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SWEET LIBERTY

Final Draft Screenplay

by

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SWEET LIBERTY

FADE IN

1 EXT. SAYEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA - DAY 1

We are high above the tree-lined streets of Sayeville, North Carolina. It's a quiet little town where nothing much ever happens. As we pass over the wooden homes, the green tufts of the treetops pass by the f.g.

2 EXT. COLLEGE - DAY 2

Start opening credits:

A college building passes in front of the lens and we hear the college marching band rehearsing inside -- maybe catching a glimpse of them through an open window.

The sound of the band cross-fades with that of the glee club as we pass by another building.

As we approach the gymnasium, we can hear the click of metal on metal and occasional grunts and groans from a man and a woman. The sound of their grunts is almost orgasmic. It's hard to tell what's going on in there. As the camera peeks in an open window, we see two people in full gear, fencing.

3 INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY 3

He's Michael Burgess, she's Gretchen Carlsen. He's in his midforties, she's in her midthirties, athletic, and relaxed -- with a sharp sense of humor. They're both fencing with energy.

She drives him back. It looks like she'll move him right off the mat. He drives her back.

MICHAEL

Keep your elbow in. Elbow. Elbow.

He feints and whips the foil out of her hand. He raises his mask and smiles at her.

MICHAEL

Gotta watch that elbow.

They take their starting positions. Without even a pause, she whips the foil out of his hand. She raises her mask and smiles at him.

CONTINUED

3

CONTINUED

GRETCHEN

I see what you mean.

He acknowledges her skill with a rueful respect. They square off again. They advance, retreat, parry, thrust. In the blur and clank of their foils, in the rhythm of their bodies, they are very well matched.

CUT TO

4

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

4

Michael and Gretchen are coming down the steps of the gymnasium carrying their canvas foil bags. Michael reaches for her bag.

End opening credits:

MICHAEL

Give me that. I'll take it for you.

She puts her bag in her other hand.

GRETCHEN

That's okay, I've got it.

MICHAEL

You're going to lug that around all day? I'll drop it at home for you.

GRETCHEN

Whose home? Yours?

MICHAEL

Yeah, my place.

GRETCHEN

It's not heavy. I'll lug it around.

MICHAEL

Gretchen, it's not a permanent arrangement if your fencing bag sits in my closet for twenty-four hours.

GRETCHEN

I don't want to move in with you, Michael. I told you that.

MICHAEL

What does this have to do with living together?

CONTINUED

GRETCHEN

(stopping and
looking at him)

Let's be honest, okay? You keep
taking my things and leaving them at
your house. You're trying to move
me in without my noticing it.

MICHAEL

Oh, come on. That would be insane.

GRETCHEN

(challenging him,
proving her point)

Where's my Walkman?

MICHAEL

I'm getting it fixed for you.

GRETCHEN

Uh, huh. You have about fifteen of
my books.

MICHAEL

I'm still reading them.

GRETCHEN

You have my blender, my hair dryer
and my French corkscrew.

MICHAEL

(passionate,
imploring)

Look, I don't want your hair dryer
or your corkscrew. I want you.

GRETCHEN

(spelling it
out)

I-don't-want-to-live-with-you! How
can you teach history and have such
a short memory?

She walks on. He tags after her.

MICHAEL

Why don't you try it for awhile?
It's fun. You buy dishes together,
you have people over -- and then you
talk about them in the bathroom
while you're brushing your teeth.
How do you know you won't like
living with someone?

CONTINUED

4

CONTINUED - 2

GRETCHEN

I lived with someone for three years
when I was married.

MICHAEL

Yeah, but not with me.

A bell tolls the hour. He looks at his watch.

MICHAEL

Look, we both have classes. Don't
decide anything now. Think about
it. I'll talk to you in an hour.

He kisses her and goes. She looks after him for a moment,
then hurries to her own class.

CUT TO

5

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The room is jammed with students.

MICHAEL

(to the
students)

...All right, here was the problem.
The colonies wanted what John Adams
called 'The Sweets of Liberty' --
but in order to get their freedom,
people were going to have to leave
their homes, obey orders, cut their
hair. And they hated this.

6

EXT. COLLEGE - DAY

Outside, sirens and a rumble of trucks can be heard. A
couple of students rise and look out the window. There are
camera trucks, prop trucks, a bus. They bear signs reading
"Sweet Liberty". They are escorted by police cars and
state troopers on motorcycles with lights flashing and
sirens blaring.

7

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

MICHAEL

Von Steuben had a hell of a time just
teaching them to march in step. He
was so frustrated, he'd stand out on
the field cursing at them. And when

CONTINUED

7

CONTINUED

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

he used up all the curse words he knew
in German, he'd call out his aide to
curse for him in English.

One student chuckles. Most of them are distracted by the
trucks.

MICHAEL

Uh...Anybody have any questions?

MALE STUDENT

Who's going to play Von Steuben?

MICHAEL

That's their department. I just
wrote the book. Uh...Does anybody
have any questions about -- you know
-- like, history?

FEMALE STUDENT

Is it true that they're gonna use
people from the town as extras?

More students are going to the window.

MICHAEL

Tell you what. Why don't we break
a little early and see what's going
on out there?

The students cheer.

MICHAEL

Don't forget Friday's our last class
-- so I have to have your papers in
by then.

The students ignore him. Some run out of the door -- a
couple of them go out through the window. Camera follows
them out the window to:

8

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

8

The students rush across the lawn to the street. As the
Chapman crane passes, people point to it and stare at the
unfamiliar machine. Michael comes across the grass heading
for his motorcycle. He goes to Gretchen, who is by her
car, looking at the trucks. People crowd around and push
past them as they talk.

CONTINUED

8

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

Did you think about it?

GRETCHEN

Yeah, I did.

(beat)

I think maybe we ought to break up
for a while.

MICHAEL

(stunned)

Why?

GRETCHEN

I feel like I'm under a lot of
pressure.

MICHAEL

So we have to break up?

GRETCHEN

It doesn't have to be permanent.
Let's just break up a little.

MICHAEL

Listen, I gotta go meet this guy
who wrote the movie script. Let's
have dinner tonight, okay?

GRETCHEN

At your place?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

GRETCHEN

No. You always want to make love
after dinner. And then you start
taking off my clothes and hiding
them in your closet.

MICHAEL

When can I see you?

GRETCHEN

Tomorrow for lunch. At my place.
And don't show up with a suitcase.

She starts to get into her car -- then stops.

GRETCHEN

Come here.

CONTINUED

10

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

10

The Sayeville Continentals, in full Colonial uniform are marching smartly down the street. The crowd applauds proudly. As stuntmen come out of the bus, they smile indulgently at the Sunday soldiers.

CUT TO

11

INT. BUS - DAY

11

Someone is rushing to the door of the bus, pushing past other people, pausing once or twice to yell through a window.

Stanley Glass is short and round with the shape and emotional velocity of a bullet. His passions are all near the surface.

STANLEY

Hey. Michael Burgess! Stanley Glass. Over here. Stanley Glass. I wrote the screenplay.

Camera follows Stanley as he lunges out the door of the bus and grabs Michael's hand.

12

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

12

MICHAEL

How did you know me?

STANLEY

How did I know you.

Stanley holds up copy of book called Sweet Liberty. Michael's picture is on the back cover.

STANLEY

This is my bible.

He shows Michael the book. There is a gunshot few feet away. Michael flinches, startled. The Continentals are firing a twenty-one-gun salute. Stanley jumps, frightened.

STANLEY

Idiots.

(to Michael)

Look at those dog-eared pages. I've studied every paragraph. Is that respect for the written word?

(reacting to

another gunshot)

Wonderful welcome. Maniacs in tights. Shooting. I'm getting outa here.

CONTINUED

12

CONTINUED

12

Michael walks with Stanley to the hotel door.

MICHAEL

(tapping book)

When you get settled, I want to ask you about this.

STANLEY

What? Ask.

MICHAEL

After you get a chance to relax.

STANLEY

This is it. This is relaxed. I don't get any calmer than this. What is it? I'm getting nervous.

MICHAEL

Well, I keep asking to see the script -- and they keep telling me next week. How much has my book been changed?

STANLEY

What do you mean, changed? Nothing is changed. I put in a few laughs....

MICHAEL

A few laughs?

STANLEY

...and a little action. But it's your book. And listen, I can't express to you how proud I am to be working on material by Michael Burgess. After twenty years of laboring in the schlock mines to suddenly be associated with literature...It's incredible. Incredible.

CUT TO

13

INT. HOTEL - DAY

13

Stanley and Michael enter with luggage. Stanley goes to the front desk. There are dozens of people from the movie company milling around, asking for their room assignments. Stanley pushes his way to the front.

STANLEY

Stanley Glass.

CONTINUED

13

CONTINUED

13

STANLEY (Cont'd)

(elbowing
someone out of
the way)

Excuse me. Stanley Glass. I have
to get right to my suite. I'm the
writer.

STUNTMAN

So? I'm the stunt coordinator.

STANLEY

So, you can fall down later. I have
writing that can't wait.

(to clerk)

Stanley Glass.

CUT TO

14

INT. STANLEY'S ROOM - DAY

14

Stanley, Michael and the hotel Clerk enter. Stanley is
dismayed at the size of the room.

STANLEY

Look at this. A shoebox! And not
even a piece of fruit.

(to the Clerk,
moving him out)

I need pears, bananas, the works.
I'm a writer. I have to chew on
things. Now.

CLERK

I'll do what I can.

The Clerk goes.

STANLEY

Michael, make yourself comfortable.
I have an incredible treat for you.

He hands him a script of Sweet Liberty.

Michael takes it gingerly -- afraid to see what's been done
to his book.

MICHAEL

I'll read it tonight.

STANLEY

What do you mean, tonight? Sit. Sit.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

14

STANLEY (Cont'd)

(sitting
Michael down)
I'm gonna take a bath. When you
laugh, tell me what page you're on.

MICHAEL

When I laugh at what?

Stanley goes into the bathroom. Puzzled, Michael gingerly
opens the script.

DISSOLVE TO

15 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

15

Stanley is drying his hair. He has the door open a crack,
listening for Michael's reaction. He hears none. Pulling
a towel around him, he goes into the other room.

CUT TO

16 INT. STANLEY'S ROOM - DAY

16

Stanley comes out of the bathroom. Michael is two thirds
of the way through the script.

STANLEY

So? Do you love it?

Michael looks up, stunned, dumbfounded.

MICHAEL

What is this?

STANLEY

The movie.

MICHAEL

This isn't my book. There are all
these naked women -- and people keep
falling off their horses.

STANLEY

It's a comedy.

MICHAEL

Where's my book? So far there isn't
one thing in here that looks familiar.

STANLEY

Are you kidding me?

CONTINUED

16

CONTINUED

16

Stanley opens up Michael's book.

STANLEY

Every one of these pages has something I kept in. Look -- that great line of Washington's. Of course, I had to give that to the girl.

Michael is massaging his face in quiet fury.

STANLEY

You're not upset, are you?

MICHAEL

(pointing to
his fencing
bag)

I think I should warn you. I have a sword in my bag.

STANLEY

It's still your book. So, okay -- I changed a couple of jokes!

MICHAEL

It didn't have any jokes.

Michael rises and paces, agitated.

MICHAEL

No wonder they never let me see the script. And then the director comes through here looking at locations and he's too busy to meet me. I'm beginning to see how this works. Well, tomorrow he sees me!

STANLEY

Michael, it's very important that you do not tell the director you don't like my script. This is extremely important. There's a question of death here. Nervous breakdowns.

MICHAEL

This is a piece of shit!

Stanley can adapt to anything.

STANLEY

Of course it is! I hate it. But we can work on it. You and I together can make it better.

CONTINUED

STANLEY (Cont'd)

(shifting
gears)

Not different, because of course the sets are built and the actors fit the costumes -- but we can definitely make it better. Infinitely better. We'll work on it together. We are the two Musketeers.

MICHAEL

I'm not a Musketeer, I'm a historian. If they don't want my story the way it happened, I'll take it back.

STANLEY

They won't let you take it back. They bought it. It's theirs. But we can fix it. Just try not to mention the word 'shit,' okay?

MICHAEL

The American Revolution was not a goddamned vaudeville show!

STANLEY

We'll fix it! Michael, my life is hanging here. I'm a playwright, an author. But you know how I started out in this business? Writing questions on game shows. Smutty double entendres for The Match Game.

(quoting)

'John showed Mary his big hot blank' ...But finally, I have the chance to work with Pulitzer Prize winner. You think I would put anything ahead of you? I'm yours. Walk on me, step on me, but I'm yours. Curse me, tell me I have no talent -- but let just a little of you rub off on me. Michael, tell me I'm yours.

MICHAEL

What choice have I got?

STANLEY

None.

MICHAEL

(with very
little
enthusiasm)

You're mine.

CUT TO

17

EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

17

Michael comes up the walk in front of the modest wooden house carrying flowers. Gretchen has seen him coming from the kitchen window and opens the side door.

GRETCHEN

(smiling)

You're early.

MICHAEL

I thought I'd help make lunch.

GRETCHEN

How domestic.

MICHAEL

(stepping through
the door)

Are we still kissing?

She gives him an awfully chaste kiss. He's not impressed.

MICHAEL

I guess not.

CUT TO

18

INT. GRETCHEN'S KITCHEN - DAY

18

Gretchen and Michael walk to the kitchen counter. A large quilt is hanging on one wall. She starts to cut an onion. He puts the flowers in a vase.

MICHAEL

(looking at
quilt)

This is new, isn't it?

GRETCHEN

(nodding)

You like it?

MICHAEL

How long did it take you to make that?

GRETCHEN

Not long.

MICHAEL

How long? Fifty hours? Sixty?

GRETCHEN

About seventy-five.

MICHAEL

How many pages of your book could
you have written in that time?

CONTINUED

GRETCHEN

Did you meet the movie people?

MICHAEL

Some of them. You just going to ignore my question?

GRETCHEN

Uh huh. What's Elliot James like?
Is he sexy?

MICHAEL

So far we're just holding hands.

(pointing at
quilt)

Look, this is beautiful. But you
can't get it published.

Michael watches her slice onions for a moment.

MICHAEL

Listen, I know you don't want to live
together, but do you realize that in
all the time I've known you we have
never made a salad together. Never.

GRETCHEN

(with irony)

I guess that accounts for this...
emptiness...I feel.

MICHAEL

Can I show you something?

Michael gently takes the knife and a fresh onion.

MICHAEL

You don't cut the root -- you peel back
the other end and slice from there.
The root is what makes you cry.

GRETCHEN

(actually
interested)

How do you know that?

MICHAEL

I read widely.

(picking up a
head of lettuce)

How do you get the stem out of this?

GRETCHEN

I hack at it with a knife.

CONTINUED

18

CONTINUED - 2

18

He bangs the lettuce, stem down, on the table -- then simply lifts it out. He holds it before her, proudly.

GRETCHEN

(smiling)

You know that's probably the most peculiar proposal anyone's ever made.

Suddenly getting it, he puts down the lettuce.

MICHAEL

Proposal? God, it really didn't occur to me. You want to get married!

GRETCHEN

Do I?

MICHAEL

Why didn't you just say it? I could accept an idea like that.

GRETCHEN

I don't think I want to marry someone who finds the idea of being married to me acceptable.

Michael takes her hand.

MICHAEL

Come on.

GRETCHEN

Where?

MICHAEL

Around the corner. Come on.

He leads her out of the house.

CUT TO

19

EXT. MUNICIPAL COURT - SAYEVILLE - DAY

19

Michael has Gretchen by the hand and is hurrying her along. He stops in front of an old building with a flight of stairs before it. The sign above the entrance reads: "Sayeville Municipal Court".

MICHAEL

Let's go.

Michael goes up a couple of steps.

CONTINUED

19

CONTINUED

GRETCHEN

What are we going to do in there?

MICHAEL

Get a marriage license.

Gretchen laughs.

GRETCHEN

Michael, that's okay. I know you love me.

MICHAEL

What's the matter, you scared?
Let's go.

She goes up the steps. She stops and turns a couple of steps above him.

GRETCHEN

You know, this is a big step. This is the real thing.

Michael goes a step above her.

MICHAEL

I love you and I want to marry you.
Do you love me, or what?

Gretchen goes all the way up the steps, opens the door and goes inside. Michael doesn't move. He's sort of paralyzed where he is. After a moment, Gretchen comes back out and walks down the steps.

GRETCHEN

(smiling, as
she passes him)
I kinda thought you were bluffing.

CUT TO

20

EXT. GRETCHEN'S STREET - DAY

20

Michael and Gretchen are walking, eating ice cream cones. He has pistachio, she, chocolate. Their tone is light.

GRETCHEN

You almost had me going for a minute there.

MICHAEL

I just couldn't do that to you.

CONTINUED

20

CONTINUED

GRETCHEN

(turning to
him, grinning)
Do what to me?

MICHAEL

Sidetrack you like that. All I could
think of was all those years you've
put into your career. You have a
responsibility to that.

GRETCHEN

(laughing)
Boy, you are so full of shit.

MICHAEL

I'm full of shit?

GRETCHEN

It's not just you. We've both been
married, and we're leary of it.

(beat)

You're real leary. / But we both are.

MICHAEL

What do you mean, I'm leary?

GRETCHEN

Look, I'm happy this way. I teach,
I make quilts, I work on my book.
In between we squeeze in a little
fencing -- and some really nice love-
making. Let's settle for perfect.

21

EXT. GRETCHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

21

They arrive at Gretchen's house. Gretchen puts the last of
her cone in her mouth.

GRETCHEN

That was better than a salad.

Michael kisses her on the mouth as she crunches her cone.

MICHAEL

Mm. Chocolate.

GRETCHEN

(munching,
kissing and
talking)

Mmm.

(comes back for
another kiss)

What'd you have? Pistachio? That's
good.

CONTINUED

21

CONTINUED

21

They smile and kiss again.

MICHAEL

Why don't we go inside for fifteen
or twenty minutes?

GRETCHEN

I have a class.

MICHAEL

Ten minutes.

GRETCHEN

Okay.

They go inside.

CUT TO

22

EXT. MAIN STREET - SAYEVILLE - DAY

22

Michael and Stanley are walking in the street. As they talk, they pass a prop truck being unloaded. Distracted, Michael watches as flintlock rifles, sabres and other Eighteenth Century paraphernalia are carried from the truck into a building.

STANLEY

He comes on like a kid, but he's
tough.

MICHAEL

(looking at
the truck)
Where'd they get those claymoor
sabres?

STANLEY

Michael, pay attention. He's smart
and he's tough. Don't screw around
with him.

Michael watches a building being painted by scenic artists. It is being transformed into a perfect example of Eighteenth Century architecture. Michael is fascinated.

MICHAEL

I can't believe how real this looks.

Faith Healy steps out of the house, reading a script and going over a scene. She is wearing a low-cut Eighteenth Century dress. Michael watches her. She places her hand

CONTINUED

22

CONTINUED

22

on the brass door ornament, as if to absorb its history with her fingertips. She turns, facing Michael. Their eyes meet. There is something about her that instantly captures his heart. She's at once innocently alluring, almost seductive and quietly self-assured. She appears to have stepped directly out of the Colonial Period. Stanley notices that Michael has stopped listening to him.

STANLEY

Come on, I'll introduce you.

Stanley leads Michael to Faith, who waits to be presented. She is thoroughly the woman she will play in the film. When in costume, she never breaks out of character.

STANLEY

Faith, this is the man who wrote the book Sweet Liberty...Michael Burgess. Faith Healy.

MICHAEL

How do you do? You look wonderful in that outfit.

FAITH

I pray you, sir, do not make me blush as it ill becomes me.

Michael hardly knows what to make of this. A delighted chuckle bubbles up in him.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

STANLEY

(to Faith)

Nice to see you, darling. We have a meeting. You look great. Really. You're gonna be fantastic in this.

MICHAEL

(as he's

ushered away)

Very nice to meet you....

She curtsies and goes back into the house. As Michael and Stanley walk on, Michael is transported by Faith.

