

THE BIRD CAGE

UNITED ARTISTS

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Adapted from La Cage Aux Folles
by Elaine May

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REV. 5/17/95 (Gold)

REV. 6/23/95 (Salmon)****

REV. 7/13/95 (Cherry) *

*The production office used peach colored revision pages.

**The production office used gold colored revision pages.

***The production office used blue colored revision pages.

****The production office used green colored revision pages.

FADE IN:

1 HELICOPTER SHOT - THE SEA - DUSK 1

glittering with the reflected light of sunset. Just ahead is the outline of a city and as we move in, we begin to see pale sand dotted with tanned bodies, a pastel street filled with art deco buildings and upscale tourists, and a heavily trafficked road with a flashing yellow sign that says: NO CRUISING WHEN THE LIGHT IS FLASHING.

VOICES SINGING: OS

"We are family,
I got all my sisters with me,
We are family,
Get up everybody and sing..."...

2 The CAMERA continues on, tracking the buildings now. 2

As it passes each one, a neon sign comes up revealing the name of the club or restaurant inside. We hear the sounds of music and voices mixing and blending with the opening song...until we reach a sign that says: Armand Goldman's THE BIRDCAGE! - starring THE GOLDMAN GIRLS and STARINA!

VOICES SINGING: OS

(they are louder now)

"Everyone can see we're together
as we walk on by,
And we fly like birds of a feather
I won't tell no lie..."...

3 A LITTLE KNOT OF CUSTOMERS STANDS OUTSIDE THE BIRDCAGE 3
mostly couples of various ages, and the CAMERA follows them as they make their way through the door...

4 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT 4

a small, dark room crammed with tables.

ONSTAGE

SIX GIRLS--performing the Opening Number.

VOICES ONSTAGE:

"We are family
I got all my sisters with me..."...

(X)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

At the door ARMAND GOLDMAN greets a few incoming customers, then strolls through the club inspecting his domain.

He opens the door to a small kitchen where a kneeling chef is transferring a chicken breast from the floor back to a plate.

He closes the door, quickly, and moves on.

A WAITER comes up to him.

WAITER

The Kennedys are here again for supper--it's the third time this week. Shall I give them a free round of drinks?

ARMAND

Ted?

WAITER

No, just the younger Kennedys.

ARMAND

I wish we could get Ted.
(after a beat)
Give them a free round of coffee.

He starts forward again. When he reaches the area of the stage, he pulls aside a black velour and steps through.

5 BACKSTAGE

5

Narrow, cramped. Little more than a corridor lined with cubicles and doors.

A stage manager (CYRIL) stands poised, holding a wig and a costume, his eyes on the stage. Armand walks up to him.

(X)

ARMAND

Where's Starina?

CYRIL

Agador just called. She'll be down in five. Whoops...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Cyril springs into action as the opening number ends and one (X) of the girls runs offstage, tearing off her costume for a quick change. Under the sequined bra is a flat chest. Under the flowing wig is a crew cut.

Under the little silk skirt is a jock strap made of ace bandages and tape.

Armand peeks out at the audience.

ARMAND

You know, we should try for three shows on Saturday. Look at that crowd.

A door in the opposite wall suddenly flies open, missing the changing performer and Cyril by inches. A dark, barefoot man in leopard skin shorts (AGADOR) stands on the bottom step, panting.

AGADOR

Starina won't go on. She's still in her robe.

ARMAND

Oh, damn.

AGADOR

I don't know what happened this time.

ARMAND

Go back upstairs and try to get her dressed. I'll be right behind you. Oh, merde!

Agador turns and hurries through the door up the stairs. Armand turns to Cyril.

ARMAND

Cyril! Tell Carmen to get ready to do Starina's number, just in case. You understand?

CYRIL

Don't be stern. I'll fall apart. Oh, my God!

6 INT. BEDROOM/DRESSING ROOM - STARINA

6

clutching a flimsy robe about him as he faces Agador.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

AGADOR
 (holding out high heels
 and stockings)
 Just put these on. Please.

ALBERT
 No, Agador. Victoria Page will not
 dance the dance of the red shoes
 tonight. Or any other night.

AGADOR
 Just the stockings.

ALBERT
 Victoria Page is dead.

AGADOR
 Just this stocking...

ALBERT
 Do you know how she died?
 (he laughs softly)
 Alone. Weeping for her lover.
 "For each man kills the thing he
 loves..." Have you eaten? You
 look haggard.

AGADOR
 Please...

ALBERT
 (handing him a fistful of
 packets)
 Here. These are supplements. I
 bought them for Armand but...
 (his eyes fill)
 ...that's all over now.

7 INT. STAIRS LEADING TO THE APARTMENT - ARMAND 7

hurries up the last few stairs and opens the door, revealing
 a living room. He walks in and calls:

ARMAND
 Albert!

8 STARINA'S ROOM 8

Starina screams...then runs to the door and, before Agador
 can stop him, locks it and leans against it. Armand begins
 knocking.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

ARMAND'S VOICE
Come on, Albert, open the door.

ALBERT
Get out!

ARMAND'S VOICE
Albert! Open it!

Armand's knocking grows louder.

AGADOR
Let's open the door for him, shall we? Let's be nice.

ALBERT
No. I don't want him to see me.
I'm hideous.

The door suddenly bursts open and Armand stands there, holding his shoulder. Starina screams wildly, then runs to the window and covers himself with a curtain.

ARMAND
Do you want to ruin me?

ALBERT
Don't look at me. I'm hideous!
Hideous! Fat and hideous. Oh,
Agador. I'm in such pain...

AGADOR
I know. It will pass.

ALBERT
It will never pass. I hate my
life! Don't forget to take those
supplements.

ARMAND
Are you crazy! Do you realize that
there's a packed house out there--

ALBERT
That's all I am to you, isn't it?
A meal ticket.

ARMAND
(closing his eyes)
I can't stand this!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 2

8

ALBERT

Never mind about my feelings.
Never mind about my suffering.
It's just about "your show." Not
even "our" show. "Your" show.
Well, I want a palimony agreement
and I want it now.

ARMAND

Well, I don't have a palimony
agreement on me now. Is tomorrow
all right.

ALBERT

Don't use that tone to me! That
sarcastic, contemptuous tone that
means you know everything because
you're a man and I know nothing
because I'm a woman.

ARMAND

You're not a woman.

ALBERT

Oh! You bastard!

AGADOR

Take it easy, Armand.

ALBERT

(to Agador)

Whatever I am he made me. I was
adorable once. Young and full of
hope. Now I'm this short, fat,
insecure, middle-aged thing.

ARMAND

I made you short?

Cyril races into the apartment and stands gasping in the
doorway.

CYRIL

What do I do?--the number's nearly
over. Do I send Carmen on for
Starina?

ARMAND

Yes.

ALBERT

No! How dare you!

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 3

8

ARMAND
(to Cyril)
Do it!

Cyril starts out.

ALBERT
No!

Cyril stops.

ARMAND
Cyril!

Cyril starts out.

ALBERT
No!

Cyril stops.

ARMAND
CYRIL!

ALBERT
Please! I'll go on. Don't give my
number away. I'll be good. You'll
see.

ARMAND
(to Cyril)
All right. Put the mambo number
on and tell Dante and Beatrice to
stand by with the staircase. Go.

(X)

Cyril races out.

ALBERT
My hands are shaking. Agador, I
need some Pirin tablets. Quickly.

ARMAND
What? What are you taking?

AGADOR
(taking out two tablets
wrapped in Kleenex)
Here. One before the show and one
after. But no more.

ALBERT
Thank you, thank you my darling
Agador. Give me...a moment...

Armand and Agador turn and start out. Albert stuffs a piece
of candy into his mouth as they go out and into...

Armand closes the door behind them, then turns on Agador...

ARMAND

What are you doing? Why are you giving him drugs? What the hell are Pirin tablets.

AGADOR

They're aspirin. With the "A" and the "S" scraped off.

ARMAND

No! My God! What a brilliant idea.

10 INT. BEDROOM/DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

10

Albert is running a razor over his arms. Armand runs in...stops.

ARMAND

I don't believe this! You're shaving your arms now!

ALBERT

I didn't have time to wax. Indifference is the most awful thing in the world, Armand.

(he begins applying mascara)

I've lost and gained over a hundred pounds in the last year...

(slapping on make-up)

I've yo-yo'd from a sixteen to a ten to a sixteen--and you've never said a word. Not one hint of encouragement or validation. If it wasn't for the Pirin tablets I don't think I could go on.

ARMAND

Albert, I'm going to kill myself if you don't finish making up.

ALBERT

You don't love me anymore, Armand.

ARMAND

Oh, shit!

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

There's a man in your life, isn't there? I sense it. And I saw a bottle of white wine chilling in the refrigerator. I only drink red. And so do you.

ARMAND

There's no man. I'm switching to white because red has tannins. There are 150 people out there waiting for you...

Starina hands Armand an anklet. Armand kneels.

ARMAND

(fastening the anklet)
...waiting to applaud you. To applaud the great Starina.

Starina suddenly kicks Armand, knocking him flat.

ALBERT

What do you do while I'm on stage? Where do you go while I'm killing myself on stage?

Armand begins to struggle up. Starina screams.

ALBERT

Go ahead. Hit me. Go on - that's what you want to do, isn't it? Well, do it! Hit me! Go on! Go ON!

Armand glances, discreetly, at his watch, then strikes out without aiming. His hand connects vaguely with Albert's shoulder. Albert screams and falls to the ground as if shot. Armand holds his hand, wincing in pain.

ALBERT

No more! No more! Please, no...
(he breaks off; looks up)
Are you all right?

ARMAND

I hurt my thumb.

ALBERT

Oh, my God, forgive me!

ARMAND

No, no. Forgive me, my little roundness, my little teddy bear.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: 2

10

ALBERT

Do you love me? Swear that you Do
you love me? Swear that you love
me.

ARMAND

Of course I love you.

ALBERT

Don't hurt me.

ARMAND

No.

ALBERT

My king.

ARMAND

My queen.

11 INT. CLUB - THE STAGE - NIGHT

11

The mambo number is still going on. Cyril stands in the wings biting his lip, his eyes on his watch. Immediately behind him, two girls stand poised on either side of a small, free standing, spiral staircase.

Suddenly, Cyril turns, closes his eyes in relief, then looks up at the out-of-frame top of the staircase and says:

CYRIL

Climb down, Carmen. He made it.

11A ANGLE - ARMAND, ALBERT

11A(X)

They stand, silhouetted for a moment in the doorway.

ARMAND

(softly)
Go--my queen.

ALBERT

My king...

He wafts out of frame.

The mambo music fades, Cyril hits a switch, the lights go...and Armand walks forward and speaks into a mike.

Armand's voice comes out of the darkness.

ARMAND'S VOICE

Ladies and gentleman, the one, the only, the incomparable--Starina!

Beatrice and Dante push the staircase onstage. A single spot hits the bottom rung and then moves up, higher and higher, until a pair of leopard boots appear, followed by legs, a pair of leopard gloves, holding a leopard muff, and then finally Starina's head, wearing a leopard hat.

ALBERT

Hello. I'm just back from Safari...

(X)

(waves muff; points to shoes)

Like him? Oh, don't look at me like that. I didn't kill him. He died. And left me everything.

(off the ladder now)

Hello, darling. Back again? Oh, look at those teeth. You must be a Kennedy.

(looks out)

Where are the adorable couple who're celebrating their anniversary here tonight?

(a middle-aged couple raise their hands)

Mon congrats, you sweeties, and I may be celebrating something myself soon. I think I've found "the one"--and he's not a white hunter, or the gorgeous pilot who flew me to meet the Sultan of Brunei, or even the Sultan of Brunei himself, who shall remain nameless. He's just a boy who works behind the counter of a 7-11 near the airport...

(begins singing)

"I know this grocery clerk, unpre-possessing..."

Armand stands in the wings watching for a few moments as Albert sings, then begins backing toward the door that leads upstairs...then freezes as Albert turns and sings a line to him...then starts again, then stops as a tall black man (CARMEN) dressed in the identical costume as Starina, steps into his path.

(CONTINUED)

CARMEN

I just want to say, very calmly, very quietly, that it isn't fair to make me get all ready to do Starina's number and then take it away because Albert decided to move his ass.

ARMAND

Don't you dare talk that way about Albert. And you're absolutely right.

He bolts for the stairs.

12 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - PATIO

12

Agador, the maid, now wearing a "big hair" red wig, is on the patio taking down the laundry and lip synching to Starina's number, which drifts up from downstairs. Armand rushes in.

ARMAND

Get that laundry down and go get the white wine out of the refrigerator and put it in a bucket with two glasses and take the night off.

AGADOR

Why do you treat me like a servant.

ARMAND

Because you're my fucking houseman. Now hurry!

AGADOR

My father was the shaman of his tribe, my mother was a high priestess...

ARMAND

Well, then it was pretty dumb of them to move to New Jersey.

AGADOR

It was, wasn't it? But they wanted me to have a career. When can I audition for you again?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

ARMAND

When you have talent. Will you
move! And take off Albert's wig
 or I'll tell him you're wearing it.

(X)

AGADOR

And I'll tell him that you're
 seeing someone else while he's on
 stage, you beast.

ARMAND

Go!

(X)

Agador tosses his head, proudly, and twirls out with the
 laundry.

(X)

ARMAND

(calling after him)
 And don't lock the front door when
 you leave.

Armand hurries into the bedroom, whips off his jacket and
 begins applying pancake.

MIT13

OMIT13

14 EXT. SIDE EXIT TO ARMAND'S APARTMENT

14

After a moment, Agador slouches out of the door, wearing
 thong sandals and a pouch purse slung over his shoulder. He
 saunters down the street as A TAXI draws up to the side
 entrance...and a YOUNG MAN gets out.

(X)

15 INT. THE PATIO - ARMAND

15

make-up completed, hurries out of the bedroom and begins
 fussily adjusting the candles...then stops as a voice behind
 him says, "Hi".

The young man (VAL) stands silhouetted in the doorway.
 Armand rushes to embrace him.

ARMAND

You keep getting better looking.

VAL

Thanks. So do you.

ARMAND

Oh, no. Really? I feel so
 bloated.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

ARMAND (cont'd)
(glances at his reflection in the glass door)
Do you really think I look good?

VAL

Primo.

ARMAND
You're sweet. I'm glad you let your hair grow. Did you eat?

(X)

VAL

I'm fine.

ARMAND
Would you like something to drink?

VAL

Beer if you have it.

ARMAND
I do not. Talk about bloat. White wine?

VAL

(abstractedly)
Swell.
(listening, nervously)
How long has Albert been on?

ARMAND
He just started and I gave Agador the night off so we're all alone. As requested. Since when do you like beer?

VAL

Look, I have something to tell you.

ARMAND

Yes?

VAL

And I don't want you to get...how you get.

(X)

ARMAND

Oh, my God.

VAL

I'm getting married.
(there is a pause)
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 2

15

ARMAND

Yes...

VAL

I didn't want to tell you over the phone...

(pours Armand some wine)

It's a girl. I met her at school. A wonderful girl. A really great girl... Are you upset?

ARMAND

(drinks his entire glass of wine)

But let me tell you why...

(refills the glass)

First of all, you're only twenty...

VAL

Look, pop, I know I'm young...but you've always said I was a very level headed guy. And I am. I have job offers, I know what I want my future to be...and I have an incredible role model.

ARMAND

Oh, please.

VAL

I do. I'm the only guy in my fraternity who doesn't come from a broken home.

ARMAND

Stop flattering me. It's cheap.

(turns away)

Well... This is...this...time thing is a joke, isn't it? Yesterday you were this little fat thing in diapers, going down that slide with your "quack-quack".

(he smiles)

Remember Mister Quack-quack?

(Val nods, uncomfortably)

I think Albert still has it somewhere...and today you're getting married...

(X)

VAL

Is it all right, pop?

ARMAND

Does it matter?

