

THE FISHER KING

a screenplay by
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INT. DARKENED BEDROOM - DAWN

C.U. - A RADIO/ALARM CLOCK read 5:59 AM. the digital numbers flip to 6:00 and the radio goes on:

A TALK SHOW HOST speaks in a soft, soothing voice:

JACK (V.O.)
It's six AM...Oooooooo and that
bed never felt sooooo
good...Mmmmm, you linger in a
gentle dream state...ever so
comfortable... ever so safe...

SOUND EFFECTS - LOUD BATTLE NOISE...

...BUT SUDDENLY YOU REALIZE IT'S
MONDAY!

A WOMAN SCREAMS...THE D.J., JACK, speaks in a rapid fire pace...

A HAND from O.C. tries to shut the alarm off in the dark.

...your hand races to shut off
the alarm before your mind wakes
up...

SCREAMS...THE HAND knocks over a water glass and grabs the clock
but can't find the OFF switch.

...But it's too late! If you
don't get out of bed now, you'll
never have enough time to blow
dry your hair THAT SPECIAL WAY...
You'll never make that nine
o'clock meeting that your PARTNER
WILL BE EARLY FOR... YOU'LL BE
LATE AND EVERYONE WILL NOTICE!

THE HAND bangs the clock violently...

...Rumors will fly about you
losing your edge and before you
know it, you're selling yourself
on street corners to lonely
middle-aged men from the
Midwest... Headlines flash across
your mind - SLEEPER GUNS D.J.
THEN SELF - CLAIMED "I only wanted
two more minutes!"

SCREAMS...SILENCE...The D.J. (JACK) speaks in a normal voice.

...Hey, it's Monday morning, and
I'm Jack Lucas.

THE HAND rips the clock off the night table.

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN.....

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING.

A MAN in a shower listening to the radio...

WOMAN (V.O.)

(upset)

...I don't have to talk to you.

JACK (V.O.)

Yes...Yes you do because you see,
today, you're our -

PRE-RECORDED ECHOING V.O.
SPOTLIGHT CELEBRITY.

WOMAN (V.O.)

No, it's none of your business
- it's MY business - and I'm very
private about what is my business.

JACK (V.O.)

OH, PLEASE! You had had sex with
the Prime Minister of Belize in
the parking lot of Sea World...
You're telling me you're a private
kind of person. No..You're our...

PRE-RECORDED ECHOING V.O.
SPOTLIGHT CELEBRITY.....

WOMAN (V.O.)

Listen, I have been humiliated
enough already.

JACK (V.O.)

Perhaps not - We need those
details...

THE WOMAN hangs up...

CREW (V.O.)

Ooooooooo.....

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

A NAKED MAN shaves as he listens to the radio.

JACK (V.O.)

I'm peeved! I'm calling Belize!
(telephone sounds)
...I WANT TO SPEAK TO THE PRIME
MINISTER, PRONTO!

VOICE (V.O.)
Yes...Belize Central Office.

JACK (V.O.)
Yes...yes, hello...Hello, this
is Jack Lucas of the United States
and I want to speak to the Prime
Minister of Belize, PRONTO!...

VOICE ON PHONE (V.O.)
He's not in.

JACK (V.O.)
What you mean he's not in - you
mean nobody's running the country!
You mean I could just walk in
there right now and take over
Belize? Hey guys! You up for a
COUP before lunch?

VARIOUS CREW MEMBERS (V.O.)
SURE! LET'S DO IT! LET'S CALL
FRANCE!

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - 7:45 AM.

A WOMAN in a bathrobe fixes herself coffee as the radio plays.

JACK (V.O.)
Hi, this is Jack Lucas and we're
discussing PERSONAL PET PEEVES...
Go ahead caller...

WIFE CALLER (V.O.)
O.K. Well, It's my husband. He
drives me crazy. I'll be talking
and he'll never let me finish a
sentence...He's always "finishing
my..."

JACK (V.O.)
(overlapping)
Finishing your thoughts...that's
awful.

WIFE CALLER (V.O.)
Oh, that "drives me...."

JACK (V.O.)
Drives you crazy, huh? The
scoundrel!

INT. KITCHEN - 9:15 AM.

A MAN reads the newspaper and sips coffee, as the radio plays.

CALLER (V.O.)
Hello, Jack. It's Edwin.

JACK AND CREW (V.O.)
IT'S EDWIN!!!!

New Years Eve sound effects.

JACK (V.O.)
Edwin. We haven't heard from you
in a while. I've missed you.

EDWIN (V.O.)
(laughing
good-naturedly)
O.K....O.K...

EDWIN (V.O.)
(sincere, child-like)
I missed you too, Jack.

JACK & CREW (V.O.)
Awww.....!!!!!!

SOUND EFFECTS - "A SUMMER PLACE"...THE NEEDLE IS SCRATCHED OFF.

EDWIN laughs, perhaps a bit over zealously - HE is a
SIMPLE-MINDED SOUL...a lonely child in the body of a lonely man.

JACK (V.O.)
So, Edwin baby, this is Sunrise
Confession time...what have you
got for us?

EDWIN (V.O.)
I...I...went to this bar..this
very, you know, IN place...called
The Side Bar.

JACK (V.O.)
I know the place. It's one of
those YUPPIE gathering holes.
I told you to stay away from them,
Edwin. Yuppies are diseased
individuals who went to private
schools and took scouting
seriously.

EDWIN (V.O.)
(simple-minded laughter)
O.K. I know, but...I met this
beautiful girl...

SOUND EFFECT - "WEDDING BELLS" THEN A NEEDLE SCRATCHING IT OFF.

JACK (V.O.)

Now, Edwin, I'm going to have to remind you of the time we made you propose to that check-out girl at Thrifty's that you liked so much. Remember her reaction?

BLACK SEVENTIES GROUP (V.O.)

"MISTER BIG STUFF...HUH...TELL ME ...WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE... MISTER BIG STUFF...YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO GET MY LOVE..."

EDWIN (V.O.)

(defensive)

I wasn't really serious about her, Jack. That was just a joke for you guys...She was just a girl. This is a woman. She wears pearls.

JACK & CREW (V.O.)

Aahhh.

EDWIN (V.O.)

I think she likes me...she gave me her number, but she must work a lot 'cause when I call she's never home...But I think we'll go out this weekend...I've -

JACK (V.O.)

Yeah, Edwin, SURE...and PINNOCHIO is a true story...EDWIN! WAKE UP! This is ANOTHER fairy tale.

EDWIN (V.O.)

No, Jack, no, it's not.

JACK (V.O.)

She gave you the brush off, kiddo. How long ago did you meet?

EDWIN (V.O.)

Um...I think it's like two weeks almost.

JACK (V.O.)

TWO WEEKS? And she's never home? What, does she commute to Saigon every day? Edwin, please...

EDWIN (V.O.)

(hurt)

JACK! She LIKES me. She said for me to call.

MICHAEL MCDONALD (V.O.)
(sings)
"WHAT A FOOL BELIEVES...HE SEES..."

EDWIN (V.O.)
(over the song)
JACK!

JACK (V.O.)
I told you about those kind of
people, Edwin. They only mate
with their own kind. It's called
YUPPIE IN-BREEDING - that's why
so many of them are retarded and
wear the same clothes. You are
not their kind Edwin...They're
not human. They're evil, Edwin.

SLIGHT PAUSE, as EDWIN considers this.

EDWIN (V.O.)
(serious)
O.K., Jack.

END CREDITS

CUT TO:

INT. RADIO STATION - 9:30 AM.

CAMERA PANS from a wall clock as JACK LUCAS winds up his
broadcast:

JACK LUCAS (O.C.)
Well, I'm gone. I'm outta here.
It's been a thrill, as always.
(false sincerity)
"Have a perfect day"...and
remember, bosses are just cruel
third graders who have grown up
and only pretended to be mature
so they could get jobs and be
cruel for money.

WE PAN several studio technicians making ready for the end of
the broadcast to the talk show host JACK LUCAS - handsome,
aggressive, intelligent - an underground media star.

JACK
Everyone here on the Jack Lucas
Morning Show says bye.

CREW
BYE!

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY plays.

JACK

This is Jack Lucas...So long...
arriverderch...I'll be sure to
send you a thought as you struggle
through yet another eternal
nine-to-fiver...Yes, I will - as
I drive home in my limo...lay out
on my sun deck...have sex with
the teenager of my choice...And
that thought will be: Thank God
I'm me!

JACK motions to techy behind glass. Then leans back in his chair, as a RADIO COMMERCIAL begins. His expression seems grave - not one you would expect after a successful broadcast. HE appears tired and annoyed. HE sighs in relief that it is over. The studio team work around him in silence - with no indication of the relationship they have "on air." JACK pulls out a bottle of aspirins and takes two.

JACK

(annoyed, to the room)
I want you all to know I'm getting
sick again and it's because
someone keeps forgetting to raise
the thermostat before I come in
here...My ass is freezing for the
first hour.

A TECHY makes mocking faces behind his back. Another TECHY suppresses a laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON.

An expansive Tribeca loft. The modern, minimalist decor gives it a sleek, cold feeling. A space full of angles and edges, with no place to feel safe and sound.

CUT TO:

A BATHROOM MEDICINE CHEST -

The mirrored door closes revealing JACK'S reflection - his head and body still wet from the shower. HE begins to towel himself dry. HE take a good look at his handsome face in th mirror - admiring every contour, every pore. HIS eyes light up with satisfaction.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN AREA

JACK'S GIRLFRIEND, SONDRRA - an artist with a beautifully sculptured face and body - sleek, cold; like JACK'S apartment, there is no place to feel safe and sound. SHE is eating a bowl of cereal, studying the cereal box.

Beside her is a SKETCHPAD with an ink drawing of a stalk of wheat (similar to the cereal box) growing out of the belly button of a naked male-figure who's torso/pelvis is shaped like a map of America. JACK enters, toweling his hair.

SONDRA

I know it's predictable but I've decided to just go with it and make his penis Florida.

JACK

Can I ask that when you clean your hands you wipe the ink off the inside of the sink before it stains the porcelain.

SONDRA

You can ask.

JACK exits

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM AREA - SAME TIME

JACK'S hand picks up a television script entitled; "ON THE RADIO" HE slides onto the bed with the script in his lap and opens to the first page...HE closes the script and breathes a sigh - leaning back against the pillow, holding the script to his chest and closing his eyes as if he were making a wish.

SONDRA (O.C.)

Raoul called before. About dinner.

JACK quickly opens his eyes. SONDRA crosses to the wall of closets and begins to undress.

JACK

About dinner as a concept or about dinner with ...

(over-enunciating)

R A O U L?

SONDRA

(deadpan)

You're so witty. I'm so jealous.

(BEAT)

I NEED to get out of here, Jack, and do something other than sit in this apartment and count how many funny lines you have per page.

JACK

You know, tomorrow's a very big day for me...And it would be nice if you acted like you understood.

SONDRA
Fine. I'll say no.

JACK
It IS my first day of taping,
Sondra.

SONDRA (O.C.)
Fine.

JACK
(looking at script;
sincere, vulnerable)
First time in my life I'll be a
voice with a body. Do you know
what that means? What this could
lead to?

SONDRA
(unsnapping her bra in
the front)
Jack, it's a sitcom - you're not
splitting the atom.

JACK
I'll remember that the next time
you get excited over drawing pubic
hairs on raisin bran.
(lighting joint and
inhaling)
Want some?

SONDRA
No, I have to work.

JACK
How un-sixties of you.

SONDRA
I was nine in the sixties.

JACK
I used to think my biography would
be JACK LUCAS - THE FACE BEHIND
THE VOICE, but now it can be JACK
LUCAS, THE FACE AND THE VOICE...or
maybe just JACK - EXCLAMATION
POINT...

SONDRA slips off her panties. JACK eyes her butt as she crossed
into the bathroom. Feeling sexy, he rises and follows her.

SONDRA leans over and turns on the shower. The bathroom door
slams behind her. SHE turns quickly. JACK is standing there,
naked. Acting sexy, HE walks toward her as he flexes his chest
muscles - right, left, right, left...HE grabs her in his arms,
dips her over backwards and kisses her passionately. HE raises
her up.

SONDRA
(unaffected)
Jack, I have work to do, too.
I just want to take a shower...

HE dips her again, kisses her, this time leaving her "dipped."

...Can't we do this later?...

JACK scoops her up in his arms.

...JACK!...What are you--

HE makes his way out of the bathroom, which is difficult - considering it's small and cluttered as SONDRA has long legs. When HE turns, SONDRA'S feet knock over their cosmetic shelf...

HE turns the other way, purposely smothering her head in the towels. SONDRA can't help but laugh...

JACK
(overly seductive)
I can't open the door, my darling.

SONDRA
Well, you better open the door
- 'cause I'm not getting it in
a bathroom.

JACK
Yes, my darling.

HE eases her down, keeping his arm around her, opens the door and guides her out as he kisses her neck.

SONDRA
You're a maniac.

JACK (O.C.)
(comically seductive)
You make me wet.

SONDRA (O.C.)
If we do this now, can I have
dinner with Raoul?

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A MONTAGE OF JACK'S EVENING ALONE.

1 - JACK turns on his CD player and moves about the empty living room, singing along with FRANK SINATRA: "IN THE WEE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING." (THE SONG plays in BG to #4)

2 - JACK on the phone, struggling with a Chinese take-out order.

JACK

No...I want one order beef with baby peas...and two egg roll..ONE ORDER BEEF. Is there anyone who speaks English there...I'm sorry but you're bumming me out - I want one order BEEF WITH BABY PEAS... and TWO egg roll...O.K...You understand now? Jack Lucas... Lucas...L - U -...L! L! L!...Like in...Lichee nut! Lichee! Leper!

3 - JACK UNPLUGS HIS PHONE and picks up a copy of his script. HE faces a full length mirror. HE throws the script down, takes a dramatic breath, then plays to his reflection.

JACK

"...I want my...

False start. JACK clears his throat, pauses, then tries again...

...I want my orange cup with the teddy bear."

4 - CAMERA PANS a bathroom floor - a brown paper bag, plate of half-eaten Chinese food, a bottle of beer, into a bathtub where JACK languishes in a bubble bath, browsing through a brochure of FERRARIS - "Oooooing" and "Aaahhhing" orgasmically at each picture. The STEREO now PLAYS - BOB MARLEY'S, "IS THIS LOVE." JACK suddenly closes the magazine and recites...

JACK

"IwantMYorangeCupWITHthetteddybear.
IwantmyORANGEcupwiththetteddybear.
IwantmyorangeCupwiththeTEDDYbear."

(smiles)

You could burp these lines and you'd be funny.

(sincere amazed realization)

I have this. I have this.

(sinks into tub and whispers)

I really have this.

END OF MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALARM CLOCK - it reads 11:15.

JACK tosses the script onto his night table and begins to rub his head. The television on, but the volume off. A half-eaten dessert sits beside him. HE suddenly notices an 8x10 glossy of himself broadcast on the TV.

Confused, JACK picks up his remote and raises the volume.
TELEVISION - A NEWS BROADCAST: a REPORTER in mid-report.

REPORTER
...suggested that Mr. Malnick
return to the scene of his initial
meeting...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SIDE BAR - NIGHT

REPORTER (V.O.)
An after work hot spot, the Side
Bar...is popular with single young
professionals. Edwin Malnick
arrived at the peak hour of 7:15,
took a long look at the handsome
collection of the city's best and
brightest - then removed a shotgun
from his overcoat and opened fire.

JACK'S face turns white.

CUT TO:

INT. SIDE BAR - NIGHT

The bar's glass has been blasted. Tables are overturned.
Paramedics are running about.

REPORTER
Seven people were killed before
Mr. Malnick...

A PICTURE OF EDWIN MALNICK is shown as the REPORTER continues.

...turned the gun on himself and
shot a hole through his head...

EDWIN MALNICK looked sad and harmless. JACK quickly grabs the
PHONE and RE-PLUGS it. HE is about to make a call when he is
stopped by the REPORTER mentioning his name...

REPORTER (ON TV)
The last person Mr. Malnick spoke
to was Jack Lucas. Representatives
of Mr. Lucas expressed regret,
however, no formal comment has
been made. But a lonely man
reached out to a world he knows
only through his radio - looking
for friendship...finding only pain
...and tragedy. This is Mark
Shaffer...Channel Ten news.

JACK is frozen. His breathing grows heavy. HIS phone begins to ring, but JACK is unable to move.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO STOP - DAY

WE SUPER: A YEAR or so LATER.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP - DAY.

CAMERA PANS the CUSTOMERS at the counter of the video store.

PUDGY WOMAN
(to counter person)
I can't watch foreign movies when
I eat - they make me nauseous.

CAMERA PANS TO a variety of CUSTOMERS looking through the shelves.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP OFFICE - SAME TIME

CLOSE UP - THE HEADLINE OF A SENSATIONALIST (NATIONAL ENQUIRER) TABLET
WOMAN KILLS PLASTIC SURGEON, THEN SELF
TOLD FRIENDS; I CAN'T BLINK WITHOUT PAIN

The picture of a bug-eyed society woman is below the caption.

ANNE, the owner of the store, enters abruptly - closing the office door behind her, a cigarette dangling for her mouth. Her desk is organized litter - her walls are filled with porno tapes. SHE searches for one as she talks.

ANNE
These people are insane today.
They took insane pills...

A bit about ANNE as she searches for a video.

ANNE is in her mid-to-late thirties....and she is all woman. She has a raw, earthy, unmistakable sensuality. Her red lipstick matches her red nail polish like a hat and glove set. Inlaid on each nail is a rhinestone design of a little star. Her angora sweaters are tight and clinging, giving her breasts a decided lift and perkiness. Her tight slacks and backless pumps that slap the ground, encourage her buns to have a life of their own. A half-smoked cigarette hangs out of her mouth with great expertise - a skill ANNE obviously picked up in a high school bathroom. Her voice is thick with a delicious Brooklyn twang. SHE is pure street-wise in attitude, philosophy and emotions.