MICHAEL

She's Mary Slocumb. She's the woman I wrote about. Where'd they find her?

CONTINUED

22

CONTINUED - 2

STANLEY

Where'd they find her? Don't you go to the movies?

MICHAEL

She even speaks like her.

STANLEY

Actors. She puts on the costume, all of a sudden she talks funny. She goes to a hamburger joint -- she says, 'I prithee, putst thou some pickalilly on my quarter pounder.' The great artist. I wouldn't mind giving her a quarter pounder in my room tonight.

Michael looks at him -- this is a weird man. They walk into the Sayeville Inn -- which is being transformed into a Colonial mansion.

CUT TO

23

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

23

Construction is going on throughout the following scene. Stanley leads Michael over to Bo Hodges. Michael and Stanley wait as Bo speaks with Hank, Jesse and Floyd, three members of the Sayeville Continentals. They are in uniform.

HANK

Well, see Mr. Hodges, we recreate the Battle of Cowpens every year and it's quite an intricate deal.

JESS

Yeah, just firing the muskets, you have nineteen different motions you go through -- there's like...

(demonstrating)

...half-cock your firelock! Handle your cartridges.

BO

Okay, but we'll tell you what we need you to do. Thanks a lot, gentlemen.

JESS

(as they go)

We can get off a shot every twenty seconds. That's pretty fast.

CONTINUED

BO

Thank you.

He smiles and ushers them out. He turns to Stanley and Michael.

STANLEY

Bo, this is Michael Burgess.

BO

Hey, pleasure to meet you. That's some book you wrote.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

BO

This is gonna be fun. Have you read the script?

MICHAEL

Uh, yes. I have.

BO

(smiling,
nodding at
Stanley)

He did a hell of a job for a guy who can't speak English.

MICHAEL

The script is...fascinating. Really. There are only a couple of things I have a problem with.

BO

What are they?

MICHAEL

Well, the story and the dialogue.

Stanley cringes and goes pale. Bo doesn't flinch.

BO

What, exactly, bothers you?

MICHAEL

None of it ever happened.

BO

Well, who really knows what happened 200 years ago?

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

I do. I've read their newspapers,
their diaries, their letters. This
script is all bullshit.

BO

(to Stanley,
ribbing
Michael)

Bullshit! I knew we should have
left out the bullshit.

MICHAEL

Look, you've got this wonderful woman,
Mary Slocumb. Her husband is off
fighting the British. Then this
British officer, Colonel Tarleton,
comes with his troops and takes over
her farm.

BO

That's what we've got. What's wrong
with that?

MICHAEL

You've got her falling in love with
him. It's impossible. Tarleton was
a vicious, ruthless beast. Why
would she fall in love with this guy?

BO

(smiling)

He's number four at the box office.

MICHAEL

What?

BO

Elliot James is an international
star. He comes on the screen in
Paris, they wet their pants in
Manila. If she doesn't fall in love
with him, the audience will set fire
to the ushers.

MICHAEL

(astonished)

Why did you people buy my book?

BO

Because it's full of earthy, sexy,
funny stories. You don't realize
what a good comedy writer you are.

CONTINUED

23

CONTINUED - 3

23

MICHAEL

I was trying to make history readable.
I wasn't trying to obliterate it.

(frustrated)

Jesus, I put ten years of my life
into that book and you just threw it
away.

BO

Hey, I'm a fan of yours. I saved
this project. This picture was in
turnaround.

MICHAEL

(to Stanley)

What's that? Turnaround.

STANLEY

It was cancelled.

BO

Nobody knew what to do with it. I
was the only one who saw how we could
make this appealing to kids. I mean,
you realize who goes to see movies?
Eighty percent of them are between
the ages thirteen and twenty-four.
And you know what kids like?

MICHAEL

(not sure
he wants to
hear this)

What?

BO

This may sound silly to you -- but,
kids go ape if you do three things
in a movie.

(holding up
one finger
at a time)

Defy authority. Destroy property.
And take people's clothes off.

Michael stares at him.

MICHAEL

What does that have to do with
American history?

CONTINUED

BO

Well, think about it. Why do kids defy authority? Because they're in rebellion. The American Revolution was the ultimate rebellion. And they destroyed property. All we had to do -- with this lunatic's help -- was to get their clothes off.

MICHAEL

Look. I want you to go back to the book. She does not fall in love with Tarleton. I'm sorry to be rough, but this means a great deal to me.

BO

I'm curious. What makes you think you can tell me what to put in the movie?

MICHAEL

(taking some
typed papers
out of his
pocket)

My contract. Paragraph 5D says I have full right of consultation. You have to consult with me on everything you do.

BO

(ignoring
the papers)

All right, let's see. You really don't like the love story?

MICHAEL

I hate it. I want it out.

BO

(pleasantly,
shaking hands)

Okay. We've just had a consultation. Nice talking to you.

Bo calls to the art director as he leaves.

BO

Charlie, where's the blue? I thought this room was blue.

Michael just stands there, stunned.

CUT TO

24

INT. GRETCHEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

24

Gretchen is sitting up in bed, sewing a quilt. She holds up a corner of the quilt, matching a piece of cloth to it. Michael is asleep beside her. She picks up some large sheers to cut the cloth. She tries to cut quietly, but the sound rouses him.

GRETCHEN

You feel better?

MICHAEL

(sleepily)

Better?

GRETCHEN

You were sort of suicidal last night.
That's why I let you stay over.

MICHAEL

(trying to
remember)

What was the problem?

GRETCHEN

They're making a movie of your book.

MICHAEL

(fully awake)

Oh, God. Who asked you.

He puts the pillow over his head. She chuckles and puts a hand under the pillow. He reaches up her arm and draws more and more of her under there with him.

GRETCHEN

This isn't the best time for this,
Michael...Michael....

He keeps drawing her to him. She goes with it. In a moment, he's rolling on top of her, then rolling her over on top of him.

GRETCHEN

Be careful of the quilt.

MICHAEL

The hell with the quilt.

He suddenly shoots two feet in the air.

MICHAEL

(screaming)

Agghh!

CONTINUED

24

CONTINUED

24

Michael grabs his behind and jumps out of bed.

MICHAEL

Something bit me -- I've been bitten!

Gretchen holds in uncontrollable laughter. She holds up a pincushion. Indignantly, Michael goes into the bathroom.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing with dangerous implements in bed?

GRETCHEN

(still laughing)

I like to sew in bed. You ought to know things like that before you try to live with someone.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Oh, God. I have these ugly little gouges all over my behind.

GRETCHEN

(interested)

No kidding? Let's see.

Michael comes out of the bathroom wearing Gretchen's flowered robe. It doesn't fit very well.

MICHAEL

How long have you been sitting there doing that?

GRETCHEN

About four hours.

MICHAEL

You have the ability to head your department and instead of working on your book, you're sewing blankets?

GRETCHEN

This is not a blanket. It's a replica of a two-hundred-year-old quilt -- with a very timely message.

She holds it up so Michael can see it. The quilt is a copy of an early American flag. It shows a snake with the motto: "Don't tread on me".

CONTINUED

24

CONTINUED - 2

24

GRETCHEN

(lowering guilt
and leveling
her gaze)

Get it?

MICHAEL

I can't believe you waste your time
like this.

GRETCHEN

(raising
her voice)

Waste my time?

MICHAEL

All right, maybe that's too harsh.

GRETCHEN

I take it that going to bed with
you, however, was not a waste of
time.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, okay? I'm upset. I have
large chunks missing from my ass.

GRETCHEN

You have large chunks missing from
your head.

He looks at his watch and starts putting on his socks,
still wearing her robe.

GRETCHEN

Are you getting dressed or are we
going to try something kinky.

MICHAEL

It's eleven o'clock. We have to go
to that reception -- and I have to
bring my mother some food first.

He pulls his shorts on under the robe. She rises and
starts to get clothes from her dresser.

GRETCHEN

I'll go with you.

MICHAEL

No! I'll meet you at the reception.

GRETCHEN

I have some chicken for her.

CONTINUED

24

CONTINUED - 3

24

MICHAEL

I'm a grown man. I can feed my mother by myself.

He has put on his pants inside out. The white pockets hang from his hips. Angrily, he pulls off his pants and puts them on again, right side out.

GRETCHEN

Michael, what is your problem? Why can't I come with you to see your mother?

MICHAEL

All right, you want the truth? The absolute truth? I don't want to get married. Okay?

GRETCHEN

Who asked you?

MICHAEL

What am I, blind? Every step you take, you move a little deeper into my life. You bring my mother chicken. You hug her, you kiss her. All of a sudden I'll have three children and a picket fence.

GRETCHEN

(rummaging
in dresser)

I'm moving into your life, huh?
Where's my orange sweater? Admit it
-- you stole my sweater.

MICHAEL

I did not steal your stupid sweater.

GRETCHEN

Look, you don't want to get married? That's absolutely terrific. We'll keep seeing each other, we'll make love, we'll have these exciting little fights -- But I am not living with you.

He holds up his wrinkled shirt.

MICHAEL

My shirt looks like it's been used to clean a windshield.

CONTINUED

24

CONTINUED - 4

GRETCHEN

The fact that your shirt gets wrinkles is not a reason to move into my house. Buy an iron.

MICHAEL

Wrinkles are the least of it. Here. Smell it. Smell my shirt.

He holds out his shirt to her.

GRETCHEN

Thanks, I'm not into that.

She moves away.

MICHAEL

I just want you to know how inconvenient this arrangement is. Come here. Smell this.

GRETCHEN

Take your shirt out of my nose. You're getting very crazy.

MICHAEL

But not letting me keep one clean shirt in your drawer or a robe in your bathroom -- that's sane, right?

He points a finger at her as she steps into a skirt.

MICHAEL

Don't put that on. Don't put it on! You're not coming with me.

She just smiles and puts on her skirt.

CUT TO

25

EXT. CECELIA'S STREET - DAY

25

Michael and Gretchen are walking with bags of food.

GRETCHEN

How's your behind?

MICHAEL

Fine. How's yours?

GRETCHEN

A lot you care. How were we going to make love if you had to come over here?

CONTINUED

25

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

I dread coming here so much I didn't want to think about it.

They arrive at the door. He rings the bell.

MICHAEL

If I start to yell at her, give me a kick or something, okay?

GRETCHEN

There's nothing to get mad at. She's a poor little old lady.

CECELIA (O.S.)

Who's there?

MICHAEL

(smiling
pleasantly)

It's Michael, Mom. Gretchen and I brought you some food.

CECELIA (O.S.)

Just a minute, dear.

Michael and Gretchen wait patiently while an incredible number of locks are unlatched.

CECELIA (O.S.)

I can't open this. It's broken.

MICHAEL

That's the one where you have to push the key all the way in, Mom. Push and turn.

CECELIA (O.S.)

I'm locked in. Call the police.

MICHAEL

Mom. Turn the key.

The door opens. Cecelia is a very intelligent woman with a good sense of humor. There's nothing outwardly crazy about her. Her tone is rational. Her reasoning is correct. Her premises are just a little off.

CUT TO

26

INT. CECELIA'S HOUSE - DAY

26

Michael and Gretchen enter. The place is dark and cluttered -- like the Colliers' Brothers house. The windows are curtained. Cecelia kisses Michael and Gretchen.

CONTINUED

26

CONTINUED

26

MICHAEL

What if there were a fire? How
would you get out?

CECELIA

I like to be safe.

Cecelia goes to the couch, which is made up as a bed, and
lies down, pulling a blanket over her.

GRETCHEN

(intervening)

We brought you some food, Mrs. Burgess.
Shall I put it in the kitchen?

CECELIA

No, dear. Just put it on the TV.
(to Michael)
You didn't say hello to Rex.

Rex is a giant Great Dane, who sits and stares at Michael.
The dog emits a low, ominous growl.

MICHAEL

Hello, Rex.

(to Cecelia)

Mom, you need someone to take care
of you. You're not eating right.

CECILIA

(pointing
to Rex)

Talk to him. He loves you. Look,
Rexie, Michael's here. Yes.

(to Michael)

See how happy he is to see you?

The dog, of course, just stares and growls.

CECELIA

Talk to him.

Michael, resigned, sits down, eye to eye with Rex.

MICHAEL

So, Rex, how's it going? Incredible
summer we're having, isn't it? Driest
summer in over eight years. Yup.
Listen, it's been great talking to
you. We have to chat more like this.
Don't be a stranger, okay? You have
my number.

CONTINUED

CECELIA

Look how happy he is. Even when you talk to him on the phone he smiles.

MICHAEL

He's a jolly guy. How about if I find you a nurse who wants to work part time?

CECELIA

You know who would take good care of me? Johnny Delvechio. He loves me.

MICHAEL

You haven't seen Johnny Delvechio in a long time.

CECELIA

I want you to find him for me.

MICHAEL

Mom, I think he wanted to end that relationship twenty-five years ago.

CECELIA

What gave you that idea?

MICHAEL

He moved to another town, he changed his name and he got an unlisted phone number. He did everything but get plastic surgery. I think he's trying to tell you something.

CECELIA

You don't know anything about love.

Cecelia takes a photograph of a man in his forties from an end table.

CECELIA

Look at those smiling eyes. Sometimes when I look at this picture, he winks at me.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

CECELIA

Tell him I miss him.

MICHAEL

Mom, I don't know where he is.

CECELIA

Find him.

CONTINUED

26

CONTINUED - 3

MICHAEL

I can't.

CECELIA

Oh, of course you can. You can do anything you set your mind to.

(to Gretchen)

I've told him that since he was a little boy.

(to Michael)

And you can, too.

(to Gretchen)

He had his doctorate by the time he was twenty-five.

(to Michael)

Now if you can do that you can certainly find Johnny Delvechio.

MICHAEL

Mom, he's gone. He's out of your life. Leave him alone, for God's sake!

CECELIA

Is that how you talk to a dying mother?

GRETCHEN

(intervening)

Mrs. Burgess, why don't I fix you some lunch?

CECELIA

Sure. Might as well finish me off with poisoned food.

MICHAEL

They were all out of poisoned food today. We got the other kind.

GRETCHEN

It looks really good. Potato salad. Eggplant parmesan. And I made you some chicken.

CECELIA

I don't eat anything unless it's been sitting on the TV for twenty-four hours.

(winking at
Gretchen)

The radiation kills whatever poison they've put in there.

Michael sighs.

CONTINUED

26

CONTINUED - 4

26

MICHAEL

Mom, I have to go. We're meeting
the movie people.

CECELIA

Did you tell them I said to get
Jackie Gleason to play George
Washington?

MICHAEL

No. Not yet.

CECELIA

He's a very fine actor, you know.
He's not just a comedian.

MICHAEL

I know. I gotta go, Mom.

CECELIA

(confidentially)

Say good-bye to Rex.

MICHAEL

Bye, Rex. I love your collar. Is
that new?

CECELIA

Don't you want to give him a little
kiss?

MICHAEL

No!

CECELIA

It doesn't have to be on the mouth.

MICHAEL

I'm not kissing the dog.

Gretchen kisses Cecelia.

GRETCHEN

Good-bye, Mrs. Burgess. Maybe we can
find your friend for you.

CECELIA

Good!

MICHAEL

What?

Michael gives Gretchen an amazed, angry look and goes.

CECELIA

(winking)

He's cute when he's mad.

CUT TO

27

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY

27

A helicopter is landing on the college green. The area is thronged with people. There is a banner which reads "Sayeville Welcomes Sweet Liberty."

Governor Swayze gets out of the helicopter greeted by photographers and news people.

Frank Stirling, the President of the University, shakes his hand.

FRANK

Governor, it's good to see you.

SWAYZE

Frank, how are you?

Frank begins introducing Governor Swayze around. Camera pans to Frank's wife, Leslie Stirling. She's considerably younger than Frank. At the moment, she's a little nervous, because she's speaking with the leading man of the film, Elliot James.

LESLIE

Who do you play in the film,
Mr. James?

ELLIOT

Tarleton. The British Colonel. He was something of a bastard, actually. Aristocratic, overbearing...insatiable lover.

LESLIE

(flirting)

How close is that to you in real life?

ELLIOT

(looking into
her eyes)

Just the insatiable part.

She giggles. This is exactly what she wanted to hear.

ELLIOT

Does your husband teach here?

LESLIE

(her little
joke)

No, those who can't teach are put in charge. He's President of the University.

She nods toward Frank.

28 EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - ANGLE ON FRANK 28
We see President Frank Stirling acting the droll host. He takes Governor Swayze over to meet Bo and Faith.

29 EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - BACK TO LESLIE AND ELLIOT 29
ELLIOT
What does that entail actually?
Being President.
LESLIE
Mostly leaving me alone while he goes off to raise money.
ELLIOT
Really. What a waste.
Leslie glows.

30 EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - ANOTHER PART OF THE GARDEN 30
Michael and Gretchen are approaching the garden party. Michael is angry.
GRETCHEN
What did I do? Just tell me what I did.
MICHAEL
How could you tell her we'd find her old boyfriend? I try to get her to stop talking crazy and you talk crazier than she does.
GRETCHEN
I felt sorry for her. Look, in a way, she's my mother, too.
Michael stops and wheels on her.
MICHAEL
No! She is not your mother. She is my mother. Go get your own mother.
They are interrupted by a man who shakes Michael's hand.
EDSON
Hi, I'm Bill Edson. I have the drugstore on Main Street.
MICHAEL
Oh, yeah. How are you?

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED

30

EDSON

My son plays the saxophone like an angel. You gotta find a spot for him in your movie.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, I don't have anything to do with the movie. I just wrote the book from which the movie has not been taken.

Michael keeps moving.

MICHAEL

(to Gretchen,
as they walk)

Listen, you have to understand something. I felt trapped when I was married. We were both miserable. I spent five years turning myself inside out to make it work. And when it was over, I felt like a failure. I don't think I'm ready to go through that again.

GRETCHEN

Michael, I teach literature. If I wanted to marry you, I know how to say it in plain Anglo-Saxon.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well. That's the point. You don't say anything. You maneuver.

GRETCHEN

I what?

Stanley comes up to them with Elliot.

STANLEY

Michael, I want you to meet Elliot James. this is the one man in the world who can make Tarleton live. Elliot, this is...Elliot ---

Elliot has turned to Gretchen and has her hand.

GRETCHEN

Hi, Gretchen Carlsen.

ELLIOT

I'm delighted to meet you. Delighted.

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED - 2

30

GRETCHEN

Well, thank you. I've always been a
big fan of yours.

ELLIOT

(smearing her
with his
graciousness)
Isn't that kind of you.

The Publicist steps in.

PUBLICIST

Elliot, can we have you for a
picture with the Governor?

STANLEY

Elliot, I'm introducing you to
Michael Burgess. Michael wrote the
book.

ELLIOT

(to Michael)
It's brilliant. There are damned
few historians who can breathe life
into the past as you can.

MICHAEL

(flattered)
Well, that's very....

PUBLICIST

Elliot....

ELLIOT

(to Michael)
We must have dinner.

Elliot moves away to have his picture taken.

STANLEY

(to Michael)
He likes you.

MICHAEL

That's wonderful.

Michael moves on with Gretchen.

GRETCHEN

You're a hell of a person to talk
about maneuvering. You insist on
moving in, you lecture me about my

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED - 3

30

GRETCHEN (Cont'd)
career, you even give me lessons in cutting an onion! And why are you so concerned about my career? Because you think the more independent I am, the less I'll want to get married! That's the real reason. Isn't it? Isn't it?

MICHAEL
You know, maybe you were right. Maybe we need a little vacation from each other.

GRETCHEN
You want to break up? Fine.

MICHAEL
Hey, it was your idea. You don't have to get angry.

GRETCHEN
I'm not angry. I think it's a good idea.

MICHAEL
You were the one who said we should break up a little. Maybe we should try it for awhile and see how we feel.

GRETCHEN
Fine. We'll be free agents. Maybe it'll do us good.

MICHAEL
Free agents. All right, if that's how you want to look at it.

GRETCHEN
How do you expect me to look at it? I mean, what do you imagine I'll do, sit around and miss you?

MICHAEL
No, I hope you enjoy yourself.