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 3

15

VAL

Yes. I want to hear you say it's all right before Albert comes up and starts screaming.

ARMAND

Well, I won't. I can't. It's too crazy. If you do this, you're on your own. Don't come to me, don't ask me for anything, I don't want anything to do with it.

VAL

(after a moment)

Okay. Well...

(picks up his jacket)

Goodbye, pop.

ARMAND

Goodbye. Come here!

(embraces him)

You little fool. As if I would let you go.

VAL

Then it's...is it all right?

ARMAND

Yes, yes, it's all right.

(he lifts the glass)

Put down your jacket and let's drink a toast to this catastrophe.

(looks at Val's anxious face)

I'm joking. It's all right. It's all right, son. What's the young lady's name?

VAL

Barbara.

16 INT. KEELEY HOUSE - SOMEWHERE IN OHIO - NIGHT

16

Expensively and carefully furnished. SENATOR KEELEY is shouting at his daughter (BARBARA). MRS. KEELEY is quickly closing the doors.

SENATOR KEELEY

Are you crazy? It's out of the question. You can't get married! You're not even eighteen!

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

MRS. KEELEY

Who is this boy, Barbie? When was the last time you saw him?

BARBARA

Please don't call me Barbie. This afternoon. At two o'clock. We've been sleeping together for a year.

SENATOR KEELEY

Good God! Has he been tested?

MRS. KEELEY

Kevin!

BARBARA

Yes! And so have I.

Mrs. Keeley screams. They both glance at her in annoyance - and then resume.

SENATOR KEELEY

Look, this will just have to wait until after the election. I can't deal with this now.

MRS. KEELEY

Where does this young man come from, Barbie..ra? Who is his father?

BARBARA

(tensely)

His father...is in the arts. On the council. The Council of Cultural Arts.

MRS. KEELEY

Really?

SENATOR KEELEY

The ones that funded the Mapplethorpe exhibit?

BARBARA

No, no. Goodness, no. He's a cultural attache to Greece.

MRS. KEELEY

Really?

SENATOR KEELEY

What the hell is that?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: 2

16

MRS. KEELEY

That...that's a diplomatic post,
isn't it? Almost like an
ambassador? What does the mother
do?

BARBARA

She's a...housewife.

MRS. KEELEY

Well, that's really refreshing,
isn't it, Kevin?

SENATOR KEELEY

I don't want to talk about this
now.

The telephone RINGS. Barbara snatches it up. Her father
hovers nearby.

BARBARA

(into the phone)

Hello? ... Yes, I just told them.

17 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT

17

Val on the phone, standing next to Armand who is holding a
wine glass.

VAL

Yes, me too. And my father is very
excited. In fact...

18 INT. KEELEY HOUSE - NIGHT - BARBARA

18

as Barbara listens to Val's voice.

VAL'S VOICE

...he's holding up his glass to
toast us...

Senator Keeley goes to a second phone...and presses two
buttons. Val's voice comes on over the phone microphone:

VAL'S VOICE

...I'll put him on. Pop?

ARMAND'S VOICE

No, no, no...

SENATOR KEELEY

I thought his parents
were in Greece.

BARBARA

(covering the mouthpiece)

Dad! Get off the phone!

19 ARMAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - ARMAND ON THE PHONE

19

ARMAND

Hello, Barbara? Here's to your future.

(bangs the glass against the phone and breaks it)

Shit! I'm sorry. That wasn't my toast. I just broke my glass...

BARBARA

That's all right. It was nice talking to you...

20 INT. KEELEY HOUSE - NIGHT

20

BARBARA

...And we'll talk again soon. Bye.

(she hangs up)

How dare you listen in on my conversation!

SENATOR KEELEY

You said his parents were in Greece.

BARBARA

They are.

SENATOR KEELEY

You saw this boy at two in the afternoon and now he's in Greece with his parents?

BARBARA

No. I...Greece? No. They're... his parents are back from Greece. For the winter. They're at their vacation house in...South Beach.

MRS. KEELEY

Is that like Palm Beach?

BARBARA

Close. It's about two minutes from Fisher Island...where Jeb Bush lives.

MRS. KEELEY

(impressed)

Really?

21 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - PATIO - NIGHT

21

He is sitting alone on the patio now, looking depressed, holding a new glass of wine. The shards of the broken wine glass are still on the floor.

There is the sudden SOUND of applause from below. Armand finishes his wine, ignoring the clump of footsteps coming up the stairs. After a moment, Albert bursts in.

He stares at the glass in Armand's hand, then at Val's glass on the table next to the empty bottle. He points...

ALBERT

Ah-hah!

ARMAND

Wait...

ALBERT

(hurling a vase)
Who is he! Who is he!

ARMAND

Will you stop screaming. It's Val.
It's Val. He's in his room. Go
on, check if you don't believe me.

22 CLOSE SHOT - VAL'S FACE

22

lying on a pillow, surrounded by darkness, the covers pulled up to his chin. His eyes are closed, perhaps a shade too tightly. A hand comes down and brushes the hair off his forehead.

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL Albert, his face transformed by affection, looking down at Val. After a moment, he starts out, stops to pick up the clothes strewn on the floor, then shaking his head, fondly, tiptoes out.

23 EXT. STREETS OF SOUTH BEACH - DAY

23

Albert, in mint green slacks, walks down a narrow street lined with markets...greeting the merchants as he goes from stand to stand, squeezing, smelling, tasting....

VOICES

"We've got some nice lobsters
today, Albert!"

"Look at these melons. Perfect!"

ALBERT

Not ripe. No, no. Too ripe. These
are nice. I'll take three. Better
make it six, the piglet is home.

(X)

(X)

(X)

25 INT. BAKERY - DAY

25

BAKERY CLERK

Would you like the cake delivered?

ALBERT

Yes, please. And don't forget to write "To my Piglet, from his Auntie" on it.

BAKERY CLERK

You got it.

ALBERT

Thank you. Well, I want to get back before he wakes up. I'm just going to try this sample. Hmm. Chocolate Schneken. A triumph. Well, bye bye. Perhaps one more schneken. Do you mind?...

26 INT. ARMAND'S KITCHEN - DAY

26

Agador is at the sink. Armand enters in his dressing gown, smoking a cigarette. Agador brings him a cup of coffee.

ARMAND

(takes a sip)

What is this? Sludge?

(CONTINUED)

AGADOR

Yes. I thought it would be a nice change from coffee.

(throatily, in his ear)

You should have told me you were meeting Val last night, you bad man. I wouldn't have been so sassy.

ARMAND

Will you put some clothes on!

AGADOR

Why won't you let me be in the show? Are you afraid of my Guatemalanness?

ARMAND

Your what?

AGADOR

My Guatemalanness. My heat. Are you afraid I'll be too primitive for your little estrogen rockettes?

ARMAND

Yes. Right. I'm afraid of your heat.

Albert enters, carrying bags.

ALBERT

Yoo-hoo! Here I am! The bag lady! Good morning, Agador.

AGADOR

Good morning, Madame.

They kiss.

ALBERT

Wash these, will you, Agador? They're delivering the rest around noon. Good morning.
(kisses Armand)
My God, that beard!

Albert opens the dryer, takes Val's clothes out, and begins folding them. Agador gives him a cup of coffee.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Thank you, dear. Hmm. Turkish coffee. Delicious.

(to Armand as he folds)

Is Val still asleep? He must be exhausted, poor baby. You should have told me he was coming. I'm so ashamed of the way I acted last night...but how could I know? The truth is you can't stand sharing your son with me. You're always pushing me away. Oh, look at this shirt. It's a rag. No matter how many shirts I send that boy... You look awful. What's wrong?

ARMAND

Val is getting married.

ALBERT

Don't be silly. I got a pork roast for dinner. I wanted to get filet mignons but they're so expensive. What do you mean "married"?

ARMAND

I mean...what do you mean what do I mean. I mean "married."

ALBERT

I don't understand.

ARMAND

Yes, you do.

ALBERT

(screaming)

No!

ARMAND

Some girl he met at school.

ALBERT

But he's a baby! He's too young! He'll ruin his life!

ARMAND

We went through all that. The bottom line is he's getting married no matter what we say, so the less said the better.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: 3

26

ALBERT

Oh, my God...I woke up feeling so good and now...all of a sudden, I feel...so funny.

(he grabs his chest)

Shhh. Take it easy. Just breathe, breathe...

Val enters...looks at Armand...sees Albert.

VAL

Oh. You've heard...

ALBERT

Oh, Vallie! Oh, my God! This is such a shock. I'm not saying anything--I promised your father--but you're only twenty and if you throw yourself away on some dormitory slut, you'll be sorry for the rest of your life. There--enough said. No more. That's all. Subject closed. Well, don't just stand there! Give me a kiss! or are you too grown-up for that now.

VAL

Hello, Albie.

ALBERT

Oh, Armand, he's going to leave us. And we won't have any others.

ARMAND

Not without a miracle.

27 INT. KEELEY DINING ROOM - DAY

27

Senator and Mrs. Keeley are also eating breakfast...and watching the TV.

28 ON THE TELEVISION, TWO HOSTS

28

sit on either side of Senator Keeley and a white-haired man (SENATOR JACKSON). All four men are shouting, incomprehensibly.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

SENATOR JACKSON - ON TV

(rising above the others)
 ...when I--and Senator Keeley
 here--founded the Coalition for
 Moral Order, it was to express
 moral rather than political...

YOUNGER HOST - ON TV

Oh, come on. Since
 when do moral views
 get campaign
 contributions?

OLDER HOST - ON TV

Oh, you come on!
 Since always! Once
 the liberals
 abolished morality...

MRS. KEELEY

It's a wonderful show.

SENATOR KEELEY

It's the most intelligent show on
 television.

SENATOR KEELEY-ON TV

(his voice rising again)
 ...I think that what Senator
 Jackson is trying to say is that
 morality is political. Abortion,
 same-sex marriage, contempt for
 family values, pornography--they
 wouldn't exist if politicians
 didn't pass laws to protect them.
 And that's why both houses are now
 Republican...

29 RETURN TO KEELEY DINING ROOM

29

The two hosts begin shouting again. Senator Keeley clicks
 off the show and picks up some papers and a tape recorder.

MRS. KEELEY

Bravo. It's a perfect platform.

SENATOR KEELEY

Yes. I'm very glad I got on
 Jackson's bandwagon instead of
 Dole's. Dole is just too...too...

MRS. KEELEY

Dark?

SENATOR KEELEY

Actually, I was going to say
 liberal. But he's dark, too.
 (he makes a note)
 I have to fire this woman...

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

MRS. KEELEY

You know, this boy that Barbie
wants to marry...

SENATOR KEELEY

(into a tape recorder)
Miss Porter, Page two, second
paragraph is "porno" not
"pronto"...

MRS. KEELEY

I wonder if he's old money. I
mean...a cultural attache'...

There is a tap on the door and A MAID enters.

MAID

Your campaign manager is calling.
He says he's got to talk to you.

Senator Keeley rises and goes out to the phone.

SENATOR KEELEY

Hello, Ben. Ready for what? WHAT?

MRS. KEELEY

What's the matter, Kevin?

SENATOR KEELEY

Jackson is dead.

MRS. KEELEY

Oh my God!

SENATOR KEELEY

(listens, then...)
He died in bed. ... Whose bed?...
(listens...)
A prostitute...

MRS. KEELEY

No!

SENATOR KEELEY

(listens)
And a minor...
(listens)
And black!

MRS. KEELEY

What?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 2

29

SENATOR KEELEY

A prostitute ... minor ... black.
 (he hangs up on the still
 ranting voice)

I don't believe this. I don't
 fucking believe this! I'm
 ruined.

MRS. KEELEY

Why? You're not responsible. You
 can't be held responsible for
 Senator Jackson's private life.

SENATOR KEELEY

Louise, I'm the vice president of
 the Coalition for Moral Order, and
 my co-founder has just died in bed
 with an under-aged black whore.
 Just wait until the media gets hold
 of this! ... I could really use a
 piece of candy.

30 CLOSE SHOT - A SCRAPBOOK

30

the pages being slowly turned. Pictures of Val as a baby,
 then as a young boy, then an adolescent, posing with Armand
 and Albert, with other friends, a dog...

OVER THE SHOT we hear the soft, steady SOUND of weeping...
 and piano chords.

ARMAND'S VOICE

You're driving me crazy, Albert.

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL Albert sitting on the couch in the
 living room, looking at the scrapbook, an ancient rubber duck
 clutched in one hand. Armand is at the piano, working on a
 tune.

ALBERT

My baby.
 (he weeps, quietly)

31 CLOSE SHOT: A TELEVISION SCREEN

31

A YOUNG BLACK GIRL is speaking:

BLACK GIRL - ON TV

He looked kinda funny but he was
 smilin' so I didn't worry...

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

VOICE - ON TV
Senator Jackson's last words!
Tonight--on Inside Edition!

MRS. KEELEY'S VOICE
How do they get them on so quickly.

SENATOR KEELEY'S VOICE
They pay.

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL...

32 THE KEELEY DINING ROOM

32

Senator and Mrs. Keeley sitting in front of the television,
their faces blank with shock.

MRS. KEELEY
They're not mentioning you much.

SENATOR KEELEY
(his mouth full of candy)

SENATOR KEELEY
It's early.

32a EXT. WIDE SHOT -MIAMI - DAY

32a(X)

There is a beat...and then a shriek over the shot:

ALBERT'S VOICE
Oh, no! They wrote Uncle!

33 INT. ARMAND'S KITCHEN - DAY

33(X)

Albert stands staring down at a newly opened cakebox.

ALBERT
I told them "Auntie"! Uncle! He
won't know who "uncle" is!

ARMAND
(calmly measuring
ingredients into a bowl)
He'll probably eat half the cake
before he looks at it. He's just
like you.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

ALBERT

Yes, the piglet.
(he smiles; then suddenly
frowns)

(X)

We'll have to completely redecorate his room, you know. We can't put a married couple in a room that looks like a bulletin board. Plus there has to be room for the grandchildren! So there goes your den.

ARMAND

Someone's feeling better.

ALBERT

Well, grandchildren... Oh, I can just see you as a grandfather! Pushing the carriage, gold chains clinking, chest hair dyed...

ARMAND

(a tiny smile)
Not a bad sight, is it? Don't stir that. It's the marinade. Go get ready for rehearsal. Go on.

ALBERT

You never let me help you cook.

ARMAND

Go, go, go. And I'll meet you downstairs...grandma.

34 EXT. KEELEY HOUSE - DAY

34

It is surrounded by television trucks, TV and print reporters, cameras.

A small movement in an upstairs window catches everyone's attention.

35 INT. FRONT WINDOW - KEELEY HOUSE - MRS. KEELEY

35

as she steps quickly back, closing the drapes. Barbara enters.

BARBARA

Where's dad?

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

MRS. KEELEY

He snuck out this morning to meet
with his advisors. They refused to
come here.

BARBARA

Mom...

MRS. KEELEY

I should never have let him go.
How will he get back in.

BARBARA

Mom...I have to tell you
something...about Val's parents.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

MRS. KEELEY

They can't blame us for this. Eli Jackson was a common redneck and we had nothing to do with him, socially. They understand that, don't they?

(Barbara nods, miserably)

Thank god they're not snobs.

Senator Keeley suddenly appears at the back window clinging to a branch. He taps on the pane. His face is dirty. His jacket crushed. Mrs. Keeley and Barbara rush to him.

MRS. KEELEY

What are you doing here?

SENATOR KEELEY

I came through the orchard and over the top of the barn.

MRS. KEELEY

But it's so dangerous! You could have fallen!

SENATOR KEELEY

I did!

They pull him over the sill.

SENATOR KEELEY

Don't let the ladder drop. We may need it. I'm just a wreck! This is all anyone can talk about.

MRS. KEELEY

Kevin...if we can manage it...there may be a solution.

SENATOR KEELEY

What? Death? It didn't work for Jackson.

