

THE LEMON SISTERS

an original screenplay
by
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EXT: ATLANTIC OCEAN---NIGHT

OVER BLACK we hear BAR SOUNDS: chatter, clinking glasses, etc. The lights of Atlantic City appear on the horizon and grow larger as we approach in AERIAL SHOT and the voices quiet slightly as an electric bass and a rhythm scraper begin the intro to "Under the Boardwalk," The AERIAL SHOT takes us closer in, and a voice, that of ELOISE HAMER, starts singing.

VOICE

When the sun beats down and
burns the tar up on the roof,
And your shoes get so hot you
wish your tired feet were fireproof

The AERIAL SHOT takes us close and over the brilliant lights of the new Atlantic City casino strip. Eloise's voice sings on, joined now by back-up voices, those of FRANKI D'ANGELO and NOLA FRANK.

VOICES

Under the boardwalk, down by
the sea...
On a blanket with my baby ...

The AERIAL SHOT takes us past the casinos a few blocks into the old Atlantic City and closes in and holds on...

EXT: TONY'S PARADISE BAR AND GRILL

VOICES

That's where I'll be...

INT: TONY'S PARADISE--NIGHT

The three singers--local girls in their 30's, kind of odd-balls, but winning--go into the chorus, doing a slightly tongue-in-cheek choreographed routine. The bar is full of regulars, including CW WILKENS and his buddy, FRANKIE CAPUTO. At the instrumental bridge, Franki D'Angelo steps forward and does a spoken monologue with Eloise and Nola doing the doo-wops behind her. Franki's small, a bit squeaky, and takes herself just a little more seriously than the rest of the world does.

FRANKI
Under the boardwalk...I guess
that brings back some memories,
doesn't it?

From the back of the room, Frankie calls out.

FRANKIE
You bet it does!

FRANKI
(A beat) Thank you.

FRANKIE
You're welcome!

FRANKI
(Pushes on) And I guess we'll
all have our memories of Tony's
too. What do you say we all
take this opportunity to wish
Tony and Mama all the luck in
the world on their new place in
Florida? C'mon! (applause)
Yeah, well I guess it's time
for Eloise, Nola, and Franki--
that's us...

From near the stage a DRUNK calls out.

DRUNK
Time to start singing again,
shorty. Cut the blab!

FRANKIE
Hey, you cut the blab, jerk.
Shut your face.(to Franki) Go
on, doll.

FRANKI
Uh, well, thank you. Well, I
guess it's time for Eloise,
Nola, and Franki--that's us--to
say not just goodnight, but

FRANKI (cont)

goodbye to some of our favorite
people in the whole world--
that's you. And here's...

DRUNK

C'mon already!

FRANKIE

I'm warnin' you, pal. Go on,
doll.

FRANKI

Thank you...some of our
favorite people in the whole
world--that's you. And here's
hoping that you might remember
us and all these Monday nights
over the years the next time
and every time you're...

She waves the band to silence and throws the hand mike to Eloise,
who's not expecting it, misses it, picks it up and comes in on the
high re-intro to the chorus as she and Nola step forward.

ELOSIE

Under the boardwalk, down by
the sea....

ALL

On a blanket with my baby
that's where I'll be...
Under the boardwalk...etc.

The place goes nuts as they come off stage. FRED FRANK, Nola's
husband, kisses her. So do her kids--ANDREA(11), DAVID(9),
JENNIFER(7), AND BENJAMIN(3), all with "you were greats," etc. Bar
regulars, too, say they'll miss them. Eloise grabs Franki and Nola's
hands and pulls them to the end of the bar.

ELOISE

Eddie, three Gallianos.
Straight up. (to Franki
and Nola) Well?

They all look at each other. The drinks come. They raise them.

ELOISE(cont.)

Well?

NOLA

To lots of years of good times.
Never to be forgotten.

FRANKI

To the group. Now and forever.
And to the day we re-open in
our own bar.

ELOISE

To the best friends anybody
ever had.

EDDIE, who's been listening, wipes away a tear.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PLACE Frankie and CW argue

CW

Cause I just don't want to,
man. Awright? Who says I got
to have a reason? Tell me
that.

FRANKIE

Hey, tell me something, OK, CW?
What's it gonna cost ya? OK?
Just tell me that. Huh?

BACK AT THE BAR

Eloise and Franki talk. Nola deals with her family.

FRANKI

Don't look now, Els, but some-
one's coming...

ELOISE

Not CW. Oh, God. That's it.
I'm not talking to him. OK.
That's... Why does he do this?

FRANKI

Oh my god, he's with that guy!

ELOISE

Tell him to go away, Franki.

FRANKI

Does he know that guy?

ELOISE

Hide me!

She grabs a napkin from a man eating next to her, puts it over her head. CW gets up to Franki with Frankie a step behind.

CW

Hi, Franki, how ya doin'? You
were real good. This guy's a
buddy of mine. Wants to meet
you. His name's Frankie, too.
Frankie Caputo, Franki D'Angelo.
See ya.

He leaves. The man takes back his napkin. Eloise is blown away,
doesn't turn around.

FRANKI

Hello.

FRANKIE

You're a very talented person.
Very talented. Did you know
that?

Eloise looks through the crowd to follow CW.

INT: ELOISE'S KITCHEN--MORNING

The kitchen is cluttered with bric-a-brac. A TV is on, tuned to "TV Trivia Quiz." Several cats wander on and over everything. Eloise, the kookiest, though perhaps the most attractive of the three, is reading a magazine—"Collector's Monthly." She puts on the kettle, removes a cat from the counter, sneezes violently, opens the cupboard, finds an empty coffee can.

ELOISE

"My Cup Runneth Over With Love."

It's the answer to the TV MC's question ("What song was Ed Ames promoting the night of the famous Tonight Show Hatchet Incident?") From another part of the house we hear a DOOR OPEN and Nola's voice.

NOLA(O.O.S.)

El?

Nola hurries in. Eloise looks up from "Collector's Monthly" only for a second.

NOLA

Morning, El. I just have a second...

Eloise joins in.

ELOISE AND NOLA

The kids are already late for school.

NOLA

Yes. Here's that five dollars. Thanks. Oh yes. Is it OK if Andrea comes over for an hour this afternoon?

Nola starts straightening up the kitchen, stacking dishes, etc. picks up the coffee can.

NOLA

You're out of coffee. Come on.

EXT: STREET--MORNING

A quiet street of old, large houses. Eloise and Nola come out onto Eloise's porch, also cluttered with chotchkes, and cross the street to Nola's house, which is badly in need of repair. Nola opens the door: an explosion of noise and activity.

INT: NOLA'S HOUSE

The kids are all there--going nuts. Basketballs, bicycles, arguments. Ironing is half done. Benjamin sits at the table throwing oatmeal. The vacuum cleaner is on. Fred is looking for something. Nola, unphased, dives into it: spooning food to Benjamin, doing a few strokes of ironing, doing the vacuuming.

FRED(hysterical)

Where is it honey?

NOLA

Did you look in the closet?

FRED

Why does this always happen?
Why? Why??!!

He goes into another room. Nola pours Eloise a cup of coffee. Fred's back, with a baseball hat on.

FRED

Under the sink. See ya later.
Bye, Eloise. Spaceship for
school leaving from platform 3!
C'mon! Jennifer!

They're all out the door. Nola switches off the vacuum cleaner, suddenly all is quiet--except the TV--also tuned to "TV Trivia."

NOLA

Heaven... must have maids.
(beat) So. Was it terrible?

ELOISE

What?

NOLA

Eloise...

ELOISE

Zasu Pitts.

It's the answer to another Trivia question (Who played Gayle Storm's best friend on "Oh Susanna?"). Eloise picks up her Collector's Monthly and starts browsing again.

NOLA

El...

ELOISE

He just wanted to introduce that guy to Franki. What's the big deal? Some guy in here is selling 400 herring plates for \$70. Some deal, huh?

NOLA

El. What if he really doesn't call?

ELOISE

He's not calling, Nola. I told him not to call and he's not calling. OK?

NOLA

Eloise dear, you have told him not to call you each of the 47 times you have broken up. And it has never taken him more than two weeks to call you. I am asking you how that feels.

ELOISE

It doesn't feel like anything. OK?

Franki's in the door.

FRANKI

Hello, ladies. What do you say
we get down to business?

ELOISE

Hi, Franks.

Franki's unrolling a large sheet of paper.

NOLA

Morning, Franki.

FRANKI

May I have your attention,
please?

ELOSIE

What's the report on that guy,
Whitey?

FRANKI

He's cute. He wants to manage
me. He thinks I should go
solo.

NOLA

Manage you? What's he do?

FRANKI

He drives a cab, but he's
moving into personal manage-
ment. Would you please look at
this chart? (recites) We live
in the city of dreams and yet
what do we do about our own
dreams?

ELOISE

(to Nola) Did you know we lived
in the city of dreams?

NOLA

Just look around you.

FRANKI

Nothing. That's what. Now: I figure for the kind of bar-restaurant we'd want we would need approximately \$200,000 to get open. At last accounting our treasury stood at the \$675 mark. Now. I propose we put those 675 dollars to work for us and that we do so in the following manner: Number one-- slots. \$515, or 2,060 quarters.

NOLA

Franki, I do not go into casinos.

FRANKI

Two: Mail-in sweeps. \$10 for postage. Number 3: The lottery. \$130 will buy a one dollar ticket every week for 3 months. Number 4: Plan X. To be revealed at a later date.

NOLA

Franki...

FRANKI

I know, Nola. Casinos are driving the small businesses like your taffy shop out of Atlantic City and bringing the gangsters in. And you promised your mom before she died that you'd never go in one. Eloise and I will be responsible for slots. Any further comments?

INT: CASINO—DAY

Eloise and Franki are at the slots. Franki plays three machines and chants "3 Sevens" in sets of 3, 3 times for each machine.

ELOISE

There goes next week's quarter budget. We breaking into the week after?

INSERT: Franki hits one lemon, two lemons, a cherry.

FRANKI

That's it!

ELOISE

What?

FRANKI

The Lemon Sisters! We're the Lemon Sisters!

ELOISE

The Lemon Sisters?

FRANKI

The Lemon Tree Lounge, featuring the Lemon Sisters.

ELOISE

The Lemon Sisters?

FRANKI

Get it?

ELOISE

Weren't they on Lawrence Welk?

FRANKI

That was the Lennon Sisters.
Alone we're just lemons, but
together we're a jackpot! I
always said we needed a name.

ELOISE

(dreams) The Lemon Sisters.
The Lemon Tree Lounge, featur-
ing the Lemon Sisters...

Franki does her 3 sevens chant again.

ELOISE

The Lemon Tree Lounge. You
could get a problem with
gigolos in a place like that.
You might. Especially if the
owner was a woman?...

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--DAY

Eloise puts the final touches on a sweepstakes entry (CU: picture of Ed McMahon and "Congratulations Eloise Hamer You May have Already Won \$10,000,000!"), stamps it adds it to a pile of sweeps entries, and hurries out the door.

EXT: STREET--DAY

Eloise is on her way to the boardwalk, singing the theme to "Rawhide" (incorrectly).

ELOISE

Hit em up, hit em down,
Hit em up, hit em down
Rawhide!...

Up ahead she spots CW polishing his cab . She stops in her tracks, watches him for a moment, heads back the other way.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--DAY

It's old, a little dingy, down at the heels. A photo of Nola's

mother hangs on the wall and a large motto: MOM'S --THE ONLY
HOMEMADE TAFFY ON THE BOARDWALK. SINCE 1937. Fred squats like a bird
on the counter, screaming. Nola stands near him, stirring a bowl.
In the back of the shop a machine makes a terrible clanking noise.

FRED

Have you ever seen a taffy
rabbit? How do you know
nobody will buy them, Nola?
How do you know that?

NOLA

Because, Fred. OK? Because
taffy is sticky, Fred. Yes?
You won't even be able to
unmold it! What am I saying?
I do not believe I am saying
this. That was the grocery
money, Fred. Not the rabbit
mold money. Our children
cannot eat \$40 worth of rabbit
molds.

FRED

Taffits! We'll call em taf-
fits: taffy rabbits: Get it?

EXT: BOARDWALK

Eloise gets to the door of the taffy shop, looks in.

ELOISE'S POV: Fred and Nola arguing.

Eloise slips the sweeps entries under the door and makes her escape.

INT: CASINO RESTAURANT--NIGHT

Franki, the restaurant photographgirl, takes a picture of a group
of fancy DINERS.

