

SWINGERS

by

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1

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT**

1

The soundtrack opens with Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon".

A HELICOPTER SHOT OF THE L.A. basin.

The pool of golden light disintegrates into the thousands of points which constitute it as we rapidly draw closer to the city.

We are just above the tops of the highest buildings as we approach Hollywood Boulevard. Below is neon and the icy thrust of search lights rotating on the corner of Hollywood and Vine.

We continue west, then quickly north.

There is the momentary appearance of the moonlit HOLLYWOOD sign as we pass the blinking red beacon of the Capital Records building and drop into Franklin avenue and over the 101.

Architectural remnants of Hollywood's past whip up. We are heading east at treetop level. A warm glow in the distance quickly grows into a modest commercial strip which includes cafes, bookstores, and a theater.

We drop to eye level as we spy through the plate glass showcase window of the "Bourgeois Pig" coffeehouse, which holds the translucent reflection of the full moon.

A cigarette wedged between knuckles shoulders. MIKE takes the last drag with great effort, then crushes it out. He sits in the window sprawled across a red velvet couch that once perfectly complemented a faux spanish foyer.

MATCH CUT TO:

2

**EXT. «BOURGEOIS PIG» COFFEEHOUSE - COUCHES AND TABLE  
IN FRONT OF WINDOW - NIGHT**

2

ROB sits down next to Mike, pouring himself some tea.

MIKE

And what if I don't want to give  
up on her?

ROB

You don't call.

MIKE

But you said I shouldn't call if I  
wanted to give up on her.

ROB  
Right.

MIKE  
So I don't call either way.

ROB  
Right.

MIKE  
So what's the difference?

ROB  
The only difference between giving up and not giving up is if you take her back when she wants to come back. See, you can't do anything to make her want to come back. You can only do things to make her not want to come back.

MIKE  
So the only difference is if I forget about her or pretend to forget about her.

ROB  
Right.

MIKE  
Well that sucks.

ROB  
It sucks.

MIKE  
So it's almost a retroactive decision. So I could, like, let's say, forget about her and when she comes back make like I just pretended to forget about her.

ROB  
Right...or more likely the opposite.

MIKE  
Right... Wait, what do you mean?

ROB  
I mean first you'll pretend not to care, not call - whatever, and then, eventually, you really won't care.

MIKE

Unless she comes back first.

ROB

Ah, see, that's the thing.  
Somehow they don't come back until  
you really don't care anymore.

MIKE

There's the rub.

ROB

There's the rub.

MIKE

Thanks, man. Sorry we always talk  
about the same thing all the  
time...

ROB

Hey man, don't sweat it.

MIKE

... It's just that you've been  
there. Your advice really helps.

ROB

No problem.

MIKE

Rob, I just want you to know,  
you're the only one I can talk to  
about her.

ROB

Thanks. Thanks, man.

DISSOLVE TO:

3

**INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

3

Close up on answering machine. Mike pushes the button.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)

Hello, you have five messages.

Mike's eyes light up. He paces in anticipation as the tape  
rewinds.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(male voice)

Hey, baby. It's Trent.

(MORE)

ANSWERING MACHINE (CONT'D)  
 I hope you're feeling better about  
 your old girlfriend. I hope my  
 advice helped...

Mike fast-forwards to next message.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
 (synthesized voice)  
 Skipping message.  
 (male voice)  
 What sup, Mike. If you want to  
 talk some more about Michelle...  
 (synthesized voice)  
 Skipping message.  
 (female voice)  
 Mike, it's Chris. Feeling better  
 yet about...?  
 (synthesized voice)  
 Skipping message.

Tension grows with every inch of spooling tape. Did she leave  
 a message?

ANSWERING MACHINE  
 (female voice)  
 Hi, Mike. Did she call yet? If  
 she didn't then she doesn't  
 deserve...  
 (synthesized voice)  
 Skipping message.

The last one. It's a long shot, but he's got the faith.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
 (elderly female voice)  
 Michael, this is Grandma. I want  
 to know if you got the part on  
 that television program. I told  
 the whole family and they're very  
 excited to know if...  
 (synthesized voice)  
 Skipping message. End of final  
 message.

MIKE  
 (lighting a cigarette,  
 defeated)  
 Shit.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
 (synthesized voice)  
 You have to put things in  
 perspective.

MIKE  
(unfazed by the sentient  
appliance)  
I know, I know.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
You've been through worse.

MIKE  
You're right. I know.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
Ever since I've known you.

MIKE  
I don't know about that.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
Moving here from New York was much  
more of an adjustment than this.

MIKE  
It didn't feel that way.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
That's because it was a challenge.  
You has control over you're  
situation. It was hard, but you  
rose to it.

MIKE  
Okay. I'll think about that.  
Bye.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
You really should. Life, after  
all, is really just a series of  
challenges...

MIKE  
(growing irate)  
Enough. I've got to use the  
phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
Are you calling Her?

MIKE  
No. Stop, come on.

The LED goes black as the machine beeps off. Mike picks up the phone and hits autodial.

Machine beeps off. Phone rings again, then is answered.

TRENT  
(over phone)  
Hello?

MIKE  
S'up Trent?

TRENT  
Lemme get off the other line,  
baby.

We hear the clicks of call-waiting-hold limbo. The silence is interrupted.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice over  
phone)  
You should call your Grandmother.

MIKE  
Shuddup.

TRENT  
(returning to line)  
That was Sue. We got two parties  
tonight. One's for a modeling  
agency.

MIKE  
I don't know...

TRENT  
Listen to me, baby, there are  
going to be beautiful babies  
there.

MIKE  
Trent, I don't feel like going out  
tonight. I got shit to do  
tomorrow...

TRENT  
Listen to you. I got an audition  
for a pilot at nine and I'm going.  
You gotta get out with some  
beautiful babies.

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

You can't sit home thinking about her.

MIKE

I don't know...

TRENT

I don't know, I don't know- listen to you. We're gonna have fun tonight. We gotta get you out of that stuffy apartment.

MIKE

We're gonna spend half the night driving around the Hills looking for this party and then leaving cause it sucks, then we're gonna look for this other party you heard about. But, Trent, all the parties and bars, they all suck. I spend half the night trying to talk to some girl who's eyes are darting around to see if there's someone else she should be talking to. And it's like I'm supposed to be all happy cause she's wearing a backpack. Half of them are nasty skanks who wouldn't be shit if they weren't surrounded by a bunch of drunken horny assholes. I'm not gonna be one of those assholes. It's fucking depressing. Some skank who isn't half the woman my girlfriend is is gonna front me? It makes me want to puke.

TRENT

(beat)

You got it bad, baby. You need Vegas.

MIKE

What are you talking about? Vegas?

TRENT

VEGAS.

MIKE

What Vegas?

TRENT  
We're going to Vegas.

MIKE  
When?

TRENT  
Tonight, baby.

MIKE  
You're crazy.

TRENT  
I'll pick you up in a half an hour.

MIKE  
I'm not going to Vegas.

TRENT  
Shut up- yes you are. Now listen to Tee. We'll stop at a cash machine on the way.

A long thoughtful pause.

MIKE  
I can't lose more than a hundred.

TRENT  
Just bring your card. Half an hour.

MIKE  
Wait.

TRENT  
What?

MIKE  
What are you wearing? I mean, we should wear suits.

TRENT  
Oh... Now Mikey wants to be a high roller.

MIKE  
No, seriously, if you're dressed nice and you act like you gamble a lot, they give you free shit.

TRENT  
Okay Buggy. Twenty minutes.

MIKE

Wear a suit, I'm telling you it works.

TRENT

Be downstairs. You're beautiful.

CUT TO:

4 **EXT. MIKE'S BUILDING - FRANKLIN AVENUE - NIGHT** 4

Mike is dressed to the nines in classic vintage threads. He's trying to look at ease as he straightens his cuff links.

He approaches Trent who suavely leans against his worn down ride. He's a tall, slim, good-looking cat. His sharkskin suit hangs well on his lanky frame as it tapers to his ankles. Sinatra's "Come Fly With Me" on the tape deck adds an elegance to the scene. They exchange an impish grin and depart without saying a word. Maybe this isn't such a bad idea.

CUT TO:

5 **INT. TRENT'S CAR - DETAIL SHOT - SPEEDOMETER - NIGHT** 5

The NEEDLE IS PINNED. The gauges are blurred by the vibration of the poorly tuned engine. The SHOT WIDENS to reveal that the "Oil" and "Service" dummy lights are both illuminated, causing an eerie red glow onto TRENT's white knuckles.

6 **EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT** 6

Trent's car is red-lined. The SWINGERS are Vegas bound. Do not pass go.

MATCH CUT TO:

7 **INT. TRENT'S CAR - NIGHT** 7

MIKE

(counting bills)

I took out three hundred, but I'm only gonna bet with one. I figure if we buy a lot of chips, the pit boss will see and they'll comp us all sorts of shit, then we trade back the chips at the end of the night. You gotta be cool though.

TRENT

I'm cool, baby. They're gonna give Daddy a room, some breakfast, maybe Bennett's singing.

MIKE

I'm serious. This is how you do it. I'm telling you.

TRENT

I know. Daddy's gonna get the Rainman suite. Vegas, baby. We're going to Vegas!

MIKE

Vegas! You think we'll get there by midnight?

TRENT

Baby, we're gonna be up by five hundy by midnight. Vegas, baby!

MIKE

Vegas!

Mike twists up the Chairman of the Board as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

8 INT. TRENT'S CAR - HOURS LATER

8

The two swingers are starting to fray around the edges but are unwilling to admit it to each other or themselves. Frank has been replaced by talk radio.

TRENT

Vegas, baby!

MIKE

Vegas!

The needle is still buried.

DISSOLVE TO:

9 INT. TRENT'S CAR - MANY HOURS LATER

9

Sleep deprivation and desert static radio.

TRENT

Vegas.



It is well past midnight and the only patrons at this hour are tourists too drunk to sleep and compulsive gamblers who snuck out of their rooms without waking their wives.

It is a weeknight and it is beginning to become painfully obvious that our boys are overdressed.

The decor is nautical plaster. Castings of bearded men with primitive prosthesis clutching daggers between their teeth are everywhere.

All of ye olde promenade shoppes are closed.

MIKE  
 (the first budding of  
 crankiness)  
 Pirates of the fucking Caribbean.

TRENT  
 This is the hot new place,  
 besides, you love pirates. Tell  
 me Mikey doesn't love pirates.

MIKE  
 This is fuckin' post-pubescent  
 Disneyland.

TRENT  
 You gotta love the pirates, baby.  
 The pirates are money.

The corridor empties into the equally kitch CASINO.

MIKE  
 This place is dead. I thought  
 this was the city that never  
 sleeps.

TRENT  
 That's New York, baby. You should  
 know that. Look at the  
 waitresses. I'm gonna get me a  
 peg-leg baby.

MIKE  
 They're all skanks.

TRENT  
 Baby, there are beautiful babies  
 here.

MIKE  
 Tee, the beautiful babies don't  
 work Wednesdays midnight to six.  
 (MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)  
This is the skank shift.

TRENT  
What are you talking about? Look  
at all the honeys.

Trent contorts his face at a cute WAITRESS passing by with a tray of drinks.

TRENT  
Arrrrrg!

The waitress cracks a smile as she crosses away. Mike is visibly embarrassed.

MIKE  
Cut that shit out.

TRENT  
She smiled baby.

MIKE  
That's not cool.

TRENT  
Did she, or did she not smile?

MIKE  
It doesn't matter...

TRENT  
I'm telling you, they love that  
shit.

MIKE  
You're gonna screw up our plan.

TRENT  
We're gonna get laid, baby.

MIKE  
First let's see what happens if we  
play it cool.

TRENT  
What? You think she's gonna tell  
her pit-boss on us?

MIKE  
Don't make fun, I think we can get  
some free shit if we don't fuck  
around.

TRENT  
Who's fucking around? I'm not making fun. Let's do it, baby.

MIKE  
The trick is to look like you don't need it, then they give you shit for free.

