

THREE WOMEN

A Film

By

Robert Altman

treatment.

THREE WOMEN
A SYNOPSIS

THREE WOMEN is a psychological suspense thriller. It is the story of two girls from rural Texas who become roommates in Los Angeles. They are Millie Lammoreaux (Shelley Duval) and Pinky Rose (Sissy Spacek).

Millie came to Los Angeles several years earlier, bringing with her all the dreams of glamour and romance fostered by our advertising society. Although she is not actually successful as a "popular" well-adjusted girl, she pretends that she is, filling her life and her diary with fantasies of "the good life."

Pinky comes to Los Angeles without any material possessions or worldly experience. She seems to be a "blank page" waiting to be written on. She and Millie become roommates and Millie becomes her idol, for Pinky also believes Millie's fantasies.

The third woman in the story is Willie. She and her husband, Edgar, own a tavern that Millie and Pinky frequent. Willie is pregnant and strangely introverted. She rarely speaks or shows any emotion.

One night Millie takes the drunken Edgar to her bed. Pinky is so shocked that she falls (or jumps) from their second story apartment to the pool and nearly dies.

After several days in a coma, Pinky is revived but seems to possess a new personality. During her recuperation, Millie, now ridden with guilt, begins to realize that Pinky's new personality is actually her own. Millie, in trying to cope with this, begins to assume the role of Pinky's mother.

Edgar continues his infidelities, only now with Pinky. As the girls' new personalities begin to solidify, Edgar walks out on Willie as she begins to have her baby. Millie and Pinky try to help with the birth, but there is no doctor, and the baby is born dead.

Later, we hear of Edgar's "accidental shooting death." The three women are now all living together and running the tavern. We are left with the impression that one of them, or perhaps all, has murdered him.

THREE WOMEN
A TREATMENT

The following treatment should be considered as a structural outline for the film, Three Women. It can be considered accurate in terms of casting, budgeting and scheduling. All the scenes that will be shot are indicated here and the "story" will closely follow this treatment. The dialogue written here, may or may not be the dialogue used in the film and is intended only to indicate a direction to be taken. In other words, I urge you not to judge the 'literary' quality of the finished film by the way it appears on these pages. It is my intention to write continually as the film progresses in order to take full advantage of the input of the actors and other creative persons involved with the production. What will be missing in this treatment will be the color, mood and tone of the film. Suspense and mystery will always be the main feeling. The audience should be frightened by the developments of the action and this shall be stressed at all times.

CAST

Millie Lammoreaux.....Shelley Duval
Pinky Rose.....Sissy Spacek
Willie.....Janice Rule

Written by Robert Altman

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FADE IN:

We see film running at five times the normal speed. There is no sound. The images fly by so quickly it is difficult to make much sense of what we are seeing but it seems to be an endless series of commercials. Beautiful men and women cavort aboard ocean liners, skimpy lashes become long, longer, longest and grey hair turns a dazzling blond, all with astonishing rapidity. CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see six screens side by side, all running the same high speed material. We are in a print checking room of a 16mm Film Lab in Burbank. The titles appear over this sequence.

Sitting in the room are six women, each watching a screen. They all wear white lab coats and occasionally make notes on a clipboard. The youngest of the women is MILLIE LAMMOREAUX. She performs her job in a perfunctory way, like all the women.

At one point the foreman enters the room accompanied by a young woman not unlike Millie. This is PINKY ROSE. They approach Millie. The foreman introduces the two girls and instructs Millie to show Pinky the ropes. He leaves. Millie explains that the job consists of looking at the silent commercials and checking for problems...color values, etc.

Millie and Pinky leave the screening room and walk through the lab hallways. It is lunchtime and they are on their way to the time clock to punch out. They discover they are both from Texas but opposite ends of the state. Millie says she's been in L.A. two years and at the lab for the last six months. She assures Pinky that the work is easy and that she'll do okay. They punch out and Pinky hangs around, hoping maybe that Millie will ask her to lunch. She doesn't and they go their separate ways.