FRANKI

Thank you very much, I'll have
your print before you finish
your meal.

A WOMAN excuses herself from the table. Franki follows.

FRANKI
That's a beautiful gown.

WOMAN
Thank you.

FRANKI
You know, it was the funniest thing. I was talking to Ann-Margaret the other night--she comes in here whenever she's appearing--and she told me she doesn't like to get dressed up. Can you imagine?

WOMAN
Really. That's very interesting. Will you excuse me?

She goes into the Ladies Room. Franki follows her.

FRANKI
I've got a few minutes. I mean, the right clothes are such an important part of an entertainer's work, really. That's what I think, anyway.

The woman goes into a stall. Franki keeps talking.

FRANKI
I told her that, too. I said, "Ann, when I'm performing professionally"--I plan to have my own club once I can raise some capital--"Ann, I said, when I'm performing professionally I expect to put a lot of thought into my wardrobe"

There's no response from inside the stall.

FRANKI

I guess she was talking about
when she wasn't performing,
though, huh. Don't you think?

INT: ELOISE'S JUNK SHOP--LATE AFTERNOON

Impossibly cluttered, TV on. A mannequin wears a Superman suit.
Eloise sits reading "Collector's Monthly," a cat on her lap. She
sneezes. From inside the clutter we hear David, Nola's son.

DAVID(O.O.S.)

Hey this is cool. Where'd you
get it, Eloise? (emerges with a
ray gun.) You got batteries
for it? Eeeeeee. (sticks it in
cat's ear) Can I have it?

ELOISE

37 breeds of dog in porcelain.
Asking \$500. Pre-war bear
traps \$35 a dozen... boy if I
had a few extra bucks...

DAVID

(gun in Eloise's ear) Beeow,
beeow! Can I?

ELOISE

No, David.

DAVID

Why? Why not? Why not,
Eloise?

Eloise grabs the gun from David and forces a smile.

ELOISE

There we go. It's an original
ray gun from the Captain Video
Show, David. It's from a
collection.

DAVID
Your dad's collection?

ELOISE
Yes, David.

DAVID
How come he had so much TV
stuff anyway, Eloise? Huh?

ELOISE
Because he loved it! (a beat)
It was his pride and joy,
David. It was his special
love.

DAVID
You mean like CW and his cab?

ELOISE
No, David. Nothing at all like
that.

DAVID
Yeah, but I mean, you know how
he's always polishing it and
all...

ELOISE
I am talking about the vision
of a great romantic, David. CW
..CW, David, is the least ro-
mantic person east of Milwau-
kee. My father had a vision.
Do you understand that? He
knew right away when they
invented it that TV was going
to be the most important thing
in America, and he started
collecting whatever he could.
This is his vision of America,
David. This is not Turtle Wax.

DAVID
He must've been smart, huh?

ELOISE
(a beat) You don't remember him
at all?

DAVID
I sorta do.

The door opens. It's Nola, with Benjamin and Franki.

NOLA
You ready to close? (to David)
Hi hon. How was your day?

FRANKI
Eight million dollar jackpot!

NOLA
We're going to get tickets.
Drawing's tonight. C'mon.

BENJAMIN
C'mon!

EXT: BOARDWALK--SUNSET

The five of them walk, skip, dance down the boardwalk.

INT: NOLA'S HOUSE--NIGHT-- A WEEK LATER

Usual bedlam: David and Andrea eat and argue, and throw food at each other. Benjamin plays with the phone and calls "mommy" incessantly. Fred tests a metal detector rig (headphones on). Eloise reads "Collector's Monthly." Jennifer sits with her, holding a cat. Nola folds laundry, feeds kids, deals with it all. TV is on.

FRED
It's working! Nola!

NOLA
(to Eloise) I make you a pot-
roast, El. They were on sale.
Benji, we don't play with the
phone, do we, honey?

FRED
I tell you...No, it's not.

Fred puts earphones on Eloise's head.

FRED
Try 'em, Eloise. They're
great.

ELOISE
I thought they were broken.
(sniffs, sneezes). Something's
burning.

NOLA
(exits) Oh my god...

FRED
I rent all seven five hours a
day, I make a grand in August
alone. (to Jennifer) What's
that cat doing in here?

Franki runs in waving a letter.

JENNIFER
I'm giving it to Eloise. I
found it.

FRANKI
Plan X! Plan X!

Nola is back in with a smoking cookie sheet.

NOLA
Oh, Hi Franki. Want some
cookies?

FRED
What do cats have, Jennifer?

FRANKI
Oh my god It's not even on!

The phone rings. Andrea grabs it. Franki changes the TV to "Trivia Quiz"

ANDREA
I'll get it!

JENNIFER
Permasites?

NOLA
Parasites, honey (read: Fred,
you asshole.)

ANDREA
Hold on. It's a guy called Mr.
Baxter, mom.

Benjamin pulls the cord from the wall.

NOLA
Benjamin! (plugs it back in)
Hello? Gone. Mr. Baxter...
Fred, do you know a Mr. Baxter?

Franki stands on a chair and screams.

FRANKI
If you don't all shut up and
listen to me I'm going to kill
myself and maybe even all of
you, too, right now!

Everyone shuts up and listens.

FRANKI(cont)

I, Franki D'Angelo, have made our dreams practically, to all intents and purposes, a reality. Thanks to my entry, our friend, Eloise Hamer will, in one week's time, be a contestant on Trivia Quiz, which, as we all know she is certain to win. And if we all shut up for a few more seconds we can hear tonight's jackpot question. Thank you very much.

ELOISE

You did what? Franki!

FRANKI

Shh!

MC

OK, Felicia, for \$173,000, "All in the Family" starring Carrol O'Connor as Archie Bunker was based on an English program. What was the name of that show, what was the name of the Archie Bunker character, and what actor played him? You have thirty seconds.

ELOISE

That's ridiculous. How can they expect anyone to know that? Look at that poor woman. She doesn't have a clue. "Till Death Us Do Part;" Alf Garnet; Warren Mitchell.

FELICIA

I...I don't have it.

MC

Oh, I'm sorry, Felicia. It was

MC (cont)
"Till Death Us Do Part;" the
character was Alf Garnet; the
actor was Warren Mitchell.

Everyone in the livingroom starts cheering and shouting.

INT: TV STUDIO--DAY
Eloise sits behind a game show booth.

C.U.: ELOISE
She is completely lost in terror and confusion.

ANNOUNCER (O.O.S.)
Welcome back to TV Trivia. Our
next challenger is from Atlan-
tic City New Jersey, Bob.
She's Eloise Hammer!

UP IN THE AUDIENCE:
Nola, Fred, Franki, kids all scream and shout.

NOLA
Hamer!

BACK ON ELOISE:

She doesn't seem to hear anything. The MC comes up to her and
kisses her on the lips. She screams. The audience cracks up. The
MC pulls a face. The audience loves it.

MC
Welcome lovely Eloise. Tell us
something about yourself.

ELOSIE
Huh? Hm? Oh...well...
I oh.

MC

Great. That's great. Just relax, dear. Anyway, you've got your work cut out for you, Scotty Willard, here, our current champion, seems just about unstoppable.

We see SCOTTY, 11 years old. Applause.

MC

So let's begin our pilot challenge round, players. Here's your first question. Who played the lead in "Life of Riley" before William Bendix?

ELOISE

Jackie Gleason.

Scotty rings his buzzer.

SCOTTY

Jackie Gleason, Bob.

MC

That's right, Scotty. Remember to use you buzzer in the pilot round, Eloise. Here's your bonus, Scotty. Ward Bond was the wagon master; who was the scout?

C.U.: ELOISE

She mouths "Doug McClure" as we hear Scotty say it.

SCOTTY

Doug McClure?

MC

Doug McClure is right. OK players, our second pilot question: the first part of the card read "Have...

Eloise's bell rings.

MC

Eloise?

ELOISE

Yes?

MC

You rang your bell.

ELOISE

I did?

MC

Judges? Sorry, Eloise, we're going to have to penalize you five points and repeat the question for Scotty. The first part of the card read "Have Gun Will Travel." What did the second part say?

ELOISE AND SCOTTY

Wire Palladin, San Francisco.

MC

Uh...that's right, Scotty. Now for your bonus question...

EXT: TV STUDIO--AFTERNOON

Eloise, Nola , Franki, kids, Fred come out onto the New York street.

DAVID

Did you really know the answer to the jackpot question, Eloise?

FRANKI

She knew every answer. They just never gave her a chance.

ELOISE
Jackpot question?

NOLA
(takes her hand) Don't dwell on
it, sweetheart. Why dwell on
it, do you know?

FRED
186,000 clams down the can.

ELOISE
Jackpot question?

Nola reaches up and puts her fingers on Eloise's temples.

NOLA
Take a deep breath. It doesn't
matter. I doesn't matter. It's
all over and done with. (again,
this time to the rest) It
doesn't matter.

FRANKI
I wonder if you can apply to
get on twice.

EXT: NOLA'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Nola, Fred, Franki each carry a sleeping kid out of the station wagon up to the porch. Eloise follows--in a daze--loaded with kids paraphenalia.

INT: NOLA'S HOUSE

A buzzer is buzzing. Fred and Franki head upstairs with their kids. Nola, with hers, goes into the kitchen, turns off the buzzer, removes a smoking pot from the stove, and puts it in the sink, trips over a toy truck, sees the phone is off the hook, and puts it back.

NOLA
(Sotto Voce) Benjamin!

INT: LIVINGROOM-- A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Fred, Eloise, Franki sip coffee in silence. The phone rings.

NOLA (O.O.S.)
I'll get it.

INT: KITCHEN

Nola picks up the phone.

NOLA
Hello?

VOICE
Thank goodness. I've been trying to get you all week. I got disconnected last week and then you were busy and...

NOLA
Yes. I'm sorry. Who is this please?

BACK IN THE LIVINGROOM the rest sit.

FRANKI
I don't believe this.

FRED
Well, tell me this isn't just my luck, huh?

Franki and Eloise share a look. (His luck?) Nola comes in. She's in a state of shock.

NOLA
El...there's a Mr. Baxter...on the phone.

IN THE HALLWAY Eloise is on the phone. Nola watches her face.

VOICE

And as I told Mrs. Frank, your shop and hers are both part of a parcel that I have been asked to secure for a third party that wishes to develop it. We had hoped that you might be willing to vacate your leases--voluntarily of course--for a considerable financial consideration.

ELOISE

What?

VOICE

I've been authorized to open negotiations at \$100,000 per lease. We'll pay you \$100,000 each if you'll simply vacate your premises. You keep the business, we get the location.

Eloise and Nola look at each other, try to deal with the news.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT: RESTAURANT--NIGHT

A room of celebrations. High-rollers, champagne poppers, merry makers. As we PAN the room we hold on one table--Fred and Nola, dressed to the nine and a half in new, completely out of character clothes, Franki and Frankie, and Eloise. A dispute is in progress.

FRED

Let me tell you your problem, Franki. You're never gonna get a nightclub open on less than 300 grand.

FRANKIE

Hey, what do you mean, Franki's problem here? I think you've got a problem here, Fred. In my experience it's specific details you gotta watch out

FRANKIE (cont)
for. It's specific details
that'll get you every time.

FRED
You hear this, Nola? Here we
are in Atlantic City and he's
talkin Pacific details!

No one laughs.

FRANKI
May I just say something here?
All I'm saying is we should
have some basic questions
decided. What location do we
want, for instance.

FRANKIE
Hey, you know CW had this guy
in the cab the other day--I
wonder if he got his number--
anyway, this guy had lots and
buildings all over the city.
Maybe you should give him a
call. I could talk to CW...

FRANKIE
That sounds like a good idea.

Eloise turns away and stares at the bar.

FRED
What's a good idea? To talk to
some stranger in a cab? CW
know the guy? You call that a
good idea? Jeez!

NOLA
Fred...

ELOISE
I wonder how many kinds of
glasses they use here?

FRANKIE

Hey, all I know is CW said he was like very, very big.

FRED

CW said, CW said. What is CW? A real estate tycoon now? You hear this Nola?

ELOISE

I'm going to go ask. Excuse me for a minute...

She leaves the table.

FRANKI

El...?

FRANKIE

Hey, come on baby, let's dance.

FRANKI

(looks to Nola) Oh. OK.

They get up.

FRED

Guy's crazy, Nola.

She doesn't answer.

FRED

Hey. C'mon. Let's dance too.