TRENT  
Well, you look money, baby. We both look money.

Mike points to a semi-curtained, semi-roped-off area near the baccarat tables. The clientele is classier, but they're still obviously overdressed.

MIKE  
(pointing)  
That's where we make our scene.

TRENT  
You think they're watching?

MIKE  
Oh, they're watching all right. They're watching.

CUT TO:

13

**INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - THE CLASSY SECTION - NIGHT**

13

Mike is at a blackjack table with Trent at his side. The game has paused to observe the newcomers as Mike draws a billfold out of his breast pocket. They're pulling it off with only slightly noticeable effort.

MIKE  
I don't know, I guess I'll start with three hundred in, uh, blacks.

Mike tries to hand the DEALER a handful of twenties after counting them twice.

DEALER  
On the table.

MIKE  
Sorry?

DEALER  
You have to lay it on the table.

MIKE

Uh, I don't want to bet it all.

The other players grow impatient.

DEALER

You're not allowed to hand me money, sir. You'll have to lay it on the table if you want me to change it.

MIKE

(hastily laying down the bills)

Oh... right.

The dealer lays out the bills such that the amount is visible to the camera encased in the black glass globe overhead. Trent and Mike look up at it open-mouthed like turkeys in the rain.

DEALER

Blacks?

Mike's attention is recaptured by the dealer, but Trent continues trying to peer through the smoked glass.

MIKE

Huh?

DEALER

You want this in black chips.

MIKE

Sure, that'll be fine.

The dealer chirps out an unintelligible formality and the PIT BOSS chirps the response. Trent's focus whips away from the camera as both he and Mike stare at the pit boss ten feet away.

The dealer plunks down the measly THREE CHIPS which represent Mike's entire cash reserve. Not quite the effect he had hoped for.

The swingers stare at the chips. The players stare at the swingers. The dealer stares at the pit boss.

MIKE

Do you have anything smaller?

DEALER

Yes, but I'm afraid this table has a hundred-dollar-minimum bet. Perhaps you'd be more comfortable at one of our lower stakes tables.

The dealer indicates a FIVE-DOLLAR TABLE across the room where an Hispanic woman deals to a BLUEHAIR, a BIKER, and a COUPLE in matching Siegfried and Roy T-shirts.

The swingers look back to the dealer who is now flanked by the pit boss.

The tense silence is broken by...

WAITRESS

Drinks?

(then to Trent)

How about you, Cap'n?

Trent looks over to see that it's the same WAITRESS who flashed him a smile earlier. At first he begins to smile, then, remembering that he is locked in a high stakes battle of wills, subtly shakes her off. She smirks and starts to leave until she is interrupted by Mike holding up a finger. It's a baldy move, but everyone's watching. The kid's going for broke.

MIKE

(to the waitress, but never breaking eye contact with the dealer)

I'll have a vodka martini, straight up, shaken not stirred, very dry.

Smooth. Trent is impressed, but masks his pride.

WAITRESS

(under her breath cynically as she writes it down)

One "James Bond".

Ow. She exits.

MIKE

(regaining composure)

No. Blacks will be fine.

Mike throws a chip in the circle. Trent is shocked. That's a hundred bucks. Mike and Trent share a look. The dealer and the pit boss exchange glances. Bets are all down and the cards are meticulously dealt.

The dealer has a two showing. Mike has been dealt a five and a six- eleven.

TRENT

(hushed tones)

Double down.

MIKE  
 (even husheder)  
 What?!?

TRENT  
 Double down, baby. You gotta  
 double down on an eleven.

MIKE  
 I know, but...

TRENT  
 You gotta do it.

MIKE  
 ... but that's two hundred  
dollars. This is blood money...

TRENT  
 If we don't look like we know what  
 we're doing, then we may as  
 well...

Everyone's waiting for them.

MIKE  
 I know.

The dealer, the pit boss, and all the players look on as Mike  
 drops ANOTHER BLACK CHIP in the circle with a barely audible,  
 yet deafening, thud.

MIKE  
 (with all the nonchalance he  
 can muster)  
 Double down.

A bead of sweat.

The sharp snap of a dealt card.

It's a seven. Eighteen.

Disappointment twists their faces.

Finally the dealer flips over his card.

It's a king! Twelve. Here comes the bust...

Flick - four. Sixteen! Here comes the bust...

Flick - five. Twenty one. Groans all around, except for the  
 swingers who watch their chips slide away in silence.

Mike breaks the spell with a plucky smile from the pit of his stomach.

MIKE  
 (to the pit boss)  
 Sure could use some dinner about  
 now.

SMASH CUT TO:

Trent and Mike are wedged between the BLUEHAIR and the BIKER At the FIVE DOLLAR TABLE. They share a pile of red chips.

TRENT  
 I'm telling you, baby, you always  
 double down on an eleven.

MIKE  
 Yeah? Well obviously not always!

TRENT  
Always, baby.

MIKE  
 I'm just saying, not in this  
 particular case.

TRENT  
 Always.

MIKE  
 But I lost! How can you say  
always?!?

In the meantime, the Bluehair has been dealt an eleven. This captures the swinger's attention.

BLUEHAIR  
 Hit.

Four. Fifteen all together.

BLUEHAIR  
 Oh... I don't know... Hit.

Two. Seventeen. Dealer has a seven showing.

BLUEHAIR  
 What the hell- hit.

Four! Twenty one.

DEALER  
 (with a warm smile)  
 Twenty one.

Polite applause from around the table which the Bluehair humbly waves off. Mike looks at Trent. Daggers. Trent shrugs.

A different PIT BOSS approaches.

PIT BOSS  
 Would you care for some breakfast,  
 ma'am?

BLUEHAIR  
 Well...? No, I shouldn't. Maybe  
 later. Thank you, though.

MIKE  
 (to Trent, under his breath)  
 I'm gonna fuckinkillyou.

CUT TO:

14 INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - CASHIER'S WINDOW - NIGHT 14

Mike is presented a stack of twenties by the CASHIER, who counts them out. Trent looks on.

CASHIER  
 ... eighty... one hundred... one  
 hundred and twenty dollars. We  
 hope to see you back on the high  
 seas soon.  
 (polite smile)

Mike throws her a disgusted look, then turns to go. Trent struggles to cheer him up.

TRENT  
 What's that? One twenty? You're  
 up twenty bucks, baby.

Mike throws him a disgusted glare.

TRENT  
 ... Well, you know, not counting  
 the first table.

MIKE  
 Thanks for clarifying that.

TRENT  
 Hey, man, I'm down too, you know.

MIKE  
Yea, how much?

TRENT  
I don't know, what? Thirty, forty  
maybe.

MIKE  
Don't give me that shit. You know  
exactly how much you lost. What'd  
you drop?

TRENT  
Twenty... but I was down at least  
fifty. I'm sorry, I got hot at  
the crap table.

MIKE  
You won. There's nothing to be  
sorry about. You're a winner.  
I'm the fuckin loser. I should be  
sorry.

TRENT  
Baby, don't talk like that, baby.

MIKE  
Let's just leave.

TRENT  
Baby, you're money. You're the  
big winner.

MIKE  
Let's go.

TRENT  
(condescending)  
Who's the big winner?

Mike looks away, shaking his head in disgust.

TRENT  
(lifting Mike's reluctant  
hand from the wrist like a  
boxing champ)  
Mikey's the big winner.

MIKE  
(shaking his head to hide a  
smirk)  
What an asshole.

TRENT

Okay, Tee's the asshole, but  
Mikey's the big winner.

The same WAITRESS from before approaches the swingers as they  
are about to leave.

WAITRESS

There you two are. I walked  
around for an hour with that  
stupid martini on my tray.

MIKE

Sorry. We got knocked out pretty  
quickly.

CHRISTY

(sarcasm?)

A couple of high rollers like you?

MIKE

Could you believe it?

CHRISTY

Wait here, I'll get you that  
martini.

MIKE

Nah, I didn't really want it  
anyway. I just wanted to order  
it.

CHRISTY

Can I get you something else? I  
mean, you shouldn't leave without  
getting something for free.

MIKE

No thanks. Why ruin a perfect  
night.

TRENT

(condescending)

Bring a James Bond for me and my  
boy Mikey, and if you tell the  
bartender to go easy on the  
water...

(holds up a half-dollar)

... this Kennedy has your name on  
it. Now run along, I'm timing  
you.

The waitress smiles in spite of herself, shakes her head, and  
walks away.

MIKE  
What an asshole.

TRENT  
That was money. Tell me that  
wasn't money.

MIKE  
That was so demeaning...

TRENT  
She smiled, baby.

MIKE  
I can't believe what an asshole  
you are.

TRENT  
Did she, or did she not smile.

MIKE  
She was smiling at what an asshole  
you are.

TRENT  
She was smiling at how money I am,  
baby.

MIKE  
Let's go. I'm not paying for a  
room, and if we don't leave now  
we'll never make it.

TRENT  
Leave? The honey-baby's bringing  
us some cocktails.

MIKE  
What are you, nuts? You think  
she's coming back?

TRENT  
I know she's coming back.

MIKE  
I don't think so.

TRENT  
Baby, did you hear her? "You  
shouldn't leave without getting  
something for free." She wants to  
party, baby.

MIKE  
You think so?

TRENT  
You gotta give Tee one thing.  
He's good with the ladies.

MIKE  
I'm too tired for this. Let's  
just go.

TRENT  
Baby, this is what we came for.  
We met a beautiful baby and she  
likes you.

MIKE  
She likes you.

TRENT  
Whatever. We'll see. Daddy's  
gonna get her to bring a friend.  
We'll both get one. I don't care  
if I'm with her or one of her  
beautiful baby friends.

MIKE  
I don't know...

TRENT  
You gotta get that girl out of  
your head. It's time to move on.  
You're a stylish, successful, good  
looking cat. The ladies want to  
love you, you just gotta let them.

MIKE  
That's bullshit.

TRENT  
It's not. You're money. Any of  
these ladies would be lucky to  
pull a cat like you.

MIKE  
It's just that I've been out of  
the game so long. Trent, I was  
with her for six years. That's  
before AIDS. I'm scared. I don't  
know how to talk to them, I don't  
know...

TRENT  
You can't think like that, baby.  
(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

It's hard, I know. I've been there. Not for six years, but I know. You just gotta get back out there.

MIKE

It's just tough, after sleeping with someone you love for so long, to be with someone new... who doesn't know what I like... and you gotta wear a jimmy...

TRENT

... gotta...

MIKE

... and then I'm struggling to impress some chick who's not half as classy as my girlfriend, who I'm not even really attracted to...

TRENT

Oh fuck that. You don't have to try and impress anyone. You think I give a shit? You think I sweat that skanky whore waitress...

Tee is interrupted by the WAITRESS who, thank God, barely missed his comment.

TRENT

(recovering, looking at watch)

... One fifty-nine, Two minutes.

WAITRESS

Two vodka martinis, straight up, shaken not stirred, very dry, easy on the water.

TRENT

Beautiful. What time are you off...

(reads nameplate)

... Christy?

WAITRESS

Six.

Mike can't believe it. Tee is just making it happen.

TRENT

Call a friend and have her meet  
the three of us at the Landlubber  
Lounge at 6:01.

(Trent throws the half-dollar  
on her tray)

SMASH CUT TO:

15 INT. TREASURE ISLAND CASINO - COFFEE SHOP - SAME NIGHT 15

Trent and Mike are looking at menus. They're smoking at the  
table because they can.

MIKE

That was so fuckin' money. It was  
like that "Jedi mind" shit.

TRENT

That's what I'm telling you, baby.  
The babies love that stuff. They  
don't want all that sensitive  
shit. You start talking to them  
about puppy dogs and ice cream.  
They know what you want. What do  
you think? You think they don't?

MIKE

I know. I know.

TRENT

They know what you want, believe  
me. Pretending is just a waste of  
time. You're gonna take them  
there eventually anyway. Don't  
apologize for it.

MIKE

I'm just trying to be a gentleman,  
show some respect...