EXT. FILM LAB

Quitting time. Men and women flow from the building. Pinky walks to a corner bus stop and sits on the bench. After awhile Millie shoots by in a VW, a man beside her. Pinky waves but Millie doesn't see her. Pinky continues to sit by herself, waiting for the bus.

DOWNTOWN GLENDALE

An old hotel. Pinky lets herself into her one room apartment. She takes off her shoes and opens the closet. One dress hangs inside and there is a pair of jeans folded neatly over a hanger. A sewing machine is on the floor.

Pinky puts a quarter in the tv and sits on the bed to watch. She opens the night table and takes out a bag of licorice. It is the only thing in the drawer aside from the bible placed there by the Gideon Society. There seems to be no luggage or personal belongings.

We're back in the screening room. It is a few days later. Pinky occupies what had been Millie's seat. Millie isn't in the room. Pinky doesn't seem to have become bored with the job yet. She peers intently at the screen and smiles to herself whenever anything she particularly likes comes on. Millie comes in and sits next to Pinky. She has to call her name twice to get her attention but when Pinky finally looks up she seems very glad to see Millie.

PINKY

Where've you been the last couple days? I thought maybe you quit or something.

Millie takes out a cigarette and offers one to Pinky. She refuses.

MILLIE

I took a couple of days off. My roommate moved in with her boyfriend and I had to help 'em. From Newhall all the way to Santa Monica.

Pinky asks where Newhall is.

MILLIE

It's where I live. In the desert. Almost.

LUNCHTIME

There are no facilities at the Lab so most employees eat in the cafeteria of the hospital across the street. Pinky, surrounded by nurses, eats an apple. Millie strolls to the bulletin board and tacks a sign on it, then goes to join a group at lunch. Pinky finishes her apple before casually crossing to the board and reading the card. "ROOMMATE WANTED - SHARE A ONE BEDROOM APT. WITH POOL IN NEWHALL. \$55.00 APIECE A MONTH."

IN THE DESERT

Stillness.

MILLIE

Most people don't like to live out this far even if they have a car but it's a lot cheaper and it doesn't take more than an hour and ten minutes each way.

Pinky thinks it looks like Texas. Pinky's parents still live there but Millie only has a couple of aunts and uncles. Millie stops at a roadside tavern called DODGE CITY. Since they only live a couple of minutes away, Millie suggests they stop for a beer. She tells Pinky that a lot of cops hang out here and that they're really fun.

INSIDE DODGE CITY

It is big and roomy with a lot of coin-operated games, a long bar, a dance floor and a juke box. The walls are covered with guns and autographed pictures of Hugh O'Brian as Wyatt Earp. Most of them are action shots. WILLIE, a pretty woman in her late thirties is behind the bar, her back to us as she works on sand paintings, filling bottles with colored sand. She is a little strange. Moody and silent to the point of sullenness; she doesn't respond to the girl's in any way, acting almost as if they weren't there. Millie explains that Pinky is her new roommate.

MILLIE

This is Willie. She and Edgar own this place and also our apartment building. They live in that house in back.

Millie looks around.

MILLIE

Where's Edgar? Out shooting?

Willie serves them two beers and goes into the back room. Pinky says she has never had a beer before. Millie finds it hard to believe. As they leave, Pinky does an exaggerated drunk act, the kind a child would do. Millie is embarrassed.

A truck pulls up and Edgar, a once handsome man who has begun to look a little frayed around the edges, steps down. He carries a rifle and a handgun in a holster around his waist.

MILLIE

This is Edgar. He was Hugh O'Brian's standin on Wyatt Earp. This is my new roommate, Pinky.

Edgar corrects her.

EDGAR

I was a stunt double honey. Did all Hugh's stunts for him.

PINKY

You really know Wyatt Earp?

EDGAR

What's your name? Pinky?

PINKY

Well, yeah. That's my nickname. My real names Mildred, but I hate it.