AT THE BAR: The BARTENDER talks to Eloise.

BARTENDER

I think that's it. Yeah. We have a few oversize brandy snifters. If you count them I guess it's 8 different kinds. Why?

Eloise looks back at the dance floor: the two couples dancing cheek to cheek.

ELOISE

I guess you probably get a few gigolos in here, huh?

BARTENDER

Excuse me?

ELOISE

Yeah, I'll bet you do. I'll just bet you do.

INT: NOLA'S LIVINGROOM--EVENING

The place has got all new furniture, big screen TV (on). Otherwise it's the usual chaos. Kids fighting, Fred plays Pac Man on a new home computer, while eating popcorn, which falls all over the place. Nola interviews MRS. KUPCHAK for a housekeeper job.

NOLA

Now, Jennifer comes home for lunch except if there's an outing, of course. You know, like to the zoo? But they always let you know about that, but Andrea likes to buy lunch, which I'll take care of. David likes turkey, but I give him tuna at least twice a week, and usually a cookie and a piece of fruit; he likes apples best, but I try to give him an occasional orange in the winter, for the vitamin C, do you know? Anyway, you and Benji pick Andrea up at school--that's at 11:45--and then on Mondays if you could stop by the cleaners...

FRED

No! No! No! No! Got 'em! Aw damn!

NOLA

We got that for our business reorganization, do you know? But Fred likes to play the games to get Benjamin interested. Anyway...

We hear an alarm in the kitchen.

NOLA(cont)

What's that?

KUPCHAK

Sounds like a kitchen timer.

NOLA

Would you excuse me for a minute?

Nola goes to investigate.

C.U.: KUPCHAK

She surveys the room: it's a tough nut to crack, but she's got an A-bomb.

EXT: BEACH--DAY

Eloise walks along the water with two cats--both in sweaters and on leashes. She's singing the "Perry Mason Theme." We hear Franki's voice calling her. She sees Franki, pulling Nola after her, running towards her. Franki screams to her.

FRANKI

Elo-ise! C'mon! We've only got 15 minutes!

ELOISE

OK. OK. We better get going. Fifteen minutes for what?

FRANKI

C'mon, you'll see when we get there.

Eloise looks to Nola and gets a shrug.

INT: EMPTY NIGHTCLUB---DAY

It's huge, old long out of business, but once quite grand. The walls are covered in painted lemons, thousands of them. The three women and two cats wander into the space. Behind them is a real estate AGENT.

ELOISE

Oh my god...

FRANKI

They called it the Lemon Club.
It's fate. Don't you think?
Like really fate?

ELOISE

C'mon.

AGENT

It's true. The Lemon Club.

Nola is quiet. Franki gets up on the large stage in the middle of the room and goes into a musical intro.

FRANKI

Bum, bum, bum, bum, bum...

She motions the other two up. Eloise comes up and takes up the Bum bums. Nola is frozen.

FRANKI

Nola!

Nola comes up and takes up the Bum bums, too.

FRANKI

They're lively, they're lovely,
they're loaded with talent,
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Lemon
Tree Lounge is proud to
present the Lemon SISTERS!

The three go into their dance steps; as they sing we recognize that the intro has been to...

ALL

Stop! (hands up) In the name of love...before you break my heart.

Think it o-o-ver, bum bum bum bum bum....

As they sing, Nola gets into it in a big way.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--DAY--CLANKING MACHINERY

FRED

(shouts) Hey, now, that's a cinch, Nola. That's the easiest question anybody ever asked me, Nola. You want to know what to tell them, Nola? I'll tell you what to tell them. NO. N. O. NO. No way. No how. No chance. No dice. No money. Got that? Got that, Nola?

NOLA

You know, Fred, you know...how am I supposed to...

FRED

Listen to me, Nola. We relocate the store, we put the money into new equipment, new packageing, We finally get a little breathing room, for Christsake, Nola. I'm talking about the family business here, Nola. And you just want to pack it up and turn the money over to those two airheads? Nola?

NOLA

My family business, Fred. My mother's business, not yours. You didn't even like her, Fred.

FRED

Oh that's great. That's just really great, Nola. Her business. Her store. C'mon, Nola.

He grabs her hand and takes her over to an old, clanking piece of machinery.

FRED

That's your mother's Nola. Is it her that's kept it going for the past 15 years? Is it? This thing shoulda been junked 20 years ago, Nola. And there ain't nobody who can run it like me.

He throws a lever and the machine starts clanking much louder. He tries to throw it back, but it jams. The machine clanks louder still. Fred wrestles futilely with the lever, hits it with a pot, smashes his finger, it bleeds. The machine stops, smoking.

FRED

Damn. Damn. Damn. Damn.

NOLA

Fred.

FRED

Damn.

NOLA

Here. Let me see it.

FRED

(walks away) Damn.

NOLA

Fred.

FRED

(quiet) Damn.

Silence.

FRED
Go ahead, Nola. Do what you
want with the money. I'd
probably just lose it anyway.

C.U.: NOLA
Torn to pieces.

INT: ELOISE'S HOUSE—DAY

Eloise hums "Stop in the Name of Love," looks into the refrigerator:
it's empty except for a casserole and cans of catfood.

FRANKI(O.O.S.)
We are not talking about this,
Eloise. Do you hear me?

IN THE LIVINGROOM

Eloise comes in with the casserole, moves a cat from the table,
sneezes. Franki and Nola wait for her. Nola sits very still.

ELOISE
There's still some of your pot-
roast, Nola. Do you think it's
still OK? Probably not, right?
I could open some tuna...

FRANKI
Did you hear me?

ELOISE
All I was saying, Franki, is
that one room, in the back,
where there were just a few
private booths--you know, with
curtains--and a private reser-
vations book for people who
didn't want certain individuals
such as wives or husbands maybe
knowing they were there or who
they were with... it couldn't
hurt. OK?

FRANKI

And all I'm saying is one:
that is totally ridiculous and
two:...

NOLA

(shouts suddenly) Stop it!
Stop it. Stop it now, please.
Just...Stop. OK? OK. Stop.
Franki. Eloise. There's not
going to be a restaurant or bar
or club or whatever. Fred and
I are putting our money into
the taffy business. OK?

FRANKI

Excuse me? Eloise? What is
she talking about please?

Eloise sneezes.

NOLA

(from memory) With new
machinery and new packaging,
you know? We could...uhm and
we could increase production
and well, cut costs...

FRANKI

She's lost her mind. You've
lost your mind. Is she crazy,
Eloise? Is she crazy?

NOLA

Crazy is opening a restaurant,
Franki. We don't know anything
about that. You've never run a
business, have you, Franki?
Well Eloise and I can tell you
it's not about singing songs
and wearing pretty dresses.
It's a lot of hard work.

FRANKI

Are you suggesting I don't know
about hard work?

NOLA
You just don't understand what
I'm talking about, do you?

FRANKI
This is a joke, right? Nola?

ELOISE
Maybe we've been rushing things
too much, you know, Whitey?
Why don't we all think about it
for a couple of weeks?

NOLA
We're not doing it. It's final.

FRANKI
Well, I think I have to go home
now.

Franki starts getting things together. Eloise can't breathe. She
gives herself a blast from an inhaler.

ELOISE
(breathless) Wait, Franki.
Nola?

Nola won't look at her.

ELOISE
Franki?

FRANKI
Yes?

ELOISE
(totally out of breath) You
want to stay for dinner?

FRANKI
You don't have any food.

NOLA

I've got a turkey in the oven.
You could both come over.

FRANKI

(stares) I have a date with
Frankie, thank you very much.
However, I certainly do hope
you both have an extremely
pleasurable evening.

ELOISE

Franki...(another blast from
inhaler).

FRANKI

Good night.

Franki leaves. Eloise sits down to catch her breath. Nola takes a
bottle of pills from Eloise's bag and gives her two.

NOLA

You've been spending too much
time with those cats. I mean,
this is the chance Fred's been
waiting for. How can I just pull
it out from under his feet? Do
you know? I mean am I crazy?

ELOISE

(catches breath) Nola, how would
I know who's crazy?

EXT: BOARDWALK---NIGHT

Franki cries, Frankie comforts her.

FRANKIE

Hey, c'mon. It's not so bad. I
been tellin' you you had to go
solo anyhow.

FRANKI

You don't understand. It's always like this. It's always the two of them and Franki's along for the ride if she's lucky. I know. I'm a terrible person. I should be happy their rich. I'm a terrible person.

FRANKIE

Hey, hey. Wait a minute here. You got any money in the bank?

FRANKI

Oh, tons. Zillions.

FRANKIE

How much?

FRANKI

Two thousand dollars. I'm saving for a car.

FRANKIE

Forget the car. We'll buy you some arrangements, some clothes, I know I can get you singing jobs. No problem. They'll be the ones left out.

FRANKI

You really could?

FRANKIE

Hey, with your personality? With your stage presence? You know I never met a girl like you before. Did you know that?

FRANKI

Really you didn't?

FRANKIE

No way.

FRANKI

Well, I never met anybody like you before either.

FRANKIE

No?

FRANKI

No. And I never went out with anyone named Frankie before, either.

FRANKIE

Me neither.

FRANKI

You weren't by any chance named after Frank Sinatra, were you?

FRANKIE

Me? Nah. Frank Rubino.

FRANKI

Who's that?

FRANKIE

Some guy. My father was in the army with him.

FRANKI

Oh. I was. I was named after Frank Sinatra.

FRANKIE

No. No kidding?

FRANKI

No kidding. The funny thing is I always liked Frankie Laine

FRANKI (cont)
better than Frank Sinatra.

FRANKIE

No.

FRANKI

Yeah. And I sort of pretend, I guess, that it's really Frankie Laine that I'm named after. Even though it's really Frank Sinatra.

FRANKIE

Yeah?

FRANKI

Yeah.

FRANKIE

Hey. C'meer.

They kiss.

INT: NOLA'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Nola, Fred, STEVE--40's, friendly, plain--and Eloise have finished dinner; sit in silence. Mrs. Kupchak comes in to clear up plates.

STEVE

I don't know. I think we're in for a lot of rain the next few weeks.

Silence. Mrs. Kupchak gives him a look of contempt.

KUPCHAK

I see nobody ate the potatoes, Mrs. Frank.

FRED
Mine wasn't cooked.

KUPCHAK
I told Mrs. Frank it's best to
test them with a fork before
draining them...

NOLA
They're much better for you if
they're a little crisp,
besides...

Eloise bangs the table with her fist. Everyone jumps.

ELOISE
What if Alexandra Isles turned
up dead? I bet they'd have to
indict that Claus von Bulow all
over again. Don't you think?
Talk about gigolos!

Everybody is struck dumb. Kupchak goes into the kitchen, shaking her head.

NOLA
(finally) I'll take some of
these dishes through.

STEVE
Excuse me, Eloise, are those
people friends of yours? Clouds
did you say his name was?

ELOISE
Huh? Oh, excuse me.

She follows Nola into the kitchen. Fred shrugs an apology to Steve.

INT: KITCHEN

Kupchak does the dishes. Eloise and Nola stand away from her.

ELOISE

C'mon, Nola. How about it?

NOLA

I don't know, El. She's the one who's mad at me.(beat) Eloise, he's a lawyer, he's into real estate, he's cute, and he's a very nice guy!

Nola stacks dishes. Eloise unstacks them, studies the pattern. Kupchak goes back out.

ELOISE

He is not.

NOLA

OK, so he's not so cute. He is nice.

ELOISE

She would if you would. Nola, this is no good. We've always had fights, but this not talking is ridiculous. (beat) He's too nice.

NOLA

That's it. You want a gigolo.

ELOISE

That's ridiculous.

NOLA

That's the problem, isn't it? Just like CW. Nice guys are boring. They're not romantic. But I think it's all just a big act, Eloise. You really think you don't deserve them. You're not good enough. That's right. And do you know where you got that idea from? I'll tell you. From your father, that's where. Your

NOLA (cont)
father. Nothing was ever good
enough for him, including you.
Nothing but that damn TV collec-
tion. If he'd paid more atten-
tion to you and your mom... E1?

Eloise is staring off in space.

NOLA
Eloise.

ELOISE
Mmm?

NOLA
(gives up the lesson) What are
you going to do?

ELOISE
Get the rest of the dishes.

She leaves the kitchen.

NOLA
E1?

Nola goes into the LIVINGROOM

NOLA
Where's Eloise?

FRED
She left.

NOLA
She left?