SHE turns and speaks to the man behind the tabloid.

ANNE
Hey! Mr. Happiness!

THE MAN LOWERS THE NEWSPAPER:

It is JACK LUCAS. No longer the aggressive radio star, but more a man who looks like he hasn't slept in months. Rings under the eyes, a sullen yet cynical expression across his face. An intolerant and self-pitying misanthrope..The outrageous articles fascinate him. HE stares back at her pitifully.

ANNE
Are we going to work a little today or are ya gonna act like ah..... your puppy's been run over by a truck? Hmm?

JACK rises to stand before her. HE notices, with some annoyance, that her bra straps are showing out from her sweater. He fixes them.

JACK
Are you going for a specific look with this?

SHE makes a face and exits. JACK raises his eyebrow and follows.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP - COUNTER

JACK'S POV - CAMERA moves "cautiously" out into the video store, taking in the crowd as they move about the hundreds of boxes of movies. Suddenly, the GIANT FACE OF A FRUMPY SECRETARY - who looks like she rents movies in lieu of no dates - POPS INTO FRAME.

WOMAN
(to JACK)
Can you help me? I don't know what I'm in the mood for. Uh...I sort of want a Katherine Hepburny kinda Cary Granty kinda thing - something sorta nutty and screwbally, ya know? Nothing heavy...I couldn't take heavy. Ya have something like that?

JACK
(very low key)
Uhh....

WOMAN
(acting helpless)
I don't know...Uh...

JACK seems frightened by the stupidity of this woman.

WOMAN
Maybe something more modern. Like
a Goldie Hawny - Chevy Chasey
kinda thing, huh?

JACK is growing angry. HE stares at the woman menacingly.

WOMAN
Or maybe something sad, I want
to either laugh or cry or both.
JACK just stares at her in silent rage from behind the counter.

JACK
Well...what will it be?

WOMAN
Well, maybe a musical.
(laughs then flirts)
I'm not sure. What are you in
the mood for?

JACK stares at the woman manically then turns to look at the
shelves of returned movies behind the desk. HE selects one and
hands it to the woman.

WOMAN
Great...
(reading box aloud)
"ORDINARY PEEPHOLES"

THE WOMAN'S eyes go wide. JACK just stares at her deadpan.

JACK
It's kind of a - Big Titty -
Spread Cheeky kinda thing...I
cried all the way through it...

ANNE has been listening to this entire exchange. SHE hastily
crosses up beside JACK.

ANNE
(to WOMAN)
...I'm sorry. I need to borrow
him for a moment.

As ANNE tugs at his sleeve, JACK eyes the WOMAN like a maniac
being lead away from his prey. HE follows ANNE back into her
office. Once inside, SHE stands before JACK who leans against
her office door, closing it behind him.

ANNE
Not for nuthin - but there's this
thing we have in business...it
might help you a little. It's
called "customa relations."

JACK
 (deadpan intensity)
 I'm sorry. You know I hate people
 who ask for screwball comedies.

ANNE moves in closer and caresses his face tenderly.

ANNE
 Sweetie, honey...You hate people.
 (sympathetic)
 What is it? Is this one of those
 days when you tell me you're in...
 whadda call it...an emotional
 abyss?
 (HE doesn't answer)
 Why don't you take the day off.
 I'll cook tonight. O.K?

SHE kisses him, then exits. JACK is not comforted in the least
 by this show of affection.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - TWILIGHT

As JACK takes a walk down a city street, he comes upon a
 luxurious hotel. HE stops to watch the goings-on at the
 entrance.

CUT TO:

A LIMOUSINE - parked and awaiting it's occupants. A handsome
 MAN in his forties exits the hotel and walks toward the limo.
 HE is holding the hand of his FIVE-YEAR-OLD SON, who is carrying
 a two foot high plastic, smiling PINNOCHIO DOLL. Both father
 and son are dressed in ties and jackets.

JACK watches in envy. HIS own clothes a shabby reflection of
 the MAN'S. HE eyes the limo with longing. Another limo pulls
 up beside it and a gang of YOUNG RICH KIDS laugh their way out
 of the back seat.

JACK is so mesmerized, he doesn't notice the FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY.

BOY (O.C.)
 Mr. Bum.

JACK looks down. The BOY has walked directly to him. JACK sort
 of smiles. The BOY extends his arms and offers the PINNOCHIO
 doll to JACK. JACK is confused but the boy simply deposits the
 doll into his arms and walks back to the limo. By that time,
 the FATHER has returned and the two drive off.

CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE

JACK holding the doll. HE is surrounded by STREET PEOPLE asleep
 or drunk on the sidewalk near the hotel. HE angrily realizes
 there's not much difference between him and them.

JACK
Anybody here named Jiminey?

A drunk groans. JACK snaps the doll under his arm and walks O.C.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - EARLY EVENING

On the bar sit seven empty martini glasses. Beside them sits a smiling PINNOCHIO - his nose in one of the martini glasses. JACK stares out in a drunken haze. THE EX-HEAVYWEIGHT BARTENDER approaches from behind the bar. JACK downs the glass and holds it out to the BARTENDER. The BARTENDER begins to fix another.

BARTENDER
Mr. Lucas, why don't you make this the last one, then go home. Huh?

JACK
I don't have a home, Joe. I'm all alone...
(looks to PINNOCHIO and smiles)
Except for my little Italian friend here.
(kisses PINNOCHIO's little head)

BARTENDER
(hands him drink)
I never seen you like this. Did somebody not know who you were again?

JACK
I never was, Joe... You ever read any Nietzsche?...

THE BARTENDER clearly has not.

...Nietzsche says that there are two kinds of people in this world. ...People who are destined for greatness...and then us. He calls us the Bungled and Botched. We get teased with greatness, but we never have it. We're expendable masses. We get pushed in front of trains...take poisoned aspirins... ..get gunned down in Dairy Queens...Don't you ever want to know the reason, Joe?

BARTENDER
My name is Phil.

JACK

Phil.

BARTENDER

No, I don't.

JACK

Do you ever get the feeling you're
being punished for your sins, Joe?

BARTENDER (O.C.)

Phil...

(JACK nods)

No.

PHIL exits. JACK nods agreeably, then turns to PINNOCHIO.

JACK

You wanna hear my new title for
my biography? "IT WAS NO PICNIC
- THE JACK LUCAS STORY"

(no response from
PINNOCHIO)

Just nod yes or no...

(tries it in
pig-Italian)

"IL NOUVA ESTA PINICKO--"

THE VOLUME on the TV above the bar is raised, pulling JACK'S
attention.

NEWS REPORTER

...Another homeless man was found
burned to death in the Lower East
Side. It is the second such
incident in two weeks...That story
when we return--

JACK winces at the thought, then raises his hand to PHIL. A
COMMERCIAL is broadcast on the TV.

ANNOUNCER (O.C.)

...New this fall...

CANNED LAUGH TRACK LAUGHS. JACK looks back up to the TV.

...From the creators of TWO IN
THE BUSH comes ON THE RADIO -
starring BEN STARR.

A SEGMENT FROM THE SITCOM IS SHOWN: An unshaven BEN STARR sits
at a breakfast nook with his wife.

WIFE

Honey, have some breakfast then
go down to the station and demand
your job back.

BEN STARR

I can't...

WIFE

Yes, you can. Just go straight
to Bill's office and--

BEN STARR

No, I mean, I can't eat breakfast.
(whiney)
I WANT MY ORANGE CUP WITH THE
TEDDY BEAR.

UPROARIOUS LAUGH TRACKS. JACK'S eyebrow rises past his skull.

ANNOUNCER

For the funniest D.J. on T.V. -
ON THE RADIO - this fall on
Channel Ten...

JACK stares menacingly at the TV then looks away. He sees his
reflection in the mirror of the bar - the hard expression, the
pallor, the possibilities gone...It's the last straw.

CUT TO:

EXT. EAST RIVER, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

C.U. OF TWO FEET stand beneath the railing overlooking the East
River. Taped to one ankle is a brick. Taped to the other is
a brick around a SMILING PINNOCHIO DOLL. An empty bottle of
liquor drops to the ground and shatters.

CUT TO:

JACK - prepared to surrender his fate and make the final leap.
HE stares at the river, almost smiling. HE has made his
decision. HE tries to raise his foot over the railing.

VOICE (O.C.)

What's going on?

Surprised, JACK turns around.

TWO WHITE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS - one wearing a leather jacket,
the other a high school football windbreaker - stand behind
JACK. Each are carrying a gallon of gasoline.

JACK is drunk but he is immediately aware of the danger when
he spots the gasoline cans.

LEATHER

I said what's going on?
(walks up to JACK)
What are you doing here?

JACK shakes his head and before he knows it, LEATHER shoves a fist into his gut, sinking him to his knees. WINDBREAKER places the gasoline cans on the bench and begins to unscrew them.

LEATHER
You shouldn't hang around this neighborhood.

JACK
O.K...

LEATHER
People like my Dad pay a lot of money for this neighborhood. They don't like looking out their window for \$4500 a month and seein' your ass asleep on the benches - you understand?

JACK
Yes...Yes...I do...I won't come back.

LEATHER
Good.
(to WINDBREAKER)
You believe this drunk?

WINDBREAKER shakes his head.

...Me neither.

JACK
(crying)
NO...NO, PLEASE...

WINDBREAKER hands LEATHER the can, who raises it above JACK'S head. AS THE GASOLINE SLOWLY LEAKS ONTO A PETRIFIED JACK SEES A FIGURE MOVING OUT FROM THE DARKNESS OF THE TREES.

FIGURE
LEAVE HIM ALONE!

Startled, THE YOUTHS TURN.

THE SHADOWY FIGURE stands defiantly.

WINDBREAKER
Shit. Let's go. We blew it.

LEATHER
No.

THE FIGURE steps out of the darkened, grassy area and into the light of a promenade street lamp.

LEATHER
(disgusted)
Jesus...They're all over the
place.

The figure turns out to be A BUM. Grimy face, tattered layers of clothing beneath a long overcoat, a pork-pie hat with a twig sticking out of it like a plume in a helmet of yore. Although clearly downtrodden, behind his beaten appearance, there radiates a calm intelligence and strength. There is something distinctly attractive and confident about him, as he stands there smiling at these two juvenile would-be terrorists. We learn later his name is PARRY; a combination of Don Quixote and Harpo Marx.

LEATHER calls to him threateningly, with the gasoline can.

LEATHER
You know, there's enough in here
for the two of you.

PARRY
I advise you to let us go.

LEATHER
You advise us!

PARRY
You're outnumbered.

PARRY glances over LEATHER'S shoulder. LEATHER TURNS to see:

A BUM pushing a shopping cart comes out of the darkness. HE is mumbling to himself incoherently.

Another BUM, wearing mountains of clothing, appears from the dark several yards behind WINDBREAKER - who is growing unnerved by these newcomers.

PARRY looks to the trees and a third BUM - tall, dark and wearing a garbage bag - steps out of the dark, menacingly.

Taken by themselves, the BUMS would look harmless and pathetic. But in the context of their uncharacteristic organization - THEY appear frightening.

WINDBREAKER
(releasing his grip on
PARRY)
Shit. It's like the fucking
"Night of the Living Dead."

JACK is frozen, in total confusion and fear. LEATHER tries to remain confident. He laughs.

LEATHER
 Am I supposed to be scared? Come
 on! They're nuts. They can't
 do anything.
 (yells at them)
 GET OUTTA HERE!

But the BUMS stand motionless.

PARRY
 They only listen to me.

LEATHER
 Yeah, right...They don't even
 understand what the fuck THEY'RE
 saying - they're going to
 understand you?

LEATHER and WINDBREAKER watch apprehensively as PARRY raises his hand to signal. Each BUM reaches into his "possessions," as if to pull out a weapon. Instead, each BUM pulls out a flashlight and shines them on the two youths, blinding them from seeing PARRY.

WINDBREAKER
 (shielding his eyes)
 Shit.

LEATHER
 You're gonna need more than your
 zombie pals when I get through
 with you.

HE brandishes his knife towards the dark spot where he assumes PARRY is standing.

PARRY
 Son...There comes a time in every
 man's life...and you will learn
 this, if and when you become
 men...

From his overcoat, PARRY pulls out a long tube sock tied at the end and filled with a softball at the bottom...

...That there are only two things
 in this world ya need...

HE begins to swing the sock over his head - centrifugally gaining force.

...Respect for all kinds of life,
 because that's what's right - and
 the love of one other person who
 you can trust and pork on a
 regular basis.

PARRY releases the "weapon."

CUT TO:

LEATHER and WINDBREAKER - as the sock flies out of the darkness, and with amazing accuracy - beans LEATHER on the forehead between the eyes. HE drops his knife to rub his head.

LEATHER
(sinking out of camera)
Ow...Ow....OW!

WINDBREAKER grows worried as PARRY reaches into the lining of his coat, pulls out another "sock weapon" and starts swinging.

PARRY
However, the ability to bean a
shithead can be a fabulous
advantage.

WINDBREAKER runs away. The BUM with the shopping bag YELLS at him as he bolts by. PARRY crosses to a speechless JACK.

PARRY
(picking up LEATHER'S
knife)
Are you all right?

LEATHER
(kneeling, rubbing his
head)
OWW...MAN...

JACK
(disoriented)
Uh...should we call the police?

PARRY
Nah. This is our fight. I think
it would be nice if we tied him
up though...If I had time I'd give
him a bad haircut...

HE kneels down, pulls out some rope from his coat and proceeds to tie LEATHER to a bench as he converses matter-of-factly...

PARRY
(hands JACK the
LEATHER'S knife)
Here, would you take care of this?

JACK, sickened by the sight of it, throws it in the river.

JACK
I need a drink.

Pulls his pockets out to find no money.

PARRY
 I know a great place.
 (puts his arm on his
 shoulder)
 Drinks are on me!

O.C. THE BUMS cheer.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OF ANNE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

ANNE walks down the hall to a neighbor's apartment and knocks.
 AN ETHNIC MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN in a bathrobe opens the door.

WOMAN
 Yeah, darling.

ANNE
 (hesitant to ask)
 I'm sorry to bother you but...
 uh...
 (decides to go for it)
 I heard from somewhere your
 husband drank?

WOMAN
 (calmly, openly)
 Oh, yeah. He was a big drunk.

ANNE
 Well...the thing is, see -
 (vulnerable and worried)
 My fella's not home...things
 haven't been going his way lately
 ...Ya know how it is...and I was
 wondering -when he drank, your
 husband, was there anyplace in
 particular he went...a cheap bar
 in the neighborhood...

WOMAN
 Who knew. When he left this
 apartment it was no longer my
 problem. When he came back, it
 was my problem.

ANNE sighs. THE WOMAN understands ANNE'S problem all too
 clearly.

WOMAN
 ...Let me tell you something, my
 darling. And I'm telling you -
 'cause when you started talking,
 I got a feeling right here...
 (presses her sternum)
 ...before your heart breaks like
 mine...get rid of this man.

ANNE smiles. SHE obviously can't.

ANNE
Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT JONES ALLEY - NIGHT.

JACK and PARRY sit on the sidewalk facing the three bums from the previous scene - A BLACK, A MIDDLE-AGED IRISHMAN and AN EX-HIPPIE. The trio sit against the alley wall, discussing the issues of the day as they pass a bottle of THUNDERBIRD.

BLACK
Death penalty's just another
violation of my constitutional
right to satisfaction.

IRISHMAN
I hate that.

HIPPIE
So, you mean if somebody like,
killed your mother, you wouldn't
want him dead?

BLACK
Sure I would. But I should get
to kill him.

IRISHMAN
(explaining further)
He gets to kill him. That's
democracy, see.

A LULL takes over as they all consider this.

CUT TO:

C.U.: JACK sitting the furthest apart from the group - holding the bottle, HE mumbles to himself.

JACK
This is it. I'm in hell. I've
been damned to an eternity of
idiotic conversation.

HE puts the bottle to his lips and:

FROM JACK'S POV, WE FACE OUT OF THE SCENE ON THE NEXT LINES - AS HE C

EYES AND SLIPS INTO A DRUNKEN SLUMBER.

HIPPIE
You were great tonight, Parry.
(affirmations from the
other two)
Superbum, man! Fucking Marvel
Comics...

THE BUMS CHEER....FADE OUT.

FADE-UP ON:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT APARTMENT - MORNING

JACK is asleep on a mattress beside a boiler. HE slowly awakens - the first dull pangs of a mean hangover making itself known. HE opens his eyes, confused - not knowing exactly what happened.

CUT TO:

THE GIANT FACE OF PARRY, sitting upright beside him.

PARRY
How are you feeling?

JACK nods, suspiciously. HE notices the basement surroundings.

JACK
Have I died?

PARRY
(friendly)
Hahahahahaaa...Nononono...

JACK
(his head throbbing)
If you're going to murder me,
that's fine...just don't laugh.

HE tries to focus his eyes and looks around the room.

There is an extremely organized "living area" - a make-shift kitchen with hot plate, a nail in the wall with clothes on hangers...

There is also a DUMPSTER SITTING BENEATH A GARBAGE CHUTE - The dumpster has planets and stars on its side.

JACK looks to the far wall and sees a hand-painted mural, depicting a medieval-style setting; grassy landscape, knights and maidens on horses and a CASTLE-LIKE BUILDING...all rather amateurish but with a definite commitment to the period.

In the foreground of this mural stands a striking figure - a five foot high KNIGHT CLOAKED IN A RED CAPE sitting atop a fiery steed. The figure is imposing and villainous.

JACK looks to the other wall and finds PARRY'S ARSENAL - homemade "weapons" that also look medieval like lances made from mop sticks, nets made of knotted rope, slingshots and a shield made from a garbage can cover with a rose painted on it.

JACK doesn't know what to make of all this. HE is frightened.

PARRY
It's all right. Don't be
embarrassed. Yes, I live in a
boiler room. My name's Parry.
We met last night.