MRS. KEELEY

What about a wedding. A big white wedding.

SENATOR KEELEY

What do you mean? What wedding? Who's getting married? ... No!

MRS. KEELEY

Why not? It will restore your image.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. KEELEY (cont'd)

A wedding is hope...a white wedding is morality and family and tradition. And this would be such a special marriage, the son of a cultural attache--a kind of diplomat, actually--who doesn't look down on us because of Senator Jackson, who's willing to join our family. There's the cover of People and Time and Newsweek--right there! Love and optimism versus cynicism and sex. It will be an affirmation. If necessary we'll get the Pope's blessing. It's not hard.

SENATOR KEELEY

I know. But he's too controversial. Billy Graham...? No, too liberal.

BARBARA

Now wait a minute...

MRS. KEELEY

Listen, Barbara, you have three and a half years till you're twenty-one and you want to get married now. Don't be a nitwit.

SENATOR KEELEY

Where's the candy?

MRS. KEELEY

You've had enough candy.
(turning to Barbara)
This boy, what's his father's name?

BARBARA

Armand...
(she swallows)
...Coleman.

MRS. KEELEY

Really? I wonder if they're related to Bobo and Tish Coleman. Are they from Boston?

BARBARA

I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 3

35

MRS. KEELEY

I think we should go down to South Beach and meet them, immediately. We can have dinner with them and spend the night with the Bushes.

(her eyes glow)

Mr. and Mrs. Armand Coleman of Greece and South Beach.

36 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - DAY

36

Albert is in full costume, rehearsing Armand's new song, while a second performer (CELSIUS) dances around him in tights and a sleeveless T. Cyril plays the piano. Armand watches from the house.

Celsius does a bump and grind...then peers over his shoulder and winks. Albert breaks off.

ALBERT

Well, this is impossible. Either I'm an artist or I'm just some cheap drag queen playing it straight so he can get laughs.

ARMAND

Let's just try and get through it...

ALBERT

You always ask so much of me, I have to understand every nuance of a song, I have to rehearse in full costume. But everyone else can just "get through it." I mean...he's chewing gum!

(X)

(X)

CELSIUS

Chewing gum helps me think.

ALBERT

Sweetie, you're wasting your gum.

ARMAND

Alright, let's take it from the top, no more talk...from anyone.

(X)

Albert begins the song again. Val enters.

VAL

Pop, I have to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

Shh. Sit down.

VAL

It's important.

ARMAND

Wait! Can't you see he's rehearsing?

ALBERT

Armand, did you see what he did?
Hello, Vallie, darling.

ARMAND

Let's keep going. What did Celsius do?

ALBERT

He blew a bubble with his gum.
While I was singing! He can't do that while I'm singing.
(cries)

ARMAND

Celsius, look...this may be a drag show but it still has to be a good drag show, if possible--a great drag show...

ALBERT

Yes! And just because you're eighteen and hung doesn't mean you're qualified...

ARMAND

Let me do this, Albert.

(to Celsius)

This is a complex number. Full of mythic themes. You were invented by the woman who's singing, you're her fantasy, this gorgeous fantasy, free and arrogant...and then, suddenly, you, the fantasy, see her, your inventor--and she becomes your fantasy.

CELSIUS

I don't think I get it.

ALBERT

Try more gum.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: 2

36

ARMAND

Albert! Well, you have to explore it, Celsius. But start with the premise that, when you see this stunning, smoldering creature - she transcends your desire to chew - she electrifies you, something begins in your pelvis that travels straight to your heart - but hit the pelvis.

CELSIUS

But what I do? I don't want to just stand here like an object.

ARMAND

Do this! 5, 6, 7, 8!
(he dances)
And this! Do a stunning eclectic, celebration of dance...
(dances; to Albert)
...and you, of course, sing...
(he dances on...and on)

VAL

Pop!

ARMAND

Coming. All right. Try it again. I'll be right back.
(he rises)

37 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - DAY - STAIRWAY

37

Armand and Val head up the stairs.

ARMAND

Well?

VAL

Barbara is coming with her parents.

ARMAND

(he stops)
When?

VAL

They'll be here tomorrow.

ARMAND

Well, that's plenty of time. Is that what you interrupted me for?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

VAL
No. There's more. Please, keep
going.

They continue up the stairs.

38 INT. APARTMENT - DAY

38

Armand and Val enter. Val goes straight for the bar.

VAL
Wine?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

ARMAND

No. Hurry. Let's hear it.

VAL

I think I'll have some.

(filling a glass)

Barbara's father is a conservative Senator and he's running for re-election and she told him that you were the Cultural Attache to Greece and Albert was a housewife.

(he gulps down the wine)

ARMAND

What?

VAL

She had to, Pop. He's a founder of the Coalition for Moral Order.

ARMAND

I don't care who he is. I don't want to be someone else. Do you want me to be someone else?

VAL

No, of course not. And neither does Barbara, but her father ...Pop, her father is Kevin Keeley.

ARMAND

Who's Kevin Keeley?

VAL

(he stares at him)

Do you ever read the newspapers?

ARMAND

Of course. Variety, The Star, the Arts and Leisure section of the New York Times... Why? Is there something I don't know? You're not marrying some Nazi, are you?

VAL

No, no. He's just...a conservative...like half of America, and I'm not marrying him, I'm marrying Barbara. And I need your help.

ARMAND

Not for this.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 2

38

VAL

You've done it before.

ARMAND

What? Lied about who I am? Never.

VAL

Do you remember my first day at Edison Park? What you told me?

ARMAND

No.

VAL

You said if Miss Donovan asked me what you do for a living, I should say you're a businessman.

ARMAND

(after a moment)

Yes, I did. Because you were a baby and Miss Donovan was a small-minded idiot and I didn't want you to get hurt. But it's different now. You're a man.

VAL

But I can still get hurt.

(he waits)

Pop, it would mean everything to me if you would help us. Just for one night...

ARMAND

(there is a pause)

Well, this is insane! What am I supposed to do? Close the club and pretend I'm a cultural attache? Whatever the hell that is? Make Albert into a housewife?

VAL

You'd have to send Albert away for a few days. We'll never get him past the Keeleys.

ARMAND

Are you crazy? Albert? You try sending Albert away.

VAL

And you'll have to get rid of a few things around here...

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

What things?

VAL

(pointing to gold phallus
on Armand's chain)

That, for example.

(walking to large nude
Greek statue)

And this -

ARMAND

The Greek? But that's art!

Val points to a primitive sculpture with a large phallus.

VAL

And that.

Armand puts his hand on the sculpture's erect penis and gently rotates the sculpture so that it's facing the wall.

ARMAND

Is that better?

VAL

No. Look...it's not just one or two things...it's everything. I mean, you'd have to tone it all down, make it more like...other people's homes...

ARMAND

So we need a total redecoration now? To make us more like other people...

VAL

And you have to try to...you know, to be...a little less obvious... change your mannerisms a little.

ARMAND

What do you mean? I'm obvious?

VAL

Pop...

Val walks over to Armand and runs his fingers down his cheek, then smears the make-up from his fingertips onto the wall behind him.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 4

38

ARMAND

Val, I just had the walls sponge painted.

A KNOCK at the door. Cyril sticks his head in.

CYRIL

You better get downstairs. She's trying to take his chewing gum away.

ARMAND

I'll be right there.

(to Val)

Yes, I use foundation. Yes, I live with a man. Yes, I'm a middle-aged fag. But I know who I am. It's taken me twenty years to get here, Val, and I'm not going to let some idiot Senator destroy it. Fuck the Senator! I don't give a damn what he thinks.

39 EXT. KEELEY HOUSE - NIGHT

39

Camera trucks are parked on the street. Outside the wrought iron gates, Reporters, Camera crews, lights, Newsmen, all are waiting. As the CAMERA PANS, we hear local Newscasters:

NEWSPERSON #1

...still outside the home of Senator Kevin Keeley, co-founder of the Coalition for Moral Order...

NEWSPERSON #2

...waiting for Senator Jackson's close friend and colleague, Senator Kevin Keeley...

NEWSPERSON #3

...no sign of Keeley, although an earlier report placed him at the home of Senator Robert Dole this morning...

40 ANGLE - A WEARY OVERWEIGHT REPORTER

40

HARRY RADMAN is leaning against a tree. He straightens as he sees a CHAUFFEUR carrying a suitcase and heading for the garage.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

Radman looks quickly around, then steps up to the gate, and holds up a wad of bills. The Chauffeur sees the bills, glances around...then comes up to the gate.

HARRY RADMAN
(softly; flashing the bills)
Where are you driving him?

CHAUFFEUR
(studies the bills in Radman's hand)
South Beach, Florida.

Radman hands him the bills. The Chauffeur moves off.

41 CLOSE SHOT - JAY LENO ON TELEVISION

JAY LENO-ON TV
(his face is grave)
There have been a lot of tasteless jokes about the death of Senator Eli Jackson...
(he suddenly grins)
...and now here's another one!

VOICE - ON TV
Tonight with Jay Leno! Jay's guests, Michael Huffington and Madonna!

42 There is a click and the set goes to black.

SENATOR KEELEY (V.O.)
This is unbearable.

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL...

THE KEELEY BEDROOM

Senator Keeley rises, goes to the window and opens it. Mrs. Keeley, who has just finished packing a small overnight case, looks up and screams.

MRS. KEELEY
Kevin, no!

SENATOR KEELEY
Shh. I'm just going down the ladder. I can't face the press tonight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

SENATOR KEELEY (cont'd)
Tell the chauffeur to come around
and stop outside the orchard.

MRS. KEELEY
(grabbing him)
You can't do that. I don't want to
go out there alone.

SENATOR KEELEY
You won't be alone, you'll have
Barbara. It's not you they're
after, Louise...

Barbara comes in. Sees her parents grappling at the window.

BARBARA
(screaming)
Daddy!

SENATOR KEELEY
Shut up! I'm just trying to get
out the back way.

MRS. KEELEY
Didn't we decide that you were
going to announce Barbara's wedding
to the Coleman boy?

SENATOR KEELEY
Not before we meet them. What if
they change their minds? Now let
go of my coat. I'll meet you in
the car.

He puts a leg over the sill and starts down the ladder.

43 EXT. KEELEY GARDEN - NIGHT - SENATOR KEELEY

43

making his way laboriously down the first two rungs.
Suddenly, lights go on. The Senator turns his head and looks
down.

Below him are two Camera Crews, Newscasters, and four or five
Reporters. Senator Keeley clings to the ladder, frozen, like
a rabbit in the headlights. A boom mike appears in the air.

NEWSPERSON #1
(into camera)
...and--yes. It's Senator Keeley,
just leaving his house.
(calling up)
Senator Keeley, Senator Keeley...

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

NEWSPERSON #1
 Senator Keeley, do
 you think this will
 cost you votes?

NEWSPERSON #2
 Senator Keeley,
 what's the future of
 the Coalition for
 Moral Order now?

NEWSPERSON #3
 Senator Keeley, what
 happened at this
 morning's meeting
 with Senator Dole...

NEWSPERSON #4
 Senator Keeley, what
 about the rumors that
 Senator Jackson was
 on Lithium...

As the questions proceed, more Newsmen and cameras appear around the back, climbing over the fence, drawn by the lights and voices. They pay no attention to the fact that the Senator is on a ladder.

SENATOR KEELEY

Gentleman...and ladies... I am, as are all my colleagues, Republican and Democrat, liberal and conservative alike, stunned and saddened by the circumstances surrounding the death of Senator Jackson...as well as the death itself. My family and I are leaving town for a few days...for reasons I cannot...to plan an event...an event which I cannot... which may perhaps heal some of the...the bad...things...that Senator Jackson's demise has made us...uh...all feel.

NEWSPEOPLE

"What's the event?"
 "Will you be back in time to attend Senator Jackson's funeral?"
 "What's the event, Senator?"
 "Senator Keeley..."

HARRY RADMAN

(above the others)
 Where are you and your family going, Senator Keeley?

SENATOR KEELEY

Where? To our...farm. And that's all I'm going to say for now.

44 ANGLE - HARRY RADMAN

44

The beginning of a smile on his jowly face.

45 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT

45

The waiters are just finishing the table set-ups. Albert, in full costume and make-up, is doing a sound check with Celsius. An occasional performer flits across the stage in back of them.

A burly man (TONY) enters carrying a keg of beer, and heads for the bar where Armand stands, moodily, drinking a glass of wine. Armand eyes the keg.

ARMAND

God, that smell.

TONY

I'm gonna make you like beer some day, Armand.

(calling)

Chuck! The club will be open in five minutes. Let's have that keg!

A young voice (CHUCK) calls from off screen:

CHUCK'S VOICE

I'll be right there, pop. I'm inflating my shoe.

TONY

(putting the keg down)

I could just kill him. Why did I get him those shoes?

ARMAND

Because he's young and ruthless and you're weak and guilty and he knows all the buttons to press.

TONY

(after a moment)

Jesus, you're right.

(he slams the counter)

If that little punk wasn't getting an athletic scholarship I'd rip those shoes off his feet.

ARMAND

You didn't tell me the scholarship came through. That's wonderful.

TONY

Yeah, three colleges. Well, you know...

(shrugs)

...the kid's got such talent. I don't know where he got it...

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

ARMAND

I know, it's amazing. Val's getting a degree in engineering--top 20 in his class--and I don't know how velcro works.

TONY

That's great. Top 20... Great.

(shakes his head)

It's funny, isn't it? When I was born my father wanted me to be president, when Chuck was born I thought if he doesn't get hooked on drugs or turn gay, I'm fine. No offense.

ARMAND

No offense. That's what I thought when Val was born. I wanted things to be, you know, easier for him...

TONY

Of course. Hey--everybody's a coward when it comes to their kids.

(claps him on the back)

But they turned out all right, didn't they? They lived, they're in college and they're driving us crazy.

(suddenly)

Hey, don't you have any sense of time!...

This last to CHUCK, about eighteen, who has just entered carrying the second keg. The performers have cleared the stage now. The music starts. One of the waiters opens the door to let in the customers...

46 INT. VAL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - VAL

46

sitting on the edge of the bed, staring hopelessly at the floor. Through the door we hear the faint sound of the music downstairs.

There is the sudden harsh sound of footsteps in the other room, then Armand's voice...

ARMAND'S VOICE

Agador! Goddamnit!

AGADOR'S VOICE

What did I do?

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

ARMAND'S VOICE
We're redoing the apartment for
tomorrow night. Goddamn it!

Val sits up, slowly, his eyes brightening.

47 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - ARMAND, AGADOR

47

Armand moves around the room, agitatedly.

AGADOR
This is for the in-laws, right?

ARMAND
Right. Get rid of everything over
the top. And get yourself a
uniform. You'll have to dress like
a butler.

AGADOR
I'll look like a fag.

ARMAND
Maybe. But you'll look like a fag
in a uniform.
(he sighs)
You'll start first thing in the
morning. I'll get Albert out of
the house early...and tell him he
has to leave for a few days...

AGADOR
(into his own problem)
Where'm I going to get a uniform...

ARMAND
Oh, God!...this will be hard...

AGADOR
Oh, God, so much to do...

VAL
Pop...

Armand turns. Val stands in the doorway.

VAL
Thanks.

ARMAND
Do me a favor, Val - don't talk to
me for awhile.

48 EXT. THE STARLIT SKY

48

as it DISSOLVES to DAWN...

The CAMERA pans down to a...

BLACK LINCOLN - ON THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT - DRIVING

The Keeleys sit crammed in back. The Chauffeur is driving.

MRS. KEELEY

Kevin, please let's charter a plane.

SENATOR KEELEY

No. We can't get out of this car. The minute we get out of this car we'll be spotted.

The Chauffeur lifts his eyes to the rear view mirror...where a SILVER ESCORT is reflected.

49 SILVER ESCORT - ON THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

49

Radman is driving. Next to him is a second man (THE PHOTOGRAPHER) with a camera in his lap.