FRED

She said she had a date. I
thought Steve here was supposed
to be her date.

C.U.: HAND LETTERED SIGN

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS SALE
DRASTIC REDUCTIONS

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

EXT: ELOISE'S SHOP--DAY

A moving van is parked outside and MOVERS are carrying boxes in.

INT: ELOISE'S SHOP

Andrea tries on old hats, dresses, etc. in a mirror. Eloise races
around opening boxes being moved in.

ANDREA

Eloise?

Eloise pulls a four foot paper mache cupid from a crate.

ELOISE

Oh, God. Look at this.

ANDREA

Hey Eloise? How come if you're
going out of business, you're
moving stuff in?

Eloise opens a crate of heart shaped boxes of chocolate. Opens one.
Eats one. The movers carry in a heart shaped mattress.

ELOISE

Want one?

(Takes one) ^{ANDREA}
How come?

Eloisie opens another crate and takes out a book.

^{ELOSIE}
200 copies of "Secret Passion"
by Orchid Amorosa.

^{ANDREA}
And how come you got all this
love stuff?

^{ELOISE}
(sharp)What do you mean, Andrea?

^{ANDREA}
Well, you know. All this stuff
is about romance and stuff.

^{ELOISE}
Don't be ridiculous. I just
came across some good buys.
These things are all real
values, Andrea. Good investments.

^{ANDREA}
Eloisie, are you gonna get
married?

Eloisie pulls a lamp from another box.

^{ANDREA(cont)}
I thought you were gonna marry CW

^{ELOISE}
(to mover) Hey, excuse me, but
I didn't order this.

^{MOVER}
No? Lemme check the manifest.

ELOISE

I don't care about the manifest.
I didn't order it and I'm not
paying for it. I mean, I'm
sorry but...

The mover goes out.

ANDREA

I guess you'll never marry him
now, huh?

ELOISE

What time did you say your
mother was coming?

A mysterious looking, richly dressed man, handsome, penetrating, but
cold--WALKER AYERS--comes into the shop.

ANDREA

Five.

WALKER

Hello. I am Walker Ayers. You
are Eloise Hamer?

ELOISE

Why yes? Uh, well. How did...?
Yes?

He looks around at the disarray.

WALKER

Do you think we could go some-
where for a drink? I'd like to
discuss a matter of some inter-
est to us both.

ELOISE

Hey Sure. I mean, why not. I
guess. Well, actually, I can't
leave here till five... What's
it about? Do I know you?

WALKER

You do not know me, but you will be interested, I expect, in what I have to say. Until five then.

He leaves. Eloise and Andrea exchange looks.

ELOISE

Andrea, do you know what a gigolo is?

The mover is back in.

MOVER

Hey, sorry about that. You were right. That's on another shipment.

INT: ELOISE'S SHOP--A LITTLE LATER

Eloise stares out the window. Andrea still at the mirror

ELOISE

It's the kind of thing women with money--especially those of us who've come into it suddenly, you know?--it's the sort of thing you have to watch out for.

ANDREA

He was dishy, OK, but sort of creepy, too, if you ask me.

ELOISE

Well, you see, that's exactly what I'm saying. They wine you and dine you and know all these just a little off color things to say...and you start to lose your head and then it's expensive gifts...or worse--they want you to "invest" in some kind of "great opportunity."

Eloise takes a pair of large heart shaped earrings out of Andrea's hand, holds them up to her own ears and looks in the mirror.

ELOISE(cont)

I'll tell you one place they really like to operate--boats. They get you out on the deck in the moonlight...expensive champagne... tuxedos...evening gowns ...you think you're in heaven till you wake up a week later and realize it's hell.

ANDREA

That part sounds like Tommy Dibala.

EXT: CASINO--FIVE O'CLOCK

Eloise, done up in her version of seductive attire, and Walker go by a line of cabs. CW stands next to his, polishing it. He and Eloise see each other. Eloise and Walker go into the casino and CW watches them in disgust.

INT: CASINO LOUNGE

Walker and Eloise are seated at a table by a WAITRESS. Behind them a combo gets set up for the first set of the cocktail hour.

WAITRESS

And what can I get you from the bar?

WALKER

What would you like, Miss Hamer?

ELOISE

Not champagne, please.

WALKER

Excuse me?

ELOISE

Not champagne.

WALKER
Yes. And what would you like?

ELOISE
I'll have a Galliano and coke on
the rocks.

WALKER
I'll have a beer. Now, Miss
Hamer, ...May I call you Eloise?

ELOISE
Sure. What took you so long?
What's on your mind?

WALKER
A business proposition,
actually.

ELOISE
Oh. I see. Aren't you going to
wait till after dinner?

WALKER
Oh. I'm afraid I have to be
back in New York for dinner.

ELOISE
Oh, you do. I suppose you have
a private car waiting?

WALKER
Why, yes...

ELOISE
And I suppose there's a bar in
the back?

WALKER
Uh...

ELOISE
And dark windows?...And maybe
even some triple x rated videos?

WALKER
Well, no...

ELOISE
Of course not. Too crude.
Well, I'm sorry, but I couldn't
possibly go to New York on such
short notice...

WALKER
Yes. I didn't mean to... at any
rate... I would like to buy your
entire television collection.

ELOISE
What?

WALKER
The television collection. The
one your father put together.
The one profiled in the May '72
Collector's Monthly? You are
liquidating your stock. Yes?

ELOISE
Buy it. You don't want me to
invest in anything?

WALKER
(confused) No...

ELOISE
I don't understand.

WALKER
What is it you don't understand?

ELOISE
You don't want my money?

WALKER
No. I want to buy your father's television collection. That is, I give you money, and you give me the collection. Understand now?

ELOISE
Oh. Oh. I...uh. Oh. Well... absolutely not. No. No. Absolutely not.

WALKER
I'd be willing to pay quite a lot of money for it.

ELOISE
Forget it, Mr. Walker Ayers. Just forget it.

WALKER
There must be a price.

ELOISE
It's not for sale. It's my father's life work. His legacy.

The waitress arrives with the drinks.

WALKER
I know...I understand... here, in case you reconsider, please take my card.

He presses his card into her bag. Eloise takes her drink and throws it in his face, stands up to go.

ELOISE
Get your hands out of my bag. This was your mistake, Mr. Walker Ayers, you forgot to get me liquored up first.

She tosses the glass at him and leaves.

WALKER
But why? What have I ...

AT THE BAR

CW has been watching, sees her stand, heads for the door, not wanting to be seen.

Eloise runs from the table. The combo kicks into their set with "This Could Be the Start of Something Big." Eloise gets to the glass door, sees CW's back. She stops, he starts to turn, she jumps into a phone booth, and sits, nowhere to go, her dream a shambles. "Something Big" goes on and covers:

MONTAGE

Nola and Fred set up their new shop, direct workmen, etc.

Franki and Frankie open boxes of nightclub costumes, hold them up to her in the mirror.

Eloise drags herself into her house, drops in a chair, opens Collector's Monthly.

Fred and Nola plug in their new computer, applaud when it lights up.

Eloise on the phone, makes an order from the magazine. Cats crawl over her, she sneezes, eats chocolates from the valentine candy box.

Franki, dressed in a gown, sings into a banana in the mirror, vamps in a big way to Frankie.

Eloise goes through the empty papers in the chocolate box. Nothing's left. She throws it on the floor.

Fred demonstrates a new taffy mixer to Nola.

Eloise walks slowly along the street by herself.

MUSIC FADES TO:

EXT: TONY'S PARADISE--DAY

Eloise walks along (cats on leash) till she gets to the front. WORKMEN are tearing it apart, carting out pieces of the interior.

ELOISE
Hey, what's going on?

WORKMAN
New Burger Boy comin in. Opens
next month.

ELOISE
Hey. No kidding.

INT: NIGHTCLUB--NIGHT

Eloise, Frankie and Franki come into the club with the crowd on the way to their seats.

ELOISE
How long is it going to go on?

FRANKI
Eloise...I did not stab my
friends in the back, and I am
not feuding. Talk to Queen Nola
about it.

FRANKIE
Wait till you see these seats,
babe. Wait. Here. This is us.

FRANKI
Oh my god, Eloise. Do you see
these seats?

FRANKIE
I want you to get a real close
look at this act. I'm talkin
you gotta get it down.

ELOISE

I have talked to her about it...
Whitey, listen. Just come over
tomorrow. For lunch. Please?

FRANKI

Lunch? At your house?

ELOISE

I'll order in. I have a great
surprise, Franks.

FRANKI

Really? What?

ELOISE

Uh-uh. Come and see. It'll be
fun, you know?

FRANKI

Well, I'm afraid we have a
rather full rehearsal schedule
for tomorrow. Don't we manager?

The orchestra starts the intro.

FRANKI

Oh my god, it's starting.

MAN'S VOICE(O.O.S.)

Excuse me, I'm terribly sorry.

It's a COUPLE standing next to their table.

MAN

I'm afraid you're in our seats.

INT: ELOISE'S DININGROOM--DAY

Eloise sets the table, using heart napkins, glasses, plates. Nola surreptitiously tidies and straightens around the room.

NOLA

It is not our fault that they wanted our stores and it is not our fault that she doesn't have a store, do you know? Just like it was not my fault that Bill Saumak did not invite her to the senior prom. So why did I feel guilty about it? Well no more, Eloise, no more. Eloise.. why are you setting three places?

The front door explodes open. Franki's in.

FRANKI

In the toilet! My life is in the toilet! Nothing! I repeat, nothing remains. (sees Nola— instant composure) Oh, Hello Nola, I had no idea that you'd be here.

NOLA

Hello Franki, how have you been?

FRANKI

Oh god, how can you ask that now? How can you ask that? I mean if it was just some disgusting underwear...OK, I could handle that. If it was just some putrid green teddy bear or something..OK, I could handle that. Even if it was some completely revolting imitation junk jewelry...OK, I could handle that. But this!

She slams down a pair of socks.

FRANKI (cont)

This I cannot handle. It is over! Finished! Nothing but a sweet, but bitter memory.

ELOISE

Is something the matter Franki?

FRANKI

Can there be love without respect? Can I love him if I don't respect him? Can I respect him after this? After THIS!?

She slams the socks down over and over.

FRANKI(cont)

Could you? Could you, Eloise? Or you, Nola? I doubt it very highly.

ELOISE

Could I what, Frankie? What are you...

FRANKI

Oh sure. Sure, it's easy for you to say it wouldn't bother you. Any one could say something like that.

Nola creeps up behind her with an afghan from the sofa.

FRANKI(cont)

But you don't have to face him in a restaurant, do you?

Nola throws the afghan over her head and she and Eloise wrestle her to a chair.

NOLA

Franki? Franki? Listen to me. We're going to hold you here till you calm down so we can talk sensibly. Do you understand me?

Franki struggles.

NOLA(cont)

Do you understand me?

Franki stops struggling.

NOLA(cont)

OK. We're going to let you out now, but I don't want you to say a single thing. Got that? I will ask you some questions and you will answer them yes or no. Understand? Yes or no.

Franki nods under the afghan.

NOLA(cont)

OK. We're taking the afghan off now.

They lift it. Franki doesn't move.

NOLA(cont)

Are you having a problem with Frankie, dear?

FRANKI

It's not...

NOLA

Yes or no, please.

FRANKI

Yes.

NOLA

Does it concern this pair of socks?

FRANKI

Yes.

ELOISE

Is the problem that Frankie gave you this pair of socks and you don't like them?

FRANKI
Well, just look at them...

NOLA
Yes or no!

FRANKI
Yes.

ELOISE
Yes, you don't like them.

FRANKI
Yes.

ELOISE
In fact, you hate them so much, and you think giving socks to your lover is such a stupid thing to do, you are finding it difficult to imagine continuing your relationship with Frankie. Is that it?

FRANKI
Yes.

NOLA
OK. Now we're getting somewhere.

Eloise rubs Franki's head in sympathy.

NOLA
OK. Now Franki, I want you to think, and answer these questions honestly. Up till today, when Frankie called you up, were you happy to hear his voice? And when you're with him, do you like it? Does it make you happy? And does he listen to your problems and make you feel like he understands you?

FRANKI

Yes.(beat) Yes.(beat) Yes.

ELOISE

And didn't you think he was the perfect man in the whole world for you just last night, even though he bought those phony tickets and got us thrown out?

FRANKI

Yes.

NOLA

And wouldn't it be stupid to throw all that away just because he gave you the world's stupidest and ugliest socks?

FRANKI

(thinks) Yes.