GRETCHEN
Thank you. I hope you do, too.

MICHAEL
Well, I'll certainly try.

CONTINUED

30

CONTINUED - 4

GRETCHEN

Good. I mean it. I wish you nothing
but the best, Michael.

MICHAEL

Thank you. You, too.

She starts to go.

GRETCHEN

Oh, by the way ---

MICHAEL

What?

GRETCHEN

Go fuck yourself.

31

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

31

Elliot is signing an autograph for Governor Swayze. Elliot
holds a glass of punch.

SWAYZE

If I didn't bring home your auto-
graph, my daughter would kill me.

Swayze chuckles at his witty remark.

SWAYZE

Listen, if you need somebody for a
walk-on in this movie, I do a great
Founding Father.

ELLIOT

(humoring him)

Well, you certainly look the part.
I will talk to the director tonight.

FRANK

(leading

Swayze away)

Governor....

Swayze and Elliot exchange good-byes. Elliot moves off
with Leslie.

32

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY

32

ELLIOT

Let's walk.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED

32

LESLIE

You're putting him in the movie?

ELLIOT

Not unless there's a part for a
Founding Idiot.

LESLIE

It must be awful coming to these
dinky little towns and having people
throw themselves at you. Don't you
just want to get away sometimes?

ELLIOT

I find my little diversions.

33 EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - HELICOPTER

33

They are standing by Swayze's helicopter.

ELLIOT

Now that is a very handsome machine.

The Pilot shakes Elliot's hand.

PILOT

Hi, Mr. James. This is a real
pleasure.

ELLIOT

Is that a 436?

PILOT

Yeah. You know choppers?

ELLIOT

I flew one in Korea. They were
fairly small then. Rather like
hanging by your fingernails. Mind
if I take a look?

PILOT

Sure. Go ahead. You know I love
that picture you made with the
submarine. I saw that three times.

ELLIOT

Did you. How nice.

(to Leslie)

Get in. See what it feels like.

Leslie and Elliot get into the helicopter.

CONTINUED

33

CONTINUED

PILOT

I saw it once in a theatre and twice
on cable.

Elliot leans over to the Pilot and hands him his empty
glass, deliberately spilling its contents.

ELLIOT

Mn hm. would you hold that?..Oh,
damn.

PILOT

Let me get you some more of that.

ELLIOT

Please don't bother.

PILOT

(taking glass)
Hey. My pleasure.

The Pilot trots across the lawn to the punch bowl.

34

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - INT. HELICOPTER

34

ELLIOT

Ever been up in one of these?

LESLIE

No.

Elliot raises his eyebrows and we hear the engine roar.
She grabs for her seat belt.

35

EXT. UNIVERSITY GARDEN - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

35

The Pilot at the punch bowl, is stopped in mid-pour as he
sees the helicopter take off.

36

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

36

LESLIE

(panicked)

Elliot, what are you doing?

ELLIOT

Trying to remember how this works.

37

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

37

The helicopter swoops shakily over the garden. People look
up and point. Some duck.

38

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

38

Leslie sinks into her seat and clutches the window as the helicopter rises dizzily. Elliot is still smiling.

ELLIOT

Want to go down?

LESLIE

Yes. Yes!

ELLIOT

Right.

39

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

39

He starts to plummet and swoops over the crowd. A few people hit the dirt.

40

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

40

Through the windshield, we can see that the copter is headed straight for a building.

ELLIOT

Want to go up?

LESLIE

(screaming)

Yes!

ELLIOT

Right.

41

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

41

The helicopter zooms up into the air. People are picking themselves up off the ground. Michael has protectively thrown himself over Gretchen. He is helping her up.

GRETCHEN

Boy, you will take any excuse to get on top of me, won't you?

MICHAEL

You want to get knocked over by an airplane?

GRETCHEN

Don't climb on people you don't want to get trapped with, okay?

CONTINUED

41 CONTINUED

41

She goes. The helicopter lands. Elliot waves and grins pleasantly. People take his picture and laugh. Nobody seems too upset with him.

CUT TO

42 INT. CORRIDOR OF THE SAYEVILLE INN - NIGHT

42

Michael is knocking loudly on Stanley's door. From inside we hear Stanley's panicky voice.

STANLEY

Who is it? I have a large dog in here.

We hear barking and growling from Stanley.

MICHAEL

Open the door. It's Michael.

43 INT. STANLEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

43

The door opens cautiously. Stanley is standing behind the door in his pajamas, holding an ashtray to protect himself against an intruder.

STANLEY

I almost died of fright.

MICHAEL

I want to rewrite the scene they're shooting tomorrow.

STANLEY

Now?

MICHAEL

You said we could fix it and I want to fix it.

STANLEY

(instant
enthusiasm)

Great. You want to work in the middle of the night? Absolutely fine. Anytime. Anyplace.

As he talks, he's putting his pants on over his pajamas.

STANLEY

I pledge you my brains, my heart, my mouth and my sacred honor. Those are the words of Thomas Jefferson.

CONTINUED

43

CONTINUED

43

He throws a jacket on over his pajama tops. He grabs tablets of paper, pens and pencils and throws them into a shoulder bag.

STANLEY

To actually write something with Michael Burgess? Are you kidding? You bet I will. All right, I'm ready. Let's go. Let's write.

MICHAEL

Put your shoes on.

CUT TO

44

EXT. MICHAEL'S STREET - NIGHT

44

Michael and Stanley are walking.

STANLEY

Of course, you realize no matter how good we make this scene, the director will never shoot it.

MICHAEL

Why not? You're the writer.

Stanley laughs and looks to heaven. He has an innocent here.

STANLEY

Michael, the director is King. He says, roll over, I spin like a top; he says, dance, I'm Nijinsky.

MICHAEL

Let's just make it good.
(firmly)
I'll get it in the movie.

STANLEY

(nervously)
How do you want to change it?

Michael takes a small book from his pocket.

MICHAEL

I have the exact words Tarleton spoke when he took over her farm. What he said to her and what she said to him.

CONTINUED

44

CONTINUED

44

Michael hands it to Stanley.

STANLEY

No, forget it.

MICHAEL

Pardon me?

STANLEY

I can tell you without looking at it, it's not gonna be funny.

MICHAEL

What the hell do I care about funny?

STANLEY

Funny is my life. Funny puts the Silvercup in the bread box.

MICHAEL

What happened to how you would do whatever I wanted?

STANLEY

Michael, I have a moral obligation to the studio. They put eighteen million dollars into this. Eighteen million is a very funny number.

45

EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

45

Michael goes to the door of his house and opens it.

MICHAEL

Stanley, either you help me with this, or I do it by myself. I don't care.

STANLEY

Of course! Are you kidding? Don't construe anything I said as negative.

They enter the house.

CUT TO

46

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

46

Michael and Stanley enter. Michael goes to his desk and starts clearing books and papers from it. He clears more books and papers. Then more.

CONTINUED

46

CONTINUED

46

STANLEY

What's that?

MICHAEL

Research -- I'm working on a book.

STANLEY

All that for one book.

MICHAEL

One chapter.

He has cleared the desk.

MICHAEL

Okay, let's start working on the scene.

Stanley energetically sits down to work. From another shelf, Michael starts piling books on the desk. Then more books. Then more. Stanley starts to get buried behind them.

DISSOLVE TO

47

INT. MICHAEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAWN

47

Stanley is asleep in a chair. Michael is typing and consulting history books. They have been up all night and are unshaven. Michael pulls the page out of the typewriter and grabs a last sip of cold coffee. It tastes awful. He spits the coffee into the wastebasket and heads for the door. Stanley wakes with a start.

STANLEY

(following
him out)Are we done? Let me see it. What
did we do?

CUT TO

48

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

48

A Chapman crane lumbers down the road. Crew and actors are getting ready for the day's shoot. Elliot gets out of the makeup chair, with Kleenex tucked into his collar. A woman in an Eighteenth Century dress calls to him across the field. It is Leslie.

LESLIE

Elliot!

(showing him
her dress)Isn't it great?

CONTINUED

48

CONTINUED

48

She runs to him. She seems to have lost a good deal of the sophisticated reserve she had at the garden reception.

ELLIOT

Don't you look lovely.

LESLIE

You were so sweet to do this for me.
I'm absolutely thrilled.

He really likes how she looks.

ELLIOT

Don't you look lovely.

LESLIE

How can I ever repay you? I'm just
so excited!

ELLIOT

Would you mind helping me learn my
lines?

LESLIE

You mean it? I'd love to.

ELLIOT

We could get off by ourselves in my
trailer -- where it's quiet.

LESLIE

God, I can't believe it. I'm in the
movies!

As they walk to his trailer, she does a little joyful hop.

49

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

49

Michael, rumpled and unshaven, strides toward the set holding script pages. Stanley is trying to keep up with him. Michael sees Faith leaving her makeup chair. He runs over to her and strolls at her side.

MICHAEL

Just keep walking. Act like we're
chatting.

She looks at him out of the corner of her eye, puzzled.

CONTINUED

49

CONTINUED

49

MICHAEL

I get the impression that you're interested in portraying Mary Slocum as she really was.

FAITH

In truth, I am, sir.

MICHAEL

Yeah, right. The way she talked and everything.

FAITH

Indeed.

MICHAEL

Right. Okay. I have a copy here of exactly what she said when she met Tarleton. You want to see it?

He pulls back his jacket, showing her the pages. Faith stops and turns to him, excitedly.

FAITH

Yes.

MICHAEL

(covering
the pages)

Keep walking. He's looking at us.

50

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

50

So, across the field, is studying them curiously. Michael covers by pointing to the movie equipment like a tourist.

51

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

51

MICHAEL

You brought this stuff all the way from Hollywood?

(sotto voce)

Don't let him see you take this. They have a rule. A writer's not supposed to have anything to do with words.

She holds her hat out to him.

FAITH

Have you seen my bonnet?

CONTINUED

51

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

(puzzled)

Nice.

She slips the pages into the bonnet.

MICHAEL

Ah. Good. I'll give Elliot a copy,
too.

She nods and goes. They are near Bo now.

52

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

BO

Michael, don't talk to the actors.
It throws them.

MICHAEL

(retreating)

Oh -- sorry. She was...showing me
around.

53

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

Michael assumes an air of studied nonchalance. Looking over at Faith, he sees her step behind a truck and read the pages. Michael is tense. After a moment, she smiles to herself and hugs the pages to her breast. Michael nearly jumps for joy.

54

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - TRAILER - DAY

Michael walks over to Elliot's trailer. He passes a Teamster, who is whittling.

MICHAEL

Is Elliot James in there?

TEAMSTER

Yup.

Michael goes to the door and is about to knock when he notices that the trailer is rocking up and down rhythmically. There are no sounds except for the squeak of the trailer springs. It stops rocking. He goes to knock. It starts rocking again. Michael has the uncomfortable feeling he's interrupting something.

He jots down a short message on the script pages and tries to slip them -- with difficulty -- under the moving door.

CUT TO

51

52

53

54

55 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

55

Montage -- First day's shooting -- Bo is setting up a shot, framing it with his hands, showing the cinematographer what he wants.

56 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

56

-- Grips are lugging lights and equipment.

57 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

57

-- Michael is moved out of the way as the camera crew rehearses on the crane.

58 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

58

-- They set up silvered reflectors to bounce light into the standin's faces.

59 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY

59

-- Faith and Elliot show Bo Michael's pages. Bo looks at pages and shakes his head. He lays them down. Elliot picks them up and gives them to him again. Faith heads for her trailer. Bo appeals to her. Faith turns and points to Michael. Bo acquiesces and stares at Michael with venom. Michael smiles boyishly.

DISSOLVE TO

60 EXT. SLOCUM FARM - BARNYARD - DAY - WIDE SHOT - BARNYARD

60

Claire calls for quiet.

CLAIRE

Okay, this is picture.

(to the

crowd watching)

Can we ask you folks to be
absolutely quiet, please.

Faith glances again at Michael's pages, then puts them in the pocket of her dress. The actors withdraw into their own worlds and prepare themselves for the scene, looking at their feet, adjusting their clothes. A hairdresser fixes Faith's hair at the last second, then scatters.

CLAIRE

Okay, roll 'em.

CONTINUED

60

CONTINUED

60

The Second Camera Assistance holds the clapboard up to the lens.

SOUNDMAN

(speaks into
his recording
machine)

Sweet Liberty, Scene six, Take one.

SECOND ASSISTANT

Mark.

She slaps the clapboard and runs out of frame. The camera on the crane starts a long move-in from high in the air as the actors begin the scene. Faith is cutting a yellow rose from a bush as Tarleton rides into the barnyard.

CUT TO

61

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - BARNYARD - DAY - TIGHT SHOT ON
MICHAEL'S FACE

61

He's watching intently.

CUT TO

62

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - DAY - MICHAEL'S POINT OF VIEW - THE
BARNYARD

62

We see the scene through Michael's eyes. One by one the artificial elements literally dissolve from view. First the crew, then the lights, then the crane and camera -- until we are left with only the people, the animals and the structures of the Eighteenth Century.

ELLIOT

Have I the pleasure of seeing the
mistress of the house?

FAITH

It belongs to my husband.

ELLIOT

Is he at home?

FAITH

He is not.

ELLIOT

Is he a rebel?

CONTINUED

62

CONTINUED

62

FAITH

No, sir. He is in the army of his country, fighting against invaders.

ELLIOT

I fear, madam, we differ in our opinion. A friend to his country will be the friend of the king, our master.

FAITH

Slaves only acknowledge a master in this country.

Elliot's eyes light glint at her sauciness. He is taken with her.

ELLIOT

(to an aide)

Pitch your tents in that orchard.

(to Faith)

Madam, the service of His Majesty requires the temporary occupation of your property. If it will not be too great of an inconvenience, I will take up my quarters in your house.

FAITH

(firmly)

There is only myself and a few servants.

(beat)

We are your prisoners.

Picking up her skirts, she turns and goes.

CUT TO

63

EXT. SLOCUM FARM - BARNYARD - DAY - MICHAEL'S FACE

63

He is totally smitten with her.

DISSOLVE TO

64

EXT. SLOCUM FARM ROAD - END OF DAY

64

People are moving down the road, leaving work. Michael walks down the road with Stanley. Stanley is exultant.

STANLEY

You did it! What a perfect first day. Perfect!

CONTINUED

Michael sees Faith walking toward them. She's still in costume on the way to her trailer. She carries a yellow rose. Their eyes meet. Stanley sees Michael looking at her. He smiles and raises his eyebrows suggestively. Michael moves toward Faith.

MICHAEL

(to Faith)

Thank you.

FAITH

(still in
character)

It is I who should thank you, sir.
I'm dining in this evening. Might I
have the pleasure of your company at
a light supper?

Stanley hears what they say and reacts with satyric pleasure.

MICHAEL

(chuckling at
the way she
speaks when in
character)

I'd love to. It's a real treat to
finally meet Mary Slocumb.

FAITH

I am preparing only garden greens,
these days. I earnestly hope that
will please you.

MICHAEL

I make a great salad. Can I bring
anything?

FAITH

Oh, perhaps just...

(beat)

...a nice plump tomato.

She says these last words innocently, but there's something about the way she says them that definitely suggests more than vegetables. She starts to go, then turns back to Michael. She hands him her rose.

FAITH

Here. That's for remembrance.
Supper at eight?

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED - 2

64

Michael nods. She smiles and goes into her trailer.
Stanley makes the okay sign.

STANLEY

Perfect!

CUT TO

65 INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - TIGHT SHOT - ALARM CLOCK 65

ringing. The clock reads "7:15." Camera pans to a bed where Michael is rousing himself from a dead sleep. In his hand is the yellow rose. Still unshaven, he has grabbed a nap in his clothes. He looks at the rose and remembers Faith.

CUT TO

66 INT. MICHAEL'S SHOWER - NIGHT 66

The shower is spraying water on Michael's face as he tries to wake up.

CUT TO

67 INT. MICHAEL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT 67

Michael finishes shaving at the sink. He splashes his face with water and dries his face with a towel. He turns sideways checking out the thickness of his middle. He pulls in his stomach. He turns front again and pinches some fat above the waistband of his shorts. He pulls the shorts up an inch to cover the fat.

CUT TO

68 MICHAEL'S BEDROOM DRAWER - TIGHT SHOT 68

Michael's hand reaches in and pulls out a hair dryer. There is a tag on the hair dryer that says in large print: "THIS BELONGS TO GRETCHEN. GIVE IT BACK!" Pull back to reveal that Michael is now dressed. He is about to use it when he glances at the tag again. He feels guilty using it on this occasion. He puts it back in the drawer. Instead, he goes after his hair with his hands. He pays special attention to getting one particular handful of hair to adequately cover his receding hairline. He takes one last look in the mirror which begins with a fairly blank expression, but grows into a very seductive look. Not terribly impressed with himself, he goes out the door.

CUT TO

69

INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

69

The door opens to reveal Faith. She is now in street clothes. She holds a telephone.

FAITH

Hi. Come on in.

Michael enters. He's carrying a bag of groceries and a book. He empties the groceries on the kitchen counter as Faith finishes her call. Her comments are terse, almost abrupt. In street clothes, there is a definite change in her personality. She appears plainer, she's tougher and a little more self-centered. Michael doesn't see this right away. Only slowly does the realization grow on him that she can be two different people.

FAITH

(into phone)

Uh, huh...Yeah, go ahead...No, I'm not comfortable with that...Well, listen, Fred, they came to us. So if they don't like it, tell them to shove it...Yeah, bye.

She hangs up the phone and starts looking at the salad makings Michael has brought.

FAITH

So what have you got here? Look at that, they have endive in Sayeville?

MICHAEL

You think this is a hick town? They have watercress, too.

He holds up some watercress.

FAITH

Hey, this is gonna be fun.

He holds out a bottle of vinegar to her.

FAITH

(reading the label)

Balsamic vinegar. Oh my God, we're in salad heaven.

The phone rings. She picks it up.

FAITH

Hello?...Yeah....

Faith lights a cigarette while she talks. Out of costume, she's a chain smoker. When she puts this one down, she'll light another.

CONTINUED

FAITH

No, tell him to forget it...Because it's an insulting offer. Look, you are authorized to tell these guys to go screw themselves.

She hangs up and smiles charmingly -- but it is not Fanny's smile. It is a business woman's signal that she hadn't meant to keep him waiting. Michael is staring at her.

FAITH

What's the matter?

MICHAEL

I'm trying to get used to how different you look. You're two different people.

FAITH

(smiling)

If all I could be was two people, I'd be out of business. You should have met me when I was playing a coal miner.

MICHAEL

You played a coal miner?

For a second, her eyes get just a little steely.

FAITH

You don't know I played a coal miner?

MICHAEL

Oh wait, yeah. The Coal Miner's Daughter.

FAITH

No, that's Sissy Spacek. I wasn't anybody's daughter. I was a coal miner. I got nominated for that. And that just -- passed you by?

MICHAEL

I don't keep up with a lot of things that happened after 1820.

FAITH

Well, at least you're not here just because I'm a movie star.

MICHAEL

Actually, I kind of fell in love with you as Mary Slocumb.

CONTINUED

69

CONTINUED - 2

69

She ignores the "falling in love" part and gives him that penetrating look she's capable of.

FAITH

What's she like?

MICHAEL

Like you. You're her.

FAITH

I need the details. How does she talk to servants? Does she want people to think she's smart? Is she a coquette? How many times a day does she make love?

MICHAEL

How many times a day?

She lights another cigarette.

MICHAEL

(looking at
her cigarette)
You have one of those over there.

FAITH

I have them all over the room. What can you tell me about her?

Michael holds up the book.

MICHAEL

I brought you Mary Slocumb's diary.
Does that interest you?

Her eyes stay on him with that penetrating gaze.

FAITH

I would kill to read her diary.

She opens the book as if it were alive.

FAITH

I knew her handwriting would be big like that.

She reads aloud -- not yet in character.

FAITH

.(reading)
'...My dear husband left again today. His company has taken to the hills north of here....'