TRENT

Respect, my ass. They respect  
honesty. You see how they dress  
when they go out? They want to be  
noticed. You're just showing them  
it's working. You gotta get off  
this respect kick, baby. There  
ain't nothing wrong with letting  
them now that you're money and  
that you want to party.

The COFFEE SHOP WAITRESS approaches the table. She's cute, but  
not nearly as hot as Christy.

WAITRESS  
Are you ready to order?

MIKE  
Coffee...  
(points to Trent, who nods)  
Two coffees. It says "Breakfast  
Any Time", right?

WAITRESS  
That's right.

MIKE  
I'll have "pancakes in the Age of  
Enlightenment".

It goes over like a lead balloon.

WAITRESS  
And you?

TRENT  
I'll have the Blackbeard over  
easy.

WAITRESS  
I'll be back with the coffee.

She takes the menus and goes.

TRENT  
(genuinely)  
Nice, baby.

MIKE  
I should've said Renaissance,  
right? It went over her head.

TRENT  
Baby, you did fine.

MIKE  
(disgusted with himself)  
"Age of Enlightenment". Shit.  
Like some waitress in a Las Vegas  
coffee shop is going to get an  
obscure French philosophical  
reference. How demeaning. I may  
as well have just said "Let me  
jump your ignorant bones..."

TRENT  
... Baby...

MIKE

... It's just, I thought  
"Renaissance" was too Excaliber,  
it's the wrong casino. She  
would've gotten it, though...

TRENT

You did fine. Don't sweat her.  
We're meeting our honeys soon.  
You know Christy's friend is going  
to be money.

MIKE

I hope so.  
(checks watch)  
We gotta go soon.

TRENT

Baby, relax. It's just down the  
hall. She's gotta change... we'll  
be fine.

MIKE

We didn't do so bad after all.

TRENT

Baby, we're money.

Mike tries to catch the attention of their waitress, who is  
passing with a huge platter containing a BREAKFAST BANQUET.

MIKE

Excuse me. We're in a bit of a  
hurry.

WAITRESS

Hang on, Voltaire.

She passes their table and sets the ENTIRE FEAST in front of  
the BLUEHAIR from the casino who sits alone.

BLUEHAIR

I said two lox platters. This  
isn't thirty dollars worth of  
food. I have a thirty dollar  
voucher. This isn't my first time  
in Vegas, you know.

CUT TO:

Christy is at the bar wearing acid-washed jeans with a matching denim top. She's sexy in a pathetic mid-eighties sort of way. She's sitting next to a pretty brunette, LISA, dressed in a similar fashion.

There is something bizarre about her appearance. Her hair is tied into long pig-tails with powder blue ribbons. Her makeup job is almost theatrical, with bright pink/red lips. She can't be that out of it, or can she?

The girls have already been flanked by a herd of potential COURTIERS.

The SWINGERS saunter up to the girls in a smooth, SLOW-MOTION SHOT.

The girls notice them.

The courtiers sense their rejection and part like the Red Sea for the swingers in perfect slow-motion choreography.

CHRISTY

Hi, boys, we almost gave up on you.

TRENT

Oh, are we late? There are no clocks in this town.

CHRISTY

Well, no harm done. This is Lisa. I'm sorry, I never got your names...

MIKE

I'm Mike...  
(with contempt)  
and this is my friend "Doubledown Trent".

TRENT

(working the bit)  
Stop.  
(then to the girls)  
Ladies, don't you double down on an eleven?

CHRISTY

Always...

LISA

No matter what... like splitting aces.

MIKE

Whatever.

TRENT

Hello, Lisa. I'm Trent. What a lovely makeup job.

CHRISTY

Lisa works at the MGM Grand...

LISA

(apologetically)  
I'm a "Dorothy".

TRENT

(trying to sell her to Mike)  
Oh... a Dorothy.

MIKE

Well... we're not in Kansas anymore.

Another lead balloon. Uncomfortable silence.

CHRISTY

What do you guys do?

MIKE

I'm a comedian.

More uncomfortable silence.

LISA

Do you ever perform out here? I'd love to see you.

MIKE

No...

LISA

You should. A lot of comics play Vegas.

MIKE

Well, I'm afraid it's not that easy...

LISA

Why not?

MIKE

There are different circuits... it's hard to explain... you wouldn't understand...

LISA  
Who's your booking agent?

MIKE  
(flustered)  
Oh? You know about booking agents... I don't, uh, actually have a west coast agent as of yet...

LISA  
Well, who represents you back east?

MIKE  
Actually, it's funny you... I'm actually, uh, between...

LISA  
What do you do, Trent?

TRENT  
I'm a producer.

BOTH GIRLS  
Wow... Oooh... Ahhh...

Mike rolls his eyes at how full of shit he is.

CHRISTY  
Listen, I'm not really allowed to drink here. We should go someplace else. How's my place?

The swingers exchange a glance.

Beat.

TRENT & MIKE  
Sounds good to me... Fine... Sure

CUT TO:

17

**EXT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - EARLY MORNING**

17

Establishing shot of an Airstream trailer dug into the desert on chocks. Trent's car and two El Caminos are parked out front.

The foursome, now somewhat more intimate, sit huddled around the fold-out table.

They've been drinking whiskey and long-neck Buds, judging by the recyclables.

The pairings seems to be Trent/Christy, Mike/Lisa.

The cramped compartment is filled with secondary smoke and laughter.

TRENT

No... no... The worst was when I went in for this After-School special and I'm sitting in the waiting room with all these little kids. I see they're all signed in for the same role as me...

CHRISTY

They were auditioning for the same role as you?

TRENT

Wait... Wait... Listen... So, I check the time and place. I'm where I'm supposed to be. I call my agent... She says they asked for me specifically...

MIKE

What was the part?

TRENT

Oh... "I love you... I can't believe you're doing this... Drugs are bad..." Whatever. After-School bullshit. The role is Brother.

MIKE

"Big Brother", "Little Brother"?

TRENT

Wait... Wait... Just "Brother". So I go in. "Hello... Hi... We loved your guest spot on Baywatch... blah blah blah..." Whatever. So, I start to read, and, Mikey, I was money. I prepared for a week. It's a starring role. I'm crying...

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)

The casting director, she starts crying...

MIKE

No!

TRENT

Yes!

LISA

Oh my God.

CHRISTY

Did you get it?

TRENT

Wait... She's crying. I finish. I hold up my finger like "Wait a second". They sit in silence for, like, at least five minutes. I look up and they all start clapping, and now they're all crying. Even the camera guy.

MIKE

No! Not the camera guy!

TRENT

I'm telling you!

LISA

So what happened?

TRENT

So, I swear to God this is exactly what he said. The producer says to me... now he's still crying... he says to me that I was great, that that was exactly what they were looking for...

MIKE

... So give me the fuckin part...

TRENT

Right?.. that I nailed it... Whatever. Then he says it's just that I'm a little old. I'm like "How old is the Brother?". He's like, he says this with a straight face, I swear to God, he says "Eleven."

MIKE  
 So, what'd you say to him?  
 "Double down."

They all crack up even more.

TRENT  
 It's like, you looked at my tape.  
 You saw my picture. Why did you  
 call me in? You knew I was  
 twenty-four.

CHRISTY  
 What an asshole.

MIKE  
 I believe it.

The room dies down. The girls settle into the arms of their men. There's a lot of body language and pheromones, but not a lot of words.

CHRISTY  
 How rude of me. I haven't given  
 you the tour.

She gets up and leads Trent into the sleeping compartment to the rear. The door slaps shut.

Mike and Lisa, in all her made-up glory, look into each others eyes.

CUT TO:

19 INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME 19

Trent is already at work. He's smooth. A cascade of stuffed animals tumble off the bed with every thrust. Clothes start to peel off.

Trent takes a breather. He takes a step to the door.

TRENT  
 Let me just check on my boy.

CHRISTY  
 Don't worry. He's in good hands.

Trent cracks the door and peers through. The light is dim, but he can make out that they're starting to neck.

He closes the door, satisfied.

CHRISTY  
 (coyly)  
 What a good friend. I can use a  
 friend like you.  
 (she beckons him back to bed)

CUT TO:

20 INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME

20

What seemed like necking is actually Lisa and Mike huddled tight having an intimate conversation.

LISA  
 (reassuring)  
 I'm sure she'll call. Six years  
 is a long time. You don't just  
 break it off cleanly after six  
 years.

MIKE  
 I know, but she did. She's with  
 someone else now...

LISA  
 Already? You poor thing. It  
 won't last.

MIKE  
 Why not?

LISA  
 It's a rebound.

MIKE  
We were a rebound, and we lasted  
 six years.

LISA  
 Yeah, but how long was the  
 relationship she was rebounding  
from?

MIKE  
 Six years.

Beat.

MIKE  
 Can I check my messages? I have a  
 calling card.

LISA  
Sure, I guess. The phone's in the  
back.

Mike gets up and approaches the door.

MIKE  
Sorry, it's just that...

LISA  
I understand.

Mike lightly knocks on the door.

MIKE  
Trent...  
(knock knock)  
Tee.

The door cracks.

MIKE  
Sorry, man, I need...

Trent pokes a CONDOM through the door.

MIKE  
No, man. I need to use the phone.

TRENT  
What?

MIKE  
I gotta use the phone.

TRENT  
Baby, you'll check them tomorrow.

MIKE  
Please, Tee. I have to use the  
phone. Sorry, man.

TRENT  
Hold on.

The door closes.

MIKE  
(to Lisa)  
I hope I'm not interrupting  
anything. They weren't in there  
that long.

Lisa reassuringly shakes her head.

Beat.

Christy walks out wearing only Trent's sharkskin jacket as a robe.

Trent follows with a towel wrapped around his waist.

Trent glares at Mike as they pass. Daggers.

MIKE  
 (apologizing to Christy as  
 she exits)  
 I've got a calling card, there's  
 no charge to your phone.

CUT TO:

21 INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME 21  
 Mike dials.

BACK TO:

22 INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME 22  
 Half naked Trent and Christy sit with fully clothed Lisa.

CHRISTY  
 (to Lisa)  
 The poor thing. Six years?

LISA  
 ... And she's with someone else.

CHRISTY  
 The poor thing. I'll make some  
 coffee.

Trent is not happy.

BACK TO:

23 INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - SLEEPING COMPARTMENT - SAME 23  
 Mike is on the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
 (synthesized voice)  
 She didn't call.

Disappointment pulls at Mike's brow.

BACK TO:

**INT. CHRISTY'S TRAILER - FRONT ROOM - SAME**

The girls clean up the bottles and ashtrays. The coffee is brewing. The shades are up. It's officially morning.

Trent's chin is in his hand. He radiates the blue tinge of glandular congestion. He'll have no part of any of this.

CHRISTY

He's so sweet. He really said that?

LISA

I believe it too. He really just wants her to be happy.

CHRISTY

He is so sweet.

Mike enters.

The girls immediately stop their chatter and look at him in anticipation.

Mike shakes his head "no".

The girls walk to embrace him in consolation.

BOTH GIRLS

Awwww.

Trent just shakes his head. He'll have no part of any of this.

CUT TO:

25 **EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY**

25

Establishing what of Trent's car heading back to L.A. on the northbound I-15. The speeding car is dwarfed by the expansive badlands.

26 **EXT. TRENT'S CAR - DESERT ROAD - SAME**

26

MIKE

She asked me what I was thinking about? What should I have done? Lie?

TRENT

You didn't have to get into it, baby.

MIKE

Sorry about interrupting...

TRENT

Don't worry about me, baby. I just wanted you to have a good time.

MIKE

Christy was nice...

TRENT

I didn't even like her, to be honest.

MIKE

She was hot.

TRENT

She really didn't do it for me, baby. How'd you like Dorothy?

MIKE

I don't know. The whole Judy Garland thing kind of turned me on. Does that makes me some kind of fag?

TRENT

No, baby. You're money.

MIKE

She didn't like me, anyway.

TRENT

She thought you were money.

MIKE

I don't think so.

TRENT

I heard them talking. They both thought you were money.