50 EXT. BEACH - MORNING

50

MODELS, GAY MEN, A FEW LESBIANS, ATTRACTIVE TOURISTS...all out in the morning sun.

Albert and Armand sit on the sand. Armand wears a safari cap and glasses. Albert wears a straw sombrero, glasses and long sleeves. They are sitting under an umbrella.

ALBERT

Oh, how I love the sun.

ARMAND

Yes. It's glorious, isn't it? You know, you could use some sun... take a few days off...you look tired.

ALBERT

What do you mean?

ARMAND

I... Nothing.

51 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

51

Cyril is there, along with the "girls" from the show. One "girl" is carrying out Albert's wigs. Two others are taking down an enormous oil painting of a satyr. Cyril is pinning up Agador's trousers.

AGADOR

Not too short. I want that Armani "buckle" in front...

VAL

(running in with a magazine)

Who put Playboy in the bathroom?

GIRL

Leave it. It's what they read.

VAL

Look, don't add anything. Just subtract. And hurry. This place has got to look respectable by six.

52 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE BIRDCAGE - DAY

52

Armand hurries along beside Albert.

ALBERT

But you must have meant something.

ARMAND

I didn't. I swear. I just meant you look tired.

ALBERT

Tired means "old." "You look tired" means you look old. And "you look rested" means you've had collagen.

ARMAND

No, no. You look wonderful. Too good to waste indoors. Let's... let's window shop.

ALBERT

No, thank you. I want to go home.

ARMAND

On a day like this? Nonsense. Come on, I'll buy you anything you want.

ALBERT

Well...I'll have to change my shoes.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

ARMAND
I'll buy you a pair.

ALBERT
I have no peds. Armand, why can't
we go home? What's going on?

ARMAND
Nothing. I...nothing.

Albert turns the corner and starts toward the entrance.
Armand suddenly cries out. Albert turns.

ARMAND
I...I've hurt my...thing...ankle...

ALBERT
Your what?

ARMAND
My ankle. I don't think I can make
it upstairs.

ALBERT
Do you want to wait here and I'll
bring some ice down?

ARMAND
No, I...just... No....

53 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

53

It has progressed. Many of the ornate touches are gone along
with much of the Greek art. Two "girls" come in the front
door carrying a large moose head.

VAL
What's that?

GIRL
It's from the antique shop across
the street. Too butch?

VAL
Don't add!

Through the door, we suddenly hear Albert's voice. Everyone
freezes.

ALBERT'S VOICE
...you're blocking my way.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

ARMAND'S VOICE
I'm sorry. I can't walk any
faster...

VAL
Put the moose head in my room! In
my room!

The two "girls" fly into the den...as everyone else runs for
the door leading to the club. The sound of their footsteps
echoes through the apartment as they clamber down the back
stairs.

54 INT. FRONT STAIRS - DAY

54

Armand and Albert walking up. Armand is leaning on Albert.

ARMAND
...I really think a doctor...

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

ALBERT
 Don't be silly.
 (he whisks up Armand's
 pant leg)
 It isn't even swollen. Here...

Albert flings open the door to the apartment.

55 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

55

Only Val is there, pressed into a corner.

ALBERT
 Sit down on the --
 (he screams)

ARMAND
 What is it?

ALBERT
 We've been robbed!

VAL
 No, Albie, we...I've just taken a
 few things out...they'll all be in
 place by the time you get back.

ALBERT
 Back? Where am I going?

VAL
 (to Armand)
 You didn't tell him?

ALBERT
 What? Tell me what?

ARMAND
 (taking a deep breath)
 Val's fiancée is coming tonight--
 with her parents. And we...we
 thought...it would be better if you
 weren't here.

ALBERT
 (there is a pause)
 I see.
 (he sits)
 I see.

VAL
 It's just for tonight...

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

ALBERT

I understand. It's just while people are here. It's all right, my darling. It's nothing. It's painful, but it's not important. I'm leaving. The monster. The monster is leaving. You're safe.

Albert rises and walks out the front door.

ARMAND

(to Val)

That went well.

He runs out after Albert. Val stands staring after them. Agador and the two "girls" with the moose head come out of the den. No one speaks.

56 EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY - ALBERT

56

running past it as Armand follows. The Customers watch, riveted.

ARMAND

(panting)

Albert ...will you listen!

ALBERT

Go away! I hate you! I never want to see you again!

(he suddenly sobs)

My heart is breaking.

ARMAND

Oh, God. Please. Don't cry. It's all right. You can stay.

ALBERT

No. I don't want to stay where I'm not wanted, where I can be thrown out on a whim, without legal rights...

ARMAND

I have the palimony papers at home.

ALBERT

You're lying again.

(he staggers)

This is too much for me. Too much ugliness, too much pain. Here, feel my pulse. Am I all right?

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND
 (soothingly)
 My goodness. It's very fast.
 Let's get you out of the sun...

Armand leads him toward one of the umbrella-topped tables. A WAITER hurries over.

ARMAND
 Water. Right away.

WAITER
Right away.

The Waiter scoots off as Armand slides a chair under Albert.

ALBERT
 It's the end. It's the end, I know
 it is.

ARMAND
 Sit down. Breathe, breathe...

The Waiter flies back, carrying a pitcher and two glasses.

ARMAND
 Thank you. And the usual.

WAITER
 Right away, Senor Goldman.

The Waiter flies off again and Armand dips a napkin into his water and holds it on the back of Albert's neck.

ALBERT
 Thank you. That's better.

ARMAND
 This is not because of you. This
 is because this girl's parents are
 assholes. Val is crazy about you.
 (wipes Albert's face with
 a freshly dipped napkin)

ALBERT
 Is he? Oh that helps. Oh, you're
 sweet. That water is so cool.
 (he sips his water)
 Maybe...maybe it is too much to
 introduce me as his mother on the
 first visit. Could you tell them
 I was a relative who dropped in?
 Val's uncle? Uncle Al?

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

What's the point? Then you'll be Val's gay uncle Al.

ALBERT

I could play it straight.

ARMAND

Oh, please. Look at you. Look at how you're holding your glass. Look at your posture. Look at your pinky.

ALBERT

(curling his pinky down)

And what about you? You're obviously not a cultural--whatever it is. You've never been to a museum and you eat like a pig.

ARMAND

Albert, these people are right wing conservatives. They don't care if you're a pig. They just care if you're a fag.

The waiter whips over with two club sandwiches.

WAITER

Right away.

Albert sits staring at the club sandwich, motionless, his eyes down, his shoulders sagging. There is a pause.

ARMAND

Oh, fuck 'em! Of course, you can pass as an uncle. You're a great performer. And I'm a great director! Together we can do...almost anything.

ALBERT

Oh, Armand. Really?

ARMAND

Absolutely. We have five hours. Let's get started. First--your pinky. It's up again. Get it down. And sit up straight!
(he slaps his back)

ALBERT

Oh!--my God! Are you crazy! What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

Stop whining. I'm teaching you to be a man. Now this is a dinner party so let's work with the food. Spread some mustard on that bread. Not with the spoon. Don't dribble little dots of mustard on. Take the knife and smear. Men smear. And get that goddamned pinky down. Your fingers are iron. Stop trembling. Hold the knife boldly. With strength.

ALBERT

(hysterically)

Oh, God! I've pierced the toast!

ARMAND

So what? The important thing is not to go to pieces when that happens. React the way a man would. Calmly. Just say to yourself, "Albert, you pierced the toast. So what? Your life isn't over." Try another one.

ALBERT

You're right, you're right. There's no need to get hysterical. All I have to remember is that I can always get more toast.

ARMAND

That's the spirit. Now let's see you walk.

ALBERT

Holding the sandwich?

ARMAND

It...doesn't matter. Just walk.

After a moment of indecision, Albert puts the sandwich down, rises and walks.

ALBERT

Too swishy?

ARMAND

(after a moment)

Let me give you an image. A cliché' but an image. John Wayne.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: 4

56

ALBERT

John Wayne?

ARMAND

You're a fan. He had a very distinctive walk, very easy to imitate, and if anyone was a man...Try it. Just get off your horse and head for the saloon. Come on.

Albert begins the John Wayne walk; knees together, hips shifting.

ALBERT

No good?

ARMAND

Actually...it's perfect. I just never realized John Wayne walked like that.

57 EXT. ACCESS ROAD - SENATOR KEELEY'S LINCOLN

57

The Senator, in hat and dark glasses, is now driving. The Chauffeur sits beside him, sleeping. Barbara and Mrs. Keeley sit in the back, clutching their safety belts.

A SIGN on the side of the road says: I-95 SOUTH with an arrow pointing left. The Senator swerves left sharply...to a chorus of horns.

58 INT./EXT. SILVER ESCORT

58

The Photographer, who is now driving, screeches to the left after the Lincoln. Radman snaps awake.

PHOTOGRAPHER

This guy is a fucking maniac.

HARRY RADMAN

Yeah...I wonder what's in South Beach.

59 EXT. A PARK - ARMAND, ALBERT

59

Armand stands under a tree, pretending to read a newspaper. Albert, also carrying a newspaper, lurches toward him, "sees" Armand...and holds out his hand.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT

Armand Goldman! You old so-and-so.
How about those Dolphins?

(there is a pause)

Screaming fag?

ARMAND

(after a moment)

Stick your hand out sideways, not
palm down. I'm going to shake it
not kiss it. And tighten that
wrist. No, straighten it and
then tighten it. Better.

(he shakes Albert's rigid
hand)

Al! You old so-and-so!

ALBERT

I just said that.

ARMAND

Well, now I'm saying it. Al--you
old so-and-so! How do you feel
about that call today; a fourth-
and-three play from the Dolphins
with only sixty-four seconds left.

ALBERT

How do you think I feel? Betrayed.
Bewildered.

(a beat)

Wrong response?

ARMAND

I'm not...sure.

(he is sweating)

Take it from the top.

ALBERT

This is very exciting.

ARMAND

Yes...it is...fella. Damn right.
Fuckin' A right! Swing that by
me again, compadre.

Albert begins backing up toward his starting point, crashing
into a man in pink shorts sitting on the grass with a friend.

MAN

Hey!

ALBERT

Oh, sorry.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 2

59

MAN

Take it easy.

ARMAND

(rising)

You take it easy, pilgrim.

MAN

Well, he bumped into me.

ARMAND

Well, tough gazongas.

MAN

Why are you being such a prick?

ARMAND

Why are you being such an asshole?

MAN

(rising; to a very full
height)

Did you just call me an asshole?

ARMAND

No...actually, I was talking to the
asshole behind you.

60 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

60

Armand is lying on the couch. Albert is applying cold
compresses to his head.

ALBERT

See? The swelling's already gone
down. It's nothing. You were
magnificent. Marvelous. Very
masculine. I'm so proud of you.
That big idiot looked so ridiculous
when he sat on you and banged your
head on the ground. He didn't even
know how to box.

(X)

Val enters with a towel. Outside we hear Agador's voice
singing Vogue in a high soprano.

ALBERT

Oh, you're a dear, Vallie. I'll go
get some ice. Be right back, love!
(he punches Val, lightly,
goes out)

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

VAL

Can't we hire a straight maid for tonight?

ARMAND

There are no straight maids in South Beach.

(he takes the towel)

And I have more bad news for you. I told Albert he could stay.

VAL

What! Why?

ARMAND

Why? Because he said his heart was breaking. Because he's my friend and companion.

VAL

But what...who will we say he is?

ARMAND

Your uncle.

VAL

My...! Well, forget it. We might as well forget the whole thing.

ARMAND

Don't be so negative. You're only twenty years old. Have some hope.

VAL

About what? I mean, once they see you and Albert together... Oh, God, what a mess...

ARMAND

What we really need is a woman. We could get away with Albert as an uncle if we had a woman as a mother. Ironic, isn't it? When you need a woman...

(suddenly)

Why don't I just ask your mother?

Albert appears unseen in the doorway.

VAL

My mother! My mother wouldn't do it! ...would she?

ARMAND

How do we know?

(X)

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: 2

60

VAL

Well, she hasn't seen me in twenty years. That's a pretty good indication.

ARMAND

No, it isn't. Twenty years ago she was a young girl...scared, broke... But now...

ALBERT

(from the doorway)
It's very unfair of you to try and talk Val into this, Armand. He has every reason not to...

(X)

VAL

(to Armand)
You really think she'd do it? Wow.
(with a touch of awe)
My mother.

(X)

61 INT. KATHARINE ARCHER'S OFFICE

61

Uncluttered, tasteful. KATHARINE ARCHER sits behind a large glass desk. She is in her 40s--stunning, beautifully groomed. She is talking into a clear plastic phone.

KATHARINE

Oh, my God! Armand! I don't believe it! It's been a hundred years. Where are you? ...

62 INT./EXT. A YELLOW CAR - WHIZZING ALONG A FREEWAY

62

Armand, behind the wheel, is talking on a cellular phone. Albert sits in the passenger seat, arms folded.

ARMAND

On the road. ... I'll be there in five minutes. ...me, too. ...Bye.
(hangs up; to Albert)
She's going to see me. Why don't I drop you off at a cafe. I'll be back in fifteen minutes.

ALBERT

That's all right. I'll go up with you. I'm sure there's a waiting room.

- 63 INT. OFFICE BUILDING CORRIDOR 63
- The entire floor is taken up by the offices of THE ARCHER SPA. Armand and Albert go through a door that says KATHARINE ARCHER, PRESIDENT.
- 64 INT. OUTER OFFICE - ARMAND, ALBERT 64
- walk in. A SECRETARY at a white lacquered desk looks up.
- ARMAND
Miss Archer, please. Armand
Goldman.
- SECRETARY
Go right in.
- 65 INT. KATHARINE ARCHER'S OFFICE 65
- She rises as Armand enters.
- KATHARINE
Army Goldman.
- ARMAND
Katie Archer.
(they smile)
Or is it Mrs. something...?
- KATHARINE
No, I'm between husbands. Sit
down. My God! I've thought about
you so many times...every time I
saw an ad for The Birdcage. Are
you still with Albert?
- ARMAND
Yes, yes. Still together. And
you--you've done very well.
- KATHARINE
Because of you. The money you gave
me started this place. You should
have gotten stock for it.
- ARMAND
I got Val for it. It was a fair
trade.
- KATHARINE
Is he... How is he?
- ARMAND
Fine. He wants to get married.

(CONTINUED)

KATHARINE
Married! How old is he?

ARMAND
He's twenty.

KATHARINE
Twenty... My God, twenty years...

ARMAND
And today, for the first time, he
really needs you...

66 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - WAITING ROOM - DAY

66

Albert is checking his make-up in his compact mirror. The Secretary watches him out of the corner of her eye.

Katharine's voice comes over the INTERCOM.

KATHARINE'S VOICE
Imelda, cancel my appointments for
tonight.

67 INT. KATHARINE'S OFFICE - DAY

67

She clicks off the intercom.

ARMAND
Thank you.

KATHARINE
It's a pleasure. Really.
(she walks to the bar)
I normally drink vegetable juice
during business hours, but for
this--

She takes out a bottle of champagne and two glasses.

KATHARINE
--Let's drink to Senator Keeley's
daughter and our Val. I'm afraid I
haven't done much for him in the
last twenty years.

ARMAND
Don't worry about it. Really.

KATHARINE
I'm not exactly maternal.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

ARMAND

I am. And Albert is almost a breast.

KATHARINE

Val was lucky, wasn't he? What time tonight?

ARMAND

Seven o'clock to be safe. We'll do a little show for them and then send them on their way.

(he takes the champagne)

KATHARINE

Do you remember the show we were in when we met?

ARMAND

Yes. Very well.

He sings a few phrases. She joins him. He does a few dance steps, she joins him. Together they reconstruct the routine.

ARMAND

Ah, the life of the gypsy...

KATHARINE

(as they dance)

How handsome you were. How unavailable. And what a body.

ARMAND

Stop - you're embarrassing me!

KATHARINE

You were so terrified! It was so sweet.