DISSOLVE TO

70

INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - CLOSEUP OF FAITH'S ASHTRAY 70

There are a number of dead cigarettes in it. Camera tilts up to Faith's face.

She no longer is speaking in her own matter-of-fact voice. She has gently taken on the characteristics of Mary. Michael is completely mesmerized by her transformation. But most of all, he's mesmerized by Mary.

FAITH

(reading)

'...Four weeks and still no word of him. He fills my dreams and his absence kindles in me such longing as I cannot bear it. I see him still by the bedroom door on the day he left. He said, 'My dearest....'

MICHAEL

(reciting from
memory)

'...My dearest Mary, may God watch over you while I am gone.'

FAITH

(reading)

'And I said: 'Don't let them kill you, Jamie.' And his words to me were....'

MICHAEL

(reciting from
memory)

'Would any man die, Mary, if he could come home to your sweet kisses?'

FAITH

(looking at
Michael)

'And we embraced....'

He leans over and kisses her.

MICHAEL

I've wanted to do that for fifteen years.

Faith looks at him for a moment, then turns back to the diary.

CONTINUED

70

CONTINUED

70

FAITH

(reading)

'I long for him, I crave his voice
-- his arms....'

He kisses her again. A long slow kiss.

FAITH

How do you suppose she makes love?

MICHAEL

I wonder.

They're kissing passionately now. A cabbage falls to the floor.

CUT TO

71

EXT. FIELD - DAY

71

Muskets are going off noisily. The Sayeville Continentals are conducting a demonstration of the Battle of Cowpens. There is much shooting and smoke. Bo and the stuntmen look on with courtesy and a little boredom. Some of the Continentals are dropping as if shot. The stuntmen point at them and chuckle. Amateur theatrics.

72

EXT. FIELD - DAY - ANGLE ON CONTINENTALS AND BO

72

Bo interrupts the demonstration.

BO

Okay, thank you, guys. We have to get back to work.

The firing grinds to a halt.

HANK

There's more, Mr. Hodges. Floyd has something he does with his spontoon.

BO

We gotta move on, I'm sorry.

HANK

He sticks his spontoon in the ground and pole vaults over the British guns. A man at Cowpens actually did that.

Floyd holds up his spontoon -- a long pole with a blade at one end.

BO

Maybe another time. Thank you.

73

EXT. FIELD - DAY

73

He leads a little round of applause. The Continentals get up. Jesse, one of the Continentals, shows his musket to Eagleton, a leathery, stuntman.

JESSE

See, this is what you call a
Committee of Safety musket.

EAGLETON

Uh huh. That's a real nice weapon.

JESSE

(demonstrating)
You hold it like this.

EAGLETON

(deadpan)
Oh, I see. How do you make it go
off? You put your finger on this
little thing here?

Unable to resist, another stuntman, Lopert, joins them.

LOPERT

I like the way you fellas were
falling down out there. Very
professional.

JESSE

Did it look okay?

LOPERT

Oh, yeah. I thought a couple of you
was actually disabled. Didn't you,
Eagleton?

EAGLETON

(pleasantly)
Hell, I thought a lot of them were
disabled.

This is all done with straight face. The Continentals do
not know they're being put on.

Floyd comes over with his spontoon.

LOPERT

Let's see your spontoon, there,
Floyd.

Floyd hands him the pike.

CONTINUED

73

CONTINUED

LOPERT

That's quite a large spontoon, ain't it? You ever see a spontoon that big?

EAGLETON

Well, I knew a fella in Arizona, had quite a large spontoon, but I don't think he could pole vault with it.

74

EXT. FIELD - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

74

Faith comes up to Bo. She is not yet in costume.

FAITH

Bo...there's a scene coming up where I do needlepoint. Three weeks ago I asked for a sewing teacher.

BO

Right. When you're right, you're right.

(to Claire)

Make sure she gets somebody, Claire.

Claire makes a note.

FAITH

And I still only have one telephone line in my Winnebago. My contract calls for two.

BO

Right.

FAITH

And the toilet doesn't work.

BO

(to Claire)

You got all that?

CLAIRE

I'm writing as fast as I can.

FAITH

And I'd like Michael Burgess on the set whenever I'm shooting. He knows the period.

Claire stops writing and looks at Bo.

CONTINUED

74

CONTINUED

74

BO

(to Faith;
after a
beat)

I'll see if he's available.

FAITH

Thanks. I have to get dressed.

She goes.

BO

(to Claire)

I should try to avoid her when she's
in street clothes.

Bo goes over to Michael.

75

EXT. FIELD - DAY

75

BO

(to Michael)

Can I see you for a minute?

He takes Michael aside.

BO

I've had a request from Faith that
you be on the set when she shoots.

MICHAEL

(pleased with
himself)

Oh, really?

BO

I wouldn't get too excited about
that. She had a long list of
complaints and you came after the
broken toilet.

Bo walks off. Stanley rushes up to Michael.

STANLEY

What? What?

MICHAEL

When Faith's here, I'm here.

STANLEY

Ha!

Stanley grabs him and kisses him.

CONTINUED

75

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

Stanley, don't kiss me all the time,
okay?

STANLEY

You're gonna be on the set! I'm
gonna have my name on a masterpiece.
Now we gotta be careful of the
politics here. What about Elliot?

MICHAEL

What about him?

STANLEY

He has to want you, too. If she
wants you and he doesn't, we're
dead. And if he knows she wanted
you first, he won't want you.

MICHAEL

That's crazy.

STANLEY

That's the way it works.

MICHAEL

What do I do?

STANLEY

Same thing you did with her.

A beat.

MICHAEL

I don't think so.

STANLEY

(shaking
his
head)

You get to know him. You schmooze,
you get his confidence. He reads
our new scene -- it's in the
picture. Look, look ---

He points O.C.

76

EXT. FIELD - DAY - ANGLE ON ELLIOT

Elliot kicks a soccer ball with some crew members.

75

76

77

EXT. FIELD - DAY - BACK TO STANLEY AND MICHAEL

77

STANLEY

He's restless. He's always looking for action. You fence, right? Maybe he wants to work out with you.

MICHAEL

Why can't we just show him what we write? Why do we have to be devious?

STANLEY

(shaking his head)

This is studio politics. You take care of the art -- I'll handle the slimey stuff.

CUT TO

78

EXT. FIELD - DAY - ANOTHER PART OF THE SET

78

Bo is showing Elliot the setup for the next scene.

BO

You jump your horse over these bushes -- and you fall into the river.

Elliot looks down at the river.

ELLIOT

Make sure you have a camera on my face so you know it's me.

BO

No, Elliot, come on. We have a stuntman for this. It's a big drop. We'll cut to you in the water.

ELLIOT

No, no, dear boy. Don't trouble the stuntman. I do my own stunts.

BO

Elliot, if the horse lands on top of you and breaks your back -- I'm out of business.

ELLIOT

(smiling)

I'll send you flowers.

CONTINUED

78 CONTINUED

78

ELLIOT (Cont'd)

(patting Bo
on the back)Be a good chap and call me when
you're lit.

Elliot leaves.

79 EXT. FIELD - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

79

Michael takes the fencing bag from the trunk of the car.
He and Stanley walk quickly toward Elliot. Stanley talks
urgently, sotto voce, into Michael's ear.

STANLEY

I told him you're a great fencer.
You do know how to fence, right?

MICHAEL

I fence. I'm a fencer. ✓

STANLEY

Okay -- just fence. Don't mention
the script -- we'll get to that later.

MICHAEL

Fine.

Michael doesn't like what they're doing.

STANLEY

(to Elliot)

Here he is!

ELLIOT

Michael! I'm delighted you could
come and play with me.

STANLEY

Okay, guys, have fun!

Stanley leaves. Elliot smiles and sizes up Michael.

ELLIOT

Well. I understand you fence a bit.

CONTINUED

79

CONTINUED

MICHAEL

A little, yeah.

Elliot tosses him a sabre.

ELLIOT

How are you, pretty good?

MICHAEL

(modestly, but
definitely
taking the
challenge)

Well, I do all right.

ELLIOT

Let's see.

Elliot steps in without warning and takes a sudden swipe at Michael. The whoosh of the sword is startling. Michael manages to block it.

ELLIOT

Not bad. You have a fairly quick hand.

Michael is completely thrown by this. He laughs.

MICHAEL

Aren't we going to use jackets -- and masks?

ELLIOT

Don't worry, I won't lay a blade on you. And I promise you -- you won't lay a blade on me.

Michael is suddenly not laughing. He takes off his jacket and tosses it aside. They stalk each other for a moment. Then Elliot moves in with a quick belly cut that cleanly slices Michael's shirt in two. Michael stares at his shirt. Elliot smiles.

ELLIOT

Have to watch that. I tend not to let those openings go by.

Michael goes after him with double moulinets but Elliot blocks them all as he retreats. Michael winds up with another slice out of his shirt. Elliot is having a hell of a good time.

79

80

EXT. FIELD - DAY - LONG SHOT

80

We hear Michael's shirt tear with every other lunge. Michael gets a swat across the side of the head with the flat of the sabre and rolls down a hill. Elliot stumbles after him.

ELLIOT

My dear boy, I am so terribly sorry.

(kneeling

next to

Michael)

You're not hurt are you?

MICHAEL

Noooooooo.

Michael stands. His shirt is in shreds.

ELLIOT

I'm so ashamed. Come on, I'll drive you back to town and buy you another shirt.

MICHAEL

I'm okay. I'm fine.

ELLIOT

No, I insist.

MICHAEL

I'm okay -- really.

Elliot helps Michael up the hill, Michael protesting all the while.

CUT TO

81

EXT. FIELD - DAY - INT./EXT. ELLIOT'S CAR

81

Michael and Elliot get into Elliot's car -- a convertible. A Teamster jumps out of his car and runs over.

TEAMSTER

Mr. James, I'll take you.

ELLIOT

No, no I'm fine. Thanks.

CONTINUED

81

CONTINUED

TEAMSTER

Mr. Hodges said you weren't ever
supposed to drive yourself.

ELLIOT

(smiling)

Tell them I'll be back before
they're lit.

He pulls out, leaving the Teamster in a cloud of dust.
Before he's even on the highway, Elliot is going fifty
miles an hour across a field. Michael clutches the
dashboard.

ELLIOT

I should never have let you fence
without a mask. I do these idiotic
things. And as a result, my life is
an absolute mess.

MICHAEL

(holding on
to the car)

Oh, yeah?

ELLIOT

I'd never have hit you in the head
if I weren't so distracted.

MICHAEL

What seems to be the...
(cringing as
they turn
onto highway)
...problem?

ELLIOT

Well, my marriage for one thing. I
have the most wonderful wife. I
adore her. But I've been very
naughty with several of the women in
this village. I always do that.
It's so incredibly self-destructive.

Michael is staring straight ahead. He can't believe his
eyes.

82

EXT. ROAD - DAY - MICHAEL'S POINT OF VIEW OF THE ROAD

Elliot is passing a car at about eighty miles an hour
and is headed straight for a truck in his lane.

87

EXT. RIVER - DAY

87

Elliot sails over the hedge on his horse and plunges into the river. The crew cheers. Elliot swims to shallow water and stands, acknowledging their applause.

Michael watches -- not all that crazy about what he's seen.

MICHAEL

(to Bo)

His hat is on wrong.

BO

Thank you. Would you stand over there, please?

Michael goes to Stanley, who is working on the script. Gretchen makes her way to them.

GRETCHEN

Michael, I'm sorry. They couldn't reach you at the college and somebody thought of calling me.

MICHAEL

What's the matter?

GRETCHEN

Your mother had some difficulty breathing. The paramedics took her to the hospital.

MICHAEL

Where? What hospital?

GRETCHEN

Come on, I'll take you.

88

EXT. RIVER - DAY

88

Michael nods and moves with Gretchen toward the car.

STANLEY

Michael, don't be long. I need you here.

CONTINUED

88

CONTINUED

88

MICHAEL

(to Gretchen)

How bad is she?

GRETCHEN

They had to revive her. I think she was gone.

MICHAEL

She won't eat. Her whole body's breaking down.

(beat)

She stopped breathing?

GRETCHEN

The guy from the drugstore was delivering her hair color. She just sort of passed out and turned blue.

MICHAEL

God damn it.

CUT TO

89

INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

89

Michael and Gretchen walk with a nurse. They get to Cecelia's bed. She doesn't look so bad, although she's pale and very thin.

MICHAEL

Hi, Mom. How are you?

CECELIA

(spunky)

I'm fine. And I'm going to stay that way, too.

GRETCHEN

You look good, Mrs. Burgess.

CECELIA

(to Michael)

You know they're going to do experiments on me here?

MICHAEL

You mean tests?

CONTINUED

89

CONTINUED

89

CECELIA

Experiments. They're going to take out all my nerves. They thought I was asleep, but I heard everything they said.

MICHAEL

Why would they take out your nerves?

Cecelia shrugs. Actually, she seems kind of relaxed about the whole thing.

CECELIA

Maybe they sell them. How do I know?

MICHAEL

Mom, why haven't you been eating?

CECELIA

I can't go into the kitchen.

MICHAEL

Why?

CECELIA

Because I saw a certain person in there.

MICHAEL

You saw the devil in the kitchen?

Cecelia gives a big broad wink as if to say: "You got it, Charlie."

MICHAEL

(wearily)

You've been sleeping on the couch in the living room for eleven years because the devil is in the bedroom. How did he get in the kitchen?

CECELIA

Well, I certainly don't know. Maybe he's hungry. I don't sit around discussing it with him.

MICHAEL

You won't let me bring somebody in to cook and you won't go into the kitchen. You're liable to starve to death. What are we going to do?

CECELIA

Go find Johnny Delvechio.

CONTINUED

89

CONTINUED - 2

89

MICHAEL

Mom, I can't.

CECELIA

Why? Because he's a bricklayer? I know he's not a big fancy professor like your father or you -- but he really loved me. I'll tell you one thing. He wouldn't let them take out my nerves.

She gasps -- a sharp intake of air like a foghorn. (She has a strider.)

The Nurse signals that it's time to go.

MICHAEL

(gently)

We have to go. I'm sorry.

He leans down and kisses her.

MICHAEL

I love you, Mom.

CECELIA

You're a good son.

MICHAEL

Thank you.

As Michael turns to leave, Cecelia looks at Gretchen and draws down the corners of her mouth and shakes her head as if to deny everything good she just said about him. Gretchen bursts out laughing. Michael looks back good naturedly, knowing that as usual his mother has done something funny. They wave good-bye and move out toward the waiting room. They walk in silence for a moment. It's always an ordeal for him, side-stepping her madness. Gretchen puts her arm around him and gives him a hug. He accepts it gratefully. The Nurse comes up to them.

NURSE

Doctor Burgess, I wonder if I could give you this.

She hands him a photograph of herself.

NURSE

I'm also an actress. I've done a lot of community theatre.

(pointing to
resume)

Sadie Thompson in Rain...Emily in

CONTINUED

89 CONTINUED - 3

89

NURSE (Cont'd)
Our Town. I have a very broad
range. I really hope your mother
gets better. Thank you.

She goes. Michael, in disbelief, looks at the picture.

CUT TO

90 EXT. FIELD - DAY

90

Gretchen's car pulls up to the film set and Michael gets
out. They wave good-bye and she drives off.

Stanley, upset, approaches Michael.

STANLEY
Finally, you're back.

MICHAEL
What's the matter?

STANLEY
Everything is marvelous. You're off
having fun with your mother and mean-
while, the picture is falling apart.

MICHAEL
What happened?

STANLEY
Faith wants to do it your way.
Elliot wants it the way it was.
They won't act. They stand there --
like two petulant salamis.

91 EXT. FIELD - DAY

91

Michael goes over to Elliot, who is sunbathing.

MICHAEL
Elliot...I heard you have a problem
with the scene.

ELLIOT
My dear boy, I love it. It's sheer
delight.

Michael looks at Stanley, puzzled.

ELLIOT
There's just this one little thing.
Tarleton would never force himself
on a woman.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED

91

MICHAEL

(disbelief)

He would never force...He bragged
about it! He said he ravished more
women than any man in America.

ELLIOT

I very much doubt it. Not our
Tarleton. Why don't you have
another go at it?

92 EXT. FIELD - DAY

92

Elliot gets up and heads for his trailer.

MICHAEL

Elliot, the man was a beast, an
animal.

ELLIOT

I can see him being an animal. But
I really don't see him being a beast.

MICHAEL

(losing patience)

He was an animal and a beast.

(holding up

pages)

Look, that's what he did, and that's
what he said. And that's it.

STANLEY

(panicked)

Well, he doesn't mean 'that's it' in
the sense of 'that's it.'

MICHAEL

How do I mean it?

STANLEY

You mean we can talk, we can think,
we can toss it back and forth.

ELLIOT

You boys are very good at this sort
of thing. It shouldn't take you
fifteen minutes to excise the
beastliness.

93 EXT. FIELD - TRAILER - DAY

93

He opens the door of his trailer. Leslie's Eighteenth
Century dress is hanging in the doorway.

CONTINUED

93 CONTINUED

93

ELLIOT

I'll, uh...I'll be working on the animal part.

He goes inside and closes the door, stuffing the hem of the dress back into the trailer.

94 EXT. FIELD - DAY

94

MICHAEL

(to Stanley)

Thanks for all your support.

STANLEY

(drawing Michael
aside, under his
breath)

Michael, he's an actor. You woo him, you romance him. You get his trust.

MICHAEL

I tried that. He almost killed me.

STANLEY

You gotta do more. Much more.

(on Michael's
look)

Believe me. I know human relations.

CUT TO

95 EXT. FIELD - DAY - MONTAGE

95

Michael engages in a round of activities that leave him increasingly exhausted.

-- Elliot and Michael are fencing in masks and jackets. Michael is trying hard not to get stabbed. The crew works around them, oblivious.

96 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

96

-- Stanley and Michael are up late tapping out a scene on the typewriter. Michael yawns.

97 INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

97

-- Faith and Michael are rolling on her bed. Mary's diary slides out of her hand.

- 98 EXT. FIELD - DAY 98
- Elliot and Michael are fencing. Elliot cuts a swatch out of the seat of Michael's trousers. Michael tries to close the gap in his pants with one hand while he fences with the other.
- 99 INT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT 99
- More late night writing. Michael rubs his eyes.
- 100 INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 100
- Faith and Michael in bed. Morning. Exhausted, he is lying on top of her, asleep. She is trying to roll him off of her so she can turn off the alarm clock and get up for work.
- 101 EXT. FIELD - DAY - ON THE SET 101
- Elliot is reading pages with Michael and Stanley watching. They look haggard. He smiles and pats them on the shoulder. They're hopeful. Elliot walks away and when someone asks him for an autograph, he signs a script page and gives it away. He leaves the rest of the pages on the ladder and goes to his trailer. Michael and Stanley are dismayed.
- 102 EXT. RIVER - DAY 102
- Young men are swimming nude in a stream. Young women (in Colonial costumes) in the f.g. beginning pulling off their clothes and jumping in the water. (We see the nudity from the rear, and somewhat blurred.) Camera pans across water -- catching the jubilant faces of the men cheering on the women -- and comes to rest on the camera and crew filming this scene. Camera pans:
- 103 EXT. FIELD - DAY 103
- to Michael, who is not happy with this historical inaccuracy. He looks to Stanley for support -- camera pans to Stanley who is craning his neck for a better look.
- CUT TO
- 104 EXT. MAIN STREET SET - DAY 104
- A local policeman holds a long line of traffic. A Truck Driver calls out of his window.

CONTINUED

104 CONTINUED

104

TRUCK DRIVER

How long is this gonna be? I been sittin' here twenty minutes.

OFFICER

We gotta get this shot. We're losing the light.

Understanding, the trucker waits.

Actors, crew and townspeople are gathered before a building on Main Street that has been transformed into an 18th Century location. Giant silks block out the sun. Fake snow is wafted by grips from the roof of the building. On the other side of the street, a woman in costume is inserting a plastic card into a cash machine in front of the Sayeville Bank.