HE holds out his hand. JACK takes it cautiously.

JACK
Jack Lucas...

PARRY
(reciting it back)
"Jack Lucas."

PAUSE. PARRY suddenly JUMPS UP AS IF BEING CALLED. (NOTE: PARRY has a tendency to move suddenly - flying and darting about the room)

PARRY
(to the air)
WHAT!

JACK
HUH?

PARRY
WHAT?

JACK
WHAT?

PARRY
(to JACK)
Ssshhhhh.

PARRY looks as if he is listening to someone. JACK doesn't understand. HE starts to creep away, toward the door.

PARRY
(understanding)
Oohhhhhh.
(to JACK)
HEY, JACK LUCAS!

HE flies next to JACK. JACK freezes.

...Can you keep a secret?

JACK
No...

PARRY
Do you know what THE LITTLE PEOPLE
just told me?

JACK
(getting nervous)
The Little People?

PARRY gets closer to JACK.

PARRY
THEY said you're the one.

JACK
They're mistaken. I am definitely
not any one...

HE continues to edge toward the door. PARRY stands abruptly
and yells once again at thin air.

PARRY
(to the LITTLE PEOPLE)
Well, I've gotta say something!
I mean you're tying my hands
here!!

JACK crawls quickly but is stopped by PARRY, who plops down in
front of him.

PARRY
They say you're not ready to know.

JACK
I'm not.

PARRY
I know all this sounds strange
but...
(sincerely)
I really do hear them.

JACK nods, trying to hold it together.

...Do you know who I am?
(JACK shakes his hand)
...Go on. Take a guess.
(shouts to the air)
LET HIM GUESS!! Tch.

Frightened, JACK decides to humor him.

JACK
Uh...well...some kind of...
vigilante.

PARRY
 (boyish)
 Noooo...I mean that sort of
 happens along the way noooo...I'm
 on a what you call a "quest"...
 See...
 (leans in and whispers)
 I'm the janitor of God.

JACK'S eyes widen.

PARRY JUMPS UP, hops in the DUMPSTER, standing 'neath the CHUTE.

PARRY
 I was standing in here one
 evening...

JACK
 (can't help but ask)
 Why?

PARRY
 I don't remember. Listen, you do
 strange things when you live
 alone. Are you married?
 (JACK shakes his head)
 Funny, you look married.

JACK is more frightened by this remark than anything else. HE
 starts to inch his way casually toward the exit...

PARRY
 Anyway, I was standing here and
 all of a sudden - I hear these
 voices - And the more I listen,
 the louder they get.

PARRY leans on the edge of the dumpster, staring at JACK.

...And then I saw them, Jack.
 Hundreds of them. Flying around
 this room. The tiniest, cutest
 little, FAT people you ever saw
 ...Well, I had to blink! But they
 were still there. And they told
 me that I had been chosen for this
 special quest...You know what they
 want me to do, Jack?

JACK freezes - afraid to hear.

CAMERA CUTS TO A C.U. of PARRY, who smiles...

THEY want me to find the Holy
 Grail for them.

JACK'S jaw drops slightly.

...My reaction exactly. I mean, you start getting requests from little floating fat people who tell you you're special, and you wind up a mini-series - Am I right?

PARRY
But then, at that very moment, there was this tremendous RUMBLING sound...

JACK shakes at PARRY'S description.

...And they sent this message,
FLYING
(indicating the GARBAGE
CHUTE)
RIGHT out of here and into my
hands...

HE hops out of the dumpster. JACK butts up against the boiler, banging his head on the metal - causing his hangover to escalate.

PARRY squats down next to JACK - cornering him against the boiler. He hands him an ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST. ...The cover picture is A HANDSOME MIDDLE-AGED MAN standing in front of a NEW YORK TOWNHOUSE - which looks very much like the CASTLE-LIKE BUILDING on PARRY'S MURAL. The caption reads -

BILLIONAIRE LANGSTON CARMICHAEL
ADDS A NEW CASTLE TO HIS KINGDOM

PARRY quickly opens the magazine to the pictorial layout of the lavish interiors of CARMICHAEL'S TOWNHOUSE. The final page shows CARMICHAEL, a dashing bachelor in his fifties, standing in his private LIBRARY beside a GLASS COMMODE. PARRY excitedly points to inside the COMMODE, where a GOLDEN CHALICE sits in the B.G.

PARRY
Right there.

JACK
(not getting it and not
wanting to)
Yeah?

PARRY
He's got it...He's got the Grail.

JACK
Langston Carmichael? Really?

PARRY
(smiles and nods)
I know! You can't imagine how surprised I was. I mean who would think you could find anything divine on the Upper East Side.

JACK
(LOSING HIS PATIENCE)
Wait a minute! You're telling me the psychic dumpster told you Langston Carmichael has the Holy Grail sitting in a commode next to his humidor?

PARRY
Yeah. It's in his library on the-

JACK
Listen, and I really don't mean to be flippant or to enrage you or anything, but I think you'd be spending you time a lot more wisely looking for your brain.
(hidden anger; forceful)
I have to go now.

JACK turns to crawl, but PARRY moves in front of him again.

PARRY
Jack, please...I need your help.

JACK decides to try and gain his footing, so he begins to inch his way up the boiler against his back.

PARRY
See...there's this one other thing. The Red Knight...

JACK stops and reluctantly indicates the KNIGHT in the mural.

PARRY
Well, I just drew that from my imagination. I haven't actually met the guy...yet...
(little people)
THEY tell me he's out there waiting for me. Waiting till I get close and then he'll show himself. See, it's either him or me. He's been playing with me lately. Those kids last night - they work for him. He's got people like that all over the city. Haven't you noticed all the crime lately.

JACK
Crime? In New York? Really?

PARRY
It's because I'm getting close,
Jack. That's why I need help.
Somebody like you, somebody true.
I'm getting close but...
(frightened)
...I don't think I could face him
alone.
(smiles)
So what do you say?

JACK rises to his feet and the room spins. HE slides down again.

JACK
(rubbing his head)
Listen. You're a very nice...very
nice psychotic man. I really
appreciate what you did for me
- you're a...it was a very brave
and noble thing...

PARRY
Oh, please...You're embarrassing
me.

JACK
But I can't help you...

PARRY is about to speak when JACK jumps in first.

JACK
...So, once again... Thank you...
(extends his hand,
forgetting his name)
Uh...?

PARRY
Parry.

JACK
Parry...I'm Jack.

PARRY
(smiling broadly)
I know.

JACK
You're a good person. Really.
Thanks again.

JACK quickly exits. PARRY smiles to himself.

PARRY
Anytime.

CUT TO:

INT. BROWNSTONE HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

JACK steps out of what must be the entrance to the basement. HE walks down the hallway toward the front exit when suddenly an apartment door swings open. FRANK, a burly superintendent, steps into the hall.

FRANK
Where you coming from?

JACK
Uh...basement I think...

FRANK
(yells so PARRY can hear)
I TELL HIM NO VISITORS!

JACK'S head sets off another explosion.

JACK
Sorry...I...he brought me here last night. I had no idea...

WIFE (O.C.)
FFFFFRRRRAAANNNNKKK! WHO IS AT THE DOOR?!

FRANK
I'M TALKIN' TO SOMEBODY! YA GOTTA YELL LIKE A BANSHEE!

WIFE (O.C.)
It's just my manner!

FRANK
(hard of hearing)
WHAT!?

WIFE (O.C.)
I SAID IT'S JUST MY MANNER!

JACK'S head is now neatly split down the middle.

FRANK
You a friend of Parry's?

JACK
No...Is he supposed to live there?

FRANK
Yeah, well...I let him stay. I
didn't know what else to do - ya
know, after what happened?

JACK
What happened?

FRANK
(dying to tell)
Oh, such a tragedy. His wife was
at some bar with some friends,
ya know, after work - and some
nut came in with a shotgun and
blew the place apart. You must
have heard about...the guy who
listened to the radio.

JACK goes numb. HE can't believe what he's hearing.

...Anyway, his real name is Henry
Sawyer used to be a teacher at
Columbia. Such a tragedy. People
stink, I swear to Christ.

HE spits. JACK almost loses his stomach.

FRANK
(talks a mile a minute)
...He went nuts. I mean, who
wouldn't. She was a beautiful
girl. They kept him at this place
for the mentally upset in Staten
Island. He didn't speak-not a
word. Then, all of a sudden, he
starts talkin' - only now, he's
this Parry guy. He used to live
here with his wife, so when he
got released they sent him here.
I felt bad. He couldn't work.
So, I let him stay downstairs.
He helps out, I give him a couple
of dollars. People throw things
away, he keeps them.

(suddenly; toward
basement)
BUT HE'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE
VISITORS!

JACK
(leans against the wall)
My God.

FRANK
 You all right?...
 (JACK nods)
 Listen, don't mention any of this
 to him though. He doesn't
 remember about being married and
 all, and if you talk about it,
 he gets kinda confused.

JACK
 Sure...
 (sits on step)
 Can I just sit here a minute?

FRANK
 Sure. You look kinda lime
 colored.

WIFE (O.C.)
 FRRRAAANNK!

FRANK turns and yells back at this wife as he enters the
 apartment.

FRANK
 YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME COMMIT
 MURDER, I SWEAR TO CHRIST!

HE slams the door. JACK sits alone, trying to put all this
 information in perspective.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

ANNE sits at a desk surrounded by shelves of porno tapes. Upon
 the desk, piles of various films, orders, receipts, etc... JACK
 sits before her.

ANNE
 Listen. I understand open
 relationships. Please. I was
 a teenager in the sixties, after
 all. But when you care about
 somebody, you need more than an
 open relationship. Ya need a
 phone call...Ya need to pick up
 the phone and tell me you're not
 dead...that you haven't been
 attacked or raped or who knows...
 I sat upstairs all night worried
 sick. Look at you!

JACK
 I'm sorry.

ANNE
I can't tell you how distraught
I was. What happened? Where were
you?

JACK
I was attacked.

ANNE is about to respond when the buzzer on her phone rings.

ANNE
WHAT?

EMPLOYEE (O.C.)
Guy here wants to check out the
pornos.

ANNE
SO, send him back!

A moment later, a meek fifty-ish BUSINESS MAN enters, smiling sheepishly. ANNE indicates the walls. HE nods and proceeds to make a selection, trying not to feel awkward or in the spotlight. ANNE turns back to JACK. SHE sniffs the air.

ANNE
I smell gas! What do you mean
you were attacked last night?

JACK
These...kids tried to...set me
on fire.

ANNE
OH, MY GOD!...What did they do?
Are you O.K.?

SHE crosses to JACK and puts her arms around him. The BUSINESSMAN, having overheard, pauses to watch. Embarrassed, JACK indicates to ANNE that he feels awkward being hugged in front of this man. ANNE confronts the BUSINESSMAN abruptly, with as little tact as possible.

ANNE
Are you almost done, or what?

MAN
(flustered)
Well...

ANNE
I mean, whatta ya looking for -
a story!?
(makes a selection)
Here...CREAMER VERSUS CREAMER...It
won an award.

JACK hides his face so as not to laugh.

BUSINESSMAN

(mortified)

Thank you...that'll be fine...

THE BUSINESSMAN exits. ANNE sits on her desk in front of JACK.

ANNE

Uch...These people... So, you were attacked. My God. But you're all right...

(now to more important matters)

So, where did you sleep last night?

JACK

I...I stayed at a friends.
Listen, I--

ANNE

(puts up her hand)

Please...before you go on...let me talk...O.K...We've had a wonderful time together...even though there's an age difference, the wrong way...When we first met, you said this wasn't serious and I shouldn't get serious and then you moved in and we haven't been serious. And I just wanna say that I have no regrets. None. And don't wanna have any now so I want ya to be up front with me...I want the truth. If your seein' somebody else, let me know...You don't have to pour gasoline on yourself and light a match just to stop seeing me. I'll say God bless and we'll part ways...just tell me the truth.

JACK looks to her - somewhat admiring the bravery and integrity underneath the Brooklynese.

JACK

I'm not seeing anyone else. I really was attacked.

ANNE

O.K.

HE nods. SHE struts to her desk without a second thought. That's all she wanted to know so she immediately changes the conversation.

ANNE

...I love you...
 (JACK smiles weakly)
 ...You don't have to say it
 back...although it wouldn't kill
 you. I'll cook tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT ABOVE THE STORE - NIGHT

If ever an apartment reflected it's inhabitant, surely this is one. ANNE seems to have successfully transplanted 1960's middle-class Italian to 1980's Manhattan - red and gold adorn the sofa and curtains.

ANNE and JACK sit around a formica kitchen table in silence after eating dinner. ANNE smokes a cigarette.

ANNE

You sure you don't want to call
 the police?

JACK

No...I don't think I could
 explain. You know what the Holy
 Grail is?

ANNE takes a long drag then puts it out in her leftover food.
 JACK is repelled by the habit.

ANNE

The Holy Grail? Yeah...I know
 that. It was like - Jesus' juice
 glass.

(JACK just stares at
 her)

Oh, I used to be such a Catholic.

JACK

You still believe in God?

ANNE

Oh, sure...Gotta believe in God.
 (trying to be
 intellectual)

But I don't think God made man
 in his own image. No. 'Cause
 most of the bullshit that happens,
 is because of men. No, I think
 man was made out of the devil's
 image and women were created out
 of God - because women can have
 (more)

ANNE (Cont'd)
 babies which is sorta like
 creating, and which also explains
 why women are attracted to men,
 because, let's face it, the devil
 is a helluva lot more interesting
 - I slept with a few saints and
 let me tell you...BOOOORRING!!!
 ...And so the whole point of life,
 I think, is for men and women to
 get married so the devil and God
 can live together and, ya know
 - work it out...

ANNE moves to him and leans in for a kiss.

...Not that we have to get
 married.

JACK notices a brown spot on her chin and pulls away.

JACK
 ...You have a little...uh...
 something on your face...

ANNE
 Oh, I got a pimple...This stuff
 is supposed to blend with my skin
 color...Like it really works, ya
 know...

JACK moves to the bar to fix a drink. ANNE follows him and
 takes the drink out of his hand. JACK knows what this means.

JACK
 I don't think I'm up to it
 tonight...
 (ANNE massages his
 shoulders)
 I slept in a boiler room...I...

ANNE nods but keeps massaging. As long as he wasn't with a
 woman, he could have knocked over a jewelry store and she would
 have the same reaction. HER massaging gets more intense -
 moving up his head and contorting his face as he speaks.

JACK
 I think I'm getting sick...
 (trying to be forceful)
 I'm...just not in the mood!...
 O.K.!

ANNE grabs his face with both hands and pulls him into a kiss. SHE proceeds to climb onto his body as she utilizes a skill she picked up in high school make-out parties. SHE is a pro. JACK, against all his better judgement and will - despite the pimple cream - is rendered helpless by this woman's passion... He returns the embrace and guides her to the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S LIVING ROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

JACK sits in his underwear on the living room floor in front of an open closet with a cardboard box between his legs. The box is filled with TAPES OF JACK'S PAST RADIO SHOWS. HE begins to sort through them...reading titles, remembering moments...then stops. The memories hurt. HE dumps the box back into the closet and moves to the bar as ANNE exits the bedroom. SHE stands in the doorway.

ANNE

Whatsa matter, hon - can't sleep?

HE doesn't answer as he pours a drink. ANNE sees the radio tapes.

...Honey?

JACK

I tell you something, Anne. I really feel like I'm cursed.

ANNE

Oh, stop. Things will change. My Aunt Mary always said, there's a remedy for everything in this world except death and having no class.

JACK

That's just what it feels like. A curse. I can't seem to...I get this feeling like I'm...this magnet but I attract shit.

(PAUSE)

Out of all the people in this city, why did I meet a man who's wife I killed?

ANNE

You didn't kill anybody. Stop.

JACK

I wish there was some way I could...just...pay the fine and go home.

(eyes fill with tears)

ANNE crosses to JACK and gently touches him. JACK turns and clutches her to him tightly. Lowering his head to hers, he cries...

ANNE
I know. I know, honey.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - THE NEXT DAY

JACK is alone in the basement.

JACK
Anybody here?...Uh...Parry?

HE slowly walks around the room - picking up little items here and there, as if trying to discover some clue to PARRY.

HE crosses to the dumpster. HE looks at the CHUTE. HE figures, "What the hell..."

JACK
(to the CHUTE)
Hey there!

VOICE (O.C.)
YEAH - Can I help you?

JACK, startled, turns around - to find FRANK standing at the boiler.

JACK
Oh, it's you...I'm...just looking for Parry...

FRANK
He's not here.
(beat)
Ya mind my asking what you're doing with this guy - I mean, you seem like a regular person.

JACK
I'm sort of...an old acquaintance of his wife's.

FRANK throws garbage in the dumpster as he speaks.

FRANK
Oh, beautiful woman...

JACK
Yeah...I guess, there's nothing of hers here, huh?

FRANK
No. I got that stuff upstairs.
The hospital said it'd be better.

JACK looks to the mural, then back at FRANK.

JACK
Can I see it?

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT

C.U. DUFFEL BAG OF PARRY'S THINGS before JACK.

JACK looks through the items: various textbooks entitled "MYTH AND LEGEND", "HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES"...a Master's Degree in Mythology...Another in Romance Literature...A torn picture with PARRY standing near a bar-be-que with an apron that reads FIRST ANNUAL DOG BAR-BE-QUE...a man's wedding ring...a beautiful photographic portrait of PARRY'S WIFE.

FRANK
She was a beautiful girl...He was
crazy about her.

JACK looks at the photograph.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT JONES ALLEY - DAY

The BLACK, the IRISHMAN and the HIPPIE are in their usual place. THEY lean against the wall, observing the afternoon life that walks by. JACK enters the scene and asks them where PARRY is. The HIPPIE begins to speak and points to his right. JACK nods in appreciation and hands them a couple of dollars.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER OUTSIDE OFFICE BUILDING - LATER THAT DAY

JACK sees PARRY from across the street; waiting near a hot dog vendor and eyeing the entrance to a midtown office building. JACK approaches.