Pinky and Millie climb in the car.

MILLIE

You didn't tell me your name is Mildred. That's my name.

PINKY

You mean Millie's short for Mildred? I never thought of that.

THE APARTMENT BUILDING

It is one of those two story, U-shaped motel like buildings with a small pool in the center. It stands pretty much alone on the highway.

Pinky is moving into Millie's second floor apartment. Her baggage consists of a sewing machine and a bag full of material. Millie's apartment is filled with things and every space that doesn't have a thing in it or on it is covered with a magazine clipping of something she doesn't own yet, but plans to buy.

Pinky picks up a book which is sitting on top of the dresser.

PINKY

What's this?

Millie quickly takes it away and says it's her diary. She hurriedly shoves the diary between the mattress and the box spring, and asks Pinky where the rest of her stuff is.

PINKY

I gave most of my stuff away.
I'm gonna make some new clothes.

She unpacks her shopping bag as they talk. She takes a washcloth which is marked with the name of the hotel and a small wrapped bar of soap into the bathroom. She removes a toothbrush from her purse and puts it next to the soap. She also has one of those little folded shower caps they hang in the bathroom of hotels.

Pinky does another stunt like the drunk act. She puts on the shower cap and acts like an old woman.

THAT NIGHT,

Pinky works at the sewing machine. She is good at it. Millie crosses out to the deck which overlooks the pool. It's empty.

Soon four men and two women come out of one of the lower apartments and gather around a table. They have drinks and towels and the music from their transistor radio drifts up through the night towards Millie.

Millie goes into the bedroom, takes off her clothes and puts on a bathing suit. Pinky continues to sew; Millie wants Pinky to go swimming with her. Pinky can't swim.

MILLIE

Well so what. You can get in the water and paddle around. It'll be fun.

Pinky agrees, but changes her mind when she sees the group partying below. Millie says they are friends of hers and they'll probably join them, but Pinky refuses. Millie grabs a towel and goes down without her.

The six people by the pool are all in their twenties and they all attempt to ignore Millie when she heads toward them.

MILLIE

Hi. Hot, isn't it.

It is obvious that Millie tries to crash their parties regularly and just as obvious that they dislike her. A couple of the guys jump in the pool. A girl is thrown in. The rest of the group suddenly finds something on the radio fascinating. Millie goes to another area and sits alone.

Pinky sits at her sewing machine. She hears a splash and the sound of a woman laughing. She gets up and walks to the balcony, leans on the railing and watches the activity below.

It looks like a commercial - lots of young people having fun around a pool. Millie has joined the group and has become the center of attention. The men all vie for her and the other two girls find themselves completely ignored. One of the men throws Millie in the pool and jumps in after her. He dives below the water and pulls her down to him. She wriggles away and gets out of the pool. The man chases her and finally catches her in a secluded corner. They kiss.

PULL BACK from the screen to reveal Pinky watching. The other screens are blank and the other chairs empty. Pinky makes a notation. Millie comes to the door.

MILLIE

I've gotta surprise for you
but we're gonna be late if you
don't come on. I'm going to the
ladies room. Meet me by the
time clock.

Pinky punches a time card. Millie comes in, takes her card and sees it has already been punched. Pinky apologizes and punches her own card.

The Dodge City. Pinky and Millie enter the bar which is empty except for Willie who is working on her sand paintings. The sound of gun shots can be heard.

MILLIE

Come on! They started already.

They get in the car and drive past the tavern down a side road. As they reach the top of a rise the marksmen come into view. Four off-duty policemen and Edgar are blasting away at targets with pistols of every description, police specials, colts, mausers. Pinky flinches every time a shot goes off. She notices a small figure making its way over the sand from the tavern toward the range. We see that the person walking towards us is a very pregnant woman, but the sun is at her back and it is hard to make out her face. A burst of gun fire. Pinky gasps.