MIKE

Yeah, a good friend.

TRENT

Baby, you take yourself out of the game. You start talking about puppy dogs and ice cream, of course it's gonna be on the friend tip.

MIKE

I just don't think she liked me in that way.

TRENT

Baby, you're so money you don't even know it.

MIKE

Tee, girls don't go for me the way they go for you.

TRENT

Michelle went for you, right.

MIKE

That was different.

TRENT

How?

MIKE

I was younger... It was college. You didn't go to college, you don't know what it's like. You screw chicks you have no business being with. They're young, they don't know any better.

TRENT

That's just plain silly. Your self-esteem is just low because she's with someone else. But thinking about it and talking about it all the time is bad. It's no good, man. You gotta get out there. The ladies want to love you, baby.

MIKE

I just need some time...

TRENT

Why? So you can beat yourself up? Sitting around in that stuffy apartment. It's just plain bad for you, man. It's depressing. You've come so far. Remember the first week? After she told you? You couldn't even eat.

MIKE

Don't remind me.

TRENT

You just sat around drinking orange juice. Now look at you. Look how far you've come in just a few months. You got that part in that movie...

MIKE

... a day...

TRENT

... Whatever. It's work. You're doing what you love. What's she doing?

MIKE

Selling scrap metal.

TRENT

(smiles)

See? And what does this guy she's with do?

MIKE

He drives a carriage.

TRENT

What?!?

MIKE

(smiling)

I hear he drives a carriage around Central Park or something.

TRENT

Please. And you're sweating him? You're "all that" and you're sweating some lawn jockey?

MIKE

I hear she's getting real fat.

TRENT

Baby, she's the one who should be thinking about you. Sounds to me like you cut loose some dead weight. Trust me, Mikey, you're better off.

Trent cranks some Frank. "You Make Me Feel So Young".

Mike is finally, genuinely, smiling.

He turns down the music enough to talk.



ROB

Do you realize how hard it's going to be to tell my parents? I still haven't told them I didn't get the pilot.

MIKE

You tested over a month ago. I'm sure they figured it out by now.

ROB

It's like "Hi, Mom. I'm not going to be starring in that sit-com and, oh by the way, I'm Goofy. Send more money."

They split up and both over-*chip* the green miserably.

CUT TO:

29

**EXT. PUTTING GREEN - PITCH AND PUTT GOLF COURSE - SAME**

29

Mike and Rob putt.

MIKE

Haven't you noticed I didn't mention Michelle once today?

ROB

I didn't want to say anything.

MIKE

Why?

ROB

I don't know. It's like not talking to a pitcher in the midst of a no hitter.

MIKE

What? Like, you didn't want to jinx it?

ROB

Kinda.

MIKE

I don't talk about her that much.

ROB

Oh no?

MIKE  
I didn't mention her once today.

ROB  
Well, until now. Tend the pin.

Mike pulls out the flag for Rob's putt. He misses.

MIKE  
The only reason I mentioned her at all is to say that I'm not going to talk about her anymore. I thought you'd appreciate that.

ROB  
I do. Good for you, man.

MIKE  
I've decided to get out there.  
(re: the ball)  
Go ahead. Play it out.

Rob putts the "gimme". He misses by an inch.

MIKE  
I'm not making any more excuses for myself.

Rob taps it in. He tends the pin or Mike, who misses.

ROB  
Good to hear, Mikey.

Mike putts again, and misses.

MIKE  
You want to hit the town tonight?

ROB  
I shouldn't, Mike, it's a weeknight.

MIKE  
What do you have? A Pluto call back?

ROB  
Sure. Kick me when I'm down.

Mike plunks it in.

MIKE  
Count 'em up.

The two of them count and recount as they revisualize each shot in their head. Throughout the process they count under their breath and point to different parts of the fairway and green.

The two of them revolve, point, and mumble for an absurdly long amount of time until finally...

ROB  
How many strokes?

MIKE  
I don't know. Eight or Nine.

ROB  
I'll give you an eight.  
(writes score)

MIKE  
What'd you get?

ROB  
An eight.

MIKE  
Looks like we're in a dead heat  
after one hole. This is turning  
into quite a rivalry.

Rob points to the far-off crowd of a dozen IRATE GOLFERS  
Waiting to tee off.

ROB  
You better replace the pin, Chi-  
Chi. The natives look restless.

CUT TO:

30

**INT. SUE'S APARTMENT - HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - EVENING**

30

First of all, SUE is a guy, and a tough guy at that. He is wearing an L.A. Kings home jersey. His sweater bears the sacred number "99". Sue is lounging in front of the TV in army surplus khaki cutoffs and untied Doc Martin boots.

Sue brushes back a shock of straight, greasy, dirty blonde hair as not to obscure his view of the screen. His face glows with the reflection of the SEGA HOCKEY game on the set. Sue and TRENT are locked in a heavily contested battle of motor reflexes. Nothing moves but their eyes, thumbs, and mouths...

SUE  
Bitch... You little bitch!

TRENT  
Chelios to Roenick...!

MIKE looks on. He is more captivated with the simulated sporting event than the Clippers game on the TV across the room.

Electric guitars blaze over the stereo.

The room, like the guys, could use a spring cleaning. Pizza boxes, beer bottles, and full, full ashtrays. You can taste the smoke.

SUE  
You little bitch!

MIKE  
Hey Sue. Gretsky's on his ass again.

TRENT  
Because he's a bitch.

SUE  
That's so bullshit. This is so bullshit.

MIKE  
You should play another team. The Kings are bitches in this game.

SUE  
Hey, man. I took the Kings to the Cup.

TRENT  
... against the computer.

SUE  
They're a finesse team...

TRENT  
They're a bitch team... SCORE!  
Roenick!

SUE  
Fuck!!! That is so bullshit!

MIKE  
Give it up, Sue.

The PHONE RINGS. Sue picks it up and balances it on his shoulder as he plays.

SUE

Hello?

(re: game)

Shit!

(back to phone)

Yeah. The elevator doesn't work.

(he lets the phone drop.

Then to Mike)

It's Pink Dot. Buzz him in - hit nine.

Mike picks up the phone off the matted shag carpet. He pushes "9", listens, then hangs up.

TRENT

I wish the game still had fights so I could bitch-slap Wayne.

MIKE

This version doesn't have fighting?

TRENT

No. Doesn't that suck?

MIKE

What? That was the best part of the old game.

SUE

I don't know. I guess kids were hitting each other or something.

TRENT

You could make their heads bleed, though.

SUE

Yeah... If you hit them hard their heads bleed all over the ice and their legs convulse.

MIKE

No.

TRENT

Yeah.

SUE

It's kinda money, actually.

MIKE

Make someone bleed.

SUE  
No, man, we're in the play-offs.

TRENT  
I'll make Gretsky bleed, the  
little bitch.

The DELIVERY MAN knocks on the door.

SUE  
Pause it.  
(Trent pauses the game)

MIKE  
Give me the money. I'll get it.

While Sue gives Mike the money, Trent UNPAUSES the game and checks Gretsky into the boards, leaving him writhing in a pool of red pixels.

SUE  
You bitch!

Sue dives onto Trent. They wrestle a little too rambunctiously for indoors. Trent pulls the hockey sweater over Sue's head and starts wailing on his back.

Mike crosses. The CAMERA follows him down a shallow hallway to the door. He unlocks it.

A delivery man of eastern-hemispheric decent is out of breath from four flights of stairs. He hands Mike a twelve-pack of Bud cans and three packs of Marlboro reds.

He can HEAR, but NOT SEE, the chaos ensuing in the living room.

CUT TO:

31 INT. SUE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

31

Trent and Sue are flushed. They pause long enough to torment Mike.

TRENT  
(feigning homosexuality)  
Is he cute? Ask him if he wants  
to stay for a cocktail!

SUE  
(following suit)  
... Is he brown?

BACK TO:

**INT. SUE'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Mike forces an apologetic smile. He is embarrassed. The delivery man doesn't seem to understand any of this.

Mike, out of guilt, hands him a four dollar tip. This he seems to understand. He smiles and leaves.

Mike crosses back to the main room.

MIKE

You guys are such assholes.

TRENT

(continuing the gag)

Aww... He got away?

SUE

(untangling himself from  
Trent)

Gimme my reds. I've been jonesing  
for an hour.

Mike throws him a pack of smokes, which he unravels with surgical precision.

Cans of beer are tossed around and cracked.

MIKE

What time's this party tonight?

TRENT

It starts at eight...

SUE

... which means no one will get  
there 'til ten.

MIKE

So, what? Eleven?

TRENT & SUE

Midnight.

MIKE

I'm gonna bring an old friend who  
just moved out here.

TRENT

Who? Rob?

MIKE

Yeah. You met him once.

TRENT  
 (approvingly)  
 Yeah. He's a "rounder".

SUE  
 What's he do?

MIKE  
 He's trying to be an actor.

TRENT  
 What a surprise...

SUE  
 ... How novel.

CUT TO:

33

**EXT. DARK ALLEY - OFF OF HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - SEEDY -  
 NIGHT**

33

MIKE and ROB walk down the dirty deserted alleyway. Mike is wearing baggy slacks, Doc Martin shoes, and an oversized Eisenhower-cut jacket with a vertical stripe inset.

The collar is large and pointy, but definitely not seventies. His ensemble has more of an early sixties vibe.

Rob hasn't been at it quite as long. He's wearing worn-in Levis over worn-in boots and, the nineties standby, an untucked flannel.

Mike walks with purpose. He intermittently tries to pull open locked steel doors along the alley. Rob looks confused.

ROB  
 So, if the party starts at eight,  
 why are we first going to a bar at  
 ten?

MIKE  
 To get a drink before we meet the  
 guys for a bite at eleven.

ROB  
 Oh.  
 (beat)  
 Where is this place?

MIKE  
 (pulling handle)  
 It's one of these.  
 (MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

For some reason, cool bars in L.A. have to be very hard to find and have no signs out front.

ROB

That doesn't sound too good for business.

MIKE

(pull)

It's kinda like a speakeasy kind of thing. It's kinda cool. It's like you're in on some kind of secret. You tell a chick you've been some place, it's like bragging that you know how to find it. The only way you could know where a place is is if someone who knows brought you there. You have to have someone come before. There is a direct line connecting you back to the original, unequivocally cool, club patrons. It's kinda like Judaism...

ROB

Sounds more like Aids...

MIKE

... That's probably a more appropriate analogy.

At this point they come upon an unmarked BLACK METAL DOOR, which Mike successfully pulls open to reveal...

34

**INT. "THE ROOM" - HOLLYWOOD BAR - SAME**

34

A smoke-filled, windowless, black-walled room. There are several round padded booths lining the walls. The place is packed, and the funk standard "Brick House" throbs over the P.A..

A HANDHELD SHOT as the two guys serpentine to the mirrored bar at the far end of the room. Enshrined in its center is a framed photograph of SINATRA smiling in approval as he presides over the evening's activities.

Mike proudly points out the photo to Rob.

MIKE

Kinda money, huh?

ROB  
 (smiling)  
 Classy.

Mike catches the attention of a cute female BARTENDER.

MIKE  
 I'll get a Dewars rocks...  
 (looks to Rob)

ROB  
 Bud.

MIKE  
 ... A Dewars on the rocks and a  
 Bud, please.

She goes.

ROB  
 I can't get over how cute the  
 girls in this city are.

MIKE  
 I know. It's like the opposite of  
 inbreeding. The hottest one  
 percent from around the world  
 migrate to this gene pool.

ROB  
 Darwinism at its best.

MIKE  
 I've been around here six months  
 and I still can't get over it.

ROB  
 It's like, every day I see a  
 beautiful woman. I'm not used to  
 that. I'm used to seeing a  
 beautiful woman, I don't know,  
 once a week. I can't handle it.

MIKE  
 Wait till summer. I swear, you  
 can't leave the house. It hurts.  
 It physically hurts.

ROB  
 I can't wait till I actually get  
 to touch one of them.

MIKE  
 Ah, there's the rub...

ROB  
There's the rub.

The bartender serves them their drinks.