JACK
Parry?

PARRY turns and smiles, acting as if he knew JACK would come.

JACK
(reaching into his
pocket)
Hi. Listen, I thought maybe you
could use...

PARRY

Sshhh.

HE pulls JACK to his side. THEY sit on the hood of a parked car and watch the entrance to the office building.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE OFFICE BUILDING

Several business men and women, secretaries, etc...make their way out for lunch. Among them is PARRY'S damsel in distress: LYDIA - a dowdy, waif-like sparrow of a thing, who waits for several more aggressive co-workers to pass through the revolving doors before she gets up enough nerve to go herself.

PARRY

Isn't she a vision?

"A VISION" is not exactly the phrase that would come to mind in describing LYDIA - torturedly self-conscious, painfully shy, clumsy, formless, plain - these are much more in keeping with LYDIA'S persona. SHE wears loose frocks that give her no figure and make her appear to be swimming in material...SHE wears no make-up; her stringy unstyled hair is kept in place by a beret that keeps sliding off her head and her contact lenses are always dry, causing her to constantly blink and use eye drops.

PARRY

Let's go.

JACK

No...wait, really. I just wanted to give you...

JACK pulls out some money, but PARRY is off camera.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Behind the glassed-in exterior, we can see LYDIA sitting by herself eating lunch. CAMERA PANS OUT TO STREET where PARRY and JACK are sitting on the hood of another car, watching.

PARRY

She loves dumplings. It's her Wednesday ritual.

LYDIA raises a dumpling to her lips with a pair of chopsticks. SHE then accidentally drops it into a dish of soy sauce and splatters her dress. Unnerved, she hastily wipes herself down knocking over a water glass when she removes the napkin.

PARRY

Isn't she sweet? She does that every time.

JACK squints at LYDIA as if trying to see what PARRY sees.

CUT TO:

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

JACK and PARRY have followed LYDIA into a book store. SHE stands browsing through romance novels. THEY watch from a safe distance.

PARRY
She buys a new book every two days.

LYDIA reads the cover of a book entitled, LOVES' LUSTY LONGINGS.

PARRY
(smiles; says with great affection)
She's into trash. Whadda you gonna do?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

PARRY and JACK are following LYDIA, when she stops at a newsstand.

PARRY
She's got a real sweet tooth.
If anybody ever told me I'd be
in love with a woman who eats
Jawbreakers, I'd said they were
nuts.
(reverentially)
But look at that jaw!

JACK doesn't want to look. If the Little People made PARRY seem crazy, this infatuation confirms him as beyond hope.

LYDIA buys some candy then turns and walks back toward her office building, once again waiting her turn to five into the revolving doors. SHE disappears into the building.

JACK
Do you follow her every day?

PARRY
Huh-huh. I'm deeply smitten.

JACK
What's her name?

PARRY
I don't know.

Things are sounding weird again, so JACK seizes the moment to accomplish his initial task - he pulls out a fifty dollar bill and hands it to PARRY.

PARRY
What's this for?

JACK
Uh...I just would like to help you. I thought...maybe...you could use some money.

PARRY
Tch...isn't that nice of you.
Awww...

HE hugs him on the street which embarrasses JACK to no end.

...What a nice thing to do...

JACK
(pulling away)
That's O.K.

PARRY
Can I take you to lunch?

JACK
No...I have to get back to work.
Take care of yourself.

JACK walks away. CAMERA stays on JACK for a few yards until he turns around and sees:

PARRY handing the fifty to a BUM in a doorway

JACK
HEY!!...HEY!

JACK walks back to PARRY, who is explaining to the BUM:

BUM
(LOUD gibberish)
FUCKKAMAL...BASTAA...NOCOIDETION.

PARRY
(as if he understands)
Well, I think you should be realistic. Ya can't start an ad agency on fifty dollars!

JACK
What are you doing? I gave that to you.

PARRY
Well, what am I gonna do with it?

JACK
I don't know. But I gave it to
you...to help YOU...not him.

PARRY thinks a moment - staring at JACK, then smiling.

PARRY
You really want to help me?

A wary JACK, who's afraid to reply.

CUT TO:

INT. LANGSTON CARMICHAEL'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

On the Upper East Side, PARRY and JACK stand across the
tree-lined street from the five million dollar townhouse.

PARRY
I read there's an alarm system
on the doors and windows but there
IS a skylight on the roof - so
I think that would be the best
way. What do you think?

JACK
You can't just break into this
man's house. This man has done
nothing.

PARRY
Jack, I have to get...

JACK
All right! Listen - please...don't
start drooling or...rolling your
eyes when I tell you this but -
You shouldn't do this...There is
no Holy Grail.

PARRY
Tch. You are so sweet. You're
afraid I'm in danger. You're
trying to protect me.

JACK
No. I think you're a moron and
I don't want to get into trouble.

Ignoring this, PARRY gets filled with emotion and hugs JACK.

PARRY
...You are such a great guy.
First the fifty, now this.

JACK
(pulling away)
Please don't hug me in public
again, O.K.?

PARRY
(shouts)
I LOVE THIS MAN...YA HEAR ME...

JACK
My God...

PARRY
I'M DAFFY ABOUT THIS GUY AND I
DON'T CARE WHO KNOWS IT!!!

A COUPLE passes by, obviously not wanting to know it.

JACK
Will you shut up!!!

PARRY
You're a true friend.

JACK
I'm not. Believe me. I'm scum.

PARRY
You're a real honest to goodness
good guy.

JACK
I'm self-centered, I'm weak - I
don't have the will power of a
fly on shit...

PARRY
That's why the Little People sent
you.

JACK
I don't believe in Little People.
I used to try to kill Tinkerbell
by not clapping.

PARRY
So, you're going to help me get
the Red Knight, aren't you?

JACK
WILL YOU PLEASE...please, listen
to me...

(HE GRABS PARRY by the
shoulders)
You know none of this is true -
the Grail, the Little People, all
of it. There's a part of you that
knows this isn't true.

PARRY
(smiling, but getting
upset)
Jack...

JACK
I know who you are...or who you
were. You don't belong on the
streets. You're an intelligent
man...you're a teacher...

PARRY breaks away from him. HE looks completely disoriented
and confused. HE keeps looking around, not meeting JACK'S eyes.

PARRY
You're acting really weird, Jack.

JACK
Parry...or whatever your name
is... Let me help you.
(beat)
THERE - IS - NO - RED-KNIGHT!

PARRY looks over JACK'S shoulder, and smiles - almost relieved.

PARRY
Oh, yeah? Then who do you call
that?

JACK turns to look in the direction of PARRY'S glance. HE sees
nothing.

JACK
Call who!?

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP PARRY.

CUT TO:

PARRY'S POV

A MAGNIFICENT BURNISHED RED STEED STANDS IN THE INTERSECTION OF
5th AVENUE AND 74th STREET. ON TOP OF HIM SITS THE RED KNIGHT
-A HELMETED FIGURE IN A FLOWING RED CAPE, HOLDING A LANCE. HE
STARES BACK AT PARRY.

CUT BACK TO:

PARRY, taking a step forward.

PARRY
God, he's beautiful...He knows
I'm close to it. He's afraid. I
can tell.

JACK (O.C.)
You're totally gone, aren't you?

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT

HE pulls the reins back, forcing the horse up onto it's hind legs. Then, he gallops off.

CUT TO:

PARRY and JACK.

PARRY
COME ON!!!

PARRY runs O.C. in the direction of the knight. JACK is not about to follow, until he sees - PARRY run right into the intersection and almost gets hit by a cab.

JACK
Jesus.

JACK runs after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CORNER OF FIFTH AVENUE AND 74TH - DAY

PARRY reaches where the RED KNIGHT stood and looks.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT riding onto the sidewalk and jumping over a stone wall into Central Park.

CUT TO:

PARRY, as JACK reaches him.

JACK
What is going o--

Before he can finish, PARRY is off again. Jack races after him. They climb the wall and run into the park. THEY dodge past women with strollers, runners, bikers, sun worshippers, etc... THEY run deep into an extremely woody section of Central Park. Trees and foliage surround them.

PARRY stops suddenly. Panting, JACK catches up.

JACK
Oh...Oh...Oh, God...I'm dying.
I can't breath and I'm dying.

PARRY
Ssshhh.

HE looks around - past the trees, as if trying to see through them - but sees nothing.

PARRY

He's gone.

JACK

(HE'S had it)

WHO? WHO'S GONE?!! WHO HAVE WE
BEEN CHASING!?? CAN I ASK THIS
QUESTION NOW!!!

PARRY

I'm sorry, Jack. I thought you
saw him.

JACK

SAW WHO?!!

PARRY

(excited)

The Red Knight! The horse! I
finally saw him!

JACK'S face fades into disappointment. HE heads through the trees to the road, as he talks; PARRY follows.

JACK

That's it! I gave you the money
-you want to keep it fine, you
want to give it away - fine.

(looks up to the
heavens)

I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW, I DID
GIVE HIM THE MONEY! O.K.! ARE WE
CLEARED?!

At that moment, a BUSINESSMAN walking down the road witnesses JACK'S declaration to empty air. PARRY gets embarrassed.

PARRY

(whispers)

Jack, who are you talking to?

(he looks around)

Are THEY here?

JACK looks at him with murder in his eyes.

JACK

Who?

(sarcastic)

The Little Persons?

PARRY

(nods)

Can you hear them now?

JACK
 (patronizing him)
 Yeah, I hear them. And they're
 saying to me "Jack, go unto the
 liquor store and findeth the Jack
 of Daniels that ye may be
 shitfaced. DOOLANG...DOOLANG..."

PARRY
 (hearing something else)
 Do you hear THAT?

Frustrated, JACK turns to leave but this time there is a sound -
 someone is crying. Someone close by. PARRY follows the cries
 O.C.

JACK
 This is too hard.

A reluctant JACK follows him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

The park's bridle path. A BEATEN MAN cries as he sits in the
 middle of the bridle path - mumbling to himself incoherently.
 HE is drunk. His manner and voice portray him as a gay man at
 the end of his rope. There are cuts above his forehead. His
 leather jacket and jeans are covered with stains. PARRY kneels
 beside him.

GAY BUM
 GET AWAY! I WANNA GO! I WANNA
 GO NOW!

PARRY
 Hey...Come on, we'll help you up.
 You can't sit here.

GAY BUM
 NO! I want a debutante on a horse
 to step on me.

JACK
 (wanting to leave)
 Parry...

PARRY
 Buddy, the days of the debutantes
 are...not what they used to be.

GAY BUM
 (starts to cry)
 Isn't that awful? Poor Brenda
 Frazier. Poor Little Gloria.
 They ruined them! THEY ATE THEM
 ALIVE!

PARRY
(helping him up)
It was a crime.

GAY BUM
Leave me alone....I wanna go...

PARRY lifts him up - he looks to JACK for help.

PARRY
Will you get the other side.
(JACK hesitates)
Jack?

The man's cuts and suicidal demeanor turn JACK off.

JACK
Listen, he just needs to sleep
it off. Someone will take care
of him.

PARRY
Who?

JACK
Well, maybe he wants to stay here.
(to bum)
Do...do you want to stay here?

GAY BUM
(suddenly lucid and
pissy)
Oh, yes, thank you - I really love
bleeding in horseshit. How very
Gandhiesque of you.

PARRY looks to JACK, who then begrudgingly helps the BUM to his feet.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLEVUE EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

In a room at the end of the line of chairs, PARRY sits next to the GAY BUM. JACK stands a safe distance away, unable to take his eyes off the scene before him. Seated against the wall are an assortment of derelicts, drunks, screaming withdrawal victims and jacketed schizophrenics. JACK has a hard time moving.

PARRY
(to JACK; referring to
GAY BUM)
Will you watch him for a minute?

Before JACK can respond, PARRY is up and about - introducing himself to the various patients as JACK watches on.

PARRY moving down the line...saying hello, wiping people's brows, holding the hands of an angry bag lady mumbling incoherently.

What seems extraordinary to JACK is the soothing affect PARRY seems to have on them.

JACK, somewhat inspired. HE tries to communicate to the GAY BUM.

BUM

I wanna go...just let me go...

JACK

Uh...Where...where do you want to go?

BUM

(upset)

Ah...can't get there. Not tonight.

JACK

(being positive)

Well, maybe you can. Where do you want to go?

BUM

Venice. Like Katherine Hepburn in SUMMERTIME.

(JACK is speechless)

Why can't I be Katherine Hepburn?
(cries again)

JACK

(trying to make conversation)

Well...What...what did you do?
You know, what...were you?

GAY BUM

(enjoying talking about himself)

I was a singer. Ya know, stage... summer stock...God.

(disgusted)

I could do CABARET - backwards - every part. But what does it all mean?

HE genuinely asks. JACK is at a loss, his expression obviously replying "nothing." The GAY BUM regains his sarcasm for a moment.

GAY BUM
 (eyebrow raised)
 You know, you always have such
 a cheerful effect on me.
 (cries again)
 I wanna die...I just wanna...
 die...

JACK, against all better judgement, pats the BUM'S hand in comfort. The BUM leans his head on JACK'S shoulder and cries.

JACK, wide-eyed with embarrassment, looks over to PARRY -

POV

PARRY is now playing charades with a STREET BUM, A YOUNG MAN IN A STRAIGHT JACKET, and a BAGLADY who is arguing to herself. PARRY is trying to be PINNOCHIO, by miming a long nose...

BUM
 (guessing)
 HORN...A HORN...

THE YOUNG MAN in the straight jacket just looks on in wonder.

BAG LADY
 (talking to herself)
 Where the hell am I gonna put the
 children? Goddamn daughter-in-law!
 Comes into my house looking for
 dust balls!

PARRY mimes the loose movements of a marionette...

BUM
 Thorazine!

CUT BACK TO:

JACK, who turns his attention back to the bum, takes a deep sigh, and eases his arm around the despairing GAY MAN. HE sits patiently.

BAG LADY (O.C.)
 PINNOCHIO...GODDAMN IT!

After a moment, PARRY rushes by JACK.

PARRY
 Come on, Jack. We're going to
 be late. It's almost five!

Before JACK can ask why, PARRY is already out the door,
 YELLING...

...Hurry up! We'll miss her!

JACK
 (whispers to BUM)
 Um...I've got to run. I've been
 doing this all day. Are you going
 to be all right?

The BUM sits up, sniffing, with a "stiff upper lip" attitude:

GAY BUM
 Please - I was born a Catholic
 in Brooklyn...I've been to hell
 and I survived...It's O.K...

JACK nods and rises, when the BUM adds quite sincerely:

...Thanks...You're a gem.

JACK nods, a little self-consciously, and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - RUSH HOUR

PARRY and JACK sit on the floor enjoying a cup of coffee. A KOREAN VET in a wheelchair with no legs sits near the opposite wall, along with at least fifteen other homeless beggars. Another MAN sits against a cash machine, crying. A WOMAN passes by and drops some change in the VET's cup without saying a word. The VET smiles broadly and says - GOD BLESS - HAVE A NICE DAY!

JACK
 You'll never see her in this
 crowd.

PARRY
 She walks the same trail every
 day. Just keep your eyes on the
 newsstand.

JACK looks to the newsstand, doesn't understand, then looks away. HE watches as a BUSINESSMAN drops some change into the VET'S cup.

JACK
 (referring to
 "change-droppers")
 They don't even look at him.

PARRY
 (smiles)
 They're paying so they don't have
 to look.

JACK
 Poor guy. What must he feel?

PARRY

Grateful. His name's Sid. Great guy. Says everyday he can sit in the middle of Grand Central and watch the rush hour, he's won...I mean, you have to admit...

PARRY smiles and looks around the mobs rushing through Grand Central.

Life at 5:00 in Grand Central...
it's pretty breathtaking. Don't you think?

JACK is impressed by PARRY'S interpretation...and by the VET'S seeming good nature in the face of his situation.

JACK looks around this mad rush hour scene, as if trying to see it as PARRY does.

WE CUT to the various sizes and shapes of people hurrying home, stopping to buy a paper, talking with their co-workers, the colors, the sights, the sounds...

OFF CAMERA a WOMAN begins to sing. JACK and PARRY turn to look. PARRY smiles with great respect.

PARRY

Margaret.

CUT TO:

MARGARET, A BLACK WOMAN in a paisley caftan, stands near a photo lab across from JACK and PARRY. With a box in front of her for donations, she starts singing " YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A NATURAL WOMAN." Some rush hour commuters stop to listen. HER VOICE is strong and soulful, she performs uninhibitedly.

WE PAN around the faces of the business crowd listening to MARGARET - looking grateful for the opportunity to stop their day for a moment and listen.

JACK'S sitting on the floor of Grand Central - beside a crippled VET and a row of beggars, listening to a woman singing for quarters, and suddenly feels almost happy; for the first time in a while, he's stopped to look around and finds he is not alone - but a part of a small group of tired people like himself; listening to a woman bare her soul in song. HE turns to PARRY and finds him staring in the other direction. JACK looks.

CUT TO:

LYDIA...going home from work. SHE moves with the crowd, as if totally without her own will, looking through her handbag for her token. SHE walks into the newspaper stand PARRY had pointed out.

IRANIAN NEWSSTAND OWNER
WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU!!! EVERY
DAY, EVERY DAY YOU KNOCK OVER THE
FUCKIN' PAPERS...

A mortified LYDIA makes a hasty exit. PARRY watches in
adoration.

PARRY
God. Just one night with her.
I'd die happy.

JACK hears this as if a light bulb went off above his head.

CUT TO:

INT. LYDIA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

A door opens. LYDIA enters with a bag of groceries she picked
up on the way. SHE turns on the light to reveal an extremely
neat, albeit modest, one bedroom apartment. SHE carries the
grocery bag into the kitchen.