NOLA

So what are you going to do?

Franki gestures that she can't answer yes or no.

NOLA

You can talk now.

FRANKI

I'm going to call him up and thank him for the socks and say I'm sorry for pouring the pitcher of orange juice over his head and that I'll meet him at the Chinese restaurant just like I was supposed to at 8 o'clock?

NOLA

Right.

ELOISE

Right.

Franki gets up, takes the socks.

FRANKI

Do I have to wear them?

NOLA

No. Just put them in your drawer.

FRANKI

Phew.

ELOISE

Now. Can we please have some lunch?

INT: ELOISE'S DININGROOM--AN HOUR LATER

They've finished lunch and are drinking coffee. They're in hysterics of laughter.

FRANKI

Oh my god...phew. So...Miss Hamer...Was that Roy Rogers Burger the surprise I was promised?

ELOISE

The surprise! C'mon you guys!

She jumps up and runs to the living room. They share a look and start to move.

FRANKI

Rudolph Valentino's false teeth, maybe?

Eloise stops at a small table covered with a cloth, pulls off the

cloth. It's a projector. She starts it, then runs to the other end of the room, pulls a cloth covering the screen, knocks it over, picks it up, runs to turn off the lights.

CU: MOVIE SCREEN

We see a home movie...three little girls—Franki, Nola, Eloise—eat birthday cake circa 1955 (in the same room they sit in now); fun on the boardwalk; play on the beach. As it runs we hear embarrassed nostalgic comments from each of them.

PAN THEIR FACES

Lit by the movie light, watching their childhood.

FRANKI

Who took these, El? Your dad?

CU: ELOISE

ELOISE

Uh-huh.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--AN HOUR LATER

Eloise rewinds a reel of film.

ELOISE

One more to go.

NOLA

Oh, god, I'd love to Els, but I told Fred I'd be back by 3 and it's almost 5.

FRANKI

Almost 5! I've got to get home and call Frankie!

ELOISE

Well, call him from here.

FRANKI

No..I've got to wash my hair...

Franki and Nola head for the door.

NOLA
Els. Els. This was great, do
you know? Great.

She gives her a big hug.

NOLA
Just great.

Nola lets go. Franki hugs Eloise.

FRANKI
Let'd do this again, OK?

ELOISE
Well, sure. Yeah.

FRANKI
Call me tomorrow?

ELOISE
Sure. OK.

NOLA
Bye Els.

FRANKI
Bye Els.

They go out the door and down the porch steps. Eloise closes the door, looks around the room, turns on the projector, sits down and watches, takes a hit from her inhaler.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--A FEW DAYS LATER

PAN THE ROOM: an inconceivable amount of junk, mainly "romantic."

ELOISE (OOS)

His hands, like his maleness,
seemed everywhere on me at once,
and as the last defenseless
garment was pulled away, he
touched me there, and there, and
there and the terror gave way to
heat.

The camera reaches several cats sitting on the couch in various costumes, "listening," and finally gets to Eloise, reading from Secret Passion. She sneezes and closes the book.

INT:REHEARSAL HALL--DAY

Franki, done up in the height of workout attire, rehearses with a PIANIST. Frankie watches.

FRANKI

(sings) Like a virgin...Touched
for the very first time...Like a
virrrgin...

FRANKIE

Wait, wait, wait, wait. Hold
it. Hey babe. Let me show you
something here. Gotta sell this
babe, OK? Watch. Like a
virgin...

He points a finger at an imaginary audience, pantomiming a gunshot.

FRANKIE (cont)

Hey! Beat. For the very first
time. Got that? The beat sells
it. And the business with the
finger. OK?

FRANKI

OK.

FRANKIE

Try that.

She does it his way. He jumps up again.

FRANKIE
Hot! Oh, baby, are you hot?

He grabs her gunfinger, sticks it in his mouth, she giggles, pulls it away, he squeezes her, etc.

ELOISE(OOS)
Hi.

They break, turn to the back of the room. Eloise stands by the door, uncomfortable.

FRANKI
Hi, Els.

FRANKIE
(to pianist) Let's work on the other one again.

Frankie runs back to where Eloise is.

FRANKIE
(to Franki) OK, babe. Let's hear this. (to Eloise) Hey, Eloise. How's tricks?

ELOISE
Tricks? Good. Very, very good.

FRANKIE
That's something about CW, huh?

ELOISE
(confused) Yeah.

FRANKIE
You heard he was moving to Philly.

ELOISE
Uh...no. Not exactly.

FRANKIE
Yeah. Gonna miss that son of a
bitch. (to Franki) No, sweet-
heart, you gotta hit that
harder.

Eloise wanders out in a daze.

EXT: BEACH--DAY

Eloise sits, staring at the ocean, singing her version of "Rawhide"
as a sad ballad.

EXT: NEW TAFFY SHOP--DAY
Eloise goes in.

INT: NEW TAFFY SHOP
Nola is working at a computer. Fred is in the back.

NOLA
Hi, Els.

ELOISE
Nola...

NOLA
Wait a sec...(yells) It is not
here, Fred!

FRED(OOS)
What do you want from me, Nola?

NOLA
It was the whole week's orders,
Fred.

Fred comes out.

FRED

(screams)Nola, I did not put it in and I do not know what you are asking me.

NOLA

I know you didn't put it in. I put it in. What I'm asking you is if you erased it. Do you understand? Did you?

FRED

Not when you use that tone of voice with me, Nola. I'm sorry. Not when you use that tone of voice.

Eloise walks out again, unnoticed.

INT: ELOISE'S KITCHEN--NIGHT

Eloise is in the dark. She looks into the empty refrigerator. Takes a can of tuna from the cupboard, doesn't seem to know what to do with it. Opens it, puts it in a bowl, adds water from the tap. Cats crawl around, eliciting an occasional sneeze, a lot of eye rubbing. She goes to the phone, picks it up, puts it down, picks it up. Dials.

ELOISE

Hi, Franki? Hi, oh, OK. How about you? Really? Yeah... sounds great... he did?...he does?...That's... yeah...Uh, Franks, I was wondering if maybe you might come over tonight ... Oh. No, no ...sounds important...Yeah. Sure. Well, give me a call. Yeah. OK. Bye, Whitey.

She hangs up, tastes the tuna "salad," puts it down. The doorbell rings.

INT: ELOISE'S FRONT DOOR

There's a DELIVERYMAN at the door. Eloise shows him in without enthusiasm as he brings in a few more cases of romantic junk.

INT: ELOISE'S SHOP--LATE AFTERNOON

It's empty. Eloise looks around, walks out, starts to lock the door, realizes there's no reason, starts away, comes back, locks it. Outside the shop is a large lamp. She picks it up.

EXT: NOLA'S HOUSE--DUSK--LONG SHOT

Eloise walks up to the front door carrying the lamp. She tries the door, finds it's locked, rings the bell. Mrs. Kupchak answers.

CLOSER IN:

KUPCHAK

I'm afraid Andrea's at Girl Scouts, Miss Hamer.

ELOISE

Oh. Well, maybe Jennifer would like to come over and see the cats, huh?

KUPCHAK

I'm sure she'd love to, but she just got over a cold and I don't think it would be a very good idea .

ELOISE

No, I suppose not. I guess David is busy, too...

KUPCHAK

Still on his homework. And Benjamin's napping. Maybe later this week. I'll find a time that's good and we'll give you a call. OK?

ELOISE
Uh, sure. That'd be just fine.
Really just fine. Bye now, Mrs.
Kupchak. Bye.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--DUSK

She sits immobile in the middle of all her junk. Cats crawl over her and the junk. She holds the Captain Video ray gun on her lap.

EXT: STREET--NIGHT

An ambulance races through the city, siren screeching.

INT: HOSPITAL--NIGHT

Nola hurries through the corridor. She turns a corner and bumps into Franki. There's a moment, then they fall into each other's arms.

INT: HOSPITAL--A FEW MINUTES LATER

A NURSE briefs Franki and Nola.

NURSE
She's resting now. The doctor
said no visitors until tomorrow.
Asthma attacks like this can be
very serious.

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM--NIGHT

Eloise lies in an oxygen tent.

INT: HOSPITAL WAITING LOUNGE--MORNING

Franki and Nola sleep on a couch. CW, carrying a potted geranium, walks by them.

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM--MORNING

Eloise, still in the oxygen tent. CW stands in the room. Silence.

CW
(finally) So...like I was
saying...How are you, anyway?

ELOISE
Well, I'm OK. Yeah. Thanks.
Thanks for coming...

CW
Well, you know.

Silence.

ELOISE
So..when are you moving to Phil-
adelphia?

CW
Oh. Yeah. Philly. Yeah. Well,
I don't know, you know? It's
just...well, you know. I guess
there's nothing really keeping
me here, you know?

No answer.

CW
You know. I mean, if there was
something keeping me here maybe.

ELOISE
(long beat) Yeah. Well, thanks
for coming.

CW
Hey. No problem. I better get
going.

ELOISE
You in a hurry?

CW
Sorta. Anyway, I guess I'll
give you a call when you get out,
huh?

ELOISE
You will?

CW
Sure.

ELOISE
What for?

CW
What for?

ELOISE
Well, you haven't called much
lately...

CW
Hey, but you know.. How'll I
know what happened to you? I
mean I know it's just asthma and
all, but you never know what'll
happen in a hospital, right?
People get the wrong drugs and
all. Even the wrong operations
sometimes...

ELOISE
Hey, thanks CW. Thanks a lot.
Jesus.

CW
Hey, I'm sorry...I... anyway,
I'll give you a call.

ELOISE
Don't bother.

CW
I'll give you a call.

He's at the door.

ELOISE
CW...

CW
Hey, I'll give you a call.

He's gone.

INT: HOSPITAL CORRIDOR--MORNING

Franki and Nola get ready to go into Eloise's room.

NOLA
OK. Now, we have to be gentle.
OK? We can't upset her. Franki?

INT: HOSPITAL ROOM--MORNING

Eloise lies in bed, out of her oxygen tent. CW's geranium on her bed table. Franki and Nola come in. Eloise bursts into tears.

NOLA
Oh, Els.

FRANKI
It's OK, baby, we're here now.

Eloise cries on.

ELOISE
Nothing's OK. Everything's a mess.

NOLA
What's a mess? Tell us.

ELOISE
Everything. Everything. My
whole life. That's all. It's a
total mess.

FRANKI
Well, you'll just have to turn
it around.

ELOISE
I can't. I can't do anything.
Except screw things up.

NOLA
Sure you can. We'll help you.

ELOISE
How? How can you?

NOLA
Eloise, do you know how some-
times in life we have to sort of
make a right turn?

ELOISE
A right turn?

NOLA
Sort of an about face?

ELOISE
What are you talking about?

FRANKI
For instance those cats.

ELOISE
What about my cats?

NOLA
I mean, think about it: here's
someone who's allergic to cats,
right?

ELOISE
I know I'm allergic to cats.

NOLA
Right. And she's living with seven of them. Seven?

ELOISE
Those cats love me. They need me.

NOLA
Nobody's telling you to throw them into the street, Eloise. I mean, you know how Fred feels about them, but I know we can work something out. Maybe in our back yard...

FRANKI
OK. Food.

NOLA
Let's face it Eloise, nutrition is everything.

ELOISE
What do you mean, "your back yard?"

FRANKI
We've put together a few menu plans here, just sort of a guide...

ELOISE
You think I can't feed myself? You think I'm some sort of idiot, don't you?

NOLA
Nobody's saying that, Eloise.

ELOISE

No. Of course not. You don't think I'm an idiot. I know exactly what you think. You think I'm in here because I'm crazy. Right? Now it comes out. Eloise the weirdo. Eloise who's too eccentric to have a man in her life. I just screw up everything because I'm just so pathetically crazy, right? Why don't you just say it? Eloise, you're just a sick, off-the-wall basketcase who's never going to have a man in her life. OK, now you've said it, so you can just go. Alright? Just go and get out and leave. Thanks. Go on. Go back to your husbands and boyfriends and million dollar careers and I will take care of my own weird self.

NOLA

Eloise...

ELOISE

No! Just shut up, OK? Just... go.

FRANKI

Maybe we should come back later.

ELOISE

Maybe you shouldn't come back at all. Got that? And don't come around to check on me either. Because I won't be home. I'm OK. I'm just peachy keen in my own diseased way. OK?

NOLA

Eloise, stop.

ELOISE

Please...get out of my room.

They start to go, then hesitate.