CHARLES (O.S.)  
Whassup Mikey?

Mike turns to see CHARLES. A young black man with a tight Dolomite fro. He wears a black leather blazer over a black turtleneck. Just look up "cool" in the dictionary.

A handshake turns into a hug.

MIKE  
Charles! What's up, man?

CHARLES  
Oh. You know.

MIKE  
Did you, um, did you get that pilot?

CHARLES  
No, man. I know you didn't get it 'cause you wouldn't've asked me. It wasn't that funny anyway...

MIKE  
... piece of shit. Listen, Charles, this is my friend Rob from Back East.

Shake.

CHARLES  
Hi.

ROB  
My pleasure.

MIKE  
Charles and me went to network on this pilot together.

ROB  
I just tested for one...

MIKE  
... yeah, a month ago.

CHARLES  
Oh, I'm sorry.  
(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
How'd your folks take it?

ROB  
I haven't heard an official "no"  
yet.

CHARLES  
You haven't told then, huh?

ROB  
No.

CHARLES  
I still haven't told my folks I  
didn't get "Deepspace 9". You'd  
think they'd'a figured it out by  
now, but Mom keeps asking...

MIKE  
... and boy does it hurt when they  
ask.

CHARLES  
I don't even tell them about  
anything I'm close on anymore...

MIKE  
... not until you book it...

CHARLES  
... and even then...

MIKE  
... you might get cut out.

ROB  
I'm considering taking a job as a  
"Goofy".

CHARLES  
Hey, man. At least it's Disney.

MIKE  
You want to come with us to a  
party at the Chateau Marmont?  
They got a bungalow and lots of  
beautiful babies.

CHARLES  
(yelling over the roar of the  
wall to wall crowd)  
Why not? This place is dead  
anyway.

CUT TO:

**INT. "SWINGERS DINER" - BEVERLY BLVD. - LATER THAT NIGHT**

MIKE, TRENT, SUE, CHARLES, and ROB sit around the round scotch-plaid corner booth of the retro-hip coffee shop. All of our boys, with the exception of Rob, are classily dressed. They wear a lot of black, brown, and gray with a splash of gold and maroon.

The CAMERA REVOLVES around the table in a repeating "Reservoir Dogs" style over the shoulder 360 DEGREE PAN.

TRENT

... No, baby. I got a better one. You gotta admit the steadycam shot in "Goodfellas" was the money...

ROB

... through the basement of that restaurant...

MIKE

... the Copa, in New York...

TRENT

... through the kitchen...

CHARLES

... I heard it took four days to light for that shot...

ROB

... Four days..?

SUE

... I don't know about four days...

CHARLES

... That's what I heard...

MIKE

... Maybe. I mean you gotta hide all the lights...

TRENT

... It looked money.

SUE

... Not as money as the shot from Reservoir Dogs...

ROB

... Which one?

SUE  
 ... In the beginning. When  
 they're walking in slow motion...

MIKE  
 ... How can you compare them?  
 Tarantino totally bites everything  
 from Scorsese...

SUE  
 ... He's derivative...

TRENT  
 ... You gotta admit, it looked  
 money...

CHARLES  
 ... . I heard they made that whole  
 movie for ten grand...

ROB  
 ... What's the big deal? Everyone  
 steals from everyone.

MIKE  
 (checking his watch)  
 Well, let's hit that party.

CUT TO:

36      **EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - HEADLIGHTS AND NEON - NIGHT**      36

The five swingers walk down the boulevard in a SLO-MO SHOT  
 which is extremely "derivative" of the "Reservoir Dogs" credit  
 sequence.

The scene is choreographed to Bennett's big band arrangement of  
 "O SOLE MIO".

CUT TO:

37      **EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT BUNGALOW - OUTSIDE THE PARTY -**  
**MIDNIGHT**      37

Muffled music seeps through the door. The swingers turn the  
 knob and enter...

38      **INT. THE PARTY - CHATEAU MARMONT BUNGALOW - SAME**      38

The huge sunken living room is packed with people congealed  
 into circles of conversation and sipping cocktails.

EVERYTHING STOPS when they enter. The music, the conversations, all movement, everything.

Everyone in the room STARES at them standing in the doorway.

Beat.

The music starts back up and everyone returns to their conversations.

The swingers weave their way through the crowd to...

39

**INT. THE BAR AREA - THE BUNGALOW KITCHEN - SAME**

39

The swingers fix themselves drinks from an assortment of bottles cluttering the table. The shamelessly paw at the top shelf brands.

MIKE

Who threw this party, anyway?

SUE

Damned if I know...

TRENT

... Beats me...

CHARLES

... I came with you.

With that, the three of them peel off to work the room.

ROB

What's that guy's name? Sue?

MIKE

Sue. His dad was big Johnny Cash fan.

ROB

Oh, like that song...

MIKE

... "A Boy Named Sue". I think that's why he's such a bad cat.

ROB

Him?

MIKE

He's a mean dude. I've seen him smash a guy's face into the curb.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)  
 He knocked out his teeth...  
 blood... He was just like Boom,  
 Boom, Boom... fuckin nasty shit,  
 man. He's a nice guy though.

CUT TO:

40 INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - SAME

40

Trent and Sue are scouting some LADIES across the room. One wears a FUNKY OVERSIZED HAT. Intermittent eye contact has been established.

TRENT  
 Oh, it's on, baby...

SUE  
 ... It's on.

BACK TO:

41 INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - SAME

41

Mike and Rob have come back into the room. They scout the terrain.

MIKE  
 There are so many beautiful women here.

ROB  
 It's unbelievable.

MIKE  
 I got to at least try once.

ROB  
 You're a better man than I am,  
 Charlie Brown.

MIKE  
 No, I just promised myself I'd  
 give it a try. I gotta get out  
 there sooner or later.

ROB  
 Go for it, man.

Mike spots a pair of beautiful BLONDES in black. They're wearing stretch bell-bottoms and tops that expose their mid-drifts. The seventies never looked so good.

MIKE  
 (indicating the ladies)  
 I'm going in. Will you be my  
 wing-man?

ROB  
 I'll be your winger.

They make the approach. With a great deal of effort, Mike catches their attention...

MIKE  
 Good evening, ladies...

... only to be interrupted by the party STOPPING to check another entrance.

Beat.

The party RESUMES and the blondes redirect their attention to Mike. He is a little put-off but, God love him, he gets back in there.

MIKE  
 How are you ladies doing this evening?

BLONDE  
 What do you drive?

MIKE  
 I'm sorry?

BLONDE  
 What kind of car do you drive?

MIKE  
 Oh... a Cavalier.

The blondes immediately enter back into their conversation as if they were never approached.

Mike and Rob exchange defeated glances.

One more try.

MIKE  
 ... It's red?

CUT TO:

42

INT. LIVING ROOM - BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

42

Trent and Sue are trying to look like they're not paying attention to the group of ladies they saw across the room.

TRENT

Is she looking at me, baby?

SUE

No.

TRENT

Now?

SUE

No.

TRENT

Is she looking now?

SUE

No! She's not looking at you.  
She hasn't looked at you once.  
Will you stop asking if... Wait,  
she just looked.

TRENT

See, baby?

Mike and Rob walk up to Trent and Sue.

MIKE

How you guys doing?

TRENT

It's on.

MIKE

Which one?

TRENT

(indicated the group of girls  
with a subtle head move)  
Minnie Pearl.

Mike and Rob STARE DIRECTLY at the girls like a deer in the headlights... a big no-no.

MIKE

The one in the hat? She's cute.

Trent and Sue react with frustrated disappointment.

TRENT  
What are you doing?

MIKE  
What?

TRENT  
You looked right at her, baby.

MIKE  
She didn't notice.

SUE  
Yes she did.

TRENT  
Damn. Now I gotta go in early.

MIKE  
I'm sorry.

TRENT  
Don't sweat it, baby. This one's  
a lay-up.

Trent crosses away.

SUE  
How's it going for you two?

MIKE  
Not well.

SUE  
Rejected?

ROB  
Shaged.

Mike's P.O.V. of Trent passing near and the GIRL IN THE HAT.  
He says something, smiles, and points to her hat. She laughs.

SUE  
Well, just watch the T-bone and  
learn.

CUT TO:

43

**INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS**

43

Trent is having a sensitive one-on-one with the girl in the hat.

GIRL IN HAT  
 ... I've always wanted to be an  
 actress, at least as long as I  
 could remember. I went to...

Under Trent's affirmative response we hear the first haunting  
 TUBA PULSE of the JAWS THEME:

TRENT  
 (nodding in agreement)  
Uhhhh... Huuuhhh.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP of MIKE'S FACE as he looks on in HORRIFIED AWE from  
 afar.

BACK TO:

44 INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS 44

GIRL WITH CIGAR  
 ... Then one day after class my  
 drama teacher, the one who  
 directed the play, said he thought  
 I should...

The second TUBA PULSE accompanies Trent's sound of agreement:

TRENT  
Uhhh... Huuuh.

BACK TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP of MIKE'S HORRIFIED EYES.

BACK TO:

45 INT. LIVING ROOM - TRENT'S CONVERSATION - CONTINUOUS 45

GIRL WITH CIGAR  
 ... I met with an agent last week  
 and I'm waiting to hear...

The third, and progressively faster, TUBA PULSE sounds under  
 Trent's response as the JAWS THEME begins to speed up and fill  
 out:

TRENT  
Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh, Uh-Huh...

CUT TO:

Mike, Rob, and Sue look on.

SUE  
Here comes the kill...

MATCH CUT TO:

The group's P.O.V. of the conversation.

The JAWS THEME reaches its violent crescendo as the girl looks into her purse.

Trent winks to the boys. Smooth.

She comes up with a pen and writes out her phone number.

Trent crosses back as the music dies away.

Using his body as a shield so the girl can't see, but so his boys can, he rips up and drops the number as he approaches them.

TRENT  
Was I money?

MIKE  
I don't know. It was kind of a dick move if you ask me.

TRENT  
Why, baby? What'd I do wrong?

MIKE  
You asked her for her number, and then you tore it up.

TRENT  
She didn't see.

MIKE  
That doesn't matter.

SUE  
That was pretty cold, dude.

TRENT  
What was cold about it?

The door opens. The party PAUSES to look, then RESUMES.

TRENT  
She offered me her number. What should I have said? "No"? That would've hurt her feelings.

(MORE)

TRENT (CONT'D)  
This way she feels like the  
winner.

Trent smiles and waves to her across the room. She coyly waves back and makes a "phone sign" with her hand. Trent nods and smiles.

TRENT  
Tee can't roll with that, she's  
"business class".

ROB  
"Business class"?

SUE  
(explaining to Rob)  
Big butt... you know, can't fly  
coach.

MIKE  
I can't believe you.

Charles approaches the crew.

CHARLES  
They're out of Glenlivet.

MIKE  
What else is going on?

TRENT  
We could hit the Dresden.

Overhead LONG SHOT of the swingers entrenched in the CROWDED PARTY.

SUE  
Yeah. This place is dead, anyway.

CUT TO:

46

**EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - OUTSIDE THE CHATEAU MARMONT -  
NIGHT**

46

The swingers have left the party and are heading to their cars. They are all parked in a row, one behind the other. They each climb behind the wheel of their own car. They pull out in UNISON.

They travel like a train with their bumpers ALMOST TOUCHING.

CUT TO:

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREETS - NIGHT**

SHOTS of the CAR-TRAIN driving and making turns.

"O SOLE MIO" reprise.

DISSOLVE TO:

48 **EXT. THE DRESDEN - VERMONT AVE. - HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT** 48

The car-train BREAKS UP to nose-in park behind the bar. They all "club" their steering wheels.

CUT TO:

49 **INT. "THE DRESDEN ROOM" - SAME** 49

The SWINGERS lounge in a booth against the cork-paneled wall, sipping cocktails. They watch MARTY and ELAYNE, the resident lounge act, perform a jazz fusion cover of "Staying Alive" on synth and upright bass. The seventies are alive and well here, but they're starting to yellow around the edges...