Out of the bag, SHE removes a LEAN CUISINE, a giant bottle of
Cream Soda and four giant bars of CHUNKY chocolate. SHE pops
the LEAN CUISINE into the oven and walks back into the living
room to an old stereo. SHE turns the turntable on - a record
already set upon it. She stands by her coffee table, as if
taking position:

SUDDENLY, WE HEAR ETHEL MERMAN - AS LYDIA LIP-SYNCS EVERY WORD WITH
COMMITMENT - GIVING A FULL OUT PERFORMANCE.

ETHEL/LYDIA
GOT NO SUNSHINE, GOT NO RAIN
STILL I THINK I'M A LUCKY DAME
I GOT THE SUN IN THE MORNING
AND THE MOON AT NIGHT....

HER attempts at hand gestures and choreography are awkward -
bunking into the coffee table, banging her hand against a lamp,
but we see a part of LYDIA that few (actually no one) sees.
HER abandon, her joy...her smile.

From upstairs, THE NEIGHBORS bang to keep the music down.

LYDIA casually crosses to the stereo, turns off the turntable
and heads back to the kitchen - as if the neighbors interference
were all a part of her nightly ritual.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - SAME EVENING

ANNE sits alone at her formica table, smoking a cigarette. Two
plates are set. SHE waits for JACK. SHE is hurt and pissed
off. TONY Orlando AND DAWN play on her stereo.

TONY ORLANDO
 KNOCK THREE TIMES...ON THE CEILING
 IF YOU WANT ME...TWICE ON THE PIPE

The song continues as the CAMERA slowly pans up to close-up of ANNE, who is fighting with an imaginary JACK.

ANNE
 Ya fuckin' bastard. I don't need
 this...
 (emphasizing)
 ...I Do Not Need This! A woman
 my age...I am a person. This is
 kid stuff. You come! You go!
 And all i do is cook like a jerk!
 You're a waste of good cutlets...I
 don't need this...Find yourself
 another dope...ya fuckin'
 bastard...

SHE takes a puff off her cigarette and sings along with TONY
 -trying, in vain, to cheer herself up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK'S GREAT LAWN - SAME NIGHT

JACK is helping PARRY lay out nets beneath an oak tree.

PARRY
 This is a very popular tree with
 the crack dealers.

JACK
 What I don't understand is - so
 you catch them in a net - what
 good is that? They don't go to
 jail.

PARRY
 Jails are crowded. The way I
 think is...if you can just...annoy
 them on a regular basis...let them
 know there are forces out there
 that are out to stop them - forces
 they can't see or even fight...
 maybe, eventually, they'll give
 up and the Red Knight won't be
 able to use them.

JACK was following this philosophy with great interest until
 the mention of the Red Knight.

JACK
(cutting him off)
Yeah, yeah, yeah...right - but,
why...not just go after
Carmichael. I mean, call the
police, call the newspapers - put
some pressure on him to fork up
the uh...ya know...the cup.

PARRY changes the subject.

PARRY
What a beautiful night.

HE walks deeper into the open field. This makes JACK nervous.

JACK
Don't you think we should be
getting out of here - it's getting
late...

PARRY starts to take off his clothes.

JACK
...What are you doing?

PARRY
Have you ever done any
cloudbusting? See, you take your
clothes off, you lie on your back
and you concentrate on staring
at the clouds...and you try to
break them apart with your mind.
It's wild.

He is now naked. HE lies down.

JACK
Parry, you can't do this. It's
dangerous.

PARRY
Well, that's stupid. This is my
park just as much as it is theirs.
You think it's fair they keep us
out just because they make us
think we'll get killed or
something?

JACK
Yes. I think that's very fair.

PARRY

Come on, try it. Ya feel the air
on your body - ya little fella's
flappin' in the breeze...everybody
in the city is busy with their
business and no one knows we're
bare assed in the middle of it.
Come on!

JACK

NO! I'm leaving! I mean it...this
is nuts.

(walking O.C.)

You're going to get yourself
killed. I'm leaving. I mean it!

JACK starts walking away from PARRY, talking to himself -

...Ha...little fella? I mean,
what do I expect? The man talks
to invisible people - he sees
invisible horses - and he's naked
in the middle of Central Park.
I should be surprised. I'm
fucking out of my mind to even
be here!

(turns back and yells)

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND!!

HE walks O.C.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREAT LAWN - TEN MINUTES LATER.

JACK, naked, is lying next to PARRY looking up at the clouds.

JACK

They're not moving.

PARRY

Sshhh.

THEY stare up. JACK raises his head.

JACK

You sure no one's coming?

PARRY

Why do you care?

JACK

I don't know how I would explain
this. "JACK LUCAS FOUND DEAD -
NAKED - BESIDE ANOTHER DEAD, NAKED
MAN...THE TWO WERE DEAD...AND
NAKED"...It'll probably boost my
(more)

JACK (Cont'd)
 biography sales. People have a
 fascination for murdered naked
 celebrities.

PARRY
 You're a celebrity?

JACK realizes his opportunity. HE faces PARRY.

JACK
 Listen...it was a little over a
 year ago...Something happened...
 I...
 (with great difficulty)
 I caused...I was responsible for--

PARRY
 Man, you are wound up so tight,
 Jack. You oughta relax a bit.
 I venture to say if I stuck a coil
 up your ass I could toast
 marshmallows.

JACK
 (heartfelt)
 How do you do it? How do you get
 through every day the way you do?
 (BEAT)

PARRY
 Did you ever here the story of
 the Fisher King?

JACK shakes his head. CAMERA focuses on PARRY.

PARRY
 It's all about this king who lived
 in the castle where the Holy Grail
 was kept. Now this king was a
 good man, but he'd been through
 some awful times - tragedies,
 betrayals, disappointments,
 abandonment...So much so, that
 the older he...got, the more
 bitter about life he became...

CUT TO:

JACK, listening...

...He had no faith in any man.
 No trust in himself...he could
 no longer truly love, or feel
 loved - And so he started to die.

CUT BACK TO:

PARRY...

And the only thing that could save him was the Holy Grail, but see, he forgot where he put it. Then it goes...on about - how all the knights in the land try to find it - they brought him gold and jewels ...but they never worked. The King was still dying. Then one day, a fool came to the village. And he knelt beside the King and sang him some songs. Told him some jokes ...But the King felt weak and needed a drink. So the fool took a cup from beside the bed, filled it with water and handed to the King. When the King took the cup, he suddenly felt better. And he realized, it was the Holy Grail the fool had handed to him...the cup that was right beside his bed all along.

(BEAT)

The King said, "How could you find what I could not find?"...and the fool said, "I didn't know I couldn't. I only knew you were thirsty."

JACK doesn't know how to respond. HE's never known PARRY to be eloquent.

JACK

Is that who you are...my fool?

PARRY turns to face JACK and smiles.

PARRY

(suddenly a professor)

The Fisher King myth has a lot of derivations...I remember I was at this lecture in Princeton once. It was this awful weekend seminar in Occidental Mythology but there was this one speaker Dr...uh... Doctor...uh...um...

HE stops. As if this memory escaped with any warning.

...What was I saying?

JACK is as surprised as he is. PARRY'S face is frightened and confused again. There is panic in his voice.

...What was I saying?

JACK grows anxious at PARRY'S discomfort, so he covers:

JACK
Nothing...Listen, how come you've
never asked that girl for a date?
...Parry?

But JACK'S VOICE BEGINS TO FADE AWAY FOR PARRY.

HE raises his head, looks to the outskirts of the field and
sees:

THE DARK SILHOUETTE OF THE RED KNIGHT UPON HIS HORSE. Staring -
knowing exactly where PARRY lies even though it's dark. HE
pauses for a moment then gallops off.

PARRY watches the RED KNIGHT ride off. HE looks frightened as
he lays his head back down.

JACK'S VOICE COMES BACK AND SNAPS HIM OUT OF IT.

JACK
How come you've never asked that
girl for a date?

PARRY snaps out of it somewhat.

PARRY
I don't know. I thought it might
upset our relationship.

JACK
Well...would you go on a date with
her if it...happened?

PARRY
God yeah.
(he hears something)
SShhh.

THEY turn on their stomachs and look to the trees.

CUT TO:

THREE BLACK YOUTHS, silhouetted by a park lamp, making a deal
beneath a tree.

CUT TO:

A frightened JACK and a suddenly confident PARRY. PARRY picks
up his sling shot, loads a rock, takes aim and fires.

CUT TO:

The rock hitting a nail, whose point secures a rope. The nail
flies off, releasing the rope.

CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE - THE TREE and surrounding area - as the nets spring up out of the ground and catapult the youths up into the trees.

BLACK YOUTHS
HEY! WHAT THE FUCK! SHIT! GET
ME THE FUCK DOWN FROM HERE!!

THEY continue to complain and curse O.C. as we:

CUT BACK TO:

PARRY and JACK, who suddenly feels safe and more confident.
THEY lie back down on the grass to continue their cloudbusting.

CUT TO:

The billowy night clouds slowly drifting apart.

JACK (O.C.)
Ha...Look, they're moving.
(beat)
Am I doing that?

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY-OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

JACK waits near the elevators as the nine-to-five crowd make their way into the building. HE spots LYDIA and follows her in.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR

The elevator is packed with the lunch crowd. JACK stands at the rear. LYDIA is nuzzled against the floor buttons facing front.

THE DOORS OPEN. LYDIA gets off with two leggy businesswomen. JACK follows. SHE walks through two glass doors with the words HOWARD BOOK PUBLISHING, INC. written in gold letters and enters the office...JACK waits until she had disappeared into the office then enters the reception area.

JACK
Could you help me - what was the
name of that girl who just came
in...

RECEPTIONIST
I didn't notice. What girl?

JACK
Uh...she was wearing a kind of
a flouncy...uh...plain...uh...

HE makes big gestures with his arms to describe the dress, then "stringy" gestures with his fingers to describe her hair.

RECEPTIONIST
(winning at Charades)
Oh, Lydia.

JACK
Lydia. Lydia what?

RECEPTIONIST
God...I have no idea. She's
worked here for fifteen years and
I have no idea...Wait, I'll call
her...

JACK
NO...no...that's all right...I
thought I knew her...Thanks...

HE starts to leave. HE glances through the glass doors into the office just as LYDIA disappears behind a cubicle partition.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S OFFICE - DAY

JACK is on the phone, with an open yellow pages beside him.

JACK
Yes. Howard Publishing? May I
speak to Lydia, please.

HE waits. ANNE enters. SHE is obviously very irritated with him.

ANNE
Can I have my desk, please.

JACK
I just have to make this...
(to phone)
Hello, I'd like to speak to Lydia?

ANNE
Lydia? Lydia who?

JACK
(to ANNE)
I don't know her last name...I'll
be off in a second.

ANNE
You're calling LYDIA in MY office.
You must think I'm some dope.
You fuckin' bastard.
(she punches his arm)
You stay out all night long...

JACK
(overlapping; to phone)
What...No...Lydia...I want to
speak to - her name is Lydia...I
...uh...

ANNE
(overlapping)
...I don't get a friggin' phone
call. You stroll in here at
noon...I got...Two people out
sick. Ya think I need this? I
Do Not Need This!

JACK
...FORGET IT...GOOD-BYE!
(HE hangs up)

ANNE sits down at her desk. SHE is waiting for an explanation.

JACK
I was not with a woman last night.
I was out with Parry.

ANNE
The moron?

JACK
He's not a moron.

ANNE
And who's Lydia?

JACK
Lydia is the girl Parry likes.
And I thought, if I could get them
together, I...

ANNE
What? The curse'll be lifted?
WILL YOU PLEASE!

JACK
I...You're not going to understand
this.

ANNE
Don't treat me like I'm stupid.
It pisses me off.

JACK
All right...Sorry...I feel in debt
to him.

ANNE
(pause)
What does that mean?

JACK
See, I told you!

ANNE
Well, what the hell does that mean?

JACK
I thought...if...if I can help him in some way...you know?...Then... maybe things'll start changing for me...My luck, ya know...Maybe...

ANNE looks at him incredulously. HE sits down and breathes a sigh - the absurdity of the idea hitting him as well. ANNE softens - feeling like she has unfairly taken the wind out of his sail.

ANNE
Oh, you poor kid...You're a mess.

ANNE stands and buries JACK'S face in her breast. SHE decides to be positive.

...Well, listen...stranger things have happened.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

JACK on the phone to LYDIA. This time ANNE is right beside him.

JACK
Hello, Lydia?

LYDIA
(abrasively)
Yeah? Who is this?

HER abrupt manner surprises JACK. JACK uses his old, confident radio voice.

JACK
This is Jack Lucas and I'm calling from Video Stop video rentals.

LYDIA
Yes.

JACK
Yes, well...
(guessing and hoping)
You are a credit card holder, are you not?

LYDIA

Uh-huh.

JACK

Well, congratulations, Lydia,
because out of several thousand
card holders, in conjunction with
several major credit card
companies...you have just won a
free membership at our store on
Second Avenue.

HE puts the receiver near a tape player and presses play.
"HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN" plays for a moment, then he shuts
it off.

LYDIA

(deadpan, not getting
it)

How did this happen?

JACK is prepared for LYDIA'S, shall we say, reluctance to buy
it!

JACK

Your name was picked.

LYDIA

(suspicious...and dense)

Well, I don't understand. What
did you do - did you pick my name
out of a hat or...or...a list?

JACK

A list.

LYDIA

Well, were there a lot of people
in the room or just you or what?

JACK

(about to answer)

Well, there...

(then)

What's the difference?

LYDIA

Well, I mean...I don't know you.
This has never...I've never won
anything and...I don't have a VCR.

JACK
 You get a VCR with the membership.
 (ANNE hits him)
 ...For a short time until you get
 your own. Listen, why don't you
 come down to the store and you
 can check it out. See if you're
 interested.

LYDIA
 Did Phyllis in accounting tell
 you to call me?

JACK
 (fed up)
 NO! I TOLD YOU! YOU WON A CONTEST!

LYDIA hangs up. JACK turns to ANNE.

...This is going to be rough.

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD PUBLISHING - DAY

The elevator doors open. JACK stands beside THE GAY BUM, who
 is now dressed like JOEL GRAY in CABARET and carrying a handful
 of balloons with the name VIDEO STOP written on them. JACK,
 remaining inside, taps him on the arm.

JACK
 (adamant)
 Remember. One chorus and out.

GAY BUM
 I'm a man with a mission, Jack.

THE GAY BUM walks to the office entrance. JACK pushes the down
 button. As the doors close, we hear him say to himself:

JACK
 I can't believe I'm on a first
 name basis with these people...

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD PUBLISHING - MOMENTS LATER

THE GAY BUM enters the reception area, much to the surprise of
 the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
 Can I...help you?

GAY BUM
 Is there a mousy woman who works
 here named Lydia?

RECEPTIONIST
Yes...if you'll wait here, I'll...

GAY BUM
This is a personalized message.
I have to give it in person.

THE GAY BUM strolls nonchalantly into the office and down the aisle, relishing in the amazed expressions of the employees. HE approaches a cubicle on which he reads a small name plate - LYDIA SINCLAIR.

LYDIA has her back to him, but slowly turns as she feels someone watching her. SHE lets out a tiny scream when she sees him standing there like a deranged clown.

The GAY BUM takes notice of her outfit - a corduroy, forest green jumper with a lime green turtleneck.

GAY BUM
You MUST be the one.

LYDIA
Huh?

GAY BUM
(sings to the tune of
"WILKOMMEN")
WELCOME - LYDIA - WELCOME...

HE lets the balloons go...PEOPLE'S heads pop up from cubicles.

GAY BUM
...WELCOME TO VIDEO STOP - VIDEO
RENTALS...YOU HAVE...JUST WOOOON
...A FREE MEMBERSHIP...FOR MORE
...DETAAILS...LALALALALLA...DA!
...DA!

HE hands her a card with the information. LYDIA, paralyzed with embarrassment, takes it. A group of office girls are hysterical.

GAY BUM
(BIG FINISH)
WELCOME! LYDIA!!! WELCOME!!!
(dance/kicking his way
out)
TO VIDEO STOP...TO VIDEO STOP FOR
VIDEO RENTAALLLLSSS!
(drops the act and
exits)
Jesus...

Stunned, LYDIA looks down at the information card she holds frozen in her hand.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP - 5:30 THE NEXT DAY

CAMERA PANS ANNE behind the counter arranging boxes of movies - JACK with one eye on the door and one eye on a receipt he's filling out - and PARRY; clean shaven, his hair slicked back - Except for a slightly nerdy, awkwardness, he looks almost handsome.

LYDIA cautiously enters the store.

Behind the counter, JACK spots her immediately and nudges ANNE. When SHE turns to look, her bra straps are visible. JACK fixes them quickly. PARRY already has his eyes locked on LYDIA

LYDIA
Hello. My name is Lydia Sinclair.

JACK
Yes. Hi. Congratulations. Jack
Lucas. Nice to meet you finally.
This is Anne Napolitano, the owner
of Video Stop.

ANNE
(overly friendly)
Hello...Congratulations.

LYDIA just nods.

JACK
And this is our other...uh...
worker...Parry...uh...
(no last name)
Parry.

PARRY looks at her in awe. HE can think of no words to say in his excitement.

LYDIA seems unnerved by his stare, but quickly shrugs it off and turns back to JACK.

LYDIA
(snotty)
So how do we do this?

JACK is once again surprised by her abrupt manner.

JACK
Well...um...you get an official
membership card...
(takes one out)
Just sign that and we'll laminate
it right here...Parry? You want
to laminate Miss Sinclair's card?

PARRY stands still, in shock.

JACK

...Parry?

PARRY snaps out of it and crosses from behind the counter to the laminating machine next to JACK.

ANNE

This will last you one year after which you have the option to renew if you like a membership discount.

LYDIA

(defensive)

But now it's free, right?

ANNE

Yeah.

ANNE backs off. SHE stands next to an equally perplexed JACK as they watch LYDIA fill out the card. Her abrasive demeanor is not what they expected. LYDIA finishes the card and pushes it toward them.