ARMAND

I thought I was going to have a heart attack. I mean, I walk into my room and there's a woman in my bed!

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: 2

67

KATHARINE

I paid the doorman \$20. \$20 in those days!

ARMAND

And I was so drunk on champagne... I thought, "What the hell, why not just try it once with a woman and see what the straight guys are raving about."

KATHARINE

And how long did we last?

ARMAND

I know exactly how long. From 2:30 to 3:45 a.m. Two times.

68 EXT. REST STOP - BLACK LINCOLN/SILVER ESCORT - PARKED - DAY 68

Barbara sits in the car with the Chauffeur, each wrapped in his own thoughts. After a moment, Senator and Mrs. Keeley come out of adjoining restrooms, seconds apart, shaved, changed and combed for dinner. They climb into the car and head toward the highway, where a big sign is visible: WELCOME TO FLORIDA.

The silver Escort follows.

69 INT. VAL'S BEDROOM AND PART OF THE LIVING ROOM

69

Through the open door, we see a few of the "girls" putting books on shelves. Val stands at the mirror, his hand out.

VAL

Hi. I'm Val. Mrs. Archer, I'm Val. Hi. Mom...I'm Val. I'm Val...mom... Senator and Mrs. Keeley...and Barbara...I'd like you to meet my mother...mom... Oh, God, please. Let this work out.

70 INT. KATHARINE ARCHER'S WAITING ROOM - ALBERT

70

He looks up at the clock, anxious and impatient...then begins drumming his fingers on his knee.

71 INT. KATHARINE'S OFFICE - KATHARINE, ARMAND

71

Armand is on the couch now. His jacket off, his shirt damp. He is on his second glass of champagne. He wipes his face.

ARMAND

Phew. You're in incredible shape.
And you can still dance.

KATHARINE

So can you, Armand. So can you.
(dips a napkin in ice,
touches it to his face)

ARMAND

Ah, that feels good. Cool.

KATHARINE

(putting her cool hand
under his shirt)
Where did all this hair come from?
Wasn't your chest smooth?

ARMAND

I shaved it off for the show. I
wanted to look so young...

KATHARINE

It's so much nicer this way, so
much more masculine. So much hair.
Let me touch it. What a beautiful
chain. Look how it glitters in
that thick, black nest of hair.
Unbutton your shirt. I want to
stroke your chest, your beautiful,
hairy chest...

ARMAND

Careful with your nails. This
shirt is silk organza... Oh!
Look, see? You pulled a thread.

The door suddenly flies open and Albert stands there...with
the Secretary behind him. He stares at Armand and Katharine
sprawled across the couch.

SECRETARY

I'm sorry, Ms. Archer, I couldn't
stop him...

Albert turns and goes out.

ARMAND

Albert!

72 EXT. SOUTH BEACH - DAY

72

Albert runs toward the yellow car, gets in and drives off.

73 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - DAY

73

The room is somber now, almost morose. Agador stands on a stack of books, putting a huge crucifix above the mantel. The door opens and Armand runs in.

ARMAND

Is Albert here?

AGADOR

No.

ARMAND

Great. Then he's driving back from Miami at twenty miles an hour with the parking brake on and I had to take the fucking bus!

(suddenly seeing the gloomy decor, the cross)

Are we crucifying someone tonight?

AGADOR

Do you like it? I traded the moose head for it. And they threw in the books. It all goes back tomorrow.

Val comes in holding a pile of tabloids, sees Armand, stops.

VAL

Dad! What happened? Did you see her? My mother? Is she coming.

ARMAND

Yes...she's coming...

VAL

(flinging the tabloids into the air)

Okay!!

ALBERT

Ah, there! You see? It all worked out...

They turn. Albert stands in the doorway.

ALBERT

I'm only here to get my toothbrush. Agador--will you? It's in the usual place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT (cont'd)

(to Val)

How I would have loved to have seen your children.

ARMAND

Shouldn't you be holding the crucifix? It's the prop for martyrs.

ALBERT

Oh, yes. Another gibe, another joke at my expense. You were probably laughing at me with Katharine, too. Well, why not? I'm not young, I'm not new, and everyone laughs at me. I'm quite aware of how ridiculous I am. And I've been thinking that the only solution is to go where nobody is ridiculous, where everyone is equal. Goodbye, Armand.

AGADOR

Wait!

(hands him a toothbrush)

Here! Please don't go, Miss Albert.

ALBERT

My poor Agador. I'm leaving you my stereo...my red boots...and my wigs. My best wigs. I won't need them where I'm going.

ARMAND

All right. I'll bite. Where are you going.

ALBERT

To Los Copa.

ARMAND

Los Copa? There isn't anything in Los Copa but a cemetery.

ALBERT

I know. That's why I'm packing light.

ARMAND

Oh, I see...you're going to the cemetery. With your toothbrush.

(CONTINUED)

ALBERT
Goodbye, Armand.
(he walks out)

AGADOR
Miss Albert!
(he drops to his knees
before the crucifix)

ARMAND
Shit!

VAL
It's all right. It will be better
without an uncle.

ARMAND
Get up, Agador.

AGADOR
I'm praying.

ARMAND
Well, don't. You have to start
dinner--because I have to go
after fucking Albert.

He slams out. Val stares at Agador.

VAL
Can you...You can cook, right?

AGADOR
Your father seems to think so.

74 EXT. SOUTH BEACH BUS STATION - ALBERT

74

sits on a bench eating from a bag of chocolate schneken.

Armand pulls up in the car and gets out...then he walks over
to the bench and sits next to Albert.

ARMAND
You know, my cemetery is in Key
Biscayne. It's the prettiest in
the world. There are lovely trees,
the sky is blue. There are birds.
The one at Los Copa is really shit.
(he leans back)
What a pain in the ass you are.
(shakes his head)
And it's true.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND (cont'd)

You're not young and you're not new. And you do make people laugh. And me - I'm still with you because you make me laugh. So you know what I have to do? I have to sell my plot in Key Biscayne and get a plot beside yours in that shithole, Los Copa, to make sure I never miss a laugh.

(taking out a folded sheaf of papers)

Here.

ALBERT

What's this?

ARMAND

Read it.

Albert takes the papers, puts on his glasses and reads.

ALBERT

(looks up)

I don't understand.

ARMAND

What's so difficult? It's the palimony papers. I told you I had them.

ALBERT

It says I have the right to give you half of everything I own.

ARMAND

Yes. I think it will be safer if something happens to one of us...

ALBERT

But who owns it now?

ARMAND

You do.

ALBERT

You've given me the club? And the apartment? And everything?

ARMAND

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 2

74

ALBERT
(looks down, cries)
I don't want it.

ARMAND
Then give me half.

ALBERT
Oh, quick! Give me a pen! I don't
want all this.

ARMAND
(handing Albert a pen)
Here. Sign it. There. We're
partners. You legally own half my
life and I legally own half of
yours.

ALBERT
But half of the club...

ARMAND
Do you think it matters? Take it
all. I'm fifty years old and
there's one place in the world I
call home...and that's because
you're there. So take it. What
difference does it make if I let
you stay or you let me stay...

75 INT. KATHARINE ARCHER'S OFFICE - THE SECRETARY

75

at her white desk. The phone rings. She picks it up.

SECRETARY
Hello? No, I'm sorry, Mr. Goldman,
she's left. But she always calls
in. Yes, I'll give her the
message. Go ahead.
(writes it down)
"Don't come...".

76 INT. THE YELLOW CAR

76

as Armand hangs up and reaches for the door.

77 EXT. SOUTH BEACH BUS STOP - ALBERT

77

still seated on the bench, his hands folded, primly in his
lap. He looks up as Armand opens the car door and sticks his
head out.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

ARMAND

It's done. Come home.

78 EXT. SENATOR KEELEY'S LINCOLN - DRIVING - DAY

78

The Chauffeur is now at the wheel. Senator Keeley sits beside him, listening to a VOICE over the car RADIO.

RADIO VOICE

...and the Reverend Al Sharpton in an interview today said that Senator Jackson's last words-- "Your money's on the dresser, Chocolate"--were racist and demeaning. The prostitute's given name is Natumbundra...

SENATOR KEELEY

(he turns it off; the car swerves briefly)

That idiot Jackson! Now the blacks will start.

MRS. KEELEY

Barbara's wedding will disassociate us from all this. Really. The Colemans are a perfect family. They've never even been divorced, have they, Barbara?

BARBARA

(in a small voice)

No.

MRS. KEELEY

You see? We're on our way to salvation.

The SIGN up ahead says: MIAMI - 80 MILES.

79 CLOSE SHOT - VAL

79

listening in horror to Armand's voice.

ARMAND'S VOICE

...it was a question of Albert--or your mother. So I had to choose...

The ANGLE WIDENS to REVEAL

ARMAND'S LIVING ROOM

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

Armand is adjusting his tie in a mirror.

ARMAND

...and I chose Albert. You understand that, son...

(he inspects himself)

Why can't I get this damned tie even! Well, the jacket will cover it...

(buttons jacket)

I look like my grandfather in this suit. He dressed like this in every picture. He killed himself when he was thirty. Any last instructions?

VAL

(dully)

No. Just...don't talk too much. Don't walk unless you have to. And try not to gesture. It doesn't matter. It won't work.

ARMAND

It will! Don't be so damned negative. I think we can pull this off...

The bedroom door opens and Albert stands there wearing a severe dark suit. He walks in and sits down. He doesn't quite know what to do with himself.

ALBERT

What? No good? Why? I'm dressed just the way you are. I took off all my rings. I'm not wearing make-up. I'm just a "guy."

ARMAND

(points to Albert's socks; they are pink)

What about those?

ALBERT

Oh, those? ...Well, one does want a hint of color. Why? What are you thinking? You're thinking that dressed this way I'm even more obvious, aren't you? You hate me. I so wanted to help you...and you both hate me.

He turns and walks, with dignity, back into the bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

Oh, God...

(hurrying after him)

Albert, we don't hate you...

Val stands alone, his face a tragic mask...and then, Agador, dressed in a dark suit but barefoot, comes in from the kitchen and begins setting the table.

AGADOR

(singing)

"She works hard for the money,
She works hard for it, honey..."...

VAL

(on the edge of tears)

You'd better put your shoes on.
It's getting late.

AGADOR

(speaking in a strange,
deep voice)

There's no point in my putting
shoes on. I never wear shoes.
They make me fall.

VAL

Go put your shoes on, Agador. And
talk in your normal voice. And
just...give me a break. Please.

AGADOR

(studies him a moment)

All right.

He bustles out. The phone begins RINGING. Val sits listening to it, absently...then, suddenly, looks at it with real hope.

VAL

Maybe they're dead!

(looks at the crucifix,
in horror)

You know I didn't mean that.
What's happening to me...

The ANSWER PHONE CLICKS ON and KATHARINE'S VOICE says:

KATHARINE'S VOICE

Armand? This is Katharine. I'm in
the car and I just got a message
telling me not to come tonight, and
I wanted to check...

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: 3

79

VAL
 (snatching up the phone)
 It's a mistake. He said not to
 come late. I was there.

80 INT./EXT. HIGHWAY - A BMW - DRIVING - DUSK

80

Katharine steers through traffic as she speaks. CROSSCUT.

KATHARINE
 Oh, I'm so glad. I thought my
 secretary got it wrong. I should
 be there in half an hour. Is
 this...Val?

VAL
 (suddenly tongue-tied)
 Yes.

KATHARINE
 Val...I want you to know how...how
 happy I am that I can do this for
 you. I know it's a little late...

81 ARMAND'S APARTMENT

81

VAL
 No. It's fine. Thank you...for
 this. See you in half an hour.
 (he hangs up)
 Mom.

ARMAND
 What?

Val turns. Armand has come into the room. Val quickly turns
 the phone ringer off.

VAL
 What?

ARMAND
 What did you say? "See you in half
 an hour...mom"? Was that...

VAL
 Yes. And there's no way to call
 her back. She's in the car.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

ARMAND

Oh, Christ! Are you crazy? Albert is totally hysterical now. Do you know what he'll do if Katharine walks into this house...

VAL

Nothing. He won't embarrass me. Pop, I couldn't tell her not to come. She's my mother. And she'll make the evening work. I mean, without her...I'm screwed. And you know it.

ARMAND

(he looks at the
crucifix)

So this is hell. And there's a crucifix in it.

82 INT. KEELEYS' LINCOLN - DUSK

82

The Chauffeur is driving. The Keeleys peer out the window at the gaudy strip, the sign that says NO CRUISING WHEN YELLOW LIGHT IS FLASHING...

MRS. KEELEY

This is less like Palm Beach than I imagined.

BARBARA

It was...all sand when they bought here. This...just...grew up around them while they were in Greece.

83 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - VAL, ARMAND

83

staring at the bedroom door. Armand tries it. It is locked.

ARMAND

If we're lucky, he won't come out at all.

(addressing the crucifix)

I'm not religious. And I'm Jewish. But if everything goes all right tonight, I'll buy you.

The DOORBELL rings.

(CONTINUED)

VAL

Amen. And speaking of Jewish.
Barbara told her parents our last
name is Coleman.

ARMAND

What!

The DOORBELL rings again. Agador runs in wearing shoes,
trips and falls.

ARMAND

(to the crucifix)

Thanks.

Agador opens the door. The Keeleys stand there.

AGADOR

Good evening. I'm Spartacus, the
Goldman's butler.

ARMAND

(to the crucifix)

Perfect.

SENATOR KEELEY

Goldman?

VAL

Coldman. Spartacus is...is...

ARMAND

...Guatemalan.

VAL

...New.

BARBARA

Val, this is my father

BARBARA

and mother. This is Val Coleman.

SENATOR KEELEY

Coleman? or Coldman?

ARMAND

Coleman. The "d" is silent.

VAL

My father--

ARMAND

(he bows to Mrs. Keeley)
How do you do...

MRS. KEELEY

(impressed by the bow)
My daughter Barbara...

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

(bows)
Delighted.

MRS. KEELEY

My husband.

ARMAND

Extremely honored.

He thrusts his hand out from the shoulder, his wrist rigid. Senator Keeley blinks at the Frankenstein-like gesture, then holds out his own hand. They shake.

SENATOR KEELEY

You have a forceful handshake, Mr. Coleman.

ARMAND

Well--you have to in Greece.

There is a tiny pause.

VAL

My mother won't be here for another ten or fifteen minutes. She's... visiting my grandparents...in Palm Beach...and the traffic...

MRS. KEELEY

Oh, isn't that nice--to have contact between the generations.

ARMAND

Yes. Won't you come in.

Armand leads them into the living room, walking slowly and stiffly. They watch his tortured progress.

VAL

How's your leg, dad? My father has an old football injury.

SENATOR KEELEY

Ah! I thought I recognized a fellow sufferer. Where did you play?

VAL

Miami, U...

ARMAND

Greece...

BARBARA

What an interesting

BARBARA

room! Oh, I love it. Oh, look mother. Isn't this room nice?

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

85

Agador limps in with a bottle of champagne in a bucket. He (X)
is having great difficulty walking in his shoes.

ARMAND

Ah! Here we go. Champagne for
everyone.

SENATOR KEELEY

And a Scotch if you have it.

There is a little thunk from the bedroom. The Keeleys turn.

MRS. KEELEY

Is someone else home?

ARMAND

Just our dog, Piranha. We lock her
in when there's company.

There is a sudden explosion as Agador opens the champagne
bottle and the cork flies across the room. Agador and Armand
squeal. Val takes the bottle from Agador.

VAL

I'll finish pouring. You take care
of dinner.

Agador teeters out. Val pours.

ARMAND

He's a brilliant chef but he still
has a lot to learn about serving.
(glances at his watch)
Where could my wife be.

86 EXT. CAUSEWAY OPEN - KATHARINE'S BMW IN TRAFFIC

86

The bridge is up.

Through the windshield we see Katharine pick up her cellular
phone, then take out several slips of paper...