The room is busy, but not packed.

The swingers have all had a few.

CHARLES

I know what you're saying, man. I don't know what to tell you...

ROB

... I mean, does it have to be "Goofy"? I was playing Hamlet off-Broadway two months ago, for crying out loud...

Trent and Sue are involved in a different conversation. They are observing two HOT GIRLS at another cocktail table.

The girls are wearing short plaid skirts with black stockings pulled up to midhigh. It's the "catholic-school-girl-gone-bad" look.

The girls are a little too touchy-feely with each other, suggesting a certain sexual open-mindedness.

TRENT

It's on.

SUE

You think?

TRENT  
Baby, I know it is. It's a black  
diamond trail...

SUE  
... double diamond...

TRENT  
... but it's worth the risk. True  
or false: It's worth the risk.

SUE  
True.

As they get up to leave...

MIKE  
God bless you guys.

They cross to the ladies.

Mike's P.O.V.

The girls seem at first cold, the receptive. Trent and Sue  
join their table and share some laughs.

Mike half-heartedly looks on. He is obviously not happy with  
where he stands on the bell-curve of masculinity.

Mike, looking for any kind of escape, crosses to the bar.

CUT TO:

50

**INT. BAR - DRESDEN ROOM - SAME**

50

Mike unsuccessfully tries to catch the attention of the middle  
aged BARTENDER.

MIKE  
(to himself)  
I can't even get this guy to  
notice me...

A cute BLONDE sitting at the bar chuckles at his comment.

Mike is at first self-conscious, then pushes ahead.

MIKE  
You like laughing at the misery of  
others?

BLONDE  
I'm sorry, I couldn't help it.  
(MORE)

BLONDE (CONT'D)

Let me make it up to you.

She raises her finger and the bartender immediately approaches.

BARTENDER

What can I get you?

MIKE

I'll have a Dewars on the rocks.

He goes to fix it.

MIKE

Thanks.

BLONDE

I've seen you somewhere...Where have I seen you?

MIKE

You ever go to the Kelbo's? On Pico?

BLONDE

... maybe...

MIKE

... Monday nights? I host an open mike...

BLONDE

You're a comedian?

MIKE

Yeah.

BLONDE

What's that like?

MIKE

(trying to bluff, not an ounce of sarcasm)

Well, you know, it's tough. A lot of traveling. A lot of hotels... but, you know, it's a dream... and the money's really good. I think I might buy another really expensive imported car after my next gig in Vegas...

BLONDE

(politely interrupting)

I know! Starbucks!

(MORE)

BLONDE (CONT'D)  
I served you an espresso at Starbucks.

MIKE  
Are you sure? Maybe...

BLONDE  
Yes! Remember? You asked me for an application? I introduced you to the manager?

MIKE  
(trying to pull out of the dive)  
Oh, yeah... Boy, that must've been a while ago.

BLONDE  
I'd say about two weeks.

MIKE  
Probably a little longer than that, but, whatever.

BLONDE  
(smiling at him)  
You better pay the man.

Mike notices the bartender, who has been waiting patiently with the drink.

MIKE  
(fumbling with the money)  
Oh... Sorry.

She chuckles. He pays and throws down a two-dollar tip apologetically.

MIKE  
(tactical retreat)  
Well, thank you...?

BLONDE  
Nikki.

MIKE  
Thank you, Nikki.

He walks away kicking himself. He is interrupted by Trent and Sue, who both hold up cocktail napkins with scribbles.

TRENT  
We got the digits, baby.

MIKE  
What a surprise.

TRENT  
What's wrong? I saw you talking  
to that beautiful blonde baby.

SUE  
She was cute.

MIKE  
She didn't like me... I made a  
fool of myself...

TRENT  
Baby, don't talk that way, baby...

SUE  
You are so money, and you don't  
even know it...

TRENT  
That's what I keep trying to tell  
him.  
(to Mike)  
You're so money, you don't even  
know...

MIKE  
Please, don't mess with me right  
now...

TRENT  
We're not messing with you...

SUE  
... we're not...

TRENT  
You're like this big beer with  
claws and fangs...

SUE  
... and big fuckin' teeth...

TRENT  
... and teeth... And she's like  
this little bunny cowering in the  
corner...

SUE  
... shivering...

TRENT

... And you're just looking at your claws like "How do I kill this bunny?"...

SUE

... You're just poking at it...

TRENT

... Yeah. You're just gently batting it around... and the rabbit's all scared...

SUE

... and you got big claws and fangs...

TRENT

... and fangs... and you're like "I don't know what to do. How do I kill this bunny?"...

SUE

... you're like a big bear.

Beat. Mike smiles.

MIKE

You're not just, like, fucking with me?

TRENT

No, baby!

SUE

... honestly...

TRENT

... you're money...

SUE

... you're so fuckin mmmoney.

TRENT

Now go over there and get those digits.

SUE

You're money.

TRENT

(pulling him aside, dead serious)

Now when you talk to her, I don't want you to be the guy in the PG-13 movie that everyone's pulling for. I want you to be the guy in the rated R movie who you're not sure if you like.

Mike nods and, energized by the bombardment, crosses back to the bar and right into the fray.

Trent and Sue rejoin the other swingers.

Swinger's P.O.V. of Mike decisively engaging her in conversation.

She laughs.

Out comes the pen and the cocktail napkin. Bingo.

Mike crosses back to the swingers' table and, using his body to shield Nikki's view, pretends to rip the napkin. This breaks the guys up.

Mike sits down and, after admiring the blotchy numerals, delicately folds the napkin and pockets it.

TRENT

See, baby. It's not that hard.

CHARLES

818?

MIKE

310.

Everyone reacts favorably to this area code.

MIKE

How long do I wait to call?

TRENT

A day.

MIKE

Tomorrow?

TRENT

No...

SUE

... Tomorrow, then a day.

TRENT

... Yeah.

MIKE

So, two days?

TRENT

Yeah. I guess you could call it that.

SUE

Definitely. Two days. That's the industry standard...

TRENT

(to Sue. shop talk)

... I used to wait two days. Now everyone waits two days. Three days is kinda money now, don't you think?

SUE

... Yeah. But two's enough not to look anxious...

TRENT

Yeah, but three days is kinda the money...

MIKE

(interrupting sarcastically)

Why don't I just wait three weeks and tell her I was cleaning out my wallet and found her number...

CHARLES

... then ask where you met her...

MIKE

Yeah, I'll tell her I don't remember and then I'll ask what she looks like.

(pause)

Then I'll ask if we fucked. How's that, Tee? Is that "the money"?

The guys laugh.

TRENT

Laugh all you want, but if you call to soon you can scare off a nice baby who's ready to party.

SUE  
Don't listen to him. You call  
whenever it feels right to you.

MIKE  
How long are you guys gonna wait  
to call your honeys?

TRENT & SUE  
Six days.

CUT TO:

51 **EXT. THE DRESDEN - PARKING LOT - OUT BACK - NIGHT**

51

The swingers are leaving through the back door. The doorway is congested with another group of guys who are entering.

A BALD GUY with a goatee brushes by Sue.

SUE  
Watch where you're going, asshole.

BALD GUY  
What'd you say, bitch?

SUE  
I said watch where you're going,  
bitch!

That's it. Now they're squaring off in the empty parking lot.

All the bald guy's boys fall in behind him. All the swingers fall in behind Sue. The swingers are not happy with Sue at all.

The two cliques contrast each other in every way.

The bald guys all have facial hair and multiple pierced extremities with the odd neck-tattoo thrown in for good measure.

Baggy denim and boots. Pot leaves and Pumas. Long, heavy key chains. Vintage 1994 whiteboy faux-gansta. They do, however, look big and mean next to our boys.

The early sixties style sweater jackets and blazers over button down shirts and tapered slacks don't quite have the same fear factor, but the boys do look classy.

The word "bitch" is growled out by the two of them a half dozen more times until...

Sue pulls a PISTOL out of his belt.

Everyone is SCARED. Especially the swingers.

SUE  
Now what, bitch? Now who's the  
bitch, bitch?

The bald guys HOLD UP THEIR HANDS and slowly back up to their  
ride.

BALD GUY  
Hey, man. I'm the bitch. I'm  
your bitch, okay? We're just  
gonna leave. Okay? I'm the  
bitch. I'm such a bitch, I can't  
even begin to tell you...

They jump in the car and SPEED AWAY.

Sue belts the gun and stands tall like Clint.

TRENT  
What the fuck..?

MIKE  
What an asshole. Didn't you see  
"Boys in the Hood"? Now one of us  
is gonna get shot.

SUE  
He's a bitch. He ain't gonna do  
nothing.

MIKE  
You asshole.

TRENT  
You dick.

SUE  
What'd you want me to do? Back  
down? He called me a bitch. We  
kept our rep.

CHARLES  
Fuck rep, I've got a callback  
tomorrow.

Charles leaves.

ROB  
Yeah, I gotta be up early  
tomorrow.

Rob leaves, shaken up.

MIKE

You asshole. Why are you carrying a gun? What? In case someone steps to you, Snoop Dogg?

SUE

Hey, man, you're not from here. You don't know how it is. I grew up in L.A....

TRENT

... Anaheim...

SUE

... Whatever. Things are different here. It's not like New York, Mikey.

MIKE

Yeah. Here it's easier to avoid trouble. It's not like you like in Compton where bullets are whizzing by your head every day. Nobody's mugging you on no subway. In New York the trouble finds you. Out here you gotta go look for it...

SUE

... People get carjacked...

TRENT

... Oh, who would jack your fuckin K-car? He's right, Sue. You don't need no gat.

SUE

Listen. Just because I was the only one with the balls to stand up to them...

TRENT

... Oh yeah, like "Cypress Hill" was gonna do anything...

MIKE

You live in such a fantasy world...

SUE

What about you, Mikey? At least I got balls. You're always whining about some bitch who dumped you a year ago...

MIKE

... It was six months, and she didn't dump...

SUE

... Whatever. You're like a whining little woman. Big deal. You got a fuckin' number. Whoopee! You'll fuck it up...

TRENT

... Sue...

SUE

Have you gotten laid once since you moved here? Did you fuck once?

TRENT

... Shut up, Sue...

SUE

I know for a fact you haven't, because you never shut up about it. You're like a little whiney bitch...

TRENT

Sue!

MIKE

No, Trent. He's right.

Mike walks to his car.

TRENT

Mikey!

It's too late. He's leaving.

Sue starts to open his mouth.

TRENT

Don't even talk to me.  
(pause)  
You asshole.

CUT TO:

Mike opens the door and flicks on the lights in his sparsely furnished single.

He drops his keys on the table and makes a bee line to the answering machine.

He pushes the button.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
She didn't call.

Mike collapses into his futon and lights a smoke.

Beat.

He pulls out the COCKTAIL NAPKIN. He stares at the number.

He looks at the clock. 2:20 AM.

He looks at the napkin.

He thinks better of it, and puts the napkin away.

Beat.

He takes out the napkin and picks up the phone.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
Don't do it, Mike.

MIKE  
Shut up.

He dials.

It rings twice, then...

NIKKI  
(recorded)  
Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.  
(beep)

MIKE  
Hi, Nikki. This is Mike. I met you tonight at the Dresden. I, uh, just called to say I, uh, I'm really glad we met and you should give me a call. So call me tomorrow, or, like, in two days, whatever. My number is 213-555-4679...  
(beep)

Mike hangs up.

Beat.

He dials again.

                  NIKKI  
                  (recorded)  
Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a  
message.  
                  (beep)

                  MIKE  
Hi, Nikki. This is Mike, again.  
I just called because it sounded  
like your machine might've cut me  
off before I gave you my number,  
and also to say sorry for calling  
so late, but you were still there  
when I left the Dresden, so I knew  
I'd get your machine. Anyway, my  
number is...  
                  (beep)

Mike calls back right away.