LYDIA

Now what?

JACK

Uh...you...you can pick out up to ten movies...

LYDIA

Free?

JACK

Yes, they're free.

ANNE

(butts in)

Only the first ten. After that they're 2.99 a rental.

LYDIA eyes ANNE suspiciously, then returns to survey the shelves.

PARRY picks up her card and laminates it - all the while, keeping his eyes fixed upon LYDIA'S every move. ANNE and JACK, having set the trap, watch with interest.

LYDIA surveys the film boxes, H-L. SHE spots one of interest and pulls it off the shelf - causing two other boxes to fall down on her. She catches one box and, as she replaces it back on the shelf, causes three more to fall. SHE catches two of the three.

PARRY, ANNE and JACK watching with an odd fascination.

JACK nudges PARRY to forget the laminating and go help her.
 PARRY gathers up his nerve and moves from around the counter,
 up behind her.

PARRY
 ...Can...can I help you?

LYDIA quickly turns - SHE is uncomfortable by his closeness.

LYDIA
 No. No...I can't look myself...

SHE moves away abruptly - like a fox terrier who pretends to
 ignore the mess she made on the living room rug.

PARRY turns to JACK and ANNE, as if to say "what do I do now?"
 JACK encourages him to keep trying. PARRY organizes the boxes
 and picks one out.

PARRY
 (reads)
 How about...ZBIEGNEW SPEIZAK'S
 "THE PURPLE BREAD", 'an intensely
 portrayed tale of love and envy
 set against the sweeping
 background of a Polish bakery.'
 In subtitles.

LYDIA
 I don't like...uh...
 (finding it hard to
 categorize)
 Polish love stories...

SHE turns her back on him, but adds:

LYDIA
 ...I like musicals.

PARRY
 (encouraged)
 Well, we have plenty of those.
 Right over here.
 (LYDIA follows him)
 We got the MGM series, Astaire
 and Rogers, the Judy Garlands--

LYDIA
 Got any Ethel Merman?

PARRY
 Uh...

HE doesn't see any. HE looks to ANNE, who shakes her head.

...Uh...we seem to be all out of
 Ethel Merman.

LYDIA
What a gyp.

PARRY
Yeah.

JACK nudges ANNE to do something.

ANNE
You know, I think I...I ordered
some just the other day. They'll
be here any day.

LYDIA
Well, I guess I'll come back then.

JACK
Here's your card.

LYDIA walks back to the counter. As JACK hands her the card,
SHE notices ANNE'S painted star fingernails.

LYDIA
I like your nails.

ANNE
Thank you.

LYDIA
Where did you get them done?

ANNE
Ah...I do them myself. I used
to work in a beauty parlor.

LYDIA keeps staring at them.

LYDIA
(without much feeling)
I like the stars.

JACK gets an idea.

JACK
You know, Anne does other people,
too. Sort of a sideline...

ANNE is surprised to hear this.

...If you want, she could do your
nails.

LYDIA
How much?

JACK
Well, since you're a member, we
could...

ANNE
(interrupts)
Twenty dollars.

LYDIA considers the offer. PARRY waits for the outcome.

LYDIA
O.K...twenty dollars...When can
you...

JACK
Tonight! How's tonight?

LYDIA thinks. ANNE is ready to kill JACK. PARRY smiles
hopefully.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - THAT EVENING

JACK searches frantically through a closet. ANNE and PARRY sit
opposite each other at the table, having coffee. ANNE doesn't
quite know how to take PARRY, who smiles as if he were a child,
grateful and excited that he was allowed to sit with the adults.

ANNE
(to JACK O.C.)
Getting your nails done is one
thing but going to dinner with
a bunch of strangers and HIM...She
didn't even look at him.

JACK (O.C.)
We'll make it very casual...not
like a date or anything. I just
have to find something he'll look
good in.

ANNE looks at PARRY as if this were an impossibility. PARRY
smiles back - he likes ANNE.

ANNE
I don't know. I mean, I've gone
out with some bums in my time,
but they were gorgeous. It's the
only reason to go out with a bum.

JACK (O.C.)
Well, she's no Grace Kelly.

ANNE
That's true. That outfit she
wore! She looked like a
centerpiece.

PARRY
This coffee's delicious. And you
have a lovely home.

ANNE
Jack, he's talking to me.

JACK (O.C.)
Well, talk back. He won't bite you.

ANNE
(cool and polite)
Thank you very much.

PARRY
(enjoying the conversation)
Your welcome. You know, a beautiful woman like yourself - your own business - I'm surprised some guy doesn't snatch you up for his own.

ANNE
(looking in JACK'S direction; but replying to PARRY)
YOU'RE SURPRISED!...
(to PARRY)
But I guess I just never met the right guy. Whatta you gonna do?

PARRY
I'm shocked. With a child bearing body like yours...
(ANNE doesn't know how to take that)
...Why a man would have to be out of his mind!

ANNE
Most men are.

PARRY
Why this is outrageous!...

PARRY, getting overly heated, slams down his fork. ANNE jumps.

...A woman of your value going to waste before my eyes...
(rising intensity)
Come on! I'm yours! Let's go!

ANNE
(nervous)
Go where?

PARRY
 (clears the table with
 one move)
 Come on - let us go to that place
 of splendor in the grass.

HE starts to unzip his pants.

ANNE
 JACK!

Climbing over the table to her, he serenades, to the tune of
 "HAVIN' MY BABY..."

PARRY
 HOLDIN' MY PENIS...
 WHAT A LOVELY WAY OF SAYIN' HOW MUCH
 YA LIKE ME...

ANNE
 WHAT ARE YOU, OUT OF YOUR MIND?

JACK enters...

PARRY
 HOLDIN' MY PENIS...

JACK
 PARRY! Close your pants...

PARRY stops singing and gets off the table. HE bows with a
 courtly flourish, having given ANNE exactly what she expected
 from a crazy bum.

PARRY
 (kidding)
 You sure now?

ANNE looks at him like she's going to belt him.

...Well, all right. But you let
 me know.
 (with great sincerity)
 You're too good a woman to go to
 waste.

ANNE, in spite of herself, agrees with him. SHE looks to JACK
 to see if he agrees but JACK is too busy inspecting PARRY.

JACK
 What are you - a 40 in a jacket?

ANNE, frustrated with the two of them, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

ANNE opens the door to a cautious LYDIA.

LYDIA nods, self-consciously, as if to say, "Yeah, I'm here."

ANNE

Hello...Welcome...Come in.

LYDIA enters, subtly inspecting the apartment.

LYDIA

I've never been in an apartment
above a store. You always pass
them on the street but you never
think anyone really lives in them.

ANNE

(raising an eyebrow)

Can I get you anything...coffee...
tea...a little tequila?

LYDIA

No, thank you.

LYDIA sits at the formica table, already set up with nail care paraphernalia - with the gleaming steel nail files it looks a bit like surgery equipment.

LYDIA

Will it hurt?

ANNE

(threateningly)

That all depends on you. ...Sure
you don't want a drink?

LYDIA'S a little nervous about this attempt at nail beauty.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT EVENING

ANNE is seated at her formica table opposite LYDIA. SHE delicately holds one of LYDIA'S hands, carefully applying the stars to her nails. LYDIA sips her tequila with one hand. ANNE'S glass is almost empty as she talks non-stop.

ANNE

...So he says to me, "you'll never
find another man like me"...I
said, "please, men like you have
one hand on their dicks and the
other hand on their mother's
leg"...I said, "there's the door
- take a trip."

LYDIA
 (paying close attention)
 You threw him out?

ANNE makes a confident nod. LYDIA sips.

LYDIA
 My parents were divorced.

ANNE
 It's an awful thing, let me tell
 you.
 (emphasizing)
 "divorce is the sister-in-law of
 death."

ANNE nods knowingly. LYDIA squints as she considers this.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME

JACK stands behind a seated PARRY in front of a mirror. PARRY'S hair is wet. JACK places a can of styling mousse in his hand, then applies it to his head...

PARRY proceeds to experiment with a number of styles - adding more and more mousse as JACK watches in silence. PARRY molds his hair into a cone, then divides it into two comes, then mashes it into a pompadour, then splits the pompadour - PARRY is having a wonderful time - applying enormous amounts of mousse to his head and eyebrows...Finally, JACK grabs the can out of PARRY'S hand and throws a towel onto his head.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

ANNE works on LYDIA'S other hand, as LYDIA sips her tequila from a straw.

ANNE
 ...So...anybody special in your
 life?

LYDIA
 (defensively)
 Do I look like I have someone
 special?

SHE moves to pick up her tequila with the manicured hand but ANNE eyes her down.

ANNE

Well, don't say it like that.
It's not so...ya know, crazy an
idea. You are a healthy woman...
You hold a steady job. Ya not
crossed eyed or anything...

LYDIA

(curtly)

Well, there's nobody special!

ANNE

Fine.

PAUSE.

LYDIA

I mean, it's not easy in this day
and age.

ANNE

What?

LYDIA

Meeting...people.

ANNE

Tell me about it. I've been
dating longer than I've been
driving. I can't believe that.

LYDIA

I never really...went through a...
dating period.

ANNE

It's a disgusting process. You
haven't missed anything.

LYDIA nods in agreement, but her face tells us she feels she
has missed a great deal.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS FOYER OF ANNE'S BUILDING - SAME TIME

PARRY, cleaned and dressed up - his hair moussed back, the suit
is a bit snug, but attractive - paces the hallway in front of
JACK. Looking handsome, you could imagine him in front of a
lecture hall, being the object of many a young girls fantasy.

JACK

You know, those shoes are old.
You keep pacing like that, you're
going to walk into the apartment
barefoot.

PARRY
 I'm excited.
 (JACK smiles)
 You must have felt this way when
 you first met Anne, huh? Where
 did you two meet?

JACK
 In a bar called Hellfire.

PARRY
 Awww...how romantic. Yeah. If
 i wasn't already committed to
 Lydia, boy. Except Anne'd never
 go for me though. She loves you
 too much. And you really love
 her, huh?

JACK
 No. But that's not the only reason
 people get together or...stay
 together.

PARRY
 What are the other reasons?

JACK thinks a moment, then answers plainly:

JACK
 Survival.

PARRY puts his arm on JACK'S shoulder and speaks very sincerely.

PARRY
 You love her a lot, Jack. You're
 ...crazy about her...I know it.
 It's just that, sometimes -
 (whispers)
 you're a little bit of a jerk.

JACK is surprised by the remark and abruptly focuses on PARRY.

JACK
 Come here...you're all crooked.

JACK adjusts PARRY'S tie, then undoes it and re-ties.

...Do you have my wallet to pay
 for dinner?

PARRY nods, keeping his eyes on JACK, as JACK primps him.

PARRY
 ...You're a nice man, Jack. Doing
 all this for me...

JACK doesn't pay attention as PARRY'S expression grows pale and
 frightened. HE suddenly raps his arms around JACK and whispers;

PARRY
I'm scared, Jack.

JACK, uncomfortable at the intimacy, tries to comfort him.

...I feel so much for her...I feel
like something awful is going to
happen.

JACK
No. Nothing bad's going to
happen. Anne'll be there. I'll
be there. Nothing bad will
happen.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER

LYDIA is a little more loose and talkative now as ANNE refills
her glass, then takes LYDIA'S other hand to apply the stars.

LYDIA
(deadpan)
...My mother calls every week.
Like a recurring nightmare. "So,
have you met anyone?"..."No,
mom."..."So, what's going to
happen?"..."I don't know, mom."...
I only thank God I moved out.

ANNE
I can't believe you lived with
her for that long. If I had to
live with my mother, I'd stab
myself six times.

LYDIA
Maybe I'm meant to be alone.
Maybe I was a man in a former life
and I used women for pleasure so
now I'm paying for it.

ANNE
You have to not try so hard.

LYDIA
(sipping her drink)
I don't feel like I have any
effect on people. At parties I
usually spend my time re-arranging
the hors d'oeuvres as people eat
them, so the platters will always
look full. I don't start
conversations because I have no
idea how to end them... I think
some people are just born to live
in the background of things.

ANNE
 Don't say that...I think you have
 a very...
 (searching)
 ...effecting personality...We're
 having a lovely conversation.

LYDIA
 I'm paying you.

ANNE drops her hand. SHE'S pissed.

ANNE
 You know, let me tell you
 something! I'm not that kind of
 person. I don't do people favors.
 If I talk to you it's because I
 want to. O.K., you're a little
 plain - but we can't all be...uh
 ...Jerri Hall. You do the best
 you can. You're not so helpless
 and desperate...You want a
 personality. Try this...
 (she whispers)
 you can be a real bitch.

LYDIA
 (her face lights up)
 Really?

ANNE
 Yeah!

SHE grabs her hand back. LYDIA feels oddly exhilarated at the
 thought of her having a strong enough effect to be a bitch.

ANNE
 Now, you have to sit for at least
 a half hour or, I'm telling you...
 Ya want another drink?

Before she can answer, JACK knocks on the door and enters with
 PARRY.

JACK
 (to LYDIA)
 Oh, hi? How's it going?

LYDIA
 Hello.

JACK
 Parry, it's Lydia Sinclair - our
 membership winner.

PARRY
 (not understanding the
 game)
 I know!
 (to LYDIA, with deep
 sincerity)
 Hi.

LYDIA
 (not knowing what to
 make of him) Hi.

ANNE
 (lighting a cigarette)
 What are you two up to?

JACK
 Well...everything's closed up.
 We thought we'd get some dinner.
 (overplaying it)
 Say!...
 (to LYDIA)
 Have you eaten? Would you like
 to come along?

LYDIA
 (rises; uncomfortable)
 Oh, no...I have to get home...

ANNE
 The nails!! Watch the nails!!...
 (LYDIA sits back down)
 Listen, you still have to eat.

PARRY stands by hoping against hope.

LYDIA
 No, really...I don't want to
 impose.

ANNE
 Hey? What did I tell you?
 (she leans in
 confidentially)
 Why don't you come? It's just
 dinner. You'll have something
 to tell your mother next time she
 calls.

LYDIA smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

PARRY and LYDIA walk up ahead from ANNE and JACK.

WE INTERCUT THE TWO CONVERSATIONS.

JACK
So, what do you think?

ANNE
Well...like my Aunt Margie said
-Some matches are made in
heaven... and some are made in
hardware stores.

JACK breathes a heavy sigh.

ANNE
...What's the matter.

JACK
I'm beginning to understand you.

ANNE smiles and hooks her arm into his. Instead of this seeming a burden, JACK accepts her arm and smiles back.

CUT TO:

PARRY and LYDIA.

LYDIA
(self-conscious)
...I...uh...I get to read some
of the books, but mostly I...just
calculate production costs from
first edition hard cover
publication to paperback. After
paperback it's basically someone
else's problem.

PARRY
It sounds exciting.

LYDIA
(calling him on his lie)
Why does it sound exciting?
There's absolutely nothing
exciting about it.

PARRY
(genuinely)
Well, you're calculating costs
that could have an effect on
whether or not the book is
published and if it is, it could
be a book that...

HE picks up some garbage as they walk and carries it.

...might somehow change the way
people think or act - a book can
do that and you would be a part
of creating a cultural shift that
could change our society forever.

HE drops the garbage in the garbage can. LYDIA watches,
curiously.

LYDIA
We mostly publish trashy romance
novels.

PARRY
Well, empires have fallen because
of trashy romances.

LYDIA considers this. THEY continue to walk. PARRY spots a
drunk in a doorway. HE yells to him.

PARRY
Hey, Martin...!

MARTIN
Parry? Don't you look all duded
up!

PARRY
This is Lydia.

MARTIN
Nice to meet you, Lydia! Got a
quarter?

LYDIA is mortified by the introduction. PARRY smiles proudly.
THEY continue to walk.

LYDIA
How do you know him?

PARRY
Martin worked for the sanitation
department until...

HE is cut off when A LARGE MAN walks by, bumping into LYDIA
without apology.

...Hey!

The LARGE MAN continues walking as PARRY reaches to his back
pocket to pull out his SLINGSHOT. From behind, JACK yells out.

JACK
PARRY!

PARRY and LYDIA stop and look to JACK and ANNE. PARRY
reluctantly leaves the sling shot where it is. LYDIA doesn't
understand what's going on. THEY all continue walking.

LYDIA
So...what do you do?

PARRY
Well, I'm in search of the Holy
Grail.

JACK
PARRY!

ANNE
(saving it)
How about The Szechuan House?

PARRY
(pats LYDIA'S arm)
I'll tell you later.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

ANNE and LYDIA sit opposite JACK and PARRY. THEY are served
three large orders of dumplings.

ANNE
Oh...I could eat all of these.

LYDIA is nervous about this. As everyone begins to eat, SHE eyes
her chopsticks with reluctance.

PARRY looks at her and smiles encouragingly.

LYDIA forces a smile back, picks up her chopsticks and dives
in.

PARRY watches her in adoration. JACK subtly tries to get PARRY
to stop staring. But PARRY is glued to his vision.

LYDIA, even more awkward now with her new nails, drops her first
dumpling into her lap.

LYDIA
Oh...god...

To save her from embarrassment, PARRY drops his dumpling into
his lap as well.

PARRY
Oh, boy...

LYDIA takes her napkin and dips it into a glass of water. PARRY
follows suit.

When LYDIA removes the napkin, her glass falls over. PARRY
forces his glass over, as well.

ANNE and JACK are looking at this mirror exercise in fascination.

PARRY
(to LYDIA)
Can't take us anywhere, huh?

LYDIA can't help but smile - a little more at ease now. Grateful, SHE is not the clumsy center of attention.

FADE TO:

LATER IN THE EVENING.

WE PAN the table as everyone eats their main course.

LYDIA, we discover, has another eating idiosyncrasy. SHE unconsciously, but quite loudly, smacks her mouth when she chews.

LYDIA (O.C.)
SMACK...SMACK...SMACK...