105 INT. PROP TRUCK - DAY

105

Squirrelled away in the back of a prop truck, Michael is napping. Stanley watches Elliot acting with Faith. Faith/Mary comes out of the building, as Elliot/Tarleton is:

106 EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

106

about to enter. She is surprised to see him. An electric spark is supposed to go between them -- but it doesn't.

FAITH

You've come back.

ELLIOT

I am never far from you, Madam.

He goes inside.

BO

Cut. Again.

CLAIRE

Camera reloading.

Elliot comes out. Bo goes to him.

BO

(quietly)

Just give me a little more, Okay?

(demonstrating)

'I am never far from you, Madam.' --

A little excitement, you know? I want to see a spark go between you.

CONTINUED

106 CONTINUED

106

ELLIOT

Yes, right. Wonderful!

Bo goes back to his chair. Faith is waiting for him.

FAITH

Look, I can't do it all by myself.
The man is not even looking at me.

BO

He's never good on the first take.
He'll be great.

FAITH

Fine. When you wake him up, call
me. I'll be in my dressing room.

Bo looks at Claire and draws his fingers across his throat.

CLAIRE

Okay, that's lunch.

107

INT. PROP TRUCK - DAY - ANGLE ON MICHAEL AND STANLEY
IN BACK OF TRUCK

107

Stanley has been peeking at the scene.

STANLEY

They need more words or something.
It's not working.

MICHAEL

(sleepily)
It's not working because it's a
bullshit scene.

108

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

108

Michael sees Gretchen waving to him from sidelines.

109

INT. PROP TRUCK - DAY

109

STANLEY

So, let's write them something else.

MICHAEL

Why? They won't do that either.

STANLEY

They will! All we have to do is....

110

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

110

Michael leaves the truck and walks over to Gretchen.

STANLEY

Where are you going? I'm talking.
I'm moving my mouth and saying things.

GRETCHEN

Do you have a minute?

MICHAEL

Is everything okay?

GRETCHEN

Yeah, but I've been thinking about
your mother's old sweetheart. I
mean, it's her dying wish.

MICHAEL

Gretchen, he's hiding from her. He
can't be found.

GRETCHEN

I found him.

MICHAEL

You found him?

GRETCHEN

Well, I have his address. He's
twenty minutes from here.

Michael thinks about this.

GRETCHEN

Michael, it would be so easy to do
this for her.

MICHAEL

(after a beat)

Let's go.

Michael starts to leave with Gretchen. Stanley comes up to
him with his script.

STANLEY

(to Michael)

Where are you going? What about the
scene?

MICHAEL

We'll work on it in the car.

CONTINUED

110 CONTINUED

110

Stanley does not like the sound of that, but he follows after Michael and Gretchen.

CUT TO

111 EXT. COUNTRY SIDE - DAY - GRETCHEN'S CAR

111

The car, a small two-seater, is moving through countryside. Gretchen is behind the wheel, Michael next to her, and Stanley is sitting with his knees in his chin, in the small back seat.

MICHAEL

(in mid-
discussion)

He wouldn't say that. What'd he just say to her a page ago? Read me that page.

STANLEY

I'm trying to get it out of my pocket. Unfortunately, my elbow only bends in one direction. This is a nice car. What is it, the Iron Maiden model?

MICHAEL

(to Gretchen)

How'd you get his address?

GRETCHEN

From the bricklayer's union.

STANLEY

Why are we doing this? This is a crazy mission.

MICHAEL

I'm guilty, all right? When I was a kid, I didn't know why she was so strange. I just hated her for it -- and now she's dying and I feel guilty because I hated her.

STANLEY

That I can understand.

(shifting
uncomfortably in
his seat)

What did I ever do to her?

CUT TO

112 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

112

Gretchen's car stops by a small house.

MICHAEL

Wait here, okay?

Michael walks to the front door. On the way, he notices several lawn ornaments. He rings the bell. The door is opened by Johnny Delvechio, a pleasant, balding man about seventy.

JOHNNY

Hi, what can I do for you?

MICHAEL

Johnny, it's Michael Burgess.

JOHNNY

Oh.

(suddenly
assuming a kind
of false
heartiness and
speaking louder
than he needs to)

Yes. Hi. We were just going for a
drive. In the car.

MICHAEL

(not quite
understanding)

I'm here about my mother. She's very
ill and she sort of made it her
death-bed wish to see you.

Johnny looks somewhat frantic. His eyes dart to the side.

MICHAEL

I know you meant a lot to each other
twenty-five years ago....

JOHNNY

(to Michael)

Yeah, well, we're on the way out --
the wife and I.

Michael finally gets the picture.

MICHAEL

I didn't know you were married.

JOHNNY

Oh, yeah. I've been married for
fifty years.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED

Michael's face falls. He backs away from the door.

MICHAEL

Uh...well, I wouldn't have bothered you, but there was this death bed-thing and I know you knew her a long, long time ago. I mean, it was so long ago that....

Mrs. Delvechio brushes past her husband.

MRS. DELVECHIO

Again? Again? How dare you come here? How dare you talk to my husband about that woman? This is a happy home.

MICHAEL

Mrs. Delvechio, I had no idea he was married.

She picks up a lamp and pushes open the screen door. She starts swinging at Michael with the lampshade.

MRS. DELVECHIO

When will she leave us alone? We moved to another town. We pulled out the phone. What do we have to do?

She's beating the hell out of Michael.

JOHNNY

(soothingly)

Aw, honey, don't do that. Honey, come on...sweetheart.

MRS. DELVECHIO

(her fury calming a little, but just as angry)

I'm surprised at you. An intelligent man with college degrees.

MICHAEL

I didn't know he was married!
(stepping back
from her)

Mrs. Delvechio, she's dying. She

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED - 2

112

MICHAEL (Cont'd)

hasn't even got the strength to pick
up a phone.

MRS. DELVECHIO

(quieting down)

Well, I don't blame you. You're a
good boy. I'm sorry your mother is
dying.

MICHAEL

Thank you. That's kind of you.
Good-bye.

MRS. DELVECHIO

(warmly)

Good-bye.

(firmly)

Don't come here anymore.

MICHAEL

(really meaning
it)

I won't. Don't worry.

JOHNNY

(nodding toward
his wife)

She's a good woman.

MICHAEL

I know. Thank you. Good-bye.

Michael goes back to the car as Johnny and Mrs. Delvechio
go into the house. Michael gets into the car.

CUT TO

113 INT. GRETCHEN'S CAR - DAY

113

STANLEY

What the hell was that?

Michael is holding his head in pain.

MICHAEL

Drive.

Gretchen quickly starts up the car and pulls out.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED

113

MICHAEL

That was a wonderful experience.
Thanks a lot.

STANLEY

That woman almost killed you. Who
was she?

MICHAEL

His wife. How could my mother do
that to her? How could she do it to
me?

GRETCHEN

(compassionately)

Because she's crazy.

MICHAEL

Yeah, well, I've had enough of that
from her. I want to see something
else for a change.

GRETCHEN

Michael, how long has she been crazy?

MICHAEL

All my life.

GRETCHEN

So, why do you expect her to be what
she's not?

STANLEY

Could you drive a little faster? We
gotta get back to the set. Plus,
I'm getting a severe cramp.

Michael removes his hand from his head and looks at it.
There's a little blood on it.

MICHAEL

Oh, this is nice.

STANLEY

He's bleeding.
(pointing)
Stop at that McDonald's.

MICHAEL

For what?

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED - 2

113

STANLEY

(impatiently)

We'll get a Coke with some ice in it
for you head.

(beat)

I'm also a little hungry, okay?

CUT TO

114 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY (THE NEXT DAY)

114

Michael and Gretchen are walking down the hall.

GRETCHEN

What are you going to tell her?

MICHAEL

I'm going to tell her what happened.

GRETCHEN

Why?

MICHAEL

What do you mean, why?

GRETCHEN

Michael, she thinks he still loves
her.

MICHAEL

So, if she's got this nutty fantasy,
why is that my problem?

GRETCHEN

You owe her. When you were a boy,
she told you you could do anything
you set your mind to. Was that the
absolute truth?

MICHAEL

No.

GRETCHEN

But look at the strength you got
from her. Michael, come on. She
gave to you. Give to her.

MICHAEL

I knew you would do this. I knew if
I let you come, you would start.

GRETCHEN

What am I doing?

CONTINUED

114 CONTINUED - 2

114

MICHAEL

Opening me up. I don't want to be
opened up.

GRETCHEN

Why is it so hard to let her feel
good?

MICHAEL

I don't like to lie, okay? It
doesn't make me feel good.

GRETCHEN

So you won't feel good for a few
minutes. Big deal. Michael, go in
there and tell her he loves her.
Make her happy, for God's sake.

MICHAEL

(muttering,
shaking his
head)

I knew you would do this.

CUT TO

115 INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

115

Gretchen and Michael are with Cecelia. Michael takes her
hand and kisses her on the cheek.

MICHAEL

Hi, Mom.

CECELIA

Did you talk to Johnny Delvechio?

MICHAEL

Yeah, I did.

Cecelia becomes radiant, like a young girl.

CECELIA

What did he say?

Beat. Gretchen looks at Michael.

MICHAEL

He said, he loves you, Mom.

CONTINUED

115

CONTINUED

115

CECELIA

What else?

MICHAEL

He thinks of you every day. He has your pictures by his bed. He dreams about you.

CECELIA

He does?

She becomes more radiant with everything Michael says.

MICHAEL

He never knew anybody so warm and generous and beautiful -- and funny. He loves your sense of humor.

CECELIA

Well, I'm pretty funny. When is he coming to see me?

MICHAEL

(after a beat)

He can't. He had an accident.

CECELIA

What happened?

MICHAEL

Uh...He got hit in the head. With a lamp.

CECELIA

But he can speak?

MICHAEL

Yeah, and he said he loves you and he's always loved you. And he always will.

CECELIA

Tell him I love him, too. Is he in the hospital?

MICHAEL

Yes.

CECELIA

Have them give us adjoining beds.

CONTINUED

115 CONTINUED - 2

115

MICHAEL

No, he's not in this hospital.

CECELIA

Move him into this hospital and put him in a bed right over there.

In spite of himself, Michael laughs.

MICHAEL

Mom, I can't. But I'll bring you messages from him -- okay?

(kissing her)

I have to get back to work.

CECELIA

Don't come back without Johnny Delvechio.

MICHAEL

Boy, you're a tough cookie, you know that?

CECELIA

You can say that again, Jackson.

She gives Gretchen a big wink.

CECELIA

You gotta keep them on their toes.

Michael and Gretchen leave.

CUT TO

116 EXT. SAYEVILLE STREET - DAY - HIGH SHOT

116

of Gretchen's car as it zips through traffic.

CUT TO

117 INT. GRETCHEN'S CAR - DAY

117

Gretchen is driving, Michael beside her. After a moment:

GRETCHEN

So -- did anything terrible happen?

Michael looks at her.

117 CONTINUED

117

GRETCHEN (Cont'd)

You told a few lies. Did you go
blind or anything?

Michael grins.

MICHAEL

I never saw that look on her face
before.

GRETCHEN

There's a look I never saw on your
face before, either. You love her.

MICHAEL

I really do. It's a good feeling.

Gretchen smiles.

MICHAEL

You're terrific, you know that? I
know we're taking a little vacation
from each other, and I probably
shouldn't say this...

(blurting
it out)

...But, God, I love you, Gretchen.

She looks at him, surprised.

MICHAEL

I love you and I want you.

GRETCHEN

What?

MICHAEL

If we can't live together -- why
can't we have a weekend once in a
while?

GRETCHEN

Michael, what are you doing?

MICHAEL

Forget I said that. I'm not being
fair to you.

(beat)

Can you drop me at the hotel?

GRETCHEN

I can't believe you would start that
again.

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 2

117

MICHAEL

I didn't mean to say it. It just slipped out while I was talking.

GRETCHEN

Don't you realize what it does to me when you talk like that? I mean some part of me loves you. A lot.

MICHAEL

Well then, damn it, if you love me, let's go to your house and pack your things.

GRETCHEN

Wait a minute. I didn't say I love you. I said some part of me loves you. Don't start dragging the rest of me into this.

118 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

118

She stops the car. They get out and walk to the hotel.

MICHAEL

You're going in here, too?

GRETCHEN

I'm working on the movie.

MICHAEL

You're kidding? Doing what?

GRETCHEN

Teaching embroidery.

MICHAEL

(trying not
to cringe)

Really. Embroidery. Good for you.

Gretchen laughs.

GRETCHEN

What are you doing here?

MICHAEL

I'm having lunch with one of the actors.

He holds open the door for her and they go inside.

119 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

119

MICHAEL

(heading for
a stairway)

I go this way.

GRETCHEN

(looking at a
small piece of
paper in her
hand)

So do I.

She follows him to the stairs.

120 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

120

As Gretchen and Michael climb the stairs, Michael is beginning to feel slightly uneasy about Gretchen's presence.

MICHAEL

Okay, see you later.

He goes to a door. Gretchen checks her piece of paper, and walks to the same door. She knocks.

MICHAEL

Who are you meeting with?

GRETCHEN

Faith Healy. You, too?

MICHAEL

Yeah.

(beat)

We have to talk over a scene.

From inside we hear Faith's voice.

FAITH

Come on in. I'm in the shower.

There is a brief moment of silence. Gretchen begins to smile. Actually, it's more of a scowl. More silence. She just stands there, scowling and nodding.

MICHAEL

What's the matter?

GRETCHEN

I wondered if you were seeing someone.

CONTINUED

120 CONTINUED

120

MICHAEL

You think I'm seeing someone?

GRETCHEN

Are you seeing Faith Healy?

MICHAEL

Am I seeing Faith Healy? Are you kidding?

He chuckles.

GRETCHEN

Hey, you can do what you want.

MICHAEL

(smiling)

I wish I had the time for it.

121 INT. FAITH'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

121

The door opens and Faith is there in a terry cloth robe with a towel wrapped around her hair.

FAITH

Oh, you're both here. Good. Did you meet?

MICHAEL

Yeah, we're old friends.

GRETCHEN

We teach at the college.

Faith shakes hands with Gretchen.

FAITH

Hi, I'm Faith.

GRETCHEN

Gretchen Carlson.

FAITH

You teach a course in needlework?

GRETCHEN

(shaking
her head)

American Literature. The needlework is sort of a sideline.

Faith has gone over to a small kitchen area where she takes some food out of the refrigerator and starts to prepare it.

CONTINUED

121

CONTINUED

121

FAITH

Have a seat. What kind of sewing did they do then?

GRETCHEN

Some amazingly complicated things. Quilts, pettipoint, tapestries...They did embroidery in silk, gold, silver ...pearls. It was really....

Gretchen pauses. Faith has taken a head of lettuce and popped it on the counter to remove the stem.

GRETCHEN

...Amazing. Sewing was a major part of a girl's education. A lot of women supported themselves by making clothes, like bonnets and gowns and quilts and....

Gretchen slowly runs out of steam as she watches Faith peeling back the skin of an onion and then holding it by its root while she slices the other end.

GRETCHEN

...things.

Gretchen gets up and goes to the door.

FAITH

Aren't you staying for lunch?

GRETCHEN

(pleasantly,
to Michael)

No, I've swallowed enough for one day.

She turns and goes. Faith looks at Michael.

FAITH

(figuring
it out)

You and she are lovers.

MICHAEL

Were.

FAITH

And somehow in thirty seconds she found out about us. What'd she get it from?

MICHAEL

The onion.

CONTINUED

121 CONTINUED - 2

121

Puzzled, she holds up the onion.

FAITH

How do you get that from an onion?

CUT TO

122 INT. BAR - NIGHT

122

Hank, Floyd and Jesse, dressed as Continentals, enter. Some locals, also in costume, call out hellos.

Camera follows them to the bar, where the stuntmen, Eagleton and Lopert, dressed as British dragoons, are standing and drinking a few feet away. Hank waves to Eagleton, who waves back.

HANK

This night shooting can get chilly.

EAGLETON

Yup.

HANK

(gesturing at
his uniform)

Goes the other way.

EAGLETON

What's that?

HANK

(helpfully)

Your sash. Goes over the left
shoulder.

EAGLETON

(not happy at
being corrected)

Oh. Thank you.

He changes his sash. Lopert and another stuntman nod and move over into a corner out of sight of the others. They take out a stunt harness and put it on Lopert.

HANK

You fellas gettin' ready for the
battle? We shoot that thing pretty
soon now.

FLOYD

Yeah, well, we do that every year,
you know, so we're always kinda -- up
on it.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED

122

EAGLETON

Uh huh. Well, I'm talking about taking a fall. You fall down great for a Fourth of July show -- but in the movies it's gotta be a little different.

HANK

How's that?

EAGLETON

Well, see, the force of a bullet sort of throws you back real hard -- now I don't know if those Colonial bullets had that strength.

JESSE

Oh, yeah, they hit you real hard.

HANK

See, for instance, you had your eighty-caliber Prussian musket, which was a real monster of a thing. And even your blunderbuss, up close....

EAGLETON

Uh huh. Well, see, when that thing hits you, you can't just fall down -- gotta sorta fly backwards.

JESSE

(frowning)

How do you do that?

Eagleton looks over his shoulder to see if Lopert is ready.

EAGLETON

It's all in the ankles. Lopert....

LOPERT

(looking up
innocently)

Hmm?

EAGLETON

Could you come over here for a second. I wanna show these boys a movie fall.

(to Jesse)

Now whyn't you pretend you have a gun and shoot him. Just use your fingers and say bang, so he gets the cue, you know?

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED - 2

122

Jesse goes over to Lopert, not seeing the wire that stretches from a hook on his back to behind a pair of swinging doors a few feet away.

CUT TO

123 INT. BAR - NIGHT - OTHER SIDE OF SWINGING DOORS

123

The stuntman tightens his grip on the wire and gets his footing.

CUT TO

124 INT. BAR - NIGHT

124

Jesse awkwardly holds out his finger toward Lopert.

JESSE

Bang.

Lopert suddenly flies backward through the air, smashes through the swinging doors and disappears completely. Jesse is stunned.

EAGLETON

It's all in the ankles.

JESSE

He just flew backwards through the air.

EAGLETON

It takes a little practice. Here, you try it. Now try to think from your ankles.

He puts Jesse in Lopert's place and points his finger at him.

EAGLETON

Bang.

Jesse tries to fly backwards, which is of course impossible. He falls in a clumsy heap on the floor. Eagleton looks down at him.

EAGLETON

Were you thinking from your ankles? Here. Try again.

Jesse rises.

CONTINUED

124

CONTINUED

124

EAGLETON

Bang!

Jesse tries his damndest, but falls like a rock again.

EAGLETON

Are you sure you got your whole mind
in your feet?

JESSE

I'll get it.

The other stuntmen are beginning to have to turn away to control their laughter. Jesse sees this and begins to get the idea they're putting him on. Then he sees the stuntman helping Lopert off with his harness and he turns crimson. He moves away, angrily. Hank and Floyd take him to the other end of the bar. The stuntmen no longer hold in their laughter, nearly choking with glee. They toast Jesse and give him a little applause.

CUT TO

125

EXT. CECELIA'S HOUSE - DAY

125

A cab is at the curb. Michael lifts his mother out of the car and carries her to the house. The driver, carrying her bag, catches up with them.

At the door, Michael, still carrying Cecelia, fumbles with the key. Cecelia starts to flirt with the driver. She smiles, she winks -- she starts poking him in the arm playfully with her foot.

Finally, Michael hands her over to the driver while he unlocks the door. She bats her eyes at the driver, who is good-natured but kind of confused. They go inside.

CUT TO

126

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

126

Stanley and Michael come out of Stanley's room and walk up the stairs to Elliot's room. The hall is busy. People are walking in and out of the production office. Others are carrying costumes and props.

STANLEY

(holding
typed pages)

Now we hit him with it. He's ready
now, he's primed.

CONTINUED

126 CONTINUED

126

He knocks on Elliot's door.

STANLEY

Timing. Timing is everything.

The door opens. Elliot is there, holding a drink.

ELLIOT

Ah, my dear boys. How nice. I wonder if you could come back in a day and a half.