                  NIKKI  
                  (recorded)  
Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a  
message.  
                  (beep)

                  MIKE  
213-555-4679. That's all. I just  
wanted to leave my number. I  
don't want you to think I'm weird,  
or desperate or something...  
                  (he regrets saying it  
                  immediately)  
... I mean, you know, we should  
just hang out. That's it. No  
expectations. Just, you know,  
hang out. Bye.  
                  (beep)

He hangs up.

Beat.

He dials.

                  NIKKI  
                  (recorded)  
Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a  
message.  
                  (beep)

MIKE

I just got out of a six-year relationship. Okay? That should help to explain why I'm acting so weird. It's not you. It's me. I just wanted to say that. Sorry.

(pause)

This is Mike.

(beep)

He dials again. There's no turning back.

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.

(beep)

MIKE

Hi, Nikki. This is Mike again. Could you just call me when you get in? I'll be up for awhile, and I'd just rather talk to you in person instead of trying to squeeze it all...

(beep)

He dials yet again.

NIKKI

(recorded)

Hi. This is Nikki. Leave a message.

(beep)

MIKE

Hi, Nikki. Mike. I don't think this is working out. I think you're great, but maybe we should just take some time off from each other. It's not you, really. It's me. It's only been six months...

NIKKI

(Live, in person. she picks up the line)

Mike?

MIKE

Nikki! Great! Did you just walk in, or were you listening all along?





**INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY**

SHOT of answering machine.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Trent's voice)

... Pick up.... Pick up, Mikey...  
Are you home?

He is.

He is sitting in the same corner, smoking, with a two day beard. He is surrounded by full ashtrays and empty Tropicana containers. Billie Holiday's "Maybe you'll Be There" draws to a close on the C.D. player.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Trent's voice)

... I guess you're not home. Why don't you come out tonight, baby. We haven't seen you for two days. We're gonna play hockey at Sue's house til ten thirty then we're either going to the Lava Lounge for Sinatra night, or the Derby for the Royal Crown. We might also check out Swing Night at the Viper. If we're not there we'll be at the Three of Clubs. So come meet up with us. We'll see you there, gorgeous.

(beep)

DISSOLVE TO:

63

**INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

63

He hasn't moved.

The PHONE RINGS.

He looks to the answering machine hopefully as it picks up after one ring.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Rob's voice)

Mikey...? It's Rob. Pick up, buddy.

His shoulders slack with DISAPPOINTMENT. It's not Her.

## ANSWERING MACHINE

(Rob's voice)

... I'm downstairs. Buzz me in.  
I know you're home. Your lights  
are on and your car's here. Come  
on, buddy. Open up...

Mike picks up the phone, pushes "9", and hangs up.

He lights a cigarette.

A knock at the door.

Mike opens it, and Rob walks in with a brown bag.

He surveys the scene. He's seen this before. He moves some  
laundry off an armchair and sits down.

He pulls a pepperoni and a loaf of seminola out of the bag.

He hands Mike a pint of orange juice.

MIKE

Thanks, man.

ROB

No problem, buddy. You eat  
anything today?

Mike shakes his head, "no".

ROB

Yesterday?

Mike shakes his head again.

ROB

You haven't been drinking, have  
you?

MIKE

No. Just O.J.

Rob cuts into the pepperoni with his Swiss army knife. Mike  
drinks his juice.

MIKE

Sorry about what happened at the  
Dresden. I had no idea...

ROB

Don't sweat it. Now I got an L.A.  
gun story. You should hear the  
way I tell to the guys back home.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)  
He had an Uzi.

Mike half-smiles.

Beat.

ROB  
You want to talk about it?

MIKE  
What's the point?

ROB  
It's been two days. You should  
call that girl Nikki...

Mike grabs his head in pain.

MIKE  
Uuuuugh!

ROB  
Oh boy.

MIKE  
I'm such an asshole.

ROB  
She wasn't your type anyway.

Beat.

MIKE  
I think I'm gonna move Back East.

ROB  
Well, that's dumb.

MIKE  
What's dumb about it?

ROB  
Well, you're doing so well...

MIKE  
How am I doing well? I host an  
open mike and I played a fuckin'  
bus driver in a movie. Big  
fuckin' deal. I'm with an agency  
that specializes in fuckin'  
magicians. How good am I doing?

ROB

At least you didn't get turned  
down for Goofy...

MIKE

They turned you down?

ROB

They went for someone with more  
theme park experience. I woulda  
killed for that job.

Mike lets it sink in.

ROB

See, it's all how you look at it.  
If your life sucks, then mine is  
God awful. I mean, I moved out  
here partially because I saw how  
well you were doing. You got in  
the union, you got an agent. I  
thought if you could make it,  
maybe I could too...

MIKE

I didn't make it...

ROB

That's your problem, man. You  
can't see what you've got, only  
what you've lost. Those guys are  
right. You are "money".

Mike smiles, then...

MIKE

(starting to cry)

Then why won't she call...?

ROB

Because you left, man. She's got  
her own world to deal with in New  
York. She was a sweet girl but  
fuck her. You gotta move on. You  
gotta let go of the past. The  
future is so beautiful. Every day  
is so sunny out here. It's like  
Manifest Destiny man. I mean, we  
made it. What's past is prologue.  
That which does not kill us makes  
us stronger. All that shit.  
You'll get over it.

MIKE

How did you get over it? I mean  
how long 'til it stopped hurting?

ROB

Sometimes it still hurts. You  
know how it is, man. I mean, each  
day you think about it less and  
less. And then one day you wake  
up and you don't think of it at  
all, and you almost miss that  
feeling. It's kinda weird. You  
miss the pain because it was part  
of your life for so long. And  
the, boom, something reminds you  
of her, and you just smile that  
bittersweet smile.

We see that Mike has been GNAWING AWAY at Rob's pepperoni and  
semolina as he listens intently.

MIKE

You miss the pain?

ROB

... for the same reason you miss  
her. You lived with it so long.

MIKE

Wow.  
(finishing the loaf)  
You wanna grab a bite?

ROB

(smiling)  
Sure.

He helps Mike up.

ROB

By the way, the guys back home  
said she put on some weight.

MIKE

(smiling)  
You always know the right thing to  
say.

CUT TO:

Trent opens the door.

He sees Mike standing there dressed for trouble. His face lights up.

TRENT  
Mikey! Guys, Mikey's here!

GUYS (O.S.)  
(from the living room)  
Mikey!

Mike HEARS the sound of a hotly contested SEGA MATCH.

SUE (O.S.)  
Bitch! You little bitch!

The CAMERA follows Mike and Trent into the...

65

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SUE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

65

Mike's JAW DROPS when he sees that Sue has been playing hockey against the BALD GUY from the Dresden.

BALD GUY  
Bitch! You bitch!

The room is filled with the BALD GUY'S CREW. They greet Mike as they take hits off their forty ouncers.

SUE  
Trent. Take over.

They do a high-speed "controller handoff."

Sue crosses to Mike.

SUE  
I'm so sorry, man. You were so right. I got rid of the gun.

MIKE  
What are they doing here?

SUE  
We ran into them that night at Roscoe's. Tee cleared it up, I apologized, bought them some chicken and waffles. They fuckin love Tee. That boy can talk.

All the baldies howl and slap hands at something funny Tee said.

SUE

But most important, man, I'm sorry about what I said. I was drunk... My adrenaline was going...

MIKE

Don't sweat it, man. I needed a kick in the ass. We're better friends for it.

SUE

Thanks, man.  
(they hug)  
I've been hating myself for the last two days.

MIKE

Believe me, I know what that's like.  
(then to Trent)  
Yo, Double Down! What time are we leaving?

TRENT

Five minutes, baby. Hey, it's been two days. You should call Nikki and see if she wants to meet you there.

CUT TO:

66      **EXT. "THE DERBY" - HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT**      66

The THREE SWINGERS are waved pass the line by the doorman in a Scorsese-style STEADICAM SHOT which continues up the stairs and through a curtained doorway into...

67      **INT. "THE DERBY" - HOLLYWOOD NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT**      67

They enter the domed decco lounge and the full house parts for them and greets them in perfect Scorsese choreography.

They pass the billiard table and the circular brass rail bar.

The six piece swing band decked out in zoot suits wail on stage as the crowded dance floor whirls.

The swingers eventually settle into a dark curtained-off onstage booth.

Sue thrusts a scotch into Mike's hand.

**INT. "THE DERBY" - MOTAGE - NIGHT**

Montage of smoking, drinking, and carousing.

The parquet floor is packed with swinging hepsters dressed in Hollywood's take on forties threads. The dancing is full-blown overcrowded slam swing. The floor is full, and everyone is damn good. This definitely aint amateur night.

69

**INT. BAR AREA - THE DERBY - NIGHT**

69

Mike steps up to the bar to refill his drink. He sees a BRUNETTE sitting at the bar.

She's cute.

Real cute.

She glows.

There's something fresh about her. She's dressed nice, but different. She definitely is not a regular.

She throws Mike a half-smile, then looks away.

He looks away.

Should he?

He shakes his head to himself. No.

Beat.

He looks over at her again.

Mike's P.O.V. of a WHITE BUNNY sitting on the bar stool.

He smiles, shrugs, and CROSSES TO HER.

When he gets to her she has reverted back to human form.

MIKE

Hi.

BRUNETTE

Hi.

MIKE

I'm Mike.

BRUNETTE

Hi, Mike. I'm Lorraine.

MIKE  
Like the quiche?

BRUNETTE  
(smiles)  
Yes. Like the quiche.

MIKE  
I like quiche.

BRUNETTE  
I thought real men don't like  
quiche.

MIKE  
My reputation seems to have  
preceded me.

BRUNETTE  
Why? You're not a real man?

MIKE  
Not lately.

MATCH CUT TO:

Trent points the conversation out to Sue from across the room.  
Trent and Sue's P.O.V. of Mike and Lorraine having an unforced,  
enjoyable conversation.

TRENT  
It's on...

SUE  
... it's on.

MATCH CUT TO:

BACK IN THE TRENCHES:

BRUNETTE  
... so I thought, what the hell,  
they make movies in L.A., not in  
Michigan, so I moved here.

MIKE  
Just like that?

BRUNETTE  
Well, it wasn't the simple, but  
yeah.

MIKE  
How was it hard?

BRUNETTE  
Well, I left someone very special  
behind.

MIKE  
Tell me about it...

BRUNETTE  
You too?

MIKE  
Yeah.

BRUNETTE  
(lights up)  
I thought I was going to die.

MIKE  
It's been six months and I'm just  
starting to get over it.

BRUNETTE  
Oh, God. That's two more than me.  
Tell me it gets better.

MIKE  
(smiles)  
It does.

BRUNETTE  
How?

MIKE  
Well, it still sucks, but you  
start to see that there are  
advantages to being single.

BRUNETTE  
(coyly)  
Like what?

MIKE  
What what? What advantages?

LORRAINE  
You said there are advantages to  
being single. I want to know what  
the advantages are.

MIKE  
(playing along)  
Well... You can talk to a  
beautiful woman at a bar without  
worrying if anyone's watching you.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue are watching from across the room.

TRENT  
It's on.

SUE  
... it's definitely on.

BACK TO:

BRUNETTE  
What else?

MIKE  
What else...? Let's see... You  
have complete freedom.

BRUNETTE  
To do what?

MIKE  
I don't know.... To grow, to go  
out. Whatever you want.

BRUNETTE  
Anything?

MIKE  
Anything.

BRUNETTE  
Like if I meet a handsome young  
man and I wanted to ask him to  
dance? I can do that?

MIKE  
Uh, if the guy wants to.

BRUNETTE  
You don't think the guy would find  
me attractive enough to dance  
with?

MIKE  
Yes. I mean, no.  
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

I mean, maybe he would find her, I mean you attractive. Maybe he doesn't like to dance. Maybe all he likes to do is just stand around and drink and smoke and look cool with his buddies who don't dance either...

BRUNETTE

Maybe it doesn't matter if he's a good dancer cause it's a slow song, if that's what he's afraid of.

MIKE

(smirk)

No... Maybe that's not the case. Maybe she shouldn't be such a smug little shit because she'd be surprised at what a good dancer he really is, but it's been a long time and he doesn't know if he's ready to...