WE HEAR THIS SMACKING OFF CAMERA as we begin on JACK; trying not to look at LYDIA but having difficulty enjoying his own meal. CAMERA moves to PARRY, staring at her, helplessly in love, not paying any attention to his own food; moving to LYDIA'S "SMACK, SMACKING", beginning to accept PARRY'S attention in her, and warming up to the idea, SHE throws a smile at him in between "smacks"; and finally ANNE, chewing quietly, staring at JACK with her eyes widened twice their normal size, indicating her disbelief at LYDIA'S vocal variety of noises.

CUT TO:

PARRY: Gazing at his sweetheart, a song to serenade comes to mind and he softly begins.

PARRY
"LYDIA...OH, LYDIA...
THAT ENCYCLOPEDIA...
OH, LYDIA THE TATTOOED LADY..."

HIS gentle voice counterbalances the odd lyrics and makes it sound like a love song.

ANNE eyes JACK to stop him.

JACK is about to make an attempt, but can't seem to find the way, so he doesn't bother.

LYDIA doesn't know how to respond either. At first, SHE smiles politely, then she pretends to be too busy eating to listen, but something about PARRY'S sincerity pulls her in. HIS face glows as he floats the lyrics across the table to her. Slowly, her "smacking" subsides, she lowers her fork, forgets her self-consciousness and listens to PARRY - slightly hypnotized; like a little girl watching a ballerina for the first time.

JACK is fascinated by PARRY'S complete adoration of this mess of a woman. HE looks to ANNE, who tries to continue her meal nonchalantly. HE notices her bra strap hanging out from her sweater.

CAMERA CUTS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE EXPOSED STRAP and JACK, as PARRY continues serenading O.C.

ANNE realizes JACK is staring at her and immediately thinks something's wrong.

But JACK just smiles at her. HIS hand reaches across the table, not to fix her sweater, but to take her hand.

ANNE is in shock. SHE slips her hand into his and smiles back, her eyes almost tearing.

When PARRY finishes, he smiles.

PARRY
Would it be all right...I mean
would you mind...if I walked you
home tonight?

LYDIA nods. From OFF CAMERA, PARRY'S hand holds a napkin and gently dabs a stain of soy sauce on her sleeve.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

CAMERA PANS the apartment as ANNE speaks from the bathroom.

ANNE
I tell ya, I'm very surprised.
She seemed to like him very much.
He wasn't that bad looking either.
I mean, he's still a little on
the disgusting side but some women
go for that...

CAMERA PANS TO JACK, who is sitting on the couch in the living room, very pleased with himself.

JACK
You know, I can't believe I did
it. She really likes him.

ANNE
(entering in a robe)
...I think you should feel very
good. You did a real nice thing
for somebody else. I'm very
proud.

ANNE leans her body next to JACK'S leg. JACK looks up at her, then suddenly pulls her down on the couch into his arms.

JACK
You were great. Thanks a lot.

HE kisses her hard and long. ANNE pulls away to catch her breath. SHE is surprised, to say the least.

ANNE
Your welcome.

JACK tenderly brushes her hair off her face. HE kisses her again, wrapping his arms underneath her - lifting her off the couch, and gently carrying her to the floor O.C.

ANNE (O.C.)
Oh, my.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYDIA'S STREET - NIGHT

PARRY and LYDIA walk - noticeably more comfortable with each other than before.

PARRY
Tell me more. I want to know everything.

LYDIA
There isn't any more to tell.

PARRY
Don't say that.

LYDIA
(deadpan)
No, really...believe me - there isn't any more. This is it.

PARRY
Well, it's enough for me.

LYDIA
You don't have to say that.

PARRY
I never say anything I have to.

LYDIA
I mean, you don't have to say nice things to me...That kind of thing is a little old fashioned for what we're about to do.

PARRY
What are we about to do?

LYDIA
Well...you're walking me home.
I ...I guess you're sort of...
attracted to me and you'll want
to come upstairs for...coffee...

PARRY
I don't drink coffee...

LYDIA
(continuing)
...and then we'll probably have
a drink and talk and get
comfortable with each other
and...and we'll... then you'll
sleep over and then in the
morning...
(driving herself into
a complex)
you'll be distant and you won't
be ...able to stay for
breakfast... you'll just have some
coffee maybe...

PARRY
I don't drink coffee...

LYDIA
And then they'll exchange phone
numbers and you'll leave and never
call and I'll go to work and feel
great for the first hour and then
slowly turn into a piece of dirt
by lunch. Why I am I putting
myself through this?
(to PARRY)
It was very nice...
(quickenning her pace)
Uh, meeting you. Good night...

SHE walks quickly away.

PARRY stops, confused to say the least, then runs after her.

LYDIA is just about to enter the front door of her building when
PARRY stops her.

PARRY
Excuse me...

LYDIA
Listen, I'm not feeling well.

PARRY
Well, no wonder. We just met, made
love and broke up all in the space
of thirty seconds and I can't even
remember the first kiss which is
the best part.

LYDIA
Listen, you're very nice.

PARRY
So are you, but I think maybe you
should shut up now...

LYDIA is surprised.

...I'm not coming up to your
apartment. That was never my
idea.

LYDIA
Oh, you mean, you don't want to.

PARRY
(deeply sincere)
Oh, no, I want to.
(sweetly)
I've got a hard-on for you the
size of Canada...but I don't want
just one night. I have a
confession to make.

LYDIA
You're married.

PARRY
No.

LYDIA
Divorced.

PARRY
No, I...

LYDIA
You have a disease.

PARRY
Will you stop!...
(pause; he looks at her)
...I'm in love with you...

LYDIA is about to speak when PARRY puts his hand over her mouth.

PARRY

...It's not just from tonight.
I've known you for a long time.
I see you come out of work
everyday. I walk with you to
lunch. I know what you order...I
see you buy Baby Ruth's before
going back in...

(slowly removes his
hand)

I know how you feel on certain
days by whether or not you go into
the bookstore...

LYDIA doesn't know how to respond, but she listens with
fascination.

...I know you hate your job and
you don't have many friends and
you sometimes feel like you're
not as...as wonderful as everybody
else and you're a little
uncoordinated

LYDIA begins to cry.

...and feeling like you're the
only one who's as separate and
alone as you are...and I love you.
I love you. I think you're the
greatest thing since...spice racks
and I would be knocked out several
times if I even got just a first
kiss. But I'll be back in the
morning. And I won't be distant.
And I will call if you let me...
But I still don't drink coffee.

LYDIA

Shhh....

SHE kisses him, tentatively - almost awkwardly. PARRY feels a
surge of emotion that makes his whole body tremble. LYDIA
separates from him and looks into his eyes. SHE pinches his
cheek, hard.

LYDIA

(earnestly)

You are real, aren't you?

THEY kiss again. Then LYDIA quickly pulls away...

...You can call...

SHE pushes away from him and runs into the building - as if she
was afraid to linger and ruin the moment.

PARRY stands transfixed. HE cannot believe his fortune. HE takes a step back from the building. HIS mind is reeling.

CUT TO:

INT. LYDIA'S BUILDING - ELEVATOR - SECONDS LATER

As LYDIA ascends she re-enacts the entire love scene in her mind, to make sure it went as well as she thinks.

CUT TO:

EXT. LYDIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

PARRY is still standing transfixed. HE takes a deep breath, and starts to walk away. But something is suddenly very wrong. The good feeling takes a darker shade, but PARRY doesn't know why. HE looks frightened - the fear of losing something you've wanted for so long and have only recently won. But PARRY feels an even deeper fear - he turns his head and looks down the block to the corner.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT sits upon his horse as if waiting for PARRY. The street lamps cast a glow around his imposing figure. The night air lifts his cape up around his massive shoulders.

CUT TO:

PARRY - vulnerable, in love - is afraid.

PARRY
Please, let me have this.

THE RED KNIGHT - silent, unforgiving, unrelenting.

PARRY begins to move away, taking a step back and then another and another...until he is running down toward the opposite corner.

THE RED KNIGHT shifts his horse into PARRY'S direction and begins to charge.

PARRY runs through deserted city streets - running for his life as the sounds of the RED KNIGHT galloping grow louder.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT, a surreal figure hunting his prey.

CUT TO:

PARRY

As he runs, IMAGES/MEMORIES begin to flood his mind uncontrollably.

AN AMBULANCE ARRIVING AT A HOSPITAL...HIS WOUNDED WIFE BEING MOVED ON STRETCHER.

CUT BACK TO:

PARRY running.

CUT TO:

PARRY AND HIS WIFE MAKING LOVE.

CUT TO:

PARRY running.

PARRY
SSTTTOPPP!!

PASSERS-BY on the street witness the familiar sight of a bum screaming at thin air.

The RED KNIGHT pursues. WE HEAR THE GALLOPING GETTING LOUDER.

CUT TO:

PARRY running, mumbling incoherently. People on the street get out of his way or snicker behind his back.

CUT TO:

THE RED KNIGHT galloping toward PARRY, as he runs; his face wet with tears - yet contorting with angry, incomprehensible reprisals. PEOPLE on the street pay no attention.

CUT TO:

A BAR WITH BROKEN GLASS SURROUNDED BY POLICE AND SPECTATORS.
- PARRY AND HIS WIFE MAKING LOVE.
- JACK'S PICTURE ON A T.V. NEWS BROADCAST.

WE INTERCUT the following BUILD OF IMAGES with PARRY, THE RED KNIGHT and THE PEOPLE ON THE STREET:

PARRY'S WIFE PLAYFULLY WAKING HIM UP IN BED.
- THE DOORS OF A FUNERAL CHAPEL CLOSING
- PARRY AND HIS WIFE MAKING LOVE.
- PARRY AND HIS WIFE MAKING LOVE. THIS TIME WE SEE PARRY'S EXPRESSION AS HE HOLDS HER - SO FULL OF LOVE.
- THE DOORS OF A FUNERAL CHAPEL CLOSING.

CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE - EXT. EAST RIVER PROMENADE - NIGHT

PARRY has run all the way to the promenade along the river.

PARRY
 NOOOOOOOO!...COME ON!...WHERE ARE
 YOU!!!! WHERE ARE YOU!!
 (softer; dropping to
 his knees)
 Where are you...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE END OF THE PROMENADE - NIGHT

THE TWO JUVENILE DELINQUENTS, LEATHER and WINDBREAKER, come strutting down the promenade, in SLOW MOTION.

PARRY looks toward them, as if surrendering.

CUT TO:

HIS POV

THE TWO YOUTHS AR BEING LEAD BY THE RED KNIGHT ON HIS HORSE.

PARRY, tear-stained face, rises to meet them. THE YOUTHS reach PARRY and surround him. LEATHER flicks open a switchblade.

LEATHER
 ...We're tired of looking at you
 people...

PARRY looks at him. HE stands before them, surrendering to his fate.

CUT TO:

PARRY'S POV

The RED KNIGHT is pointing a sword at him in front of LEATHER with the switchblade. HE slashes PARRY'S chest AS WE-

CUT TO:

WIDE ANGLE OF PROMENADE

PARRY sinks to his knees...The YOUTHS close in around him.

CUT TO:

INT. ANNE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Outside the bathroom door, we hear the toilet flush. ANNE exits is an imitation silk kimono, feeling very much the satisfied woman. SHE crosses into the living room and finds JACK, on the floor with his box of radio tapes, feverishly organizing himself.

ANNE crouches down behind him, wraps her arms around his shoulders and kisses his neck.

ANNE
Whatcha doin'?

JACK
I'm trying to get these into some order. I'm going to call a few agents tomorrow. Make some appointments.

ANNE
(excited)
Really? Oh, Jack, that's terrific.

JACK
Yeah...I...
(stops to tell her)
I feel real good, Anne. I don't know, I...feel good and I feel ready.
(laughs)
I don't know how else to say it.

ANNE
No, no, I understand...God, I think it's great.
(she kisses him)
It's so good to see you like this.
(JACK continues to organize)
Ya know, I'm thinkin' - with another income coming in, I would love to get a bigger place.

JACK
Huh?

ANNE
I don't want to rush things - you have to get a job first, but I'm so sure that's gonna happen I'm not even thinking about it.

JACK realizes what she's saying and stops organizing.

ANNE
...But, I would love to start looking at least. You know, maybe a two bedroom or even, maybe the top floor of a house - like in Brooklyn or Staten Island...

JACK looks at her, not knowing what to say.

...What?...You don't want to commute?

JACK

No, it's not...Come here...

HE turns her around and cuddles her up in his arms, with her back to him.

JACK

You're an incredible woman, Anne.

ANNE breaks away suddenly and looks at him, sternly.

JACK

What?

ANNE

"I'm an incredible woman?" What is this, a death sentence?

JACK

No, I...I just want to talk about it.

ANNE

(aware and suspicious)

You want to talk? Come on, Jack... Did I cross the line by mentioning the future or what?

JACK

No...it's just...

ANNE shifts her body to face him directly.

...Listen, a lot has happened and I think it would be a good thing if we slowed things down a little.

ANNE

Slowed things down? Where have I been? Have we been going fast!?

JACK

Right now, I'm just not sure about things.

ANNE

What things!?

JACK

Will you let me talk!...It's been a real...difficult time for me... The past year or so...And now, for the first time, I feel like I'm above water. I feel like I know a lot more than I did, and I want the time to make the right choices. And...I think that maybe ...I need to be alone for awhile.

ANNE is speechless - for the moment.

JACK

I need to clear my head, Anne.
Like I said, I feel like I know
a lot more now and--

ANNE

(interrupts)

First of all, let me tell you
something--you don't know shit.
Second of all, what time? What
time do you need? What have we
been doing here, except TIME?
Have I ever...ever pressured you!

JACK

No.

ANNE

No. So what time do you need?
I love you - you love me - you
want to start your career, great!
I want to be a part of it - I
deserve that! What do you need
to figure out?

JACK doesn't answer. PAUSE. ANNE is afraid she knows.

ANNE

All right. I'm going to ask you
on question.

(summoning up all her
strength)

Do you love me?

PAUSE.

JACK

I don't know.

SHE slaps him.

ANNE

You can't even given me that.
You were just gonna organize you
life...

(indicates the box)

...walk out that door, move in
by yourself and what - drop the
news when you find somebody else?
What were you planning to do,
Jack?

JACK

I didn't know. I just said all
I want is some time.

ANNE

(fighting back tears)
Bullshit! If you're going to hurt
me, you hurt me now - not some
long, drawn out hurt that takes
weeks of my life because you don't
have the balls!

JACK doesn't answer.

JACK

All right...I'll pick my stuff
tonight.

ANNE slaps him again.

ANNE

What have you been doing here?
HUH? I WANNA KNOW!

JACK

LISTEN! We both got something
out of it, all right.

ANNE

Oh, yeah? What did I get? What
did I get I couldn't've gotten
from somebody with no name any
night of the week? You think your
company is such a treat? Your
moods, your...

(sarcastic)

..."pain", your problems...You
think you're entertaining.

JACK

Then what do you want to stay with
me for?

ANNE physically attacks him.

ANNE

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU!...STUPID!...
FUCKIN'!...

JACK blocks her blows and holds her arms. ANNE surrenders to
her tears. HE is about to embrace her, when she pulls away.

ANNE

No. You don't get to be nice.
I'm not a modern woman, Jack.
I don't like being friends with
men I used to love. No way...

At that moment, THE PHONE RINGS. JACK answers it.

JACK
Hello?...Yeah...My wallet, what
do you mean?...
(his face drops)
What?...What?

INT. BELLEVUE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

JACK, ANNE and A DOCTOR talk as they walk.

DOCTOR
He was brought in early this
morning. Must have been lying
there for hours. He's lost a lot
of blood.

HE opens the door to PARRY'S room.

PARRY lays in bed - his face bandaged, his arms in casts, his
chest rapped tightly. HE has been severely beaten. ANNE is
impressed by the sight and quickly exits.

JACK
Parry?

DOCTOR
He can't hear you.

JACK sits beside the bed as the DOCTOR fills him in.

DOCTOR
I have his record here.
(he reads)
Henry Sawyer - brought in a few
years ago - catatonic stupor
rendering him non-verbal for over
thirteen months...

JACK
I know. I know all about it.

DOCTOR
Well, it says he was sent to a
psychiatric hospital.

JACK
I know all this. Why are you
telling me this?

DOCTOR
Well - his beating's bad but...
that's not the problem. I'm
afraid he's re-experiencing the
same symptoms of his earlier
condition.

JACK
What are you saying?

THE DOCTOR pulls him aside.

DOCTOR

Sometimes victims of tragedies are subject to the brain's replay system. The brain never loses anything - it just stores it up and waits. A person could actually re-experience the full effect of a tragedy, long after the actual incident took place.

JACK'S goes numb. HE looks to PARRY, who is clearly in his own world.

JACK

Is there anything you can do?

DOCTOR

Knowing his history, I'd say no. Was he having hallucinations?

JACK

Yes.

DOCTOR

(reading the chart)
That's in keeping with the diagnosis. The nervous system has these - neural secretions that actually cause hallucinations to protect the ego from something it can't handle.

JACK

But he was happy.

DOCTOR

There are people who have been through great tragedy that have a harder time with feeling good than feeling bad. It's not as familiar ...it can bring back the pain of what was lost. Are you a relative?

JACK

No. Just a friend.

DOCTOR

Well, it doesn't matter then anyway. We're going to have to send him back to the same institution. They have the facilities there he needs.

JACK

Well...What if I was a relative?

DOCTOR

You'd have the option to care for him at home, but it wouldn't be the best thing for him. He needs hospital care. I just thought you could sign the necessary releases, but the city can do that. There's really nothing anybody can do. I wouldn't feel responsible in any way. There's nothing you can do.

JACK nods and the DOCTOR leaves. JACK looks at PARRY, who stares vacantly in space...

JACK and ANNE stand alone.

ANNE

Poor Lydia...First guy who shows any interest at all and he winds up in Bellevue...

SHE looks straight into JACK'S eyes...