87 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

87

Barbara and Val are talking now, their voices shrill and
forced.

BARBARA

...he was like...so weird...

(CONTINUED)

MRS. KEELEY

Yes, very. Very pleasant vacation house. I like its...severity.

VAL

Actually, dad uses this place more for...work and reflection than anything else. It's not so much a vacation house as a...a...

ARMAND

...monastery.

VAL

Yes.

MRS. KEELEY

Well, it's just charming. And what lovely old books.

(reading the titles)

"Nancy Drew and the Case of the Burning Candle." Oh, you have the whole series.

VAL

What? Yes. They're my mother's.

ARMAND

Sit down. Please, please.

They sit on the massively soft couch and rigid Gothic chairs.

ARMAND

Shall we have some champagne to celebrate?

MRS. KEELEY

Oh, how nice.

ARMAND

(calling)

Agador!

VAL

(quickly)

Spartacus!

ARMAND

Agador Spartacus!

(to the Keeleys)

He insists on being called by his full name.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: 4

83

ARMAND (cont'd)
(Agador appears in the doorway)
Bring in the champagne. (X)

Agador limps out. Val and Armand sit smiling at the Keeleys. They are soaked with sweat.

84 EXT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT

84

The silver Escort is parked in front of the club...behind the Black Lincoln. The Chauffeur sits inside.

Radman talks to the Chauffeur through the window, then walks over to the corner where the Photographer stands snapping pictures.

HARRY RADMAN
They went in around the corner.

The Photographer looks where Radman is pointing.

PHOTOGRAPHER
That's the side entrance to this building. I wonder if it leads to the club.

HARRY RADMAN
(studying it)
Let's check it out.

85 INT. ARMAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

85

They sit in the same position we left them.

MRS. KEELEY
Such a responsibility--two houses. How long ago did you buy this one?

ARMAND
About fifteen years ago. Of course, the area was mostly Jewish then.

MRS. KEELEY
Really. Barbara was telling us it was mostly sand.

ARMAND
Yes. Well, you know the old saying, where there's sand...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

87

VAL

...I really was. I was all, "Will you marry me?" and she was all, "Excuse me? But aren't you the guy who said 'no way before thirty'?"

They laugh loudly.

BARBARA

Oh, it was so funny...

MRS. KEELEY

Yes, it...it does sound funny...

There is another thunk from the bedroom. The Keeleys' eyes dart toward the door.

VAL

Did you have a good trip, Senator?

SENATOR KEELEY

Uh... What? Yes. A good trip. Very nice. We decided to drive here...to see the seasons change. It was a long trip...down through Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia...but it's just so magical to me to come from the North where it's cold, to the South where it's warm and see the tremendous differences from region to region in this incredible country of ours. My wife and I used to drive down to Virginia every Autumn to see the foliage turn. Virginia has amazing foliage--although I think the foliage in Ohio is underrated. It's just dazzling along I-75...

(X)

There is a sudden series of clicks and Katharine's Voice comes over the answerphone. Val and Armand remain motionless, their eyes fixed expectantly on the Senator's face. After a moment of uncertainty, the Senator goes on.

SENATOR KEELEY

...just...dazzling. But we would drive to Virginia just to get away for awhile, you know, see the wonderful farms and the countryside. Just beautiful. The hills...

KATHARINE'S VOICE

Hello? Hello? It's Katharine. Armand? Val? Albert? Someone? Oh, shit. Listen, I'm stuck in traffic, can you start dinner without me...

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 2

87

Val, who has risen and backed toward the answerphone without ever looking away from Senator Keeley, now clicks it off.

SENATOR KEELEY

...the mountains. Talk about "purple mountains majesty"...just fantastic. Red leaves, purple mountains, green fields, and the roads...black...just cutting through the green. All the colors, the trees...

(there is a pause)

Pennsylvania is nice, too.

There is another pause. Then, suddenly...

ARMAND

Was that my wife? Just now? On the phone? I think it was. I was just so caught up... Val, was that...mom?

VAL

Yes. She's stuck and she wants us to start dinner without her. I should have picked up but I didn't want to interrupt the Senator's story.

SENATOR KEELEY

Well, it wasn't that good...

ARMAND

It was wonderful. Well, I'd better tell Agador Sparticus the news...

He begins to swish to his feet. Val leaps to his side.

VAL

Let me help you, dad.
(to the Keeley's)
Will you excuse us?

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 3

87

Val leads him out of the room on to the

87A PATIO - NIGHT

87A

ARMAND

(softly)

I've never had so much go so wrong
so quickly. This is like a curse.

VAL

What'll we do? Should we try and
wait for her? Oh, God, this is
awful...

87B LIVING ROOM

87B

Senator Keeley is speaking softly to his wife.

SENATOR KEELEY

Something odd is going on.

MRS. KEELEY

It's this thing with Jackson. The
wife probably doesn't want to be in
the same house with us...and the
father's a nervous wreck...

BARBARA

Oh, no. I'm sure that's not it.

SENATOR KEELEY

But there's something else...
something about the father...and
the butler...I can't put my finger
on it...

BARBARA

It's nothing! Why must you
always think the worst. Val's
mother is just a little late...

ARMAND

Excuse me...

Val and Armand have returned. Val looks ashen. Armand looks
glazed.

ARMAND

Well, we'll...let's give her half
an hour and then if she isn't...

ALBERT'S VOICE

Here I am!

(CONTINUED)

87B CONTINUED:

87B

They turn. Albert stands there, wearing a wig that has been trimmed and sprayed into submission. There is a little stole around his shoulders and he is carrying a purse. Armand and Val watch, frozen.

ALBERT

Please forgive me for being so late but the traffic was unbelievable. Senator Keeley, Mrs. Keeley--I'm so happy to meet you at last.

(he turns to the
open-mouthed Barbara)
And you must be Barbara. What a pretty child! Come here and give me a hug. Don't be afraid. Oh, how adorable. She's shy.

MRS. KEELEY

It's so nice to meet you, Mrs. Coleman.

ALBERT

Goldman.

SENATOR KEELEY

I thought the "d" was silent.

BARBARA

(pleadingly)
It is pronounced Coleman, isn't it? We've had some confusion...

ALBERT

Oh, yes. Coleman. The d is silent in America. It's Cole'd'isle au Man or Cole of the Isle of Man in France where Armand's chateau is, and Cole d'man in Greece where Armand's work is, and, finally, the vulgar Coleman in Florida where Armand's home is...so, actually, we don't know where we are until we hear our last name pronounced.

(he laughs, trillingly)

MRS. KEELEY

Oh, I see. Well, that explains it.

SENATOR KEELEY

Yes. At last.

BARBARA

I think I would like to hug you, Mrs. Coleman.

88 INT. A SMALL LOCAL NEWSROOM - IN NEW ENGLAND - NIGHT 88

CAMERA tracks with a man (THE TV REPORTER) as he walks across the floor and into a small

89 TAPE EDIT ROOM 89

where a PRODUCER and a TAPE EDITOR are going over the footage of Senator Keeley that was shot the night before.

The Producer looks up as The Reporter enters. (X)

PRODUCER

Take a look. We were going through footage for the special on Jackson...

(to the editor)

Can you pump up the sound?

90 ON SCREEN 90

The Chauffeur reaches through the gate and takes some bills from Radman. There is a hiss and crackle as the images speak:

HARRY RADMAN - TAPE

"Where are you driving him?"

CHAUFFEUR - ON TAPE

"South Beach, Florida."

91 RETURN TO TAPE EDIT ROOM 91

The Editor hits a switch. The frame freezes.

TV REPORTER

Where'd we get this?

PRODUCER

Keeley's house last night. Shooting cutaways. The fat guy is with The Inquirer. Harry...Radman.

TV REPORTER

(peering at the screen)

Oh, yeah. My God, he put on so much weight since the Simpson case.

(there is a brief pause)

Maybe this should go to the network.

92 INT. ARMAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

92

They are all chatting, much more relaxed now...except for Val and Armand.

MRS. KEELEY

It's just wonderful what you've done here...everything so simple and uncluttered. Our place is just a sea of papers...

(shaking her finger at

Senator Keeley, jokingly)

You men! You're just the biggest babies. They can run the world but they can't pick a tie.

ALBERT

I know. I can't get this big lug to buy a new suit.

SENATOR KEELEY

Armand, they're picking on us.

ARMAND

(who is outraged)

Yes.

ALBERT

Well, bless them, that's the way nature made them. Maybe I'm just an old-fashioned girl, but I pity the woman who's too busy to stay home and take care of her man.

Barbara stiffens. Senator Keeley raises his glass.

SENATOR KEELEY

Hear, hear! God, it's so nice to meet people like you.

93 EXT. SIDE ENTRANCE - ARMAND'S BUILDING

93

Radman is peering at the card above the bell and speaking into a cellular phone.

HARRY RADMAN

C-o-l-e-m-a-n. ...No first name on the bell. ...You're sure?

(to photographer)

They can't find him.

PHOTOGRAPHER

What about the name on the club? Goldman. Coleman and Goldman are pretty damned close.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

HARRY RADMAN

You're right. Wouldn't that be something.

(into phone)

Try Goldman. Armand Goldman.

94 INT. ARMAND'S LIVING ROOM

94

Barbara, Val and Armand are rigid. Only the Keeleys and Albert are at ease.

SENATOR KEELEY

...just so odd to me, this fuss over school prayer. As if anyone-- Jews, Muslims, whatever, would mind if their children prayed in the classroom.

ALBERT

It's insane.

Agador walks in with a bucket of ice, sees Albert and collapses into hysterical laughter.

ARMAND

Thank you, Agador Spartacus. You may go.

Agador puts the ice bucket down and exits.

ALBERT

He's very nice but he's such a problem! We never know what makes him laugh.

MRS. KEELEY

At least he speaks English. If you knew how many chauffeurs we've run through in the last six months...

ALBERT

If you knew how many maids we've run through in the last six years. I could name a dozen; Rodney, Julian, Bruce -

ARMAND

Oh, look!

(they turn)

You all need more ice in your drinks!

(CONTINUED)

He picks up the ice bucket and tongs, and makes his way around the room, dropping ice in their glasses.

SENATOR KEELEY

You know, I really have such a good feeling about you people. Not a lot of "clever" books on the shelves, not a lot of fancy "art" on the walls--just the crucifix and a lot of good, warm, family feeling. This is what Clinton didn't understand when he started in on school prayer and gays in the military...

ARMAND

And more ice for you...

ALBERT

Oh, now there's an idiotic issue--gays in the military! I mean, those haircuts, those uniforms--who cares?

VAL

Now, mom...you shouldn't be talking about things you don't know about. Please...

SENATOR KEELEY

Don't patronize your mother, Val. She's an amazingly intelligent woman. I think homosexuality...

ARMAND

And a lot more ice for you...

VAL

I'll have some ice, dad.

SENATOR KEELEY

...is one of the things that's weakening this country.

ALBERT

You know, that's what I thought until I found out Alexander the Great, was a fag. Talk about gays in the military.

ARMAND

How about those Dolphins!

They stare at him. He drops the ice bucket.

(CONTINUED)

VAL

I'll get it.

Senator Keeley suddenly puts his drink down.

SENATOR KEELEY

Look, I think...we've been skirting an issue that has Mr. Coleman very nervous...and I don't blame him..

(there is a deathly hush)

I know you've heard the terrible news about Senator Jackson, how he died...

ALBERT

Oh, that. Yes. What an ugly story. Of course, we don't believe a word of it.

SENATOR KEELEY

What...what do you mean?

ALBERT

He was obviously framed. And I, for one, would like an autopsy.

VAL

Uh...mom...

SENATOR KEELEY

(gasping)

That's just what Rush Limbaugh said.

ARMAND

(rising)

Excuse me.

He hurries out, and into

staggers in and quickly puts his head between his knees. Agador hands him a drink. He tosses it back.

ARMAND

I've never felt such tension. It's like riding a psychotic horse toward a burning stable.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

AGADOR

(deep in his own crisis)
Dinner will be late. But I just
had so little time to shop...

ARMAND

But the girl's nice...and I owe it
to Val. Growing up the way he
did...it can't have been easy...

AGADOR

And I'm really sorry about
laughing at Miss Albert. It was
just that hairdo!

ARMAND

Fuck it. It's one night. I can
live through it.

He turns and walks back into

96 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

96

just in time to hear...

SENATOR KEELEY

...of course, it's very wrong to
kill an abortion doctor--

Armand clutches his heart.

VAL

Dad...

ARMAND

I'm here, son.

SENATOR KEELEY

--but many pro-lifers--I don't
agree with them--but many
sincerely believe that stopping the
doctors will stop the abortions.

ALBERT

Well, that's ridiculous. The
doctors are just doing their jobs.
If you're going to kill someone
kill the mothers. That'll stop
'em.

There is a moment of stunned silence.

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

Dear...may I see you for a moment...

ALBERT

I know what you're going to say--if you kill the mother the fetus dies too, but the fetus is going to be aborted anyway so why not let it go down with the ship.

ARMAND

I really must see you. Now.

ALBERT

Excuse me.

He rises and follows Armand out of the room. There is complete silence.

VAL

I assure you...my mother is just following out a train of thought to its logical and absurd conclusion. Very much the way Jonathan Swift did when he suggested the Irish peasants feed their babies to the rich.

SENATOR KEELEY

Well, I don't know anything about Jonathan Swift. But I know one thing about your mother--she's a passionate woman who follows her heart. And I just love her.

97 EXT. ARMAND'S BUILDING - THE SIDE ENTRANCE

97

Radman is on the phone. The Photographer is snapping pictures.

HARRY RADMAN

(into phone)

So, in other words Goldman owns the club, and lives above it, and owns the building...and he's gay.

(he hangs up and turns to the Photographer)

We're in Inquirer heaven.

98 INT. A LARGE NEWSROOM - NATIONAL STATION

98

around a big open set, with a bank of telephones and a glass window where the EXECUTIVE PRODUCER sits, talking on the phone. A middle-aged man with glasses (EDITOR) stands next to him, waiting patiently.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

(into phone; writing)

... "black Lincoln... with Ohio license plates." ... Got it. ... Well, it's a small area. If he's there, they'll spot him.

(he hangs up; to the Editor)

Kevin Keeley slipped off to South Beach and the National Inquirer is tracking him.

(hands him the slip of paper)

Call Miami and tell them to get on it. This could be real news.

99 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT

99

Armand is at the piano playing I Could Have Danced All Night. Albert is dancing with Senator Keeley and singing in his ear. Val is dancing with Barbara. Mrs. Keeley is sitting on the bench with Armand and singing.

ANGLE - BARBARA, VAL

BARBARA

I hope your mother knows I'm going to have a career after we're married.

VAL

Barbara, Albert is not my mother. He's a drag queen.

BARBARA

That's right, that's right. I just can't... he just sounds so much like a mother.

They arrive at the last line of the song... and Agador steps into the doorway and finishes with them.

AGADOR, THE KEELEYS, ALBERT

"...I could have danced, danced, danced All night!"

(they burst into applause)

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

MRS. KEELEY

What a lovely voice you have,
Agador Spartacus.

AGADOR

(glancing at Armand,
bitterly)

Thank you. Dinner is served.

Senator Keeley offers Albert his arm. Barbara and Mrs. Keeley follow. Val looks at Armand.

ARMAND

(softly)

Go on in. I'm going to write a
note to Katharine and tape it to
the door. Go on.

Val goes, reluctantly, into

100 ARMAND'S DINING ROOM

100

The guests stand at the table. Through the open doorway we can see Armand rushing around, looking for a piece of paper to write on.

ALBERT

...and Mrs. Keeley there. And the
Senator on my left. And Val over
there... Please sit.

SENATOR KEELEY

(putting his hand on
Albert's)

You are the most gracious
hostess...

ALBERT

(putting his free hand
over Senator Keeley's)

Thank you. Oh, I'm having such a
wonderful time...