BRUNETTE

Mike...

She gets up. She's beautiful. She is beautiful.

BRUNETTE

... Will you dance with me?

She's in great shape, and look how classy her vintage dress looks. A vision from the forties. She's too good for this place. She belongs on the nose of a B-52. What can he say, but...

MIKE

Sure I will.

He awkwardly leads her to the unusually empty dance floor. They START TO DANCE. It's a slow song and they boringly rock back and forth. Mike is self-conscious, but her touch. Oh her touch.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue watching in disbelief.

SUE

It is on.

TRENT  
... it is so on.

BACK TO:

The couple's dance is cut short as there were only a few bars left of the slow ballad. Mike smiles politely in relief and begins to lead Lorraine off the floor.

She pulls him back. He's not getting off that easy. She wants a whole song. He politely holds her, poised for another slow number. They're alone on the floor.

Much to Mike's dismay, the song begins with a DRIVING TOM TOM SOLO. This cues every hep cat in the Derby that the big one's coming. They all flood the floor for the last dance of the night.

Mike pleadingly shakes his head at Lorraine. It's too fast. Her eyes narrow as her grip tightens. No sympathy here.

The band breaks into the full-tilt swing number and the dance floor writhes around them.

They stand motionless for what seems like an eternity.

Gut check. Fuck it. Sink or swim.

Mike grabs her like a man grabs a woman. It's just a simple six-count swing step, but they're in perfect harmony.

Mike and Lorraine look into each others eyes. It's on, baby.

As Mike's courage grows, the moves start to flow. A spin at first. Then a double twirl. It's not long before he's throwing her through combinations that stand out even among the pros.

CUT TO:

Trent and Sue, mouths agape.

BACK TO:

Mike is whipping her smoothly through violent-looking combinations without a trace of hesitation, and, boy, can she follow.

The set ends with a flourishing crescendo. They're frozen in a final dip, panting through a glaze of clean sweat.

Mike and Lorraine smile and look into each other's eyes. The smile slowly disappears. Will they kiss?

They're close.

Really close.

Lips almost touching.

Mike tries to muster-up the courage, but it's been so long.

He can't do it. He lets her up.

The floor clears. Exhausted dancers push past them. Forget it. The moment's gone.

What the hell. They had a great time. What's the hurry?

SOFT CUT TO:

70

**EXT. LA BREA AVENUE - OUTSIDE THE DERBY - NIGHT**

70

Mike is walking Lorraine to her car. They come upon a parked Escort.

LORRAINE

Well... This is it.

MIKE

Listen. I had a great time.

LORRAINE

Me too.

MIKE

I would love to see you again  
sometime.

LORRAINE

I'll be around.

MIKE

That's not good enough. I want to  
make plans to see you.

LORRAINE

Let me get a pen out of my car.  
(opens the door)

Do you have something to write on?

Mike hands her a business card.

LORRAINE

(looking at it)  
You're a comedian?

MIKE

Yeah. And an actor.

LORRAINE

I'll have to come see you  
sometime.

MIKE

If and when I get a real gig I'll  
call you.

LORRAINE

It's not going too well?

MIKE

When I lived in New York they made  
it sound like they were giving out  
sit-coms to stand-ups at the  
airport. I got off the plane in  
L.A. six months ago and all I got  
to show for it is a tan.

LORRAINE

Didn't you tell me to be patient  
with my career?

MIKE

... Yeah, but entertainment law  
isn't something you just jump  
into...

LORRAINE

Neither is acting. Not if you're  
serious about it.

(She writes her number on the  
card.)

Can I have one of these?

MIKE

Why, you like the duck with the  
cigar?

(hands her a card)

LORRAINE

Yeah. Nice touch. It's the logo  
from "You Bet Your Life", right?

MIKE

Good eye. Not one club owner got  
it. They all ask me why I got  
Donald Duck on my card.

LORRAINE

Hey, at least it's not Goofy.

Beat.

LORRAINE  
Well, I should be getting...

MIKE  
... It's really getting late.

LORRAINE  
... home. It's getting late.  
Yeah.

Beat.

LORRAINE  
Can I give you a ride to your  
car...?

MIKE  
... Nah. I'm right across the  
street...

LORRAINE  
... Which one...?

MIKE  
... The red piece of shit over  
there...

LORRAINE  
... well, it suits you...

MIKE  
... get the hell outta here  
already...

Mike leans in and slowly gives her the sweetest, softest, most  
innocent kiss.

He backs up. She's got that goofy look as she unlocks her club  
and starts the car.

LORRAINE  
Bye.

She drives off.

He watches her go.

DISSOLVE TO:

71

**EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT**

71

Mike is driving Trent and Sue home in his car.

CUT TO:

TRENT

You were off your ass back there!  
Where the hell did you learn to do  
all that twirly whirly shit?

MIKE

I took a ballroom class with  
Michelle. I never danced with  
anyone but her, til tonight. That  
Lorraine chick is good.

TRENT

You were good. Did you see how  
she was vibing you?

SUE

Sorry man.

TRENT

Yeah. You probably coulda hit  
that tonight if you didn't have to  
drive us home.

SUE

... Definitely...

MIKE

It's not like that...

TRENT

Don't give me that! She liked  
you, man.

MIKE

I know she liked me. I mean, it's  
not like I wanted to do anything  
with her tonight.

SUE

Good for you, man. He's being  
smart.

MIKE

She's really special, guys.

TRENT

The bear's got his claws back.

SUE

Be smart about it.

TRENT  
I'm telling you. Wait three  
days...

SUE  
You don't have to wait three  
days...

TRENT  
... Okay, two...

SUE  
... just be smart about it.

MIKE  
Guys... Guys... I got it under  
control.

TRENT  
Oh. He's got it under control...

SUE  
... Well, then, I guess we don't  
have to worry about him anymore.

TRENT  
Our little baby's growing up...

Trent and sue pretend to cry and hug each other.

Mike looks at them in the rear view mirror.

He smirks and shakes his head.

MIKE  
You guys are such assholes.

BACK TO:

73 INT. MIKE'S CAR - SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

73

Trent and Sue scream at the top of their lungs as they cruise  
down Sunset. Alcohol is a terrible drug.

DISSOLVE TO:

74 INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

74

Mike is standing in the middle of the room looking at  
LORRAINE'S NUMBER on the back of the BUSINESS CARD.

He looks at the clock.

2:45 A.M.

He looks back at the NUMBER.

Beat.

He thinks better of it. He wedges it into a crack in the answering machine and unbuttons his shirt for bed...

ANSWERING MACHINE  
(synthesized voice)  
Good move.

Mike smirks.

FADE TO:

75        **INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING**

75

Mike wakes up and rolls out of bed.

He walks to the phone and pulls the CARD out of the crack.

He looks at the clock.

12:10 PM.

He sticks it back in the crack.

He makes an "x" on a day of his calendar.

CUT TO:

76        **INT. MIKE'S BATHROOM - MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY**

76

Mike brushes his teeth.

He looks at the card clipped into the frame of the bathroom mirror.

He turns the faucet, allowing exactly ONE DROP of his precious Los Angeles water supply to drip onto his toothbrush.

He resumes brushing.

CUT TO:

77        **EXT. "BOURGEOIS PIG" COFFEEHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

77

Mike sips espresso as he stares at the CARD.

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Mike is playing solitaire with the CARD laying above all the playing cards.

The PHONE RINGS.

Mike rushes to get it, then forces himself to wait another ring and a half exactly.

MIKE

Hello?

FEMALE VOICE

Hi Michael.

MIKE

Michelle?

MICHELLE

How's it going? It's been a while...

MIKE

... Six months.

MICHELLE

How are you doing?

MIKE

Fine... I guess. You?

MICHELLE

Good.

(pause)

I think about things.

MIKE

Yeah?

MICHELLE

Yeah.

MIKE

What kind of things?

MICHELLE

You know, us.

MIKE

I thought you met someone else.

MICHELLE

It doesn't matter.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)  
I think about you every day.

MIKE  
Really?

MICHELLE  
I miss you, Mike.

MIKE  
Why didn't you call?

MICHELLE  
I couldn't. Do you know how hard  
it's been not to call you? I pick  
up the phone every night.  
Whenever that commercial comes  
on...

MIKE  
... the Micheline commercial...

MICHELLE  
... Yeah, with the baby in the  
tire. One time I started to cry  
right in front of Pierre...

MIKE  
Pierre... That's his name?  
Pierre? Is he French?

MICHELLE  
No, he's not... Listen I don't  
want to talk about him. That's a  
whole other headache. I called  
because I heard you might be  
moving back to Queens...

The BEEP of Mike's CALL WAITING.

MIKE  
Hang on. Let me get rid of this  
call.

He clicks to the OTHER LINE.

MIKE  
Hello?

LORRAINE  
Hi, Mike?

MIKE  
Lorraine?

LORRAINE  
Are you on the other line?

MIKE  
Yeah, hold on.

LORRAINE  
I can call back...

MIKE  
No, no. Hold on.

He clicks back to the OTHER LINE.

MIKE  
Hi.

MICHELLE  
I heard you might be moving  
back...

MIKE  
Yeah, uh, I don't think that's  
gonna be happening any time  
soon... Listen, can I call you  
right back? I gotta take this  
call...

MICHELLE  
I'm not home and going out of town  
tomorrow for a week. Can't you  
talk for five more minutes?

MIKE  
I really want to catch up with  
you, but I've gotta take this  
call. They're holding. I'll talk  
with you when you get back in  
town. Bye.

MICHELLE  
Goodbye. I lov.....  
(click)

Mike SWITCHES LINES, cutting Michelle off mid-sentence.

MIKE  
Hi. Sorry about that.

LORRAINE  
You didn't have to get off the  
other line. I would've called you  
back.

MIKE

That's okay. I wanted to talk to you.

Mike holds his palm over the receiver and looks at the answering machine.

Beat.

MIKE

(to answering machine)  
Do you realize that I've been waiting for that call for six months and I cut her off?

ANSWERING MACHINE

(synthesized voice)  
You're money, baby.

Mike smiles.

Back to Lorraine.

MEDIUM SHOT of Mike through his window as he looks down onto Franklin avenue and talks on the phone.

MIKE

Hi, Lorraine. Thanks for holding on.

LORRAINE

Listen, Mike. You really didn't have to get off the line. I just wanted to ask you one thing. I know I shouldn't have called, I mean, my friends said I should wait two days... Oh God, I probably sound like such a schoolgirl... It's just that it's tonight only... I mean, it's Sinatra's birthday and they have this thing every year at "The Room". Do you know where that is? It's impossible to find if you've never been there. I don't understand why none of the clubs in Hollywood have signs. Anyway, I'm so bad at this, if you're not busy I thought you might...

Mike smiles as the CAMERA PULLS BACK from the window and backwards down Franklin Avenue in a reverse of the first shot of the movie. The soundtrack kicks in with Sinatra's "Here's To The Losers"....

FRANK

Here's to those who love not too  
wisely, no, not too wisely, but  
too well... To the girl who sighs  
with envy when she hears that  
wedding bell... To the guy who'd  
throw a party if he knew someone  
to call... Here's to the losers...  
Bless them all...

... We rise and pass the glowing Hollywood sign. It's still a  
full moon...

FRANK

Here's to those who drink their  
dinners when that lady doesn't  
show... To the girls who wait for  
kisses underneath that  
mistletoe... To the lonely summer  
lovers when the leaves begin to  
fall... Here's to the losers...  
Bless them all...

... Past the blinking red beacon of the Capital Records  
building...

FRANK

Hey Tom, Dick and Harry... Come in  
out of the rain... Those torches  
you carry... Must be drowned in  
champagne...

... Up and over Hollywood Boulevard. High above the city...

FRANK

Here's the last toast of the  
evening... Here's to those who  
still believe... All the losers  
will be winners... All the givers  
shall receive... Here's to  
trouble-free tomorrows... May your  
sorrows all be small... Here's to  
the losers... Bless them all.

... It's all just a pool of beautiful golden light.

FADE TO BLACK.