STANLEY

You're busy? I thought we said Sunday at three o'clock.

Michael looks into the room over Elliot's shoulder and sees only the crossed legs of a woman sitting on the couch.

MICHAEL

Stanley, let's go.

STANLEY

Ah.

(winking to
Elliot)

Action, right? Always action.

Elliot closes the door.

ELLIOT

Well, one never knows -- do one?
I'll call you just as soon as I can.
(looking over
their shoulder
down the
stairwell)

Ah hah.

MICHAEL

What's the matter?

We see Leslie Stirling climbing the stairs.

ELLIOT

Why don't we step inside for a story conference?

CONTINUED

126 CONTINUED - 2

126

Elliot opens the door for Michael and Stanley.

ELLIOT

(to Leslie)

Darling, what a bother. My meeting's running late.

127 INT. ELLIOT'S ROOM - DAY

127

Michael, followed by Stanley, enters uncomfortably...and stops dead in his tracks when he looks at the woman on the couch. He's stunned.

128 ANGLE ON THE WOMAN'S LEGS

128

As she rises, camera tilts up to reveal it is Gretchen. She's grinning playfully.

GRETCHEN

Hi. I thought I heard you out there.

MICHAEL

What are you doing here?

GRETCHEN

Finding out all about show business.
Fascinating, isn't it?

Elliot enters with Leslie.

ELLIOT

Have we solved it?

(to Leslie)

Script problems. Leslie, this is Michael Burgess and Gretchen, uh -- Carlson?

GRETCHEN

Yes, we all know one another.

MICHAEL

It's a small town.

LESLIE

(agreeing)

Mn.

ELLIOT

Leslie, as I suppose you know, is a musicologist. She's been teaching me some marvelous Eighteenth Century songs. For the film.

CONTINUED

128

CONTINUED

128

MICHAEL

Ah. The film. Yeah.

ELLIOT

(indicating
Michael and
Gretchen)

And these two have made an incredible
contribution to the historical accur-
acy of this picture.

(beat)

Incredible.

The others nod. Then they sort of stand there and stare at
one another. Elliot never appears at a loss.

ELLIOT

I love history. It's so old. So
full of...events.

They nod and mumble agreement. Then dead silence.

ELLIOT

If you don't mind my saying so, this
is a very dull group. I tell you
what we'll do. Let's all of us go
for a drive.

MICHAEL

No, I don't think
so.

GRETCHEN

I really ought
to be going.

LESLIE

I don't actually
have a lot of time.

ELLIOT

We've got to get out of this hotel.
You're all beginning to look wan.
Look at Michael. Doesn't he look wan?

STANLEY

Absolutely.

(to Michael)

Fun. Right? Fun is good for the
movie. Michael, don't be wan. Come
on.

Reluctantly, Michael starts out the door with the others.
As he passes Gretchen, he gives her a grim, reproving
look. She answers with a bright, happy smile.

CUT TO

129 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

129

Elliot, Gretchen, Stanley, Michael and Leslie emerge from the hotel.

ELLIOT

There's a place twenty minutes from here that is the ugliest, most wonderfully tacky....

Elliot stops in his tracks. Stanley is concerned.

STANLEY

What, what?

ELLIOT

From time to time, my wife will drop in on location to surprise me.

130 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

130

Elliot's wife, Grace, is getting out of a taxi. She's a very pleasant, very sensible woman and is not easy to fool.

STANLEY

She's here?

ELLIOT

(smiling,
totally
unthrown)

Stimulating, isn't it?
(to Grace)

Darling!

131 EXT. HOTEL - DAY

131

Elliot goes to Grace and kisses her. Michael, Stanley, Gretchen and Leslie watch somewhat awkwardly as Elliot embraces his wife.

After a moment, Elliot and Grace walk back to the group. He carries her two small bags.

ELLIOT

(to Grace)

We were just setting off on a drive
-- but I'll get you settled. You
must be tired.

CONTINUED

131 CONTINUED

131

GRACE

(looking at
the two women
with
curiosity)

No, no. I'd love to go for a
drive. I hear there are some
incredible sights around here.

ELLIOT

Wonderful! This is Grace, my
adoring wife.

(waving a hand
at the group)

They all have names, but we'll work
on that in the car.

Elliot puts Grace's bags in the trunk of the convertible.

ELLIOT

We are going to have the best time.
We are going to be silly and giddy.
And we are going to pee in our pants
with laughter three times before
this day is over. Each and every
one of us.

As they all get into the car, Elliot is the only one who
shows any signs of happiness. Grace is quietly skeptical
-- and the other faces show dread, panic and desperation.
The car pulls out.

CUT TO

132 INT./EXT. ELLIOT'S CAR - DAY

132

Elliot is driving. All six people are singing "London's
Burning" (A Round). Only Elliot seems to be enjoying it.
At one point in the song, everyone but Elliot stops singing
-- they are looking straight ahead in horrified fascination.
Elliot swerves the car as the truck they were about to hit
passes them. Relieved, they slowly start singing again.

CUT TO

133 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATER AFTERNOON - MIDWAY

133

Elliot is walking arm and arm with Grace. Stanley is with
Leslie and Michael is with Gretchen.

CONTINUED

133 CONTINUED

133

ELLIOT

I was so bored on a picture in Indonesia, I rented a balloon and tried to escape. They chased after me with automobiles, helicopters -- it was wonderful.

He goes up to a ticket booth.

ELLIOT

How many for this? Everyone?

They all look above them.

CUT TO

134 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - THEIR POINT OF VIEW - LATE AFTERNOON 134

Camera tilts up showing the endlessly high scaffolding of a giant roller coaster. Way at the top, a car is pitching down a steep incline. People are screaming.

135 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATE AFTERNOON - BACK TO GROUP 135

There is the slightest pause.

LESLIE

Sure!

STANLEY

Absolutely!

MICHAEL

No.

STANLEY

(overruling
him,
grabbing
Michael's
elbow)

Yes!

GRACE

Not me. I have a problem with heights. You all have fun.

ELLIOT

Gretchen?

CONTINUED

135 CONTINUED

135

GRETCHEN

(shaking
her
head)

I have a problem with falling.

ELLIOT

(assuming
Michael is
in)

Four!

Elliot goes to the window and buys the tickets.

MICHAEL

(quietly,
to Stanley)

I'm not getting on that thing.

STANLEY

You want him in our corner? You
wanna see what we write up there on
the screen?

Michael eyes the roller coaster warily.

STANLEY

Michael, be free, be wild. A little
ride on a children's toy. It's
nothing. Come on.

Elliot has the tickets and ushers them to the entrance.

136 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

136

ELLIOT

Let's go, chums.

They get into an empty car. For Grace's benefit, Elliot
seats himself next to Stanley. Michael is beside Leslie.
Grace watches Elliot like a hawk. Elliot smiles and waves
as the car takes off.

GRETCHEN

How long are you staying?

GRACE

I have to be back in London on
Tuesday.

CONTINUED

136 CONTINUED

136

GRETCHEN

That's not very long.

GRACE

No, it isn't. So, tell me about
yourself. How long have you known
Elliot?

CUT TO

137 EXT. ROLLER COASTER CAR - DAY

137

The car climbs slowly to the top. Camera is mounted on
front of car. Behind our group, we can see the Earth
getting farther and farther away. Elliot leans forward and
taps Michael on the shoulder.

ELLIOT

Michael, if I may, I'd like to have
a chat with Leslie.

MICHAEL

(distracted,
scared)

Go ahead.

ELLIOT

Trade seats with me.

MICHAEL

Trade seats? We're a mile off the
ground.

ELLIOT

(smiling)

I have to talk with Leslie.

MICHAEL

Talk. I'm not moving.

Elliot stands up and starts climbing into Michael's part of
the car.

MICHAEL

Elliot! You want to get killed?

Elliot helps Michael to his feet -- actually, he lifts him
over the seat.

ELLIOT

Come on, that's a good boy.

CONTINUED

137

CONTINUED

137

ELLIOT (Cont'd)

(as they struggle)

Michael, we'd better not be standing
when we get to the top. It could be
dangerous.

Michael looks up at the approaching top of the ascent, then
he hastily scrambles to the seat next to Stanley. Elliot
settles next to Leslie.

ELLIOT

My God, but you smell delicious.

LESLIE

Elliot, I think your wife suspects
something.

ELLIOT

(laughing)

No, no, no, no. Not for a second.
(leaning in,
his nose near
her neck)
Delicious.

He nuzzles her neck. She smiles.

ELLIOT

Give me those lips.

He leans toward her to kiss her just as the car starts its
downward plunge. She opens her mouth in a blood curdling
scream.

ELLIOT

Darling, close your mouth. Just for
a moment. Leslie, close your mouth.

She keeps screaming like a train whistle, so he kisses her
neck. The danger excites him. Michael is rigid with
fear. Stanley has gone wild.

STANLEY

I hate this! I hate it!

As the car goes around a curve, Stanley grabs Michael by
the head. Michael fights him off.

CUT TO

138

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT - LONG SHOT

138

Elliot, Grace, Leslie, Stanley, Michael and Gretchen are
dancing down the deserted street with their arms locked,
stepping high and chanting.

CONTINUED

138

CONTINUED

138

EVERYONE

Knees up, knees up....

Exhausted, they stop to catch their breath.

MICHAEL

I don't think I get the...point of this.

ELLIOT

When I was a boy during the war... everyone did it. One night, I was coming home from an air raid shelter with my family and we were so bloody glad to be alive, we locked arms and started doing 'knees up.' And suddenly -- I swear to God -- around the corner walked Winston Churchill. We stopped dead in our tracks. I mean, God, there was Winston Churchill. He looked at us -- and you know what he said?
(locking arms)
'Knees up, knees up.'

Picking up the chant, they all dance again down the street.

CUT TO

139

INT.. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

139

Stanley and Michael are opening the door to Stanley's room. Michael, exhausted, leans against the wall and sighs.

STANLEY

What are you so down about? He loves it! He just wants a few changes.

MICHAEL

Let's work for a couple of hours, and then I gotta get some sleep.

At the end of the hall, Faith opens her door. She is wearing a peignoir. She stands in the doorway knowing the light from her room is catching her in a special way.

FAITH

Michael -- could I see you for a few minutes...it's about tomorrow's scene.

CONTINUED

139 CONTINUED

139

It may or may not be about tomorrow's scene.

MICHAEL

(to Stanley)

Take a nap. I'll be back.

Stanley nods knowingly and goes into his room. Michael, weary to his bones, trudges down the hall to Faith.

DISSOLVE TO

140 EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAY

140

Elliot/Tarleton rides into the clearing and sees Faith/Mary. His hand is bandaged. He pulls his horse up and dismounts -- but as Elliot goes to her, the horse spooks. Elliot pulls Faith out of the way of the horse.

BO

Let's go again.

CLAIRE

Una mas.

BO

Can somebody give that horse a pill?

Michael is standing near Bo.

MICHAEL

I hate this scene.

BO

I hate it more than you.

MICHAEL

It never happened. Why don't you cut it?

BO

Because then I won't have an ending and the audience won't know when to go home.

Michael stews. Claire comes over to Bo.

CLAIRE

Can you give me a decision while they reload the horse?

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED

140

BO

What?

CLAIRE

We had twelve fencers for the battle scene. Eight just fell out. Is four enough?

BO

No, we need fencers.

MICHAEL

(interrupting)

Listen, you're ignoring the facts. Yes, okay, she did ride all night to tend the wounded -- but it wasn't at this battle.

BO

(to Michael)

Hold it a minute.

(to Claire)

What about the college fencing club?

CLAIRE

Summertime. They're at the beach.

MICHAEL

And on the way home, she did not meet Tarleton in the woods.

BO

How do you know? Were you behind a tree or something? Michael, do you want to really help? Get fitted for a uniform.

MICHAEL

A uniform?

BO

I need people who can fence. You want to contribute to the accuracy of the film? Here's your chance. Just don't keep hocking me about these damn nit-picking details.

MICHAEL

Keeping a woman from sleeping with the enemy is not nit-picking.

CONTINUED

- 140 CONTINUED - 2 140
- Bo waves him off and turns to Claire. Disgusted, Michael walks to the side of the set where he watches Elliot and Faith from behind their backs.
- 141 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - MICHAEL'S POINT OF VIEW - ELLIOT AND FAITH - TIGHT SHOT 141
- ELLIOT
(to Faith)
Don't worry, we'll get it. I have never gone more than forty-seven takes.
- He smiles charmingly. Camera tilts down their backs and catches his hand as he reassuringly pats Faith on her fanny. His hand lingers there.
- CUT TO
- 142 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - TIGHT SHOT - MICHAEL 142
- He's watching Elliot's hand.
- 143 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - BACK TO ELLIOT'S HAND 143
- It doesn't move. In fact, it gets a little more involved. Faith has clearly made no effort to remove the hand. In fact, she puts her hand on his behind.
- 144 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - BACK TO MICHAEL 144
- Michael is steaming mad.
- 145 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - WIDE SHOT - CLAIRE 145
- CLAIRE
Okay, that's lunch. Back in an hour. This'll be the first shot.
- The crowd heads for the lunch wagon. Faith turns away from Elliot and sees that Michael has been standing behind them. Neither she nor Michael mentions what he has probably seen. She goes to the sound assistant and lifts her skirt.
- FAITH
Ray, you want to disconnect me?

CONTINUED

145

CONTINUED

145

He kneels and works on a radio transmitter strapped to her leg. Michael sees Elliot take a long, approving glance at Faith's thigh. Angrily, Michael turns and walks off. Elliot, who does not realize Michael is angry, calls to him.

ELLIOT

Michael, my boy. How about a short one before lunch?

Elliot tosses Michael a sword. Sword in hand, Michael charges like a maniac at Elliot, who is not too sure what's going on. As Michael gets to him, Elliot simply steps aside and Michael plunges into a bush.

ELLIOT

What a peculiar lunge.

When Michael climbs out of the bush, he's holding a broken sword. He tosses it away angrily.

MICHAEL

Wait right there.

146

EXT. CLEARING WOODS - DAY

146

Michael goes to the prop truck and gets another sword. Faith steps in front of him.

FAITH

I think if you have a complaint, you ought to take it up with me.

MICHAEL

Exactly how far do you take being Mary Slocumb?

FAITH

How far do you take being a historian?

MICHAEL

I would stop short of sleeping with George III.

(beat)

How could you have anything to do with him?

CONTINUED

146 CONTINUED

146

FAITH

Because he's a witty, charming man,
and because it helps our scenes.

MICHAEL

...Helps your scenes?

FAITH

When I look in his eye now, there's
someone there. Do you know how it
feels to act with someone who has
the emotional depth of an eggplant?

MICHAEL

(at a loss
for
words)

You're not at all like her.

FAITH

(astonished)

God, where've you been for ten weeks?

She turns and walks away.

CUT TO

147 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - TIGHT SHOT - CLAPBOARD 147

It reads: "Take 48." Pull back to reveal:

148 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 148

The scene with Elliot and Faith is repeated -- and played
out to conclusion.

149 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 149

Michael is watching from the sidelines -- this time aware
of all the elements that go into creating the illusion.

150 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 150

The intense concentration of the camera crew as they hit
their marks precisely.

151 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 151

the sound boom man straining to catch every word.

- 152 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 152
The recordist monitoring the dials.
- 153 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 153
The needles jumping in time with the sound on the recording machine.
- 154 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 154
The crane lowering its arm, and a steadycam operator stepping off and moving with the actors.
- 155 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 155
The quiet choreography of the crew, as they manipulate the lights, the camera, the cables and the sound equipment during the scene in careful synchrony with the scene unfolding a few feet away from them as though they weren't there.
- 156 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 156
Michael sees all of this as if for the first time.
- 157 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 157
The scene ends with a big embrace between Faith and Elliot. We see the steadycam operator circle them 360 degrees around and around.

BO

Cut! Print. Okay, here's the coverage. Head and shoulders on her -- and a complementary on him. Low -- her point of view....

As Bo sets up the next shot, Michael watches, still absorbed in these techniques that he has never before noticed. A wardrobe person comes up behind Michael and starts helping him into the uniform of a Continental officer. Measurements are taken for shortening his sleeve, drawing in the waist. He slowly becomes aware of them as they push and pull at his costume.

CUT TO

- 158 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 158
Cannon are being pulled into place, horses are trotting by. Dozens of extras dressed as British and Continental

CONTINUED

158 CONTINUED

158

soldiers are getting their equipment for the battle scene.
Michael is being helped into his uniform.

CLAIRE

Can we have the American soldiers
for rehearsal, please?

The soldiers file out onto the field. Michael comes out,
throwing on his jacket.

BO

All right. Listen carefully, and
don't get killed. The British are
over there.

159 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

159

He points off to the left.

160 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

160

BO

The Americans come from that house
over there.

161 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

161

He points to the right.

162 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

162

BO

They walk with their guns like this.

He demonstrates with a rifle.

BO

Walking, walking, walking. You get
here -- bang. You shoot. Then we
do the sight gag. The British
cannons start shooting. The first
explosion is there.

163 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

163

He points to a Special Effects Man who is standing in the
field by an explosion pot.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(throwing up his
arms and
indicating
the explosion)

Boom.

164 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

164

BO

This makes you run back to the house. Then there's another explosion right in front of you.

165 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

165

SECOND SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(throwing up his arms)

Boom.

166 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

166

BO

You run back to the British.

167 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

167

FIRST SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(again with the arms)

Boom.

168 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

168

BO

You run back to the house again. Back and forth. Okay? If all goes well, this will be relatively hilarious.

The Continentals hate the sound of this. They start to mutter. Michael raises his hand.

BO

You have a question, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yeah, what the hell are you trying to do here?

BO

I'm trying to make a movie here, Michael.

MICHAEL

In the Battle of Cowpens, the Americans were not running around the field looking hilarious. They charged up there and they took the British cannons. And what the hell is that house doing there? This was a big empty pasture.

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED

168

BO

The set and dressing are here for artistic reasons. And I do not have time to argue about this.

MICHAEL

Do you realize there are leaves on the trees?

BO

Yes. So what?

MICHAEL

This took place in January. Winter.

The Continentals, muttering their agreement at first, are now calling out in support of Michael. "Yeah!"... "That's right, damn it!" Stuntmen, playing British soldiers, look at the Continentals contemptuously.

HANK

Hey, why don't you guys can it.

JESSE

You just fall down when we go 'bang.'

The Continentals are clearly angered by this. They mutter a few heated replies.

BO

What do you want us to do? Go around the field taking the leaves off the trees?

MICHAEL

(impatiently)

I want you to make at least one thing in this movie historically accurate. The Americans charged the cannons. That's not going to change just because some jackass is making stupid movie.

BO

Screw historical accuracy, okay? This day is costing us two hundred thousand dollars. I am not shelling out twenty dollars a second just to hear myself called a jackass.

Michael reaches into his pants for money.

MICHAEL

Here's fifty. You're also an asshole.

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED - 2

168

BO

Look -- one:(holds up
one finger)Defy authority. Two:(holds up
two fingers)Destroy property. Three:(holds up
three
fingers)

Take people's clothes off. That's
what kids want to see. They don't
care if the hats are on wrong, or
the buttons are on the wrong sleeve.
They want to have fun. Now get over
to that house or get the hell off
this set.

Michael stares at him for a moment with a malevolent gaze
and moves off.

CUT TO

169

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD - DAY
(A FEW MINUTES LATER)

169

In costume, Michael angrily gets on his motorcycle and
rides up the hill to the house.

CUT TO

170

INT. BATTLE HOUSE - DAY

170

It is not a real house, just four facades held together by
supports. Michael and the Continentals militia are sitting
on the ground. Everyone is sullen and angry.

HANK

I'll tell you, Mike. We have
re-enacted this battle every year
for fifteen years and we don't run
from the cannons. We charge the
cannons.

JESSE

My little boy's going to see this
movie. I don't want him to see me
running around like a goddamn
chicken.

CONTINUED

170

CONTINUED

FLOYD

If we're not gonna charge the cannons, I don't even want to go out there.