101 INT. LIVING ROOM - ARMAND

101

has now found a pad and is tearing a sheet of paper off it. Through the open door we see and hear the others.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

ALBERT'S VOICE

...This is just what I've always dreamed of, a big, loving family... gathered around the table...just the way it was when I was a girl...

Armand looks up, incredulously.

SENATOR KEELEY'S VOICE

Yes, that's how we grew up, too...

ALBERT'S VOICE

Oh, it was a wonderful world then, wasn't it? Happy families and everyone speaking English and no drugs and no AIDS...

VAL'S VOICE

Easy on the wine, mom.

MRS. KEELEY'S VOICE

What interesting china. It looks like young men playing together. Is it Greek?

Armand freezes.

ALBERT'S VOICE

I...I...have no idea. I've never seen these bowls before.

MRS. KEELEY'S VOICE

Really? Barbara, get my glasses, will you dear? They're in my purse on the sofa.

Barbara rises and flies into the living room toward the sofa, nearly colliding with Armand, who is racing toward the kitchen.

102 ARMAND'S DINING ROOM

102

Mrs. Keeley is squinting at her unused soup bowl. Senator Keeley is searching through his pockets.

SENATOR KEELEY

Where are my glasses.
(lifting the bowl toward his face)

It is Greek... Greek boys, actually... Naked Greek boys...

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

ALBERT

And girls. Don't you have any girls on your bowl?

VAL

I have one.

ALBERT

So do I. Look, Senator Keeley. There. I think that's a girl.

SENATOR KEELEY

Then it's been a long time since you've seen one. That's a boy. I may need glasses but I can still see that.

Barbara darts in holding her mother's purse.

BARBARA

I couldn't find the glasses. Maybe you left them in the car.

SENATOR KEELEY

I must have mine somewhere...
(rummaging in his jacket)

103 INT. ARMAND'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

103

Agador is ladling soup into a large tureen. Armand stands holding the handles. Agador drops some shrimp in.

ARMAND

Hurry! You idiot! They're sitting there looking at the bowls now. What kind of moron sets the table without looking at the bowls! Stop ladling! Just give me the pot!

(X)

104 INT. ARMAND'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

104

Senator Keeley is now checking his pants pockets.

SENATOR KEELEY

It just drives me so damned crazy - wait - here they are.
(takes out his glasses, puts them on)
Now let's look and see what these Greeks are doing.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

He looks down at the bowl just as Armand sweeps in and ladles the soup into it.

ARMAND

Here we go. We're in luck. Some of Agador's superb soup!...

He ladles the soup into Mrs. Keeley's bowl.

ARMAND

Hmmm. And it's his specialty. Seafood chowder.

MRS. KEELEY

(staring at the ladle)
Isn't...that a hard boiled egg?

ARMAND

What? Why...yes. It...is! This is so "Guatemala." They put hard boiled eggs in everything down there. Well, chicken is so important to them. It's their only real currency. A woman is said to be worth her weight in hens. A man's wealth is measured by the size of his cock. Do you all have soup? Yes. Would you excuse me?

(X)

105 INT. KITCHEN - ARMAND

105

storms in. Agador stands clutching a dishtowel.

ARMAND

What the hell are you serving us.

AGADOR

Sweet and sour peasant soup. I don't know why you called it seafood chowder.

ARMAND

What's sweet and sour peasant soup?

AGADOR

I don't know. I made it up.

ARMAND

Oh, my God! This is a nightmare.

106 INT. ARMAND'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

106

They are eating their soup in a new, slightly awkward silence. Armand is not at the table. Val keeps glancing toward the kitchen and at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

ALBERT

Where are you staying in Florida?

MRS. KEELEY

With the Bushes on Fisher Island.
The Jeb Bushes.

ALBERT

Oh, Fisher Island. Such a lovely
spot. My parents lived on Fisher
Island until they died.

Val shakes his head, violently.

SENATOR KEELEY

Weren't you just visiting your
parents in Palm Beach?

ALBERT

What? Yes. Now. That they're
dead. They've moved. Were moved.
Because... my mother always said
"live on Fisher Island, get buried
in Palm Beach, that way you'll have
the best of Florida."

VAL

(springing up)

Excuse me.

He rushes into

107 THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

107

Agador is weeping in the corner. Armand stands with his
forehead pressed against the wall.

VAL

Dad! You've got to get in there!
Everything's going to hell...

He breaks off as Armand turns and looks at him with insane
eyes.

ARMAND

He didn't make an entree.

VAL

What do you mean? You mean...we
just have SOUP?

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

AGADOR

(sobbing)

Peasant soup is an entree. It's like a stew. That's why I put so much in it...

ARMAND

Shut up.

(he thrusts a piece of paper into Val's hands)

Here! It's the note for Katharine. Put it on the outside door. I have to get back before they eat enough to see the bottom of the bowl.

AGADOR

I had an hour to shop, I had a million things to do...

ARMAND

Shut up. All right, all right, stop crying, it's done. Goddamn you.

(to Val)

Why are you standing there! Go! She'll be here any minute.

VAL

(suddenly coming to life)

Oh, man!

(he streaks out)

108 EXT. STREET - NIGHT - KATHARINE'S BMW

108

as it passes the NO CRUISING WHEN LIGHT IS FLASHING. She looks at her watch, shakes her head.

109 EXT. SOUTH BEACH - NIGHT - A WHITE VAN

109

with the letters WXLTV on the side moving slowly down the street.

110 INT./EXT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

110

A Young Editor and his pretty blond assistant (FAYE). The Editor is driving. The BLOND peers out the window, a slip of paper clutched in her hand. The Editor suddenly straightens. (X)

YOUNG EDITOR

Up ahead. See if the black Lincoln has Ohio plates.

(CONTINUED)

BLOND

Where?

YOUNG EDITOR

With the chauffeur leaning against it.

BLOND

(squinting at it, then at the paper)

That's it. Pull over.

They pull into the only parking space on the street--in between the silver Escort and the Black Lincoln--just as Katharine's BMW U-turns to get the same space.

The Editor sticks his head out of the window.

YOUNG EDITOR

(calling to Katharine)

Sorry.

Katharine swears softly, U-turns again, and inches forward looking for another parking space.

111 EXT. ARMAND'S BUILDING - SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT - VAL

111

taping the note to the front door. He peers down the street, anxiously...then opens the door and darts back in.

The moment he is gone, Radman and the Cameraman step out of the shadows. Radman grabs the note.

HARRY RADMAN

(reading)

"Katharine--whatever you do, don't go upstairs. I'll call you tomorrow. Armand."

(he puts the note in his pocket)

This is going to be great.

112 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

112

They are just finishing the soup. Val's chair is still empty. The Keeleys' eyes keep darting toward it.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

ALBERT

...and from that day on, they decided to look for a cemetery they really loved instead of eating tofu. Daddy favored Key Biscayne but mummy was afraid of developers...

ARMAND

Senator Keeley?

He leaps up with the tureen.

SENATOR KEELEY

No, no...

Armand ladles in another bowlful.

SENATOR KEELEY

(firmly)

Thank you. No more after this. I don't want to get too full.

ARMAND

No fear of that. Mrs. Keeley?

She puts her hands over her bowl as Armand approaches.

MRS. KEELEY

No, really. I'm saving myself for the main course.

ARMAND

Oh, but I thought you understood...

He lowers the ladle and, in a daring move, begins to tilt it. Mrs. Keeley whips her hands out of the way just as the liquid cascades into her bowl.

ARMAND

...this is the main course. In the Guatemalan jungle, peasant soup represents a coming together or pot-au-feu, everything in one pot--actually, everyone in one pot as they say in Agador's little village on bath night.

(he laughs, ignoring their uneasy faces)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND (cont'd)

But, seriously, when two families are about to unite, they dine together on peasant soup for the first meal--to symbolize that they're both going to be in the same...

ALBERT

...pot.

ARMAND

Yes.

BARBARA

Oh, that's so...incredible. Don't you think that's incredible, dad?

SENATOR KEELEY

Yes.

BARBARA

And this is such a great dish. Don't you think so, mom?

MRS. KEELEY

Yes. What...what gives the soup greens that sweetish taste.

SENATOR KEELEY

(chewing)

The pineapple.

Val sprints in, breathlessly.

ARMAND

Well, just in time for dessert. Did you get everything done?

VAL

Yes.

ALBERT

(rising)

Then shall we have our coffee in the living room?

They stop in mid-mouthful...then put down their spoons and get to their feet.

113 EXT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT

113

The white van is parked behind the Black Lincoln. Faye, the blond assistant is standing at the curb with the Keeleys' chauffeur--handing him money. (X)

A few feet away, the Young Editor stands talking, excitedly, on a cellular phone.

114 EXT. A STREET - NIGHT - KATHARINE'S BMW

114

The street is darker, the music distant.

Katharine finishes parking, her rear and front bumpers touching the cars on either side. She opens the door and nearly falls out...then looks at her watch and starts running.

115 INT. ARMAND'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

115

They are seated on the couch, drinking coffee and eating the cake that used to say "To my piglet, from his uncle."

Barbara looks haggard. Val is dazed. Armand's suit is crumpled, his collar crushed, his tie out. Albert's lipstick has melted. But they are still working.

ARMAND

So...what do you think about these kids getting married?

SENATOR KEELEY

Well...of course...she's only eighteen and he's only twenty and so, naturally...

There is the sudden BLAST OF MUSIC O.S., and we hear the opening number begin downstairs.

SENATOR KEELEY

Good God...that sounds like it's coming from downstairs.

MRS. KEELEY

(listening)

It is. It must be from the nightclub on the corner. This...this must be the same building.

ALBERT

You're joking! I always thought that was someone's television set.

(CONTINUED)

ARMAND

(chuckling, quickly)

Now, mother--you KNOW we live
above a nightclub.

(to the Keeleys)

My wife has traveled all over the
world with me but, deep down, she's
still the same little girl from
Grovers Corners.

ALBERT

Yes. I'm afraid I am a bit
naive.

SENATOR KEELEY

(leaning forward;
suddenly, fiercely)

Don't you be ashamed of Grovers
Corners, Mrs. Coleman. It may not
be a chateau in France but it's a
damned good place to call home.

They look at him, taken aback by his intensity. The music is
quite loud now...and there is a slight vibration from the
dancing.

ALBERT

Oh, thank you, I will remember
that. Of course, Armand is much
more sophisticated than I am, but
he comes from good stock...

(his wig slips)

...and so do these two
youngsters...

Barbara sees the wig and jumps up, in front of Albert.

BARBARA

Where's the bathroom?

VAL

(standing up)

I'll show you.

BARBARA

No. I want...Mother Coleman to
show me.

ALBERT

(rising; his hand to his
heart)

Oh, my dear child...

(tears fill his eyes)

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: 2

115

Armand suddenly sees Albert's crooked wig, leaps up, and grasps Albert's head in his hands, trying to straighten it.

ARMAND

One kiss.

ALBERT

(pushing him away)

Armand, I'm only going to the bathroom.

The wig is now slightly worse. Val moves to the other side of Albert.

VAL

We'll all go. That's a pretty tough door to handle since the paint job.

ALBERT

Well, I think you're all crazy.
(shakes his head, the wig wobbles)

My men.

Albert starts toward the bathroom, with Armand and Val crowded in on either side of him, their arms around his waist. Barbara leans her cheek against Albert's as they walk, covering him from the front.

BARBARA

This is so wonderful...all of us together, all of us pot-au-feu.

ALBERT

Oh, I think I'm going to cry. Oh, my goodness...I'm so happy.

He begins to weep as they walk him out of the room. The Keeleys sit staring after them.

MRS. KEELEY

Something very strange is going on here.

SENATOR KEELEY

I know.

MRS. KEELEY

That dinner. And I know there was something on those bowls. And the son disappearing like that while we were eating...

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR KEELEY
I know just what's going on.

MRS. KEELEY
You do?

SENATOR KEELEY
Of course, I do. It's the oldest story in the world.

MRS. KEELEY
What is it?

SENATOR KEELEY
She's a small town girl and he's a pretentious European--the worst kind--with his Cole d' whatever and his decadent china. Oh, I've seen this before. Aristotle Onassis was like this, and all the French, especially Mitterand, and the English--not Margaret Thatcher, of course, but you can't tell me John Major doesn't have something on the side and she just can't handle it.

MRS. KEELEY
Who?

SENATOR KEELEY
Mrs. Coleman.

MRS. KEELEY
Why should she care about John Major.

SENATOR KEELEY
No, no. Mrs. Coleman can't handle her marriage, to him, to Coleman, with his nasty little European traditions, and his snobbery, and that dig about Grovers Corners...

MRS. KEELEY
Kevin, you're rambling.

SENATOR KEELEY
Well, it makes me furious to see the contempt he has for her. Did you see him while she was talking? He looked...almost frightened.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: 4

115

SENATOR KEELEY (cont'd)

And the son is patronizing, too.
 And that fake European
 courtliness--"one kiss", and the
 way he bowed when he was introduced
 to you. And he doesn't even let
 her run the house. He's in the
 kitchen, and he serves, and he
 tells that beige savage what to
 do...

116 INT. BEDROOM - ALBERT, ARMAND, BARBARA, VAL

116

Albert is weeping in earnest now, his wig askew. Masses of (X)
 hair strewn around the dressing table indicate what the wig
 once was. Armand, Val and Barbara search through drawers and
 shelves.

ALBERT

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I've
 ruined everything.

ARMAND

Don't be silly. No one even
 noticed the wig. Where the hell is
 the spirit gum.

VAL

I don't know. They carted
 everything out of here...

BARBARA

I have a barrette. Let's try it.
 If you don't move your head too
 much, it might work...

ALBERT

Thank you, you're a very sweet
 girl. Oh, Val, I'm so sorry...

117 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

117

The Keeleys are standing now, their faces tight with anger.

MRS. KEELEY

Well, I notice you didn't have this
 kind of blind sympathy for poor
 Bessie Jackson!

SENATOR KEELEY

Bessie Jackson is an insensitive
 cow. This woman is a lady. For
 God's sake, I don't understand you.
 She's going to be your in-law, too.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

MRS. KEELEY

Well, if you think he's so terrible maybe Barbara shouldn't marry his son.

SENATOR KEELEY

I don't think he's terrible in that way. I mean, he's not going to get mixed up in some stupid scandal. Europeans are like Republicans-- they don't sleep with women who go on "A Current Affair." Except for that moron Jackson.

MRS. KEELEY

(staring at him)

I don't think I've ever seen you before.

SENATOR KEELEY

What do you mean?

MRS. KEELEY

I don't even know who you are. You aren't even worried about Barbara. Just your career. And "poor little Mrs. Coleman."

SENATOR KEELEY

Oh, please. You're just as worried about my career as I am. You're the one who pushed for this marriage. And Barbara can handle that boy. She's a modern woman-- tough as nails. But Mrs. Coleman cries if you call her "Mother." She's that vulnerable. My God, it just breaks my heart. They don't make women like that anymore.

There is a knock on the door. A breathless voice calls:

KATHARINE'S VOICE

Hello? I'm home. I forgot my key.

SENATOR KEELEY

Who...who is it?

KATHARINE'S VOICE

It's Val's mother. Mrs. Goldman. Is Armand there?

There is a pause.

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR KEELEY

Val's mother?

MRS. KEELEY

Mrs. Goldman?

KATHARINE'S VOICE

Hello? Armand? Open up!

SENATOR KEELEY

So this is the whole story.
This son-of-a-bitch has a live-in
mistress.

Agador stumbles in, hurriedly.

AGADOR
(calling)

You're in the wrong
house.

MRS. KEELEY

(calling)
Coming!

Agador and Mrs. Keeley both race toward the door. Mrs. Keeley wins easily. She opens it. Katharine stands there. Agador leaps forward.

AGADOR

Good evening. May I take your
purse...as usual. Or...for the
first time.

KATHARINE

Thank you.

She hands it to him...and turns to the Keeleys.