ELOISE

OUT!

She picks up the geranium by the flower, hurls the pot at the door, they close it behind them. She's left with the flower and the stem in her hand, throws it away.

EXT: ELOISE AND NOLA'S BLOCK---MORNING

Mrs. Kupchak, holding a big cardboard box, leads Jennifer across the street to Eloise's house.

EXT: ELOISE'S FRONT DOOR

The door opens. Eloise is holding a cat.

KUPCHAK

Mrs. Frank got your letter...

ELOISE

Yes? And?

KUPCHAK

Well, she sent me to get them.

ELOISE

Oh, she did. Well, then... Mm-hm. Come in, then.

JENNIFER

Hi, Eloise.

ELOISE

Hi, Sweetie.

INT: ELOISE'S HOUSE

ELOISE

Well, then, why don't we just
...uh...put them in your box,
then? Why not? You know it's
insane for someone who's
(sneeze) allergic to cats to
have seven, isn't it?

JENNIFER

I'll get Jamaica.

KUPCHAK

I'd just as soon you not handle
them until we get them washed,
dear.

Eloise pulls a gas mask from a pile of junk.

ELOISE

Maybe you'd like to wear one of
these in the meantime, Mrs.
Kupchak.

She takes another one.

ELOISE (cont)

Here, take one for Mrs. Frank,
while you're at it.

EXT: ELOISE'S HOUSE

Mrs. Kupchak comes down the steps carrying the box, Jennifer behind.
Eloise stands on the porch. Down the block, Nola stands on her
porch, they look at each other, but don't speak.

EXT: NOLA'S BACK YARD

Mrs. Kupchak locks the cats in a chickenwire pen. Over this,
Franki's voice sings "That's Life," which covers...

INT: BAR--DAY

Extremely grungy, dark, empty. Franki's singing on a small stage with her pianist. Frankie and the club owner sit on bar stools. Franki's "distinctive styling" of "That's Life" continues and covers MONTAGE:

INT: TAFFY SHOP--DAY

Nola works on a ledgerbook. The Debits page is full. The Credits page is almost empty.

INT: ELOISE'S BEDROOM--DAY

She's in work-out clothes--stands up, takes a deep breath, collapses.

INT: ANOTHER BAR--DAY

Franki's singing the same song. A fat lady in sunglasses smokes a cigarette, refusing to make eye contact with Frankie.

EXT: STREET--DAY

Eloise starts to jog, goes ten yards, pulls up, panting.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--DAY

Fred tries to wrestle a huge pot of taffy from a mixing machine. Nola talks on the telephone and writes on papers.

EXT: TAFFY SHOP--SAME TIME

Eloise, still in jogging clothes, walks to within a few feet of the shop, starts to jog.

INT: TAFFY SHOP

Fred spills the pot of taffy all over the floor. Eloise jogs by the window.

INT: ANOTHER BAR--DAY

Franki's still singing. A drunk sleeps, head on bar. The bartender counts bottles. Frankie can't get them interested.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--EVENING

Fred and Nola sit staring at each other, surrounded by a huge pile of taffy boxes.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVING ROOM--DAY

Eloise struggles with a vacuum cleaner, trying to clean her junk-filled room. The vacuum cleaner won't go where she wants it to. She yanks the hose, it comes out. She flips, hitting the junk with it over and over.

INT: SONS OF ITALY SOCIAL CLUB--DAY

The club is pure basics: bridge chairs and card tables. A few old guys play dominos. VINNIE, the social director, sits with Frankie, as Franki finishes "That's Life," selling the ending to the hilt. There's no response.

VINNIE
(finally) How tall are you
sweetheart?

FRANKI
Excuse me?

VINNIE
(to Frankie) She know any
Italian songs?

FRANKIE
Does Franki D'Angelo know any
Italian songs?

VINNIE
You know any Italian songs,
sweetheart?

EXT: STREET--A MINUTE LATER

Frankie chases Franki down the street.

FRANKIE
What are you, crazy? Vinnie
made a special trip down here
just to audition you.

FRANKI
Oh wow. I bet he had a special
pass from the warden, too.

FRANKIE
The guy is interested, Franki.

She goes into a pizza parlor. He follows.

INT: PIZZA PARLOR

Frankie and Franki are at a table. He grabs her arm.

FRANKIE
Hey, c'mon baby. Nobody starts
at the top.

FRANKI
Would you mind very much not
touching me? This is lower than
the bottom, Frankie. This is
the basement. No. Excuse me,
the basement is miles above
this. (to counterman) I'd like
a Coca Cola, please. On the
rocks with a twist.

Frankie grabs her arm again.

FRANKIE
Hey. Listen to me.
Everything's under control...

FRANKI
Under control? Well, now, that's
really a good one. Frankie, I'm
very, very sorry to have to say
this, but this arrangement just
isn't working out. I'm going to
have to let you go.

FRANKIE
Huh? What're you talking about?

FRANKI
I mean that you no longer
represent me. That's what.

FRANKIE
I no longer represent you? This
is trully rich. Listen, sweet-
heart, you work for me.

FRANKI
Hah. That's a laugh. Read my
lips: you're fired Caputo.

FRANKIE
I'm fired? You're fired! What
d'ya think about that, shrimp-
boat? And I'll tell you some-
thin' else. You're finished in
this business. Got that? Fin-
ished!

FRANKI
Oh yeah? Finished? I'll show
you finished.

She grabs a hero from the counter and pushes it in his face.

FRANKI(cont)
Finish this, big boy.

EXT: STREET

Franki goes running scared down the street.

INT: ELOISE'S KITCHEN--EVENING

Eloise awkwardly, but obsessively, puts brewer's yeast, tiger's milk, yoghurt, etc. into a blender and switches it on--without the top. It sprays all over her. She turns it off. The phone is ringing. She puts the top on, regards herself, a la youghurt, does not answer the phone.

INT: NOLA'S KITCHEN--SAME TIME

MOVERS are carrying out the big screen TV. Fred and Nola watch.

FRED

Oh yeah? Well you tell him that we're gonna get it back. You got that? We'll get it back.

Mrs. Kupchak comes bustling in.

KUPCHAK

Away from the stove, please, Mr. F.

She opens some pots and stirs.

KUPCHAK(cont)

The children are already at the table.

Nola and Fred head obediently for the door.

INT: DININGROOM--A FEW MINUTES LATER

The family is at the table; terrified obedience has replaced the chaos of earlier scenes. Mrs. Kupchak stands, holding a pot.

KUPCHAK

Hands!

The kids put out their hands for inspection. Mrs. Kupchak checks them and starts dishing out food.

KUPCHAK

Just two potatoes tonight, Mr. F. OK? Putting on a bit, I'd say. We don't play with our food, do we Benjamin? Thank you.

NOLA

I think I'll make some cookies tonight, what d'ya say gang?

KUPCHAK
(horrified) No need. I made quite a large batch this morning, Mrs. F.

NOLA
Oh...maybe a cake?

KUPCHAK
I have a fresh one for dessert. There's really no need, Mrs. F. Really no need. Why not leave the baking to me, hm? Eat up everybody, there's seconds for those with clean plates.

She's back in the kitchen. The family sits in silence.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--NIGHT

She watches big screen TV, sound off, no lights on. The phone rings. She doesn't answer.

EXT: STREET--SAME TIME

CW hangs up at a pay phone by his cab.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--AFTERNOON--PILES OF BOXES

Fred, at his wits end, on the phone.

FRED
Listen, Mr. Baxter... listen to...yeah. Yeah, I know...God-damn it, Baxter, what's the matter, you bankers run out of farmers to put out of business? Now it's taffy makers? This is our life, Baxter. Well, fuck you. Just FUCK YOU! (hangs up)
Oh god damn it all to hell.

Nola, in the back, has been watching through a window. She cries.

INT: TAFFY SHOP--LATER THAT DAY

Nola goes over books and bills, searching for a loophole. She talks on the phone.

NOLA

Yes, I know, Mr. Baxter. But if I could just show you the paperwork, I know I could convince you...twenty minutes? In your office? You bet I can.

She hangs up and starts racing around looking through papers, bills, etc. opening drawers, looking for receipts. Franki bursts in.

FRANKI

Ripped in two! Nola, I am being ripped in half and I cannot bear it! Why? Why is this happening?

NOLA

(still searching) What are you talking about, Franki?

FRANKI

A job, Nola. A singing job at a casino. The real thing, Nola. And can I be happy? Can I enjoy it? No, naturally. I have to go and ruin my life by pushing a sandwich in the face of the only man who ever loved me. (Karl Malden:) What will I do, Nola? What will I do?

NOLA

(still searching) I don't know, Franki.

FRANKI

You don't know? Nola!? Would you please put down those papers and at least give me some attention?

NOLA

Franki, I'm sorry. I'm really sorry, but I just cannot deal with this right now.

FRANKI

You can't deal with this? What do you mean, Nola?

NOLA

Franki, did it ever occur to you that I might have more important things to think about than your stupid career or your no-good boyfriend? Did it, Franki?

FRANKI

Well, I don't recall ever thinking about it in quite those terms. No.

NOLA

You never think about anything, Franki. That's your problem. You never think about anybody but yourself. Some of us have to deal with real life, Franki. Seven days a week.

FRANKI

Are you implying that I am not real life, Nola? You know I don't need to come in here to be persecuted, Nola. I can get plenty of persecution out on the street.

NOLA

Well, please be my guest.

FRANKI

Oh. Well thank you ever so... Next time I need a friend I'll look in the yellow pages.

She bangs out. Nola puts her head in her hands.

EXT: ELOISE'S HOUSE--EVENING

Franki runs up the walk, bangs on the door, rings the bell.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM

Eloise watches the TV, no sound again. The room is fuller of junk than ever--piled to the ceiling. She doesn't get up to answer the bells and knocks.

FADE TO:

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--NIGHT

Eloise is asleep in the same chair. A test pattern is on the big screen TV. She wakes up; sits; gets up, and walks around the room. She stops at a book case, where amidst the clutter, is a little shrine-like collection of photos of the cats: Eloise with the cats, the cats as kittens, etc.

EXT: ELOISE'S HOUSE --NIGHT

The front door opens. Eloise creeps out with a flashlight.

EXT: NOLA'S BACKYARD--NIGHT

Eloise crouches by the cats' pen, shining the flashlight on them.

ELOISE

Yeah. So how 'bout Jamaica?
Have you missed me? Of course I
have.

The back door opens.

NOLA (OOS)

Who's there? Who is it?

Eloise turns off the flashlight and doesn't answer.

NOLA

I know you're there. Identify
yourself. I have a gun.

ELOISE

It's me, Nola.

NOLA
Eloise?

ELOISE
Do you really have a gun?

NOLA
(turns on light) Of course not.
What are you doing, Eloise?

ELOISE
Visiting. I couldn't sleep.

NOLA
Me either.

ELOISE
I better go.

NOLA
You want some warm milk?

INT: NOLA'S KITCHEN--A FEW MINUTES LATER

Eloise sits at the kitchen table. Nola races around trying to get warm milk together.

NOLA
Oh, lord, what am I thinking
about? This pan is too big.

She looks for a smaller one, spills milk out of the big one.

NOLA
Oh god.

She gets a sponge, wipes it up.

NOLA
Sometimes I think I'm losing my
mind...where did I put that pan?

ELOISE
Are you OK, Nole?

NOLA
Am I..OK? Am I OK? Wait. Let
me think... Am I ..OK?

ELOISE
Nola?

NOLA
(starts to cry) Am I OK? Wait.
Uh...(sobbing) OK. I'm OK.
It's just, well, first there's
the business...that's gone of
course, and then all this with
Baxter, he said no... I mean I
knew he would...but Eloise, 50
years! We've been here 50
years. Doesn't that count for
anything?

Eloise sits her down and holds her head.

ELOISE
Slow down, Sweetheart. Shhh...
What is it? Slow down. Tell
me. What about the business?

NOLA
It's gone, Eloise. My
mom's store, it's all gone. We
over expanded, we over ran the
money we got...it's gone.

ELOISE
Oh, Nola.

NOLA
But the worst part is the house.

ELOISE
The house?

NOLA
Well, when we saw the business
was in trouble we took out a
mortgage on the house and now we

NOLA (cont)
can't make the payments... Oh,
god, Els, they're going to take
our house away. I've lived here
my whole life, Els!

ELOISE
Oh, Noles...How much would it
cost to buy back the mortgage?

NOLA
Thirty thousand dollars.