(angrily)

I practiced all summer with this damn thing!

Floyd flings his spontoon at the wall, where it sticks, point first.

HANK

I don't know. I don't want to make a fuss. What do you think we ought to do, Mike?

MICHAEL

(after a beat,
quietly)

What do you say we charge the cannons?

Everybody's face begins to light up. Michael kneels and starts drawing in the dirt.

MICHAEL

We're here and the British are here.

Michael's hand has touched a couple of wires.

MICHAEL

What are these wires?

HANK

They run out to the explosives.

MICHAEL

Is anybody here good with electrical things?

JESSE

I'm a licensed electrician.

MICHAEL

Come with me.

They head for the door. Michael chuckles deliciously. He's really getting off on this.

CUT TO

171

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

171

Claire calls out to six different cameras placed around the field. They wave in acknowledgment.

CONTINUED

171 CONTINUED

171

CLAIRE

Camera one are you ready? Camera
two? Camera three?

CUT TO

172 INT. COLONIAL HOUSE - DAY

172

As we hear Claire calling out to the cameras, we see the Continentals nervously waiting for the scene to begin. Michael goes from soldier to soldier like Robert Ryan in a World War II movie. He clasps the hand of each of them and gives them a reassuring look.

MICHAEL

This is it, men. Let's go.

They move out.

CUT TO

173 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

173

CLAIRE

Just so there are no mistakes: When the first cannon goes off, Special Effects hits explosion number one -- and this part of the field goes up.

CUT TO

174 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

174

with plunger switch. He waves to show he understands.

CUT TO

175 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

175

CLAIRE

All right, we're rolling.

BO

Action!

176 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

176

Michael and the Continentals, move resolutely toward the British. The British raise their rifles and fire. The Americans fire back.

MICHAEL

Nobody fall down.

CONTINUED

176 CONTINUED

176

JESSE

I'm supposed to get shot.

MICHAEL

Screw 'em. If you don't feel dead,
don't fall down.

177 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

177

The cannons are moved into place on the hill. Bo raises his hand to signal the Special Effects Man.

178 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

178

MICHAEL

Go get 'em!

Michael and the Continentals charge up the hill. Floyd sticks the tip of his spontoon in the ground and catapults himself over the cannon into the surprised faces of the stuntmen. Michael and the Continentals grab the stuntmen by their rifles and sleeves and roll some of them down the hill. The stuntmen are confused. This isn't supposed to be happening. Some of them glance off toward the director, looking for some hint of what to do. The director is just staring open-mouthed at the scene. Some stuntmen resist. There is grappling and wrestling. Elliot rides up on his horse and stops by a cannon. Michael pushes the horse away.

MICHAEL

Move! You're in the way.

ELLIOT

Stop that. This is a nervous animal.

MICHAEL

Get out of the way, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Will you stop that? You're pushing
me out of the shot.

MICHAEL

Out!

Michael winds up and gives the horse a tremendous wallop on the behind with the flat of his sword. There's no controlling the already jumpy animal and the horse takes off. Elliot nearly slides off the saddle. As the horse races across the field, Elliot struggles to regain his seat.

CONTINUED

178 CONTINUED

178

ELLIOT

(to the horse)

No, boy, no! Easy, boy. Oh, God.
Oh, shit.

Michael, on the top of the hill, waves his sword above his head triumphantly, and holds up his index finger toward Bo.

179 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - BO

179

looks a little stunned.

180 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

180

Michael and the Continentals get the cannon in place and finish loading it. They light the fuse. The cannon goes off.

CUT TO

181 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

181

Hearing his cue, he pushes the plunger.

CUT TO

182 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

182

Instead of an explosive going off in the field, the entire house blows up.

183 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

183

Michael looks at Bo and holds up two fingers. Bo is beginning to get the idea.

184 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

184

The Continentals cheer and wave their arms.

MICHAEL

Sshh. Quiet. Ten-hut.

They come to attention.

MICHAEL

Present arms.

CONTINUED

184 CONTINUED

184

The men rip off all their clothes and throw them in the air. From the front, we only see them from the waist up -- but they are stark naked. They jump around and hoot, displaying themselves for the camera. Michael proudly looks at Bo and holds up three fingers.

CUT TO

185 EXT. MAIN STREET - SAYEVILLE - DAY

185

A chartered bus, empty, comes down the street. It passes buildings that are being stripped of their Colonial trappings -- as they're repainted and restored to their original Sayeville look. It passes a trailer where a wardrobe mistress is holding a huge armload of 18th Century dresses and gowns as townspeople are lined up, returning their costumes.

186 EXT. HOTEL - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

186

The bus pulls up in front of the hotel, where a large group of movie people are waiting with their luggage. Behind them the building is being returned to its normal look by workmen.

Locals and movie people are hugging. We hear phrases like: "Be sure to write, okay?" -- "Are you coming back for the opening? Will I ever see you again?" Camera finally lands on Stanley and Michael.

STANLEY

Not a bad time. A pleasant little interlude, right? A diversion -- a dance -- a gossamer dream to lighten your cares. Look at the way I use language now -- look at how much I've learned from you.

He gives Michael a big hug. Michael kisses his head.

STANLEY

(to Bo)

Look at this, he kisses now!

Michael looks at Bo.

MICHAEL

Listen, Bo. I'm sorry if I ruined things for you yesterday.

CONTINUED

186

CONTINUED

186

BO

The battle scene? I shot it with
'six cameras. I can put it together
any way I want. It's gonna be
terrific.

He smiles at Michael's chagrin and gets into the bus.
Michael turns and sees Faith. She shakes Michael's hand.
Their words are casual, but underneath there's tenderness.

FAITH

So long. It was very nice meeting
you.

MICHAEL

It was very nice meeting you, too.

FAITH

(nodding
toward the
movie people)
I hope we didn't wreck your summer.

MICHAEL

You didn't. You really didn't.

FAITH

'Bye, Michael.

She gives him a tender kiss. Gretchen watches this. Faith
gets on the bus. Elliot comes over to Michael.

ELLIOT

Good-bye, old cock. It's been grand.

They start to shake hands. Gretchen steps in.

GRETCHEN

'Bye, Elliot. It has been grand.
Really.

Gretchen throws her arms around Elliot and gives him a big
kiss. It goes on for some time. And then a little longer.
Michael just stands there and waits. Finally, Elliot gets
on the bus. Gretchen recovers from the kiss -- brushing
back her hair, pulling down her jacket. She waves as the
bus moves out. People are hanging out of the windows,
waving, touching hands and throwing flowers as the bus goes
down the street.

Gretchen and Michael look at each other.

MICHAEL

You want to walk a little?

GRETCHEN

Sure.

187 EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

187

Michael doesn't talk about the kiss. He just sort of grins.

GRETCHEN

How's your mom?

MICHAEL

Still hanging on. Still a fruitcake.

GRETCHEN

That doesn't sound too bad. Is it getting you down?

MICHAEL

Nah. She sees things her way, I see them mine. It's kind of stimulating.

GRETCHEN

You sure about that?

MICHAEL

I'm not so sure about anything anymore.

GRETCHEN

That sounds even better.

MICHAEL

Was that for real with him? That kiss?

GRETCHEN

Was that for real with you and her?

MICHAEL

Not for me it wasn't. No.

GRETCHEN

(smiling
enigmatically)

Me neither.

MICHAEL

Listen...How do you feel about us?

GRETCHEN

Well, I've been thinking about that.

MICHAEL

If you wanted to try again -- I think maybe I could be a little less insistent on certain things.

GRETCHEN

I probably could, too.

CONTINUED

187

CONTINUED

187

MICHAEL

I guess I don't really have to live
at your place.

GRETCHEN

Well, it does seem kind of silly not
to let you keep a shirt there. And
maybe a robe. It's a real turn off
when you wear mine.

MICHAEL

You wouldn't mind if I stayed over
once in a while?

GRETCHEN

Maybe once a week.

MICHAEL

How about the whole weekend? I mean
-- as long as I'm there.

GRETCHEN

Saturday and Sunday?

MICHAEL

And Friday. Sort of get a jump on
Saturday. I wouldn't tell you how
to cook.

GRETCHEN

Maybe one weekend a month.

MICHAEL

Two weekends a month and a full week
on school holidays. And I'll keep a
pair of jeans there and a sweat
shirt.

She stops and glances over his shoulder.

GRETCHEN

Maybe we should just go the whole way.

MICHAEL

(not
understanding)
Like what?

GRETCHEN

Sort of a trial marriage.

188

EXT. MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

188

He looks behind him. They are in front of the courthouse.

CONTINUED

188 CONTINUED

188

MICHAEL

You mean with a license and everything?

GRETCHEN

If we don't like it after a year, we cancel it. You realize what I'm offering you? That's practically the same as living together.

MICHAEL

A year?

GRETCHEN

My God, I'm agreeing to a divorce and I'm not even married yet.

MICHAEL

A year is a long time.

GRETCHEN

There would be a certain amount of sewing -- but not in bed.

MICHAEL

Six months.

GRETCHEN

Nine.

MICHAEL

Seven. And I won't tell you how to run your career.

GRETCHEN

Eight. With an option for four more. I can't believe I'm saying this.

She runs up the stairs and opens the courthouse door.

GRETCHEN

This offer expires in thirty seconds.

(beat)

I'll take a chance if you will.

Michael hesitates only a moment, then bounds up the stairs into her outstretched arms.

Camera (Steadicam) circles their embrace 360 degrees around and around.

DISSOLVE TO

189

EXT. MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE - DAY - THE SAME SHOT OF FAITH AND ELLIOT

189

as Mary Slocumb and Tarleton embrace and we circle them around and around. The credits of the film within the film start to roll.

CUT TO

- 190 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT - FIREWORKS IN THE NIGHT SKY 190
Camera arms down to reveal:
- 191 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - MAIN STREET - SAYEVILLE - NIGHT 191
The doors bang open and people in evening dress pour from the theater onto the street to the cheers of townspeople. There are TV news crews to interview the celebrities as they leave the theater.
Roll closing credits under the following:
- 192 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 192
-- Leslie and Frank come out arm in arm. She loves her performance in the film. She signs an autograph and poses for photographs.
- 193 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 193
-- Bo comes out with Faith. They wave to the crowd. Their body language reveals a relationship that is not platonic.
- 194 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 194
-- Elliot comes out arm in arm with his wife, Grace.
- 195 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 195
-- Michael comes out with Gretchen. As she moves past the camera, we can see that she's nine months pregnant. They walk over to a TV crew.
- 196 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 196
-- Cecelia is pushed out of the theater in a wheelchair by Stanley. As they pass Michael, she gives him the "Okay" sign.
- 197 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 197
-- A TV Reporter questions Michael:
- REPORTER
Professor Burgess, what did you think
of the movie?

CONTINUED

197 CONTINUED

197

MICHAEL

(almost
surprised at
his own
reaction)
I liked it. It's funny.

REPORTER

How accurate is it? Did all those
things really happen?

MICHAEL

Well, what really happened was....

He goes on talking, but his voice is blotted out by the
fireworks we can see exploding behind him.

REPORTER

It's kind of noisy.

MICHAEL

Mnn.

REPORTER

I'll ask you that again.

(to her crew)

We rolling?

(to Michael)

Does this movie show things the way
they really were?

MICHAEL

Well, the real story was a little....

Again, the fireworks blank out his voice.

REPORTER

(giving up)

Well, thank you, Doctor Burgess.

And good luck with the movie.

He looks at Gretchen and shrugs, letting it go.

FREEZE FRAME

198 TITLE

198

-- on Michael's shrug -- the closing line of the credits
roll onto the screen: "The characters and events in this
film are wholly fictitious. Any resemblance to persons
living or dead is purely coincidental."

FADE OUT

THE END

131 CONTINUED

131

GRACE

(looking at
the two women
with
curiosity)

No, no. I'd love to go for a
drive. I hear there are some
incredible sights around here.

ELLIOT

Wonderful! This is Grace, my
adoring wife.

(waving a hand
at the group)

They all have names, but we'll work
on that in the car.

Elliot puts Grace's bags in the trunk of the convertible.

ELLIOT

We are going to have the best time.
We are going to be silly and giddy.
And we are going to pee in our pants
with laughter three times before
this day is over. Each and every
one of us.

As they all get into the car, Elliot is the only one who
shows any signs of happiness. Grace is quietly skeptical
-- and the other faces show dread, panic and desperation.
The car pulls out.

CUT TO

132 INT./EXT. ELLIOT'S CAR - DAY

132

Elliot is driving. All six people are singing "London's
Burning" (A Round). Only Elliot seems to be enjoying it.
At one point in the song, everyone but Elliot stops singing
-- they are looking straight ahead in horrified fascination.
Elliot swerves the car as the truck they were about to hit
passes them. Relieved, they slowly start singing again.

CUT TO

133 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATER AFTERNOON - MIDWAY

133

Elliot is walking arm and arm with Grace. Stanley is with
Leslie and Michael is with Gretchen.

CONTINUED

133 CONTINUED

133

ELLIOT

I was so bored on a picture in Indonesia, I rented a balloon and tried to escape. They chased after me with automobiles, helicopters -- it was wonderful.

He goes up to a ticket booth.

ELLIOT

How many for this? Everyone?

They all look above them.

CUT TO

134 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - THEIR POINT OF VIEW - LATE AFTERNOON 134

Camera tilts up showing the endlessly high scaffolding of a giant roller coaster. Way at the top, a car is pitching down a steep incline. People are screaming.

135 EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATE AFTERNOON - BACK TO GROUP 135

There is the slightest pause.

LESLIE

Sure!

STANLEY

Absolutely!

MICHAEL

No.

STANLEY

(overruling
him,
grabbing
Michael's
elbow)

Yes!

GRACE

Not me. I have a problem with heights. You all have fun.

ELLIOT

Gretchen?

CONTINUED

135

CONTINUED

135

GRETCHEN

(shaking
her
head)

I have a problem with falling.

ELLIOT

(assuming
Michael is
in)

Four!

Elliot goes to the window and buys the tickets.

MICHAEL

(quietly,
to Stanley)

I'm not getting on that thing.

STANLEY

You want him in our corner? You
wanna see what we write up there on
the screen?

Michael eyes the roller coaster warily.

STANLEY

Michael, be free, be wild. A little
ride on a children's toy. It's
nothing. Come on.

Elliot has the tickets and ushers them to the entrance.

136

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

136

ELLIOT

Let's go, chums.

They get into an empty car. For Grace's benefit, Elliot
seats himself next to Stanley. Michael is beside Leslie.
Grace watches Elliot like a hawk. Elliot smiles and waves
as the car takes off.

GRETCHEN

How long are you staying?

GRACE

I have to be back in London on
Tuesday.

CONTINUED

136 CONTINUED

136

GRETCHEN

That's not very long.

GRACE

No, it isn't. So, tell me about
yourself. How long have you known
Elliot?

CUT TO

137 EXT. ROLLER COASTER CAR - DAY

137

The car climbs slowly to the top. Camera is mounted on
front of car. Behind our group, we can see the Earth
getting farther and farther away. Elliot leans forward and
taps Michael on the shoulder.

ELLIOT

Michael, if I may, I'd like to have
a chat with Leslie.

MICHAEL

(distracted,
scared)

Go ahead.

ELLIOT

Trade seats with me.

MICHAEL

Trade seats? We're a mile off the
ground.

ELLIOT

(smiling)

I have to talk with Leslie.

MICHAEL

Talk. I'm not moving.

Elliot stands up and starts climbing into Michael's part of
the car.

MICHAEL

Elliot! You want to get killed?

Elliot helps Michael to his feet -- actually, he lifts him
over the seat.

ELLIOT

Come on, that's a good boy.

CONTINUED

137

CONTINUED

137

ELLIOT (Cont'd)

(as they struggle)

Michael, we'd better not be standing
when we get to the top. It could be
dangerous.

Michael looks up at the approaching top of the ascent, then
he hastily scrambles to the seat next to Stanley. Elliot
settles next to Leslie.

ELLIOT

My God, but you smell delicious.

LESLIE

Elliot, I think your wife suspects
something.

ELLIOT

(laughing)

No, no, no, no. Not for a second.

(leaning in,
his nose near
her neck)

Delicious.

He nuzzles her neck. She smiles.

ELLIOT

Give me those lips.

He leans toward her to kiss her just as the car starts its
downward plunge. She opens her mouth in a blood curdling
scream.

ELLIOT

Darling, close your mouth. Just for
a moment. Leslie, close your mouth.

She keeps screaming like a train whistle, so he kisses her
neck. The danger excites him. Michael is rigid with
fear. Stanley has gone wild.

STANLEY

I hate this! I hate it!

As the car goes around a curve, Stanley grabs Michael by
the head. Michael fights him off.

CUT TO

138

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT - LONG SHOT

138

Elliot, Grace, Leslie, Stanley, Michael and Gretchen are
dancing down the deserted street with their arms locked,
stepping high and chanting.

CONTINUED

138 CONTINUED

138

EVERYONE

Knees up, knees up....

Exhausted, they stop to catch their breath.

MICHAEL

I don't think I get the...point of this.

ELLIOT

When I was a boy during the war...
everyone did it. One night, I was
coming home from an air raid shelter
with my family and we were so bloody
glad to be alive, we locked arms and
started doing 'knees up.' And
suddenly -- I swear to God -- around
the corner walked Winston Churchill.
We stopped dead in our tracks. I
mean, God, there was Winston
Churchill. He looked at us -- and
you know what he said?
(locking arms)
'Knees up, knees up.'

Picking up the chant, they all dance again down the street.

CUT TO

139 INT., HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

139

Stanley and Michael are opening the door to Stanley's
room. Michael, exhausted, leans against the wall and sighs.

STANLEY

What are you so down about? He
loves it! He just wants a few
changes.

MICHAEL

Let's work for a couple of hours,
and then I gotta get some sleep.

At the end of the hall, Faith opens her door. She is
wearing a peignoir. She stands in the doorway knowing the
light from her room is catching her in a special way.

FAITH

Michael -- could I see you for a few
minutes...it's about tomorrow's
scene.

CONTINUED

139 CONTINUED

139

It may or may not be about tomorrow's scene.

MICHAEL

(to Stanley)

Take a nap. I'll be back.

Stanley nods knowingly and goes into his room. Michael, weary to his bones, trudges down the hall to Faith.

DISSOLVE TO

140 EXT. CLEARING IN THE WOODS - DAY

140

Elliot/Tarleton rides into the clearing and sees Faith/Mary. His hand is bandaged. He pulls his horse up and dismounts -- but as Elliot goes to her, the horse spooks. Elliot pulls Faith out of the way of the horse.

BO

Let's go again.

CLAIRE

Una mas.

BO

Can somebody give that horse a pill?

Michael is standing near Bo.

MICHAEL

I hate this scene.

BO

I hate it more than you.

MICHAEL

It never happened. Why don't you cut it?

BO

Because then I won't have an ending and the audience won't know when to go home.

Michael stews. Claire comes over to Bo.

CLAIRE

Can you give me a decision while they reload the horse?

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED

140

BO

What?

CLAIRE

We had twelve fencers for the battle scene. Eight just fell out. Is four enough?

BO

No, we need fencers.

MICHAEL

(interrupting)

Listen, you're ignoring the facts. Yes, okay, she did ride all night to tend the wounded -- but it wasn't at this battle.

BO

(to Michael)

Hold it a minute.

(to Claire)

What about the college fencing club?

CLAIRE

Summertime. They're at the beach.

MICHAEL

And on the way home, she did not meet Tarleton in the woods.

BO

How do you know? Were you behind a tree or something? Michael, do you want to really help? Get fitted for a uniform.

MICHAEL

A uniform?

BO

I need people who can fence. You want to contribute to the accuracy of the film? Here's your chance. Just don't keep hocking me about these damn nit-picking details.

MICHAEL

Keeping a woman from sleeping with the enemy is not nit-picking.

CONTINUED

140 CONTINUED - 2 140

Bo waves him off and turns to Claire. Disgusted, Michael walks to the side of the set where he watches Elliot and Faith from behind their backs.