...Some woman just have no luck, huh?

Including herself in this remark, and having cried all she could cry, SHE and JACK exchange one final look. SHE turns and walks down the long corridor, out of the ward.

After a beat, JACK calls her.

JACK

Anne...Anne, I'll call you, all right?

ANNE doesn't turn or stop - she just keeps walking.

JACK stares back at PARRY, CAMERA MOVES IN TO CLOSE-UP - his face hardening, a mixture of hurt...and hunger...and resignation.

FADE TO:

SUPER - SIX MONTHS LATER.

INT. RADIO STUDIO - DAY

CAMERA PANS PAST A STATUESQUE REDHEAD, watching JACK through the glass..to JACK in mid-broadcast:

JACK
 ...So, if you're an aspiring
 Picasso-salad maker, or if you
 just want to find out exactly what
 IS a multi-flavored pickle - come
 down to the Patterson Mall, this
 Saturday right off Route 130...

HE smiles at the REDHEAD. SHE kisses through the glass.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

An even more luxurious version of JACK'S original apartment -
 expensive furniture, track lighting, multi-leveled, art pieces
 - very tastefully decorated.

The REDHEAD (BETH) is in the kitchen throwing out the remnants
 of a take-out Mexican dinner. JACK sits on a stool near a
 counter, watching her. HE is wearing a bathrobe and his hair
 is wet, nursing a beer. BETH is clad only in an oversized
 T-shirt.

JACK
 Did they say when they were
 shooting for?

BETH
 No, they didn't go into
 scheduling, but I'm telling you,
 Jack - they are really hot on
 this. As soon as I said the
 phrase "cable talk show with a
 difference"...I am telling you,
 his face lit up. He said they've
 been trying to develop something
 along those lines with these, you
 know, up and coming comedians,
 but nothing has worked out. When
 they heard it was you--

JACK
 Did they know about me?

BETH
 They knew what happened. They
 figured you dropped out for
 personal reasons, which they were.
 But Jack...
 (faces him)
 ...they were not at all - in any
 way - turned off by it.
 (strokes his face)
 Really, honey. It's going to be
 great. SO I want you to write
 it down in your book - a week from
 tomorrow, 3:30...

JACK looks down at his crotch - his hard-on or Mr. Baldy as BETH refers to it, is prominently extended (O.C.) from his robe. BETH gets up giggling. HE smiles, with cynical resentment.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

MONTAGE:

JACK walks the streets. It seems that no matter where he goes or what he sees, he is reminded of his past:

- the neon sign of the VIDEO STORE; BUMS huddles in doorways...
- the EAST RIVER PROMENADE - the spot where he once contemplated suicide until someone saved him. HE looks into the river and smiles, then turns to face the woody area from where PARRY first sprang. It seems dark and empty. He starts to walk further down the promenade. HE looks up to the night clouds drifting against in a clear night sky. HE continues to walk. HE spots two bums sharing a bench. Something about one of the BUMS seems familiar - he looks like a hippie. JACK approaches them and discovers they are the BLACK and the HIPPIE from his first night with PARRY. THEY are both trying to sleep on the bench. JACK smiles. THEY look up at him, without any recognition.

BLACK
Got any change?

JACK
You remember me?...I'm a friend
of Parry's...Have you seen Parry?

THEY just stare at him, without any idea what he's saying.

BLACK
Got any change?

JACK sees as if for the first time - whatever magic PARRY once brought to their lives, is clearly gone. JACK hands them some money, then walks off.

- PARRY'S BASEMENT: JACK walks around. HE looks at the wall of weapons and the mural of the medieval scene. HE stands before the drawing of the "tower" and the golden chalice.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKBROOK STATE INSTITUTION - THE NEXT DAY

JACK is waiting in an area apposite the nurses station when he spots a familiar face walk up to the nurse.

LYDIA. We can notice a change in her. The self consciousness replaced by a self-assuredness, the insecurity replaced with a maturity. Even her dress - a smart, tightly fit suit - gives the appearance of someone in control and confident.

JACK is about to call out, when he thinks better of it and purposely turns his back so that LYDIA will not see him.

CUT TO:

NURSE'S DESK

LYDIA
Excuse me, but the bed sheets I brought last week...

NURSE
Oh, yes...I'm sorry. They're being cleaned. One of the doctors had a little accident with a hypo.

LYDIA
All right. Thank you.

LYDIA exits. JACK turns to watch her enter the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S WARD - LATER

JACK enters a room lined on both side with beds and patients.

CUT TO:

THE VARIOUS PATIENTS - all men - are confined to their beds. Some are mumbling inaudibly to themselves, others are rocking back and forth, others just stare off into space.

PARRY sits in bed - his eyes are dead, his body unresponsive. JACK stands at the foot of his bed. PARRY does not respond.

JACK
Hey...Sorry I haven't been around. I've been working and...and...it's uh...been...hard...ya know, it takes a lot out of ya to get things back on track. Ya know?... You look good...You do.

PARRY remains the same. JACK moves closer to him. HE picks up his hand and holds it. Then shakes it.

...Hey...you gonna wake up for me? Huh?

No response. JACK leans closer into him.

...You're going to make me do this, aren't you?...

(sternly)

Well, I just want you to know...I don't feel responsible for you, I don't. Everybody has bad things happen to them...I'm not God! I don't decide...

(fighting back tears)

...people survive...If I do this, I want you to know it's not for me. It's not because I feel guilty or...or...bad or responsible or anything...

The tears come, JACK gently pushes the hair off PARRY'S forehead.

...I feel like an idiot for even considering this, I want you to know.

(HE kisses PARRY'S forehead)

Don't go anywhere...huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

JACK stands on the deserted block on front of the townhouse. HE looks around the neighboring houses - all the New Yorkers safely locked away behind their doors and windows, intentionally oblivious to what goes on around them.

JACK is holding a rope with a self-made hook at the end. HE looks up the five story building and takes a gulp. HE throws the rope up. IT MISSES and falls back toward him - scaring him to jump aside and making an awful sound when it lands. JACK tries again. IT CATCHES. HE tugs a bit. HE begins to climb up the front of the townhouse...

JACK

I was never good at this in gym.

HE places a foot on the wall and begins his ascent as he talks to himself - Keeping his terror in check.

JACK

(climbing)

Listen, I'll just tell them the truth. I was stealing a gift for a sick friend. Public opinion will be on my side.

HE pulls and steps, pulls and steps...when suddenly -

HE HEARS THE SOUND OF A HORSE GALLOPING TOWARD HIM...

HE stops and slowly turns to the street.

But the street is vacant - lit by the glow of the street lamp...An eerie silence hangs as if for a moment, time stopped.

JACK

Oh, terrific. I'm hearing horses now.

(turns back to the wall)
Parry will be so pleased! He's finally turned me into a moron, too...

(climbing)

I can just see the headlines.
EX-RADIO PERSONALITY TURNS
SCREWBALL ON MISSION FROM GOD...I just hope there's a vacant bed

(intensely)
Right next to his!

JACK hears a SIREN IN THE DISTANCE and freezes, closing his eyes:

SUDDENLY, THREE POLICE CARS come barreling down the street - sirens blasting, they screech to a halt! At least a dozen cops hit the streets with rifles and spotlights aimed at JACK.

A REPORTER talks to a news camera on the pavement.

REPORTER

A crazed radio personality dangles from the townhouse of billionaire...

ANNE jumps out of one of the police cars and runs to the townhouse. HER face is full of concern and love.

JACK

(seeing her; he whispers)

Anne.

HE is about to call out when WE:

CUT TO:

POV - STREET

IT IS EMPTY AND STILL.

A REAL POLICE CAR and SIREN race down the adjacent avenue, without any reference to JACK.

JACK blinks his eyes in disbelief - a garbage can stands where ANNE "stood"...a page of newspaper blows gently out the top and across the sidewalk. It was another hallucination.

JACK is a ball of sweat. The fear is peaking. But HE gathers all his strength - takes a deep breath - and continues to climb.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF - A FEW MINUTES LATER

JACK reaches the roof and climbs over. He pulls up the rope and quickly moves to the skylight. HE looks down into it and sees a dark, ominous void. HE takes a breath and pulls out some masking tape. HE makes three big tape loops and applies them to the glass. HE then takes out a glass cutter and begins to cut a pane. The sound, at first, is startling, but he continues.

HE suddenly looks up, into the darkness of the roof. HE stares at the SHADOWS created by the moon and the night. When he finds himself caught up in staring, he shakes away any thoughts of demons in the dark, and continues to cut.

When he finishes the cutting, he replaces the cutter in his pocket and plasters his arm against the tape. HE gently bangs the pane loose. HE is impressed at his success. HE places the pane on the roof and begins to fasten one end of the rope to a pipe.

CUT TO:

INT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

JACK is easing himself down the rope into a pitch black room. But the rope doesn't reach the floor. JACK hangs from the end - panting, frightened at falling - but then decides it is the only way to get down. HE takes a breath and lets go.

HE falls to the floor with a painful THUD! The room is dark. Only faint shadows from the moonlight illuminate some art pieces hanging on the wall. JACK stands there for a moment and pulls out the page from PARRY'S ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST. HE lights his lighter and looks - the "GRAIL" is in the library on the first floor. JACK cautiously makes his way out.

CUT TO:

INT. FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY OF TOWNHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

JACK looks down the darkened hallway. At the far end, HE sees the top of a staircase and heads towards it - until he sees something that makes him freeze once again.

Slowly, A SHADOW holding a SHOTGUN emerges up the stairs to the fifth floor.

JACK stops in fear.

The SHADOW becomes a MAN, who reaches the top of the landing - it is EDWIN MALNICK...and he is staring right at JACK.

JACK doesn't know what to do. HIS heart is bursting out of his chest in panic.

MALNICK'S expression is the same as the photo JACK saw on the TV coverage of the massacre - sad and harmless. EDWIN cocks the gun and fires.

The BLAST hits JACK, echoing against the hallway. But there is no blood - no injury. HE looks at himself in the mirror and pulls it all back together.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST FLOOR TOWNHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

JACK enters CARMICHAEL'S LIBRARY cautiously. A small lamp is on near a large LEATHER CHESTERFIELD CHAIR. The chair has a huge back that obliterates JACK'S view of the fireplace.

Within the antique COMMODE, the "GRAIL" sits innocently behind two glass doors. JACK looks at it for a moment, then gently opens the doors. HE takes out the goblet and holds it reverently in his hands. HE notices an inscription on the bottom:

TO LITTLE LANNIE CARMICHAEL
FOR ALL HIS HARD WORK
MERRY CHRISTMAS
MRS. LINDSTROM, P.S. 247
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT, 1939

JACK can't help but smile. HE takes the chalice and turns to leave, when he is stopped in his tracks by another sight:

CUT TO:

POV

LANGSTON CARMICHAEL, wearing only the bottoms of his silk pajamas, sits fast asleep in the CHESTERFIELD CHAIR. On a table beside him, lies an empty BOTTLE OF VODKA and a PILL BOTTLE.

JACK is paralyzed - until it occurs to him that CARMICHAEL has not stirred an inch. JACK doesn't understand. At first, HE thinks it is another hallucination - but then he notices the PILL BOTTLE and slowly moves towards it. The floor squeaks beneath his feet but CARMICHAEL does not move. JACK picks up the pill bottle and reads - SECONAL. The bottle is half empty.

JACK looks at CARMICHAEL'S limp body. The man looks much older - much more worn out than the dashing pictures from the magazine. JACK lowers his head to listen to CARMICHAEL'S heart beat. It is very faint. JACK once again, doesn't know what to do. HE slowly backs out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF LIBRARY - FIRST FLOOR

JACK is panicked. HE does not know what action to take. HE wants to run away. HE looks down the hallway to the front entrance.

CUT TO:

POV

The FRONT DOOR ALARM SYSTEM - a beam of light a few inches above the floor.

CUT BACK TO:

JACK, who suddenly feels quite calm. HE has decided what to do, set off the alarm.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARMICHAEL TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT, MOMENTS LATER

JACK exits from the front door, carefully making sure no one is on the street to see. A small BUZZ is heard when he crosses the alarm's beam of light.

ANNE (O.C.)
(endearingly)
Right out the front door, huh?

JACK looks up to see ANNE standing at the bottom of the stoop. SHE smiles.

...Ya bastard.

JACK smiles back and takes a step toward her - but she vanishes. HE pauses a moment - then quickly runs down the block.

CUT TO:

PARRY'S WARD - THE FOLLOWING DAY

JACK places the "GRAIL" in PARRY'S lap. HE pulls up a chair beside the bed. HE takes a newspaper clipping off the chair and sits. The newspaper headline reads: ACCIDENTAL SUICIDE THWARTED BY NIGHT PROWLER...THIEF ESCAPES EMPTY-HANDED.

JACK props his feet up onto PARRY'S bed and settles into sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. PARRY'S WARD - LATER THAT NIGHT

CAMERA MOVES past JACK'S sleeping face to PARRY'S bed, then to PARRY'S HANDS - as they gently begin to grasp the chalice.

CUT TO:

C.U. PARRY

HIS eyes open with awareness, he raises the chalice up and with full knowing, looks at it. HE sees JACK sleeping in his chair and smiles.

PARRY

(whispers)

Hey, Jack...Jack?

(JACK remains asleep)

I had this dream, Jack...I was married. I had a wife...A beautiful wife. I don't remember her face too well, but I remember her. 'Cause she died, Jack...Yeah, she died...

(PAUSE. PARRY remembers)

And you were there...

(HE looks to JACK; BEAT)

I really miss her. Is that O.K., Jack? Can I miss her now?

CAMERA PANS to JACK - his eyes closed, pretending to sleep but in truth, hearing every word. A tear rolls down his cheek.

WIDE ANGLE

PARRY reaches out and places one hand on JACK'S shoulder, as he cradles the chalice to his chest with the other.

CUT TO:

INT. OAKBROOK INSTITUTE - DAY

A somber LYDIA makes her way down the corridor with some flowers. SHE enters the ward and stops dead in her tracks - frozen with what she sees:

CUT TO:

LYDIA'S POV

PARRY has gathered all the patients into the middle of the room and is teaching them to sing, "GROOVIN'"...Some patients are quietly watching like little children, others are shouting nonsensical lyrics. But everyone is having a good time.

PARRY notices one of the patients looking behind him and turns to see LYDIA. HIS face lights up!

PARRY

Hi, ya, sweetheart! Where you been?!

LYDIA loses control and begins to cry through her smile. PARRY approaches and raps his arms around her.

PARRY
Don't cry...Hey...

LYDIA throws her arms around him.

...Are you my girl?...Are you my
girl...?

LYDIA sobs and nods in his shoulder. PARRY holds her tighter.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO STOP - DAY

ANNE sits in her office, a cigarette dangling from her mouth.
There is a knock at the door.

ANNE
Come!...

JACK enters holding a bouquet of flowers. HE smiles. ANNE
looks at him as if to say, "What do you expect me to do,
applaud?"

...Well...don't you look nice...
Who died?

JACK
(meekly)
How have you been?

ANNE
(coldly)
Terrific. Going on a lot of
dates...seeing lots of men...lots
of dates...And you?

JACK
Fine...I...I...uh...

ANNE
(baiting him)
I haven't heard from you in a
while.

JACK nods. HE is uncharacteristically nervous.

ANNE
I heard you on the radio...Very
funny.

JACK
Thanks.
(PAUSE)
I...uh...I've--

ANNE
(abruptly)
What? I got the weekend crowd
coming in!

JACK is startled. HE takes a breath, looks at ANNE and pushes the words out of his gut.

JACK
I love you.

For once, ANNE is speechless. She slowly rises from behind her desk in such a way that JACK takes a step back in fear. ANNE comes up to him. She has no intention of making this easy.

ANNE
(tough)
Excuse me, I didn't get that!
Wanna run it by me again.

JACK is dying. HE could hardly say it the first time.

JACK
I think...
(quickly corrects
himself)
I...I realized...I love you.

ANNE looks at him and nods.

ANNE
Huh-huh...
(then)
You son of a bitch!

SHE hauls off and cracks him a slap across the face that stuns him - his knees giving out, lowering him to the floor. After settling the score for all the pain she's been through, SHE quickly grabs his face with her hands and plants a passionate kiss on his lips, that slowly causes him to rise back up. HE drops the flowers and grabs her. SHE mounts his body and begins to undo his suit. THEY go at it with such passion, they both fall on the floor. FROM OFF CAMERA, WE HEAR:

JACK
I love you.

ANNE
Jesus. What rock hit YOU in the
head?

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

CAMERA OPENS ON NIGHT SKY - billowing clouds against a midnight blue backdrop.

CAMERA PANS DOWN past the New York skyline and into the park to reveal JACK and PARRY cloudbusting in the park.

JACK
Beautiful night.

PARRY
Mmmmm.

JACK
You know those Little People you used to hear?

PARRY
Yeah.

JACK
Have you heard from them recently?

PARRY
Sure. Spoke to them last week.
They say hi!

THEY hear muffled voices O.C.

JACK
Sssshhhh.

JACK and PARRY roll over and look towards the trees.

CUT TO:

A FOURSOME OF YOUTHS, dealing drugs beneath an elm.

CUT TO:

JACK as he calmly picks up THE SLINGSHOT lying by his side on the grass. HE stands up. loads, takes aim and fires.

WE HEAR the SHOT hitting it's target and the "WHOOSH" of a net being released and swooping the youths up into the trees.

YOUTH (O.C.)
(in net)
I'm getting tired of this shit.

JACK picks up a hat with a branch sticking out of it and puts it on his head.

JACK
You think maybe one day I'll get to see them - the Little People?

PARRY looks up at JACK - standing naked in the park with a branch sticking out of his head and an excited grin on his face - PARRY smiles proudly.

PARRY
I'm sure of it.

CAMERA begins to pan out - as JACK lies back down beside PARRY.
WE HEAR HIM ASK:

JACK
Have you ever tried busting stars?

THE END