ELOISE
Oh, Nole, I wish I had it. If I
did I'd give it to you. You
know that.

NOLA
What do you mean you don't have
it?

ELOISE
I've only got a few thousand
dollars left.

NOLA
What? How? What happened to
the rest?

ELOISE
Well, I picked up a few things.

NOLA
A few things?

ELOISE
You know...different things...

NOLA
Are you telling me that you
spent \$100,000 on junk? Eloise?
Just tell me if that's what
you're telling me, because I

NOLA (cont)

want to know. I just want to know if you are. Just sit there and look me in the eye and tell me that you spent \$100,000 on valentines and paper mache cupids. ELOISE??!!

ELOISE

I don't think you're in any position to be lecturing me on money management, Nola.

NOLA

I don't think we're discussing money management here, Eloise. Excuse me, but I think what we are discussing here, Eloise, is serious mental illness!

ELOISE

Oh. We are. Well. Huh. Well. Thanks, Nola. That's sweet.

NOLA

I'm sorry. I really am. I'm sorry. (a beat) Oh god, Eloise, how could you?

ELOISE

Is this a joke? Listen Ms.E.F. Hutton, I've still got my house, at least.

NOLA

Eloise, we made some bad choices. I guess that's pretty obvious, but they were rational business mistakes, Eloise.

ELOISE

What is a "rational business mistake," please? I mean that one went right by me.

NOLA

Well, I'll tell you what it's not: it's not some crazy person's idea of a spending spree. It's not insane, Eloise. It's not insane!

ELOISE

Oh, give me a break. Expand production, compete with the chains. With that dummy of yours in charge? Franki's bar was IT&T compared to investing in that idea, Nola.

NOLA

Oh, you and Franki. That's the pair alright. Why didn't the two of you do it alone, then? Huh, Eloise? So holier than thou you were, too.

ELOISE

Holier than thou? Nobody could possibly ever be holier than thou Nola, could they? Oh my... and... What about my cats, Nola? You put my cats in prison, Nola. In prison!!!

Nola fights off a smile. So does Eloise.

NOLA

Oh, El.

They hold each other in a long hug.

FADE TO:

INT: NOLA'S KITCHEN--DAY

The kitchen is stripped of personal belongings, furniture. It's raining outside. Nola stands by herself, walks into the

LIVINGROOM

It's completely bare.

EXT: NOLA'S HOUSE--A MOMENT LATER

The Franks, Mrs. Kupchak, MOVERS, finish packing a moving van. Eloise comes over to watch, stands at a distance. On the other side of the lawn, Franki watches, too. Rain drizzles down. Kids each carry a few cats to the station wagon. Jennifer slows down as she passes Eloise.

KUPCHAK

Let's keep it moving, Jennifer.

She moves on, then stops, drops cats, runs back to Eloise, crying, and jumps into her arms. Eloise holds her in a long embrace. Eloise and Nola's eyes meet. Nola turns away. Eloise lets Jennifer go.

ELOISE

Go on, hon.

Jennifer runs to the station wagon. Eloise stoops, a cat comes to her. She carries it to Nola. Franki comes over too.

NOLA

(stiff upper lip) We'll be at Fred's sister's at least till next Thursday when the apartment in Philadelphia is ready. You have the number, right?

ELOISE

Yeah, I have it.

NOLA

If you need to get us.

ELOISE

Yeah.

NOLA

We'll be in touch. So long you guys.

She gives Franki and Eloise each a short hug.

FRANKI

Bye, Noles.

ELOISE

Bye, Noles.

NOLA

Goodbye, Mrs. Kupchak. Thanks for helping today. We'll send you the last check next week.

KUPCHAK

Thank you, Mrs. Frank. I'll believe that when I see it.

Fred jumps out of the station wagon and goes face to face with her.

FRED

Mrs. Kupchak, ol pal, believe this: Not only are you not gonna get your last check, but you know that check we gave you last week? Well, it's gonna bounce, beautiful, it's gonna bounce. Bye Mrs. Kupchak. It's been swell.

Nola and Fred get in and the station wagon drives off. Jennifer and a cat are in the rear window. Mrs. Kupchak stands in shock. Eloise and Franki wave.

INT: STATION WAGON

Nola looks back at the house and Eloise and Franki walking away. A DJ'S VOICE covers:

DJ

Hey, everybody, next up on WAC, a touch of yesterday...

The Supremes' "Stop in the Name of Love" starts up as the sky above the Frank's house darkens to night and

FADE TO:

MAN

Uh-huh?

ELOISE

Can I help you?

MAN

We're waiting for Mr. Baxter.
He's going to show us this
house...

ELOISE

What for? It's not for sale, you
know.

MAN

Oh, no. Why Mr. Baxter said
that after tomorrow morning the
foreclosure'd be final and it'd
be up for sale then...

ELOISE

Oh, no, no, no, no. There's
been a terrible mistake. This
house isn't for sale at all.
Uh-uh. Somebody's living there.

WOMAN

But there's no furniture.

ELOISE

They're just having it cleaned.
You better go.

MAN

Gee. I think maybe we oughtta
wait for Mr. Baxter, though.
Don't you honey?

ELOISE

He's not coming. He just called
me to tell you to forget it.

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--NIGHT

Eloise watches Nola's dark house through the window, listening to the radio. She starts doing the routine they had to the song and singing along.

INT: REHEARSAL ROOM--SAME TIME

Franki has the radio on, too, and does the same routine.

INT: FRED'S SISTER'S HOUSE--SAME TIME

It's small, cramped, depressing. Voices of fighting kids and a woman yelling. Through it we hear the sound of a radio, same station, following the sound and find...

INT: BATHROOM

Nola singing and dancing, too, by herself in the bathroom.

FADE TO:

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--AFTERNOON

Eloise vacuums around her junk. She shifts something and three giant wax lemons fall out. She picks them up, turns them over. She starts to put them back, but sees the Captain Video ray gun in the box, takes it out, goes to the window and looks at Nola's house again.

ELOISE'S P.O.V.: NOLA'S HOUSE

A MAN and a WOMAN walk around the porch, look in the windows, etc.

EXT: ELOISE'S STREET

Eloise runs down the block.

EXT: NOLA'S HOUSE

Eloise gets to the front yard, out of breath. The man is goofy, wears a "tax-busters" T shirt.

ELOISE

Excuse me?

MAN
I don't understand.

ELOISE
It's haunted, too. The last
five owners have all been
brutally murdered. You better
go. Really. Right away. I'm
serious.

INT: ELOISE'S HOUSE—A FEW MINUTES LATER

She searches frantically through papers. In exasperation she runs to the telephone and dials.

INT: FRANKI'S HOUSE--SAME TIME

Franki stands on a chair in the middle of the room, trying to hang a noose from a hanging lamp. The phone starts to ring.

INT: ELOISE'S HOUSE

Eloise on the phone.

ELOISE
Franks? It's me. Get over
here right away. Franki, read
my lips: get over here. I don't
care if you can't read lips over
the phone. Get over here!

INT: ELOISE'S LIVINGROOM--AN HOUR LATER

Both of them search through her mountain of junk. Eloise finds a card.

ELOISE
Oh my god, here it is.

INSERT: BUSINESS CARD

"WALKER AYERS"

INT: ELOISE'S KITCHEN

Eloise is on the phone. Franki's next to her.

ELOISE

What airline is he flying? A private plane... could you get him a message? You could? You think you could. OK. OK. Here it is. OK? Oh, god, what is it? OK? OK. Here it is: Eloise Hamer is on the way, OK? Yes, and I'm ready to sell the collection. OK? And if he... never mind that. OK. That's enough. Just tell him not to leave till I get there. OK? It has to be tonight or never. OK? OK? OK. Thanks. OK. Bye.

She hangs up.

ELOISE

(to Franki) Now, how do we get to Newark Airport?

INT: LIVINGROOM--A FEW MINUTES LATER

Franki has the yellow pages. Eloise bangs down the phone.

ELOISE

I don't believe this. No planes till 10. No rental cars left... Frankie's cab. We'll borrow Frankie's cab. Call him.

FRANKI

Oh no. Oh no. Uhuh. I absolutely will not. (beat) It's in the shop, anyway. Eloise, what about CW's cab?

ELOISE

Forget that. He'd never lend it to us.

FRANKI
He'd do anything you asked him
to.

ELOISE
Wrong. We haven't even talked
in weeks.

FRANKI
Eloise...

ELOISE
We'll steal it.

FRANKI
What?

ELOISE
I know just how to do it.

EXT: CASINO ENTRANCE---NIGHT

CW polishes his cab. Franki comes out the casino entrance and calls
to him.

FRANKI
CW! Quick! CW! You gotta come
quick! Hurry!

She runs back inside. CW scratches his head and follows her.
Eloise comes from behind a parked car on the other side of the
street, sneaks to CW's cab, gets in. She pulls down the sun visor,
can't understand why the keys aren't there, opens the glove
compartment, starts to search it.

CW (OOS)
I don't use the visor no more.
Too many theives around.

Eloise looks up. CW stands by the cab. Franki's behind him.

ELOISE

CW...

He throws the keys at her.

CW

Why didn't ya just ask, Eloise?
All ya hadda do was ask.

ELOISE

Look, CW...

CW

I know...it's for Nola's house.
Franki told me.

ELOISE

She told you?

CW

All you hadda do was ask,
Eloise. Why didn't you just
ask?

He turns his back and walks away. Eloise gets out of the cab, calls to him over the roof.

ELOISE

CW...

He wheels on her.

CW

Just drive carefully, will ya,
Eloise?

Franki gets in the cab.

ELOISE

CW...

CW

(stares) Yeah?

ELOISE
CW...(a long beat) I always
drive carefully.

She jumps in the driver's seat, starts the engine, floors it, pulls up on the sidewalk to get around cars stopped, unloading, etc, tears down the sidewalk, through an intersection and out of sight.

CW
(deadpan) Holy Jesus, Mary, and
Joseph.

EXT: DELAWARE MEMORIAL BRIDGE---NIGHT

CLOSE ON: THE CAB
We hear Franki and Eloise V.O.

FRANKI
If we average 80 and don't get
stopped, we'll miss him by about
an hour and a quarter.

ELOISE
We're going to catch him,
Franki.

FRANKI
Eloise...

ELOISE
Mmm?

FRANKI
Isn't this the bridge we took to
Baltimore that time? The
Delaware Memorial Bridge?

ELOISE
Is it? Yeah, I think it is.

FRANKI
(A beat) Eloise? What direction
does that bridge go in?

ELOISE
Wake up, Einstein, it goes in
both directions. What do you
think?

EXT: DELAWARE MEMORIAL BRIDGE—A FEW MINUTES LATER

The cab goes in the opposite direction.

ELOISE
I said we're gonna catch him,
and we're gonna catch him,
Franki. He's gonna wait for us.

INT: OFFICE BUILDING—NIGHT

A SECRETARY, jacket on, stands under logo: Walker Ayers Enterprises,
on the phone. She's impatient as it rings.

INT: AIRPORT--SAME TIME

A phone by a private check-in desk rings. No one answers it. Down
the corridor, the men's room door opens as the phone stops ringing.
A flight ATTENDANT walks out and to the desk.

INT: OFFICE BUILDING

The secretary puts the phone down and leaves.

EXT: HIGHWAY--NIGHT

The cab speeds along in heavy traffic.

INT: CAB

The back seat is full of TV junk. Superman is on top.

ELOISE
Do you believe this traffic?

FRANKI
I figure we've been averaging
50... so at that rate...

ELOISE
Maybe there's another road, you
know? See if there's a map in
the glove compartment.

Franki looks, pulls out a few.

FRANKI
Here we go. (opens one) Let's
see.

ELOISE
The last exit was Swedesboro.

FRANKI
Is that near Minneapolis?

Eloise grabs the stack of maps from her.

ELOISE
Gimme those.

She starts unfolding one on the steering wheel.

ELOISE(cont)
OK. Let me...

FRANKI
Eloise!

EXT: HIGHWAY

They've gone onto the shoulder and the dividing strip, barely avoid
a parked road repair truck, can't avoid a pile of lumber by the
road.

INT: CAB
As they crash through the lumber. Then they get back on the road,
causing a few cars to swerve out of their way.

ELOISE
(finally) OK. We're OK.

We hear a BOMP,BOMP,BOMP.

FRANKI
What's that noise?

ELOISE
I don't hear a noise. That?
That's just the road.

INT: AIRPORT

Walker walks quickly through the airport, not even pausing for people who say hello. He gets to the gate, where the attendant waits.