141 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - MICHAEL'S POINT OF VIEW - ELLIOT AND FAITH - TIGHT SHOT 141

ELLIOT

(to Faith)

Don't worry, we'll get it. I have never gone more than forty-seven takes.

He smiles charmingly. Camera tilts down their backs and catches his hand as he reassuringly pats Faith on her fanny. His hand lingers there.

CUT TO

142 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - TIGHT SHOT - MICHAEL 142

He's watching Elliot's hand.

143 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - BACK TO ELLIOT'S HAND 143

It doesn't move. In fact, it gets a little more involved. Faith has clearly made no effort to remove the hand. In fact, she puts her hand on his behind.

144 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - BACK TO MICHAEL 144

Michael is steaming mad.

145 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY - WIDE SHOT - CLAIRE 145

CLAIRE

Okay, that's lunch. Back in an hour. This'll be the first shot.

The crowd heads for the lunch wagon. Faith turns away from Elliot and sees that Michael has been standing behind them. Neither she nor Michael mentions what he has probably seen. She goes to the sound assistant and lifts her skirt.

FAITH

Ray, you want to disconnect me?

CONTINUED

145 CONTINUED

145

He kneels and works on a radio transmitter strapped to her leg. Michael sees Elliot take a long, approving glance at Faith's thigh. Angrily, Michael turns and walks off. Elliot, who does not realize Michael is angry, calls to him.

ELLIOT

Michael, my boy. How about a short one before lunch?

Elliot tosses Michael a sword. Sword in hand, Michael charges like a maniac at Elliot, who is not too sure what's going on. As Michael gets to him, Elliot simply steps aside and Michael plunges into a bush.

ELLIOT

What a peculiar lunge.

When Michael climbs out of the bush, he's holding a broken sword. He tosses it away angrily.

MICHAEL

Wait right there.

146 EXT. CLEARING WOODS - DAY

146

Michael goes to the prop truck and gets another sword. Faith steps in front of him.

FAITH

I think if you have a complaint, you ought to take it up with me.

MICHAEL

Exactly how far do you take being Mary Slocumb?

FAITH

How far do you take being a historian?

MICHAEL

I would stop short of sleeping with George III.

(beat)

How could you have anything to do with him?

CONTINUED

146 CONTINUED

146

FAITH

Because he's a witty, charming man,
and because it helps our scenes.

MICHAEL

...Helps your scenes?

FAITH

When I look in his eye now, there's
someone there. Do you know how it
feels to act with someone who has
the emotional depth of an eggplant?

MICHAEL

(at a loss
for
words)

You're not at all like her.

FAITH

(astonished)

God, where've you been for ten weeks?

She turns and walks away.

CUT TO

147 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - TIGHT SHOT - CLAPBOARD 147

It reads: "Take 48." Pull back to reveal:

148 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 148

The scene with Elliot and Faith is repeated -- and played
out to conclusion.

149 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 149

Michael is watching from the sidelines -- this time aware
of all the elements that go into creating the illusion.

150 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 150

The intense concentration of the camera crew as they hit
their marks precisely.

151 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 151

the sound boom man straining to catch every word.

- 152 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 152
The recordist monitoring the dials.
- 153 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 153
The needles jumping in time with the sound on the recording machine.
- 154 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 154
The crane lowering its arm, and a steadycam operator stepping off and moving with the actors.
- 155 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 155
The quiet choreography of the crew, as they manipulate the lights, the camera, the cables and the sound equipment during the scene in careful synchrony with the scene unfolding a few feet away from them as though they weren't there.
- 156 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 156
Michael sees all of this as if for the first time.
- 157 EXT. CLEARING IN WOODS - DAY 157
The scene ends with a big embrace between Faith and Elliot. We see the steadycam operator circle them 360 degrees around and around.

BO

Cut! Print. Okay, here's the coverage. Head and shoulders on her -- and a complementary on him. Low -- her point of view....

As Bo sets up the next shot, Michael watches, still absorbed in these techniques that he has never before noticed. A wardrobe person comes up behind Michael and starts helping him into the uniform of a Continental officer. Measurements are taken for shortening his sleeve, drawing in the waist. He slowly becomes aware of them as they push and pull at his costume.

CUT TO

- 158 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 158
Cannon are being pulled into place, horses are trotting by. Dozens of extras dressed as British and Continental

CONTINUED

158 CONTINUED

158

soldiers are getting their equipment for the battle scene.
Michael is being helped into his uniform.

CLAIRE

Can we have the American soldiers
for rehearsal, please?

The soldiers file out onto the field. Michael comes out,
throwing on his jacket.

BO

All right. Listen carefully, and
don't get killed. The British are
over there.

159 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

159

He points off to the left.

160 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

160

BO

The Americans come from that house
over there.

161 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

161

He points to the right.

162 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

162

BO

They walk with their guns like this.

He demonstrates with a rifle.

BO

Walking, walking, walking. You get
here -- bang. You shoot. Then we
do the sight gag. The British
cannons start shooting. The first
explosion is there.

163 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

163

He points to a Special Effects Man who is standing in the
field by an explosion pot.

SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(throwing up his
arms and
indicating
the explosion)

Boom.

164 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

164

BO

This makes you run back to the house. Then there's another explosion right in front of you.

165 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

165

SECOND SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(throwing up his arms)

Boom.

166 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

166

BO

You run back to the British.

167 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

167

FIRST SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

(again with the arms)

Boom.

168 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

168

BO

You run back to the house again. Back and forth. Okay? If all goes well, this will be relatively hilarious.

The Continentals hate the sound of this. They start to mutter. Michael raises his hand.

BO

You have a question, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yeah, what the hell are you trying to do here?

BO

I'm trying to make a movie here, Michael.

MICHAEL

In the Battle of Cowpens, the Americans were not running around the field looking hilarious. They charged up there and they took the British cannons. And what the hell is that house doing there? This was a big empty pasture.

CONTINUED

168

CONTINUED

168

BO

The set and dressing are here for artistic reasons. And I do not have time to argue about this.

MICHAEL

Do you realize there are leaves on the trees?

BO

Yes. So what?

MICHAEL

This took place in January. Winter.

The Continentals, muttering their agreement at first, are now calling out in support of Michael. "Yeah!"..."That's right, damn it!" Stuntmen, playing British soldiers, look at the Continentals contemptuously.

HANK

Hey, why don't you guys can it.

JESSE

You just fall down when we go 'bang.'

The Continentals are clearly angered by this. They mutter a few heated replies.

BO

What do you want us to do? Go around the field taking the leaves off the trees?

MICHAEL

(impatiently)

I want you to make at least one thing in this movie historically accurate. The Americans charged the cannons. That's not going to change just because some jackass is making stupid movie.

BO

Screw historical accuracy, okay? This day is costing us two hundred thousand dollars. I am not shelling out twenty dollars a second just to hear myself called a jackass.

Michael reaches into his pants for money.

MICHAEL

Here's fifty. You're also an asshole.

CONTINUED

168

CONTINUED - 2

168

BO

Look -- one:(holds up
one finger)Defy authority. Two:(holds up
two fingers)Destroy property. Three:(holds up
three
fingers)

Take people's clothes off. That's
what kids want to see. They don't
care if the hats are on wrong, or
the buttons are on the wrong sleeve.
They want to have fun. Now get over
to that house or get the hell off
this set.

Michael stares at him for a moment with a malevolent gaze
and moves off.

CUT TO

169

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD - DAY
(A FEW MINUTES LATER)

169

In costume, Michael angrily gets on his motorcycle and
rides up the hill to the house.

CUT TO

170

INT. BATTLE HOUSE - DAY

170

It is not a real house, just four facades held together by
supports. Michael and the Continentals militia are sitting
on the ground. Everyone is sullen and angry.

HANK

I'll tell you, Mike. We have
re-enacted this battle every year
for fifteen years and we don't run
from the cannons. We charge the
cannons.

JESSE

My little boy's going to see this
movie. I don't want him to see me
running around like a goddamn
chicken.

CONTINUED

170

CONTINUED

170

FLOYD

If we're not gonna charge the
cannons, I don't even want to go out
there.

(angrily)

I practiced all summer with this damn
thing!

Floyd flings his spontoon at the wall, where it sticks,
point first.

HANK

I don't know. I don't want to make
a fuss. What do you think we ought
to do, Mike?

MICHAEL

(after a beat,
quietly)

What do you say we charge the cannons?

Everybody's face begins to light up. Michael kneels and
starts drawing in the dirt.

MICHAEL

We're here and the British are here.

Michael's hand has touched a couple of wires.

MICHAEL

What are these wires?

HANK

They run out to the explosives.

MICHAEL

Is anybody here good with electrical
things?

JESSE

I'm a licensed electrician.

MICHAEL

Come with me.

They head for the door. Michael chuckles deliciously. He's
really getting off on this.

CUT TO

171

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

171

Claire calls out to six different cameras placed around the
field. They wave in acknowledgment.

CONTINUED

170

CONTINUED

170

FLOYD

If we're not gonna charge the cannons, I don't even want to go out there.

(angrily)

I practiced all summer with this damn thing!

Floyd flings his spontoon at the wall, where it sticks, point first.

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They head for the door. Michael chuckles deliciously. He's really getting off on this.

CUT TO

171

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

171

Claire calls out to six different cameras placed around the field. They wave in acknowledgment.

CONTINUED

171 CONTINUED

171

CLAIRE

Camera one are you ready? Camera
two? Camera three?

CUT TO

172 INT. COLONIAL HOUSE - DAY

172

As we hear Claire calling out to the cameras, we see the Continentals nervously waiting for the scene to begin. Michael goes from soldier to soldier like Robert Ryan in a World War II movie. He clasps the hand of each of them and gives them a reassuring look.

MICHAEL

This is it, men. Let's go.

They move out.

CUT TO

173 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

173

CLAIRE

Just so there are no mistakes: When the first cannon goes off, Special Effects hits explosion number one -- and this part of the field goes up.

CUT TO

174 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

174

with plunger switch. He waves to show he understands.

CUT TO

175 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

175

CLAIRE

All right, we're rolling.

BO

Action!

176 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

176

Michael and the Continentals, move resolutely toward the British. The British raise their rifles and fire. The Americans fire back.

MICHAEL

Nobody fall down.

CONTINUED

176 CONTINUED

176

JESSE

I'm supposed to get shot.

MICHAEL

Screw 'em. If you don't feel dead,
don't fall down.

177 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

177

The cannons are moved into place on the hill. Bo raises
his hand to signal the Special Effects Man.

178 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

178

MICHAEL

Go get 'em!

Michael and the Continentals charge up the hill. Floyd sticks the tip of his spontoon in the ground and catapults himself over the cannon into the surprised faces of the stuntmen. Michael and the Continentals grab the stuntmen by their rifles and sleeves and roll some of them down the hill. The stuntmen are confused. This isn't supposed to be happening. Some of them glance off toward the director, looking for some hint of what to do. The director is just staring open-mouthed at the scene. Some stuntmen resist. There is grappling and wrestling. Elliot rides up on his horse and stops by a cannon. Michael pushes the horse away.

MICHAEL

Move! You're in the way.

ELLIOT

Stop that. This is a nervous animal.

MICHAEL

Get out of the way, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Will you stop that? You're pushing
me out of the shot.

MICHAEL

Out!

Michael winds up and gives the horse a tremendous wallop on the behind with the flat of his sword. There's no controlling the already jumpy animal and the horse takes off. Elliot nearly slides off the saddle. As the horse races across the field, Elliot struggles to regain his seat.

CONTINUED

178 CONTINUED

178

ELLIOT
(to the horse)
No, boy, no! Easy, boy. Oh, God.
Oh, shit.

Michael, on the top of the hill, waves his sword above his head triumphantly, and holds up his index finger toward Bo.

179 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - BO

179

looks a little stunned.

180 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

180

Michael and the Continentals get the cannon in place and finish loading it. They light the fuse. The cannon goes off.

CUT TO

181 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - SPECIAL EFFECTS MAN

181

Hearing his cue, he pushes the plunger.

CUT TO

182 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

182

Instead of an explosive going off in the field, the entire house blows up.

183 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

183

Michael looks at Bo and holds up two fingers. Bo is beginning to get the idea.

184 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

184

The Continentals cheer and wave their arms.

MICHAEL
Sshh. Quiet. Ten-hut.

They come to attention.

MICHAEL
Present arms.

CONTINUED

184

CONTINUED

184

The men rip off all their clothes and throw them in the air. From the front, we only see them from the waist up -- but they are stark naked. They jump around and hoot, displaying themselves for the camera. Michael proudly looks at Bo and holds up three fingers.

CUT TO

185

EXT. MAIN STREET - SAYEVILLE - DAY

185

A chartered bus, empty, comes down the street. It passes buildings that are being stripped of their Colonial trappings -- as they're repainted and restored to their original Sayeville look. It passes a trailer where a wardrobe mistress is holding a huge armload of 18th Century dresses and gowns as townspeople are lined up, returning their costumes.

186

EXT. HOTEL - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

186

The bus pulls up in front of the hotel, where a large group of movie people are waiting with their luggage. Behind them the building is being returned to its normal look by workmen.

Locals and movie people are hugging. We hear phrases like: "Be sure to write, okay?" -- "Are you coming back for the opening? Will I ever see you again?" Camera finally lands on Stanley and Michael.

STANLEY

Not a bad time. A pleasant little interlude, right? A diversion -- a dance -- a gossamer dream to lighten your cares. Look at the way I use language now -- look at how much I've learned from you.

He gives Michael a big hug. Michael kisses his head.

STANLEY

(to Bo)

Look at this, he kisses now!

Michael looks at Bo.

MICHAEL

Listen, Bo. I'm sorry if I ruined things for you yesterday.

CONTINUED

186

CONTINUED

186

BO

The battle scene? I shot it with six cameras. I can put it together any way I want. It's gonna be terrific.

He smiles at Michael's chagrin and gets into the bus. Michael turns and sees Faith. She shakes Michael's hand. Their words are casual, but underneath there's tenderness.

FAITH

So long. It was very nice meeting you.

MICHAEL

It was very nice meeting you, too.

FAITH

(nodding
toward the
movie people)
I hope we didn't wreck your summer.

MICHAEL

You didn't. You really didn't.

FAITH

'Bye, Michael.

She gives him a tender kiss. Gretchen watches this. Faith gets on the bus. Elliot comes over to Michael.

ELLIOT

Good-bye, old cock. It's been grand.

They start to shake hands. Gretchen steps in.

GRETCHEN

'Bye, Elliot. It has been grand.
Really.

Gretchen throws her arms around Elliot and gives him a big kiss. It goes on for some time. And then a little longer. Michael just stands there and waits. Finally, Elliot gets on the bus. Gretchen recovers from the kiss -- brushing back her hair, pulling down her jacket. She waves as the bus moves out. People are hanging out of the windows, waving, touching hands and throwing flowers as the bus goes down the street.

Gretchen and Michael look at each other.

MICHAEL

You want to walk a little?

GRETCHEN

Sure.

187

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

187

Michael doesn't talk about the kiss. He just sort of grins.

GRETCHEN

How's your mom?

MICHAEL

Still hanging on. Still a fruitcake.

GRETCHEN

That doesn't sound too bad. Is it getting you down?

MICHAEL

Nah. She sees things her way, I see them mine. It's kind of stimulating.

GRETCHEN

You sure about that?

MICHAEL

I'm not so sure about anything anymore.

GRETCHEN

That sounds even better.

MICHAEL

Was that for real with him?. That kiss?

GRETCHEN

Was that for real with you and her?

MICHAEL

Not for me it wasn't. No.

GRETCHEN

(smiling
enigmatically)

Me neither.

MICHAEL

Listen...How do you feel about us?

GRETCHEN

Well, I've been thinking about that.

MICHAEL

If you wanted to try again -- I think maybe I could be a little less insistent on certain things.

GRETCHEN

I probably could, too.

CONTINUED

187

CONTINUED

187

MICHAEL

I guess I don't really have to live
at your place.

GRETCHEN

Well, it does seem kind of silly not
to let you keep a shirt there. And
maybe a robe. It's a real turn off
when you wear mine.

MICHAEL

You wouldn't mind if I stayed over
once in a while?

GRETCHEN

Maybe once a week.

MICHAEL

How about the whole weekend? I mean
-- as long as I'm there.

GRETCHEN

Saturday and Sunday?

MICHAEL

And Friday. Sort of get a jump on
Saturday. I wouldn't tell you how
to cook.

GRETCHEN

Maybe one weekend a month.

MICHAEL

Two weekends a month and a full week
on school holidays. And I'll keep a
pair of jeans there and a sweat
shirt.

She stops and glances over his shoulder.

GRETCHEN

Maybe we should just go the whole way.

MICHAEL

(not
understanding)
Like what?

GRETCHEN

Sort of a trial marriage.

188

EXT. MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

188

He looks behind him. They are in front of the courthouse.

CONTINUED

188

CONTINUED

188

MICHAEL

You mean with a license and everything?

GRETCHEN

If we don't like it after a year, we cancel it. You realize what I'm offering you? That's practically the same as living together.

MICHAEL

A year?

GRETCHEN

My God, I'm agreeing to a divorce and I'm not even married yet.

MICHAEL

A year is a long time.

GRETCHEN

There would be a certain amount of sewing -- but not in bed.

MICHAEL

Six months.

GRETCHEN

Nine.

MICHAEL

Seven. And I won't tell you how to run your career.

GRETCHEN

Eight. With an option for four more. I can't believe I'm saying this.

She runs up the stairs and opens the courthouse door.

GRETCHEN

This offer expires in thirty seconds.

(beat)

I'll take a chance if you will.

Michael hesitates only a moment, then bounds up the stairs into her outstretched arms.

Camera (Steadicam) circles their embrace 360 degrees around and around.

DISSOLVE TO

189

EXT. MUNICIPAL COURTHOUSE - DAY - THE SAME SHOT OF FAITH AND ELLIOT

189

as Mary Slocumb and Tarleton embrace and we circle them around and around. The credits of the film within the film start to roll.

CUT TO

- 190 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT - FIREWORKS IN THE NIGHT SKY 190
Camera arms down to reveal:
- 191 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - MAIN STREET - SAYEVILLE - NIGHT 191
The doors bang open and people in evening dress pour from the theater onto the street to the cheers of townspeople. There are TV news crews to interview the celebrities as they leave the theater.
Roll closing credits under the following:
- 192 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 192
-- Leslie and Frank come out arm in arm. She loves her performance in the film. She signs an autograph and poses for photographs.
- 193 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 193
-- Bo comes out with Faith. They wave to the crowd. Their body language reveals a relationship that is not platonic.
- 194 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 194
-- Elliot comes out arm in arm with his wife, Grace.
- 195 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 195
-- Michael comes out with Gretchen. As she moves past the camera, we can see that she's nine months pregnant. They walk over to a TV crew.
- 196 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 196
-- Cecelia is pushed out of the theater in a wheelchair by Stanley. As they pass Michael, she gives him the "Okay" sign.
- 197 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT 197
-- A TV Reporter questions Michael:

REPORTER

Professor Burgess, what did you think of the movie?

CONTINUED

197 CONTINUED

197

MICHAEL

(almost
surprised at
his own
reaction)
I liked it. It's funny.

REPORTER

How accurate is it? Did all those
things really happen?

MICHAEL

Well, what really happened was....

He goes on talking, but his voice is blotted out by the
fireworks we can see exploding behind him.

REPORTER

It's kind of noisy.

MICHAEL

Mnn.

REPORTER

I'll ask you that again.

(to her crew)

We rolling?

(to Michael)

Does this movie show things the way
they really were?

MICHAEL

Well, the real story was a little....

Again, the fireworks blank out his voice.

REPORTER

(giving up)

Well, thank you, Doctor Burgess.
And good luck with the movie.

He looks at Gretchen and shrugs, letting it go.

FREEZE FRAME

198 TITLE

198

-- on Michael's shrug -- the closing line of the credits
roll onto the screen: "The characters and events in this
film are wholly fictitious. Any resemblance to persons
living or dead is purely coincidental."

FADE OUT

THE END