KATHARINE

You must be...Senator and Mrs.
Keeley. Katharine Goldman. I'm
delighted to meet you. Please
forgive me for being so terribly
late, but I...

She breaks off as Albert's voice rings out...

ALBERT'S VOICE

Sorry to take so long but Barbara
wanted to see the...

They turn as Albert sweeps in from the bedroom, wig secured, followed by Val, Armand, and Barbara. They stop as they see Katharine.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 3

117

ALBERT

(pointing)

What is she doing here!

ARMAND

Let me explain...

SENATOR KEELEY

Yes! Explain to all of us!

(he nods toward Albert)

I don't want to embarrass this lovely lady... But exactly how many mothers does your son have?

ARMAND

What?

SENATOR KEELEY

(indicating Katharine)

This woman has just introduced herself as Val's mother. How many mothers does Val have?

There is a pause...and then Val steps forward.

VAL

Just one.

He walks over to Albert and takes off the wig.

VAL

This is my mother.

Senator Keeley stands staring at Albert, blankly. Mrs. Keeley shrinks back. Albert bursts into tears. Val puts his arm around him.

VAL

My father owns the nightclub downstairs. My mother is the star. Agador's real name is Jake, he's from New Jersey.

SENATOR KEELEY

(his eyes dimming)

What...

VAL

We lied to you. Barbara and I... and everybody lied for us. These are my parents.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 4

117

ARMAND
(taking Albert's hand)
And this is my wife.
(he turns to Katharine)
And this is the lady who had Val.

VAL
Nice to meet you, Katharine.

KATHARINE
Very nice, Val.
(to Armand)
You've done a good job.

ARMAND
Thank you...
(he puts his hand on
Albert's shoulder)
We're very proud of him.

SENATOR KEELEY
I don't understand.

MRS. KEELEY
Wait a minute...the nightclub
downstairs...he owns it?
(she turns to Barbara)
You mean, he's not a cultural
attache...?

(X)

BARBARA
No. And he's not married to a
housewife. And their name isn't
Coleman. It's Goldman. They're
Jewish.

SENATOR KEELEY
I don't understand.

MRS. KEELEY
He's a man. They're both men.

SENATOR KEELEY
He can't be.
(to Albert)
You can't be Jewish.

MRS. KEELEY
Kevin! This is a man!

SENATOR KEELEY
(blinking)
What?

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 5

117

BARBARA

Don't you understand? They're gay.
They own the drag club downstairs.
They're two men!

ALBERT

(stepping forward)

I just want you to know, Senator
Keeley, that I meant every word I
said to you about a return to
family values and a stricter moral
code.

SENATOR KEELEY

I feel like I'm insane.

KATHARINE

Look, it's very simple. Armand and
I were together one night...

SENATOR KEELEY

(to Albert)

You cried. You said...you...I
don't...

ALBERT

Kevin, nothing's changed. It's
still me. With one tiny
difference.

(X

SENATOR KEELEY

(whispering)

I don't understand...

MRS. KEELEY

I'll explain it to you in the car.
Let's go. Barbara...

BARBARA

No. I'm not coming.

MRS. KEELEY

Don't do this to me, Barbara. I
may not be as "vulnerable" as Mrs.
Coleman...but I still have
feelings...

(she breaks down)

...someone has to like me best.

They stare at her. She sobs, wildly. Senator Keeley shakes
his head, as if waking from a dream...then goes over to her.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED: 6

117

SENATOR KEELEY

Take it easy. Take it easy,
Louise.

(he looks around, looks
at Albert, looks away)

Barbara...we're leaving. And I
want you to come with us.

BARBARA

Daddy, please...

SENATOR KEELEY

Barbara, I've made your mother cry,
I'm coming up for re-election,
we're in the middle of a scandal,
and I'm in the home of a gay couple
who own a drag club. Now, I
understand that you want to get
married, but how many lives do you
want to ruin to do it.

Barbara looks at her father and her weeping mother...then,
helplessly, at Val and Armand and Albert.

BARBARA

(barely able to speak)
I would have...I would have...
really liked to have you as my
family.

She goes quickly to her father. He opens the door, then
turns to Albert.

SENATOR KEELEY

I just want to say, Mr...Mrs...
Mr...whatever your name is, that I
hope this won't influence your
vote.

HARRY RADMAN (V.O.)

Senator Keeley!

Senator Keeley jumps, startled, and his hand shoots up in
front of his face. A flashbulb goes off.

He leaps back in and slams the door.

SENATOR KEELEY

Oh, no!

118 INT. ARMAND'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

118

Radman and the Photographer stand near the top of the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

HARRY RADMAN

Did you get him?

PHOTOGRAPHER

No! I would have if you hadn't said "Senator Keeley."

HARRY RADMAN

I was trying to make him turn.

119 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT

119

There is a WXLTVAN parked outside and a cameraman setting up lights.

ANOTHER VAN with the letters WLLS draws up to the corner. A (X)
Crewman jumps out and calls to the blond assistant, Faye.

CREWMAN

What's the story?

FAYE

If you don't know, what are you doing here?

CREWMAN

We got a call that you were here.

120 EXT. 2ND ENTRANCE - NIGHT

120

As Radman and the Photographer come out of the door...and stand staring bitterly at the corner.

HARRY RADMAN

Those vultures.

121 INT. ARMAND'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

121(X)

Senator Keeley lies stretched out on the chaise. Mrs. Keeley applies ice to the back of his neck. Barbara stands weeping in the corner in Val's arms. Armand sits brooding in a chair. Agador passes a bottle around.

Katharine sits eating a bowl of soup. Albert is at the window.

ALBERT

Another television van just arrived. And a car. It says Florida Eagle--oh, that's just print news.

(CONTINUED)

SENATOR KEELEY

They have a great headline.
"Senator Jackson and his women:
Senator Keeley and his men."

MRS. KEELEY

But it's perfectly innocent. You
just came to meet the parents of
the boy Barbara wants to marry.
And you didn't know...

SENATOR KEELEY

Louise, the people of this country
aren't interested in details. They
don't even trust details. They
just trust headlines.

KATHARINE

Well, if I can put in my two cents:
they don't have a thing on you.
It's their word against yours that
you're even here.

SENATOR KEELEY

Well, they will have something on
me. Because at some point I'll
have to leave. People will notice
if I'm never seen again.
(to his wife)
More candy.

There is a short, brooding pause.

ALBERT

(looking out the window)
Another TV crew. And they're going
into the club. Wouldn't you know
it. The one night I don't
perform...

AGADOR

Can I get anyone some soup?

There is a quick murmur of "no's." Katharine looks up from
her bowl.

KATHARINE

Who made this?

AGADOR

I did.

KATHARINE

And it's wonderful.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: 2

121

BARBARA

Daddy, I'm sorry...

SENATOR KEELEY

(wearily)

I know, I know...

AGADOR

Another shot, Senator?

SENATOR KEELEY

I don't really drink.

AGADOR

Now is the time to pretend.

Armand clicks the monitor on. We hear Cyril's voice:

CYRIL'S VOICE

And now we end as we began---our
first number is our last number...

(X)

VOICES

(singing)

"We are family,
I got all my sisters and me..."...

VAL

Dad, couldn't the Keeleys slip out
with the audience at the end of the
show?

ARMAND

No. They're waiting for that.
They'd be recognized in two
seconds.

ALBERT

Not necessarily.

122 INT. ARMAND'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

122

Keeley, in full drag, sits in front of a dressing table,
facing away from the mirror. Albert, in a suit, is finishing
his lips.

ALBERT

There. Now, remember - the first
time is always a big shock. Ready.
Turn.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED

122

Albert spins him around. He stares at himself.

SENATOR KEELEY

Oh, my God...

Mrs. Keeley enters with Barbara--and shrieks. Both women are wearing costumes. All three gasp.

SENATOR KEELEY

Is that you, Louise?

MRS. KEELEY

Yes.

(staring at him)

It's terrifying, Kevin.

SENATOR KEELEY

I know, I know. I told them white would make me look fat.

123 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - BACKSTAGE - ARMAND

123

talking into the mike.

ARMAND

A big hand for our girls ladies and gentleman!

ANGLE - THE HOUSE

The girls are trouping on stage--two by two. Armand's voice continues over the shot.

ARMAND'S VOICE

As we come to the end of our show, you are family, too. Please sing along.

There is applause. Scattered through the audience are Newsmen, Reporters, and a few Photographers, their eyes darting around the darkened club, searching for their prey.

Suddenly, several of the Newsman stiffen as Armand comes from backstage and begins making his way through the club.

YOUNG EDITOR

Who's that?

FAYE

Well, it's not Kevin Keeley.

Their eyes follow him as he pauses to speak to the drag queen at the cash register (ZA-ZA) and two other drag queens who work in the house.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED 123

ANGLE - ARMAND, ZA-ZA, TWO OTHER DRAG QUEENS

as they head briskly back toward the stage...and disappear through the door.

124 EXT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT 124

Another truck pulls up. The media is now divided between the inside of the club, the outside of the club, and the side entrance.

Senator Keeley's Chauffeur stands by the Lincoln, taking money from a man in a windbreaker. There is a small line of newsmen behind him, each holding a wad of bills.

125 EXT. SIDE STREET ENTRANCE - NIGHT 125

Radman from The Inquirer and his Photographer are squeezed near the front of a small horde of newsmen.

PHOTOGRAPHER

How long do you think these guys will wait?

HARRY RADMAN

As long as it takes. There's no story if they don't get him coming out.

126 INT. THE BIRDCAGE - NIGHT 126

IN THE HOUSE the newsmen glance at their watches, shifting impatiently as....

ONSTAGE Armand, Za-Za, the other two drag queens, Cyril and Albert stream in from the wings and join the girls as they begin dancing down the stairs into the house. There are excited cries from the crowd.

+OMIT 127-131

132 ANGLE - TWO NEWSMEN 132

Watching the girls mingle with the audience.

NEWSMAN #1

Oh, great.

NEWSMAN #2

I hate shows that do this.

133 ANGLE - FAYE (THE BLOND NEWSWOMAN), THE YOUNG EDITOR 133
as some of the girls dance past.

BLOND
This show is really assaultive.

YOUNG EDITOR
Yeah. But...interesting.

134 ANGLE - SENATOR KEELEY - IN THE HOUSE 134
sashaying around the tables, mouthing indistinguishable lyrics off beat, pretending to sing.

SENATOR KEELEY
"And we da-dum thing
birds dee feather..."...

135 ANGLE - ARMAND 135
He stops beside Val and says, softly.

ARMAND
Keep 'em moving toward the door.

136 ANGLE - MRS. KEELEY, A CUSTOMER - DANCING 136
He is an extremely handsome Latino.

LATINO MAN
(he dips her)
I've never danced with a man before.

MRS. KEELEY
(throatily)
There's always a first time.

137 ANGLE - SENATOR KEELEY, BARBARA 137
They are the only ones no one has asked to dance.

SENATOR KEELEY
No one will dance with me in this dress. I told them white would make me look fat.

(CONTINUED)

140 ANGLE - SENATOR KEELEY

140

As he dances past his chauffeur and whispers to him...

SENATOR KEELEY

Meet me in twenty minutes on the
the corner of El Dorado and Palm..

CHAUFFEUR

Lady, not for a million dollars.

Mrs. Keeley shoves the Senator into the car, the door
slams...and the car drives off into the night.

THE MOVIE CONTINUES UNDER THE FINAL CREDITS:

141 INT. A NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

141

A wedding is about to begin.

On the RIGHT SIDE OF THE CHURCH, Mrs. Keeley sits with
friends and relatives--all wealthy, tastefully groomed,
traditionally dressed...and barely able to keep their eyes
off...

THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CHURCH--where Albert and Armand sit with
their friends and relatives: Katharine, the Goldman girls,
Tony and his wife, the Greengrocer and the Butcher and their
wives, Albert's mother and two brothers, Armand's aunt and
uncle, etc.

There are FOUR USHERS, one of them Chuck, one of them a
college friend of Val's we have never seen before, and
Agador, who now limps down the aisle seating latecomers.

THE BRIDESMAIDS are lovely, gentile girls. THE MATRON OF
HONOR looks like Queen Elizabeth and stares, helplessly, at
Agador.

A priest and a rabbi are in attendance. The rabbi is gay.

142 ANGLE - THE LEFT SIDE - ZA-ZA AND A 2ND DRAG QUEEN

142

staring openly at the right side.

ZA-ZA

Robert Dole is gorgeous.

143 ANGLE - THE RIGHT SIDE

143

At the end of the row we see Robert Dole, staring fixedly
ahead. TWO MATRONS glance covertly at the left side.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

MATRON #1

Which one is the mother?

MATRON #2

I just don't know.

The music begins playing and Barbara walks down the aisle on Senator Keeley's arm.

The guests on the right side of the church watch with softened faces. Mrs. Keeley weeps, quietly.

The guests on the left side of the church clutch their hearts. Armand and Albert sob.

The bride reaches the altar and looks at the groom. The groom smiles at her...and the ceremony begins.

THE END

143 EXT. SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

143

Flash bulbs go off. Camera crews push forward with mikes. They are moving in on a man with a newspaper in front of his face, dressed in Senator Keeley's clothes.

Radman steps forward and tears the newspaper away. Agador looks out from behind it.

HARRY RADMAN

This isn't him. This guy's Spanish.

AGADOR

Hispanic. And I'm Guatemalan.

REPORTER #1

Dumb trick.

144 ANGLE - THE CORNER

144

The Newspeople and the girls and the few customers who have exited from the club begin to go back inside.

REPORTER

It was a set-up, huh?

FAYE

Yes. I thought it might be. That was really stupid. Now we know he's in there.

145 EXT. ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE CLUB - NIGHT

145

The Senator and Mrs. Keeley and Barbara are being herded along by Katharine.

KATHARINE

My car's straight ahead.

MRS. KEELEY

I can't believe it. I made a hundred dollars.

Senator Keeley suddenly sees his chauffeur and darts over to him. He points toward Katharine.

SENATOR KEELEY

She's taking us to a gas station on El Dorado and Palm. Meet me in twenty minutes.

CHAUFFEUR

Lady, not for a million dollars.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED:

145

Katharine grabs the Senator and pulls him away. The four of them hurry into the darkness toward her car.

THE MOVIE CONTINUES UNDER THE FINAL CREDITS:

146 INT. A NEW ENGLAND CHURCH

146

A wedding is about to begin.

On the RIGHT SIDE OF THE CHURCH, Mrs. Keeley sits with friends and relatives--all wealthy, tastefully groomed, traditionally dressed...and barely able to keep their eyes off...

THE LEFT SIDE OF THE CHURCH--where Albert and Armand sit with their friends and relatives: Katharine, the Goldman girls, Tony and his wife, the Greengrocer and the Butcher and their wives, Albert's mother and two brothers, Armand's aunt and uncle, etc.

There are FOUR USHERS, one of them Chuck, one of them a college friend of Val's we have never seen before, and Cyril, who now flits busily down the aisle seating latecomers.

THE BRIDESMAIDS are lovely, gentile girls. THE MATRON OF HONOR looks like Queen Elizabeth and stares, helplessly, at the BEST MAN (Agador).

A priest and a rabbi are in attendance. The rabbi is gay.

ANGLE - THE RIGHT SIDE - TWO MATRONS

MATRON #1

Which one is the mother?

MATRON #2

I just don't know.

147 EXT. CHURCH - THE MEDIA

147

describe the scene, naming the prominent political friends of Senator Keeley who have and have not shown up, and making open-ended predictions as to his chance for re-election.

148 INT. CHURCH

148

The music plays. Barbara walks down the aisle on Senator Keeley's arm.

The guests on the right side of the church watch with softened faces. Mrs. Keeley weeps, quietly.

(CONTINUED)

148 CONTINUED:

148

The guests on the left side of the church clutch their hearts. Armand and Albert sob.

The bride reaches the altar and looks at the groom. The groom smiles at her...and the ceremony begins.

THE END