WALKER
Any messages?

ATTENDANT
No, sir.

Walker goes through.

EXT: HIGHWAY

The cab speeds along, past a HoJos.

INT: CAB
We still hear the BOMP, BOMP.

FRANKI
Remember when we first got our licenses how we used to go to the Hojos along the Parkway?

ELOISE
And put ketchup and mustard and sugar under the coke cups?

FRANKI
And Nola would say we were disgusting and it was torturing the waitresses?

ELOISE
Yeah. God. She was right, too.

FRANKI

Yeah.

A car passes. The driver honks, tries to signal them, pointing backwards.

ELOISE

Sure, buddy. I love you too.

FRANKI

Are you sure that's just the road?

ELOISE

What?

FRANKI

That sound.

Another car passes, also honking and signaling.

ELOISE

Stick it buddy. (to Franki) What sound?

EXT: HIGHWAY SHOULDER--FEW MINUTES LATER

Eloise and Franki frantically remove tools from underneath TV stuff in the trunk. Finally they have a pile of tools next to the flat tire.

ELOISE

Phew! Now. Do you now how to do this?

INT: PRIVATE PLANE--SAME TIME

Walker looks over some papers; checks his watch.

EXT: HIGHWAY

The cab flies along.

EXT: TURNPIKE TOLL BOOTH
ELOISE AND FRANKI'S P.O.V.:

A heavy traffic jam across several lanes of toll booths. They get closer and closer.

INT: CAB

FRANKI
Els... Els...there's a toll
booth up ahead. Better slow
down... Els?

ELOISE AND FRANKI'S P.O.V.:

The toll plaza and cars get closer and closer at high speed.

INT: CAB

FRANKI
Better slow down, Els...

ELOISE
We haven't got time.

EXT: TOLL PLAZA

Without slowing down, the cab does an end run across all the lanes of traffic, around the toll booths, onto the grass, down an embankment, through a small creek, up the opposite embankment, onto the shoulder on the far side. The cab takes quite a beating.

INT: CAB

Franki is freaked. Eloise impassive, turns to look back.

ELOISE
No problem.

EXT: AIRPORT RUNWAY

Walker's private plane (Ayers Enterprises on side) taxis onto the runway.

EXT: NEWARK AIRPORT

The cab on the approach road.

INT: PLANE

Walker picks up his telephone.

WALKER

What's the hold up, Tad? Damn.
Well, do what you can.

INT: CAB

FRANKI

How are we going to find this
plane, Eloise?

ELOISE

Well, we'll just ask someone for
directions.

EXT: APPROACH ROAD

The cab pulls across three lanes of heavy traffic, behind a fuel truck going through a gate that leads onto the runway. The cab goes through the gate and onto the runway, where it is surrounded by huge planes moving back and forth. It pulls up next to a guy directing a plane with flashlights.

ELOISE

Excuse us. Do you know where
they keep the private planes?

INT: PLANE--WALKER ON PHONE

WALKER

Wonderful. Let's go.

EXT: RUNWAY
The cab stands still.

INT: CAB
We hear jet engine noise that gets louder and louder.

ELOISE
He said right after the hanger,
Franki.

FRANKI
(shouting) Eloise, that doesn't
make sense.

ELOISE
What is that supposed to mean?

The noise is deafening now.

EXT: RUNWAY
A jet lands just over the top of the cab, missing it by inches.

INT: CAB
They sit in stunned silence.

FRANKI
(finally) Maybe we should ask
someone else.

Eloise looks off in the distance, sees something.

ELOISE'S P.O.V.:
The Ayers Jet on the runway. It starts to move.

INT: CAB
Eloise sees the jet, floors it.

EXT: RUNWAY
The cab cuts across runways, grass, everything in a line to cut off Walker's plane, which starts to pick up speed for it's takeoff. The cab pulls alongside with Eloise waving and honking.

INT: PLANE

Walker sees the cab and Eloise waving. He picks up the mike.

WALKER

Take off! Take off! get me out
of here!

WALKER'S P.O.V.:

Eloise is waving the superman cape out the window.

WALKER

No. Stop! Pull over. Abort
take off. Abort take off.

FADE TO:

INSERT: SMOKING BURNT COOKIE PAN

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

INT: NOLA'S KITCHEN--DAY

Nola carries the pan into the LIVINGROOM:

The old furniture is back along with all the old chaos. Kids, Fred, Eloise, Franki showing her performance gowns etc. Nola puts down the cookie sheet and notices her mother's photo is off center. She straightens it.

FRANKI

Oh my god, I've gotta go! See
you all at the show!

C.U.: NOLA

Eye to eye with her mother.

INT: CASINO LOUNGE--NIGHT

Eloise sits at a table alone, looking around. She sees Fred come in and waves him over.

ELOISE

Where's Nola?

FRED

She couldn't go through with it.

ELOISE
Aw, Fred, she promised!

FRED
A vow is a vow she said. She will not come into a casino and that's it. She said to meet her afterwards at Julio's.

ELOISE
Oh, god. Nola! I better go see how the kid's doing.

INT: DRESSING ROOM

Franki, undressed, shakes her gown at Eloise.

FRANKI
Well, look at it! Look at these sequins. The big ones are supposed to be on the top and little ones are supposed to be on the bottom, Eloise. Any idiot knows that. How am I supposed to walk out there in this? You want to know what I would feel like? I'd feel like a fool, Eloise. A fool. OK? Is that what you want?

ELOISE
Just try to calm down, Franki.

FRANKI
Calm down? What am I going to do?

A knock at the door.

VOICE
Five minutes, Miss D'Angelo.

Eloise takes the gown and turns it upside down.

ELOISE

It's strapless. Maybe you could wear it upside down.

She tries putting it over Franki's head.

FRANKI

Stop it! NO! Are you crazy?
Are you crazy? Stop it!

In the struggle, they both fall over a chair and onto the floor, knocking over everything on the dressing table. A robe is thrown over Franki's head and is held there by a pair of hands.

NOLA(OOS)

Franki? This is Nola. Now I want you to calm down so we can talk sensibly. OK? Do you understand me?

Franki struggles.

NOLA(cont)

Do you understand me?

The struggling stops.

NOLA(cont)

OK. I'm going to let you out now, but I don't want you to say a single thing. Got that? I will ask you some questions and you will answer them yes or no. Understand? Yes or no.

Franki nods under the robe.

NOLA

OK. I'm taking the robe off now.

She lifts it off. Franki doesn't move.

NOLA

Now. Are you having a problem with going on?

FRANKI

Well of...

NOLA
Yes or no please.

FRANKI
Yes.

Franki motions to Eloise to tell Nola about the sequins.

ELOISE
She thinks the big sequins are
supposed to be on the bottom.

Franki shakes her head no, violently.

ELOISE
I mean on the top and...

Nola cuts her off.

NOLA
Franki, the dress is fine. It's
beautiful. Do you hear me?

FRANKI
NO!

NOLA
Franki, you're very nervous,
aren't you?

FRANKI
Yes.

NOLA
You didn't even audition for
this job, did you?

FRANKI
No.

NOLA

And Ernie had to tell some lies
about your experience for you to
get it?

FRANKI

Yes.

NOLA

And so you're very scared that
you're not going to be good
enough and Frankie isn't even
around to help you. Right?

FRANKI

Yes.

NOLA

And it really doesn't have
anything to do with the dress,
right?

FRANKI

(thinks) Mmm...

NOLA

You're very, very, very, good,
Franki. We all know you are,
and it's perfectly natural to be
nervous. Do you hear me?
You're going to put on this
beautiful gown, just the way it
is, and you're going to knock
their socks off. OK? OK?!!

INT: CASINO LOUNGE

Fred, Eloise, Nola are back at the table. Nola can't believe her
eyes.

NOLA

I had no idea...I mean are they
all so...well, I don't know!

Frankie, CW, and CHARLIE, walk into the lounge. Eloise sees CW and tries to duck out of sight. They sit at another table. CW sees Eloise, waves. She avoids it.

CW

Hey, Eloise!

She sinks lower.

NOLA

Eloise!

A fast dancing drumbeat starts and the band joins in. Franki flies onstage doing her version of Tina Turner's version of "Proud Mary." She does a verse, some oom-pah-pahs, some turns, then signals the band to an abrupt stop. The audience sits in stunned silence.

FRANKI

Thank you so very much.

Nola snaps out of it, starts clapping and elbows Eloise, who does, too, as does the rest of the table. Everyone else is silent. The Booker is in shock.

FRANKI(cont)

You're too kind. And now while I have your attention, I'd like to do something for you that's very special. Or at least I should say, it means an awful lot to me. Personally, that is. Ernie, if you please.

The band starts up and Franki moves into "Rawhide." As she gets into it, she picks up more pizzazz...gets hotter and hotter. She attempts a minor microphone trick and to her amazement, it works. She gets hotter and gets more ambitious, twirling the microphone by the cord in a big circle between phrases, but she loses control of it, it flies into the audience breaking a glass and hitting a man at a table in the head. She goes into the audience after it, picks up the song and goes back to stage trying to pretend nothing's happened. But the cord gets caught under a chair. She gives it a yank, pulling the chair out from under another patron, knocking him back onto another table. The booker comes out onto the stage, signalling the musicians to stop and grabbing Franki's arm.

BOOKER
That's it! Stop. Stop. Stop
playing! Stop, stop, stop.
Right now.

FRANKI
Hey, let go.

BOOKER
You shut up.

Frankie stands at his table.

FRANKIE
Hey, let her sing.

The booker starts dragging Franki off stage. Eloise and Nola stand up, too.

ELOISE
Hey, she was good.

NOLA
Let the girl sing!

ELOISE
(to audience) Wasn't she good?
C'mon, everybody!

Various people in the audience agree with "let her sing," "she's funny," "leave her alone." etc.

CU:CHARLIE
He's taking it in that the audience likes her.

BOOKER
Security!

Franki tries to get back to center stage and the booker gives her a hard yank.

BOOKER
C'mon bimbo, off the stage.

Frankie, followed by CW, bounds to the stage.

FRANKIE
Get your hands off her, jerk.

BOOKER
Security!

Several security men converge on the stage, followed by Eloise, Nola, and Fred. Everyone's on stage, shouting at each other.

BOOKER
Everybody out. Clear the stage.

FRANKIE
Just keep your hands off her,
OK?

BOOKER
I want all of these people out
of here.

FRANKIE
Just keep your hands off her,
OK? Just keep your hands off
her.

A DIFFERENT CASINO LOUNGE—HALF HOUR LATER

Nola and Fred; Frankie, Franki, and Charlie; CW and Eloise are clustered around a table. Nola looks around the casino in wonder.

NOLA
(to Fred) I mean, I know it's
disgusting, but it's so incred-
ible, too, do you know? This
place is even more incredible
than the other one! I'm going to
look around a little.

She gets up, leaving Fred, who has no one to talk to now, feeling awkward.

CHARLIE

One week's booking guaranteed.
If it goes well, I bring you
back next month for two weeks.
Comedy Corner policy.

FRANKI

I don't know, I don't normally
think of myself as a comedi-
enne.

FRANKIE

We'll take it.

FRANKI

A comedienne?

FRANKIE

How many minutes do you want us
to do?

CW has Eloise cornered.

ELOISE

So, I guess you're still pretty
mad, huh?

CW

Well, the cab's out for a week.
The boss is pissed...I even had
to talk to the cops.

ELOISE

Oh, god.

CW

Didn't make it any easier to get Fred the job down there. I think he'll be an OK cabbie, though, don't you?

ELOISE

Sure. Fred. God. Just look at him. I mean...

They catch him looking around, pretending not to be ill at ease, not knowing what to do with himself.

CW

Nola's really crazy about him, though, isn't she?

ELOISE

Yeah...crazy's the word.

CW

(a beat) So. What about Saturday night?

ELOISE

Saturday night? What's Saturday night?

CW

Nothin. I just want to know if you wanta go out. That's all.

ELOISE

CW...I don't know. What's the point, CW?

CW

Cause you wanna. That's the only reason you ever did. What other reason do you need, Eloise?

ELOISE
OK. Saturday night.(a beat)
Where'd Nola go, anyway?

"Under the Boardwalk" starts up.

PAN CASINO

Nola at a slot machine. She hits three lemons. Coins pour out.
Music continues as we see

EXT: BOARDWALK--NIGHT

The three Lemon Sisters dancing, barely visible in
the night.

THE END