The pregnant woman gets in the pickup truck parked there. She throws the door open. The woman is Willie. She indicates for Pinky to get in. Pinky does, and the truck pulls away.

The truck pulls up to the apartment building. Willie takes a hamper filled with dirty clothes from the back of the truck and heads for the laundry and rec room on the bottom floor of the building. Pinky tags along after her.

The room has washers and dryers on one side and a telephone, pinball machine and television on the other. Willie starts sorting clothes and throwing them in the washer.

PINKY

Have you lived out here long?

Willie doesn't answer. She takes out some change and starts the machine going.

PINKY

When's the baby due?

WILLIE

Soon.

PINKY

Think it'll be a boy or girl.

WILLIE

It'll be a boy.

Pinky sits down. She looks at Willie out of the corner of her eye and suddenly falls backwards off her chair. Another stunt. Willie ignores her.

Pinky leaves and goes into her apartment. She looks under the mattress, pulls out the diary and reads it. The diary is filled with Millie's fantasy of what her life should be - stated as fact. It serves to reinforce Pinky's misguided notion of who Millie is.

Saturday morning. Pinky is asleep in the pull out bed in the living room. The phone rings in the bedroom, and Millie picks it up. We stay on Pinky as she listens.

MILLIE

Hello...No, you didn't wake me up. No really. I've been up for hours. Well, I have some tentative plans, nothing I can't get out of. Tonight?...with two extra guys huh. Are they cute? Oh yeah?...No, she's all right. Kinda quiet, but she's real nice. ...Yeah...Bland...So what are these guys, friends of Jim's from work? Great. Okay. See ya later.

We hear Millie hang up the phone. She comes into the living room.

MILLIE

I hope you don't have anything planned for tonight?

PINKY

No. Why?

Millie goes into the bathroom.

MILLIE

Cause we're having my ex-roommate and three boys over to dinner. They're cops. See, Nancy met Jim at Dodge City and he's bringing two friends of his for you and me. Now I gotta go shopping cause this dinner's got to be perfect, and you stay here and clean up while I'm gone, okay?

Millie comes out of the bathroom. Pinky is lying on the kitchen floor holding a knife to her stomach. She has smeared ketchup on the front of the nightgown. Millie steps over her to get the coffee.

MILLIE

That's stupid.

Pinky gets up.

Millie wanders up and down the aisles of a giant supermarket. She has a calculator in her hand and she figures out the best buy on everything. She's very into comparison shopping. She sniffs canteloupe, squeezes peaches, shakes boxes.

Pinky is halfheartedly rolling a floor sweeper around the apartment. Sweat drips into her eyes. She falls back onto the couch and reads more of Millie's diary.

Millie and Pinky prepare for the dinner. It is very fancy - candles, wine - all the glamour items. Pinky admires Millie even more. When they are ready, Millie gets dressed and Pinky takes the garbage down. While Pinky is struggling down the stairs to the garbage cans, a car pulls up with three guys and one girl inside. The girl leans out the window.

GIRL

Hey, do you live here?

PINKY

Well, I...

GIRL

Do you know Millie Lammoreaux?

PINKY

I'm her roommate.

The girl and one of the boys have a quick conference sotto voce.

GIRL

We were supposed to come up for a drink, but as long as we're out here the guys want to do some shooting while the light holds. Tell her we'll meet her at the bar after ten.

PINKY

But she...

GIRL

Thanks.

The car drives off. Pinky walks slowly up the steps. She enters the apartment with apprehension. Millie has put on a hostess gown and swirls around to model it as Pinky enters.

MILLIE

Isn't this pretty? Go get dressed, they'll be here any second.

Pinky tells her the message haltingly.

MILLIE

What did you say to them?

PINKY

I didn't say anything.

MILLIE

Well, did you do anything weird?

PINKY

They just said they wanted to shoot and they'd meet you later. I'm sorry. I probably should have gotten dressed before I took the garbage down...

Millie goes into the kitchen and pulls the main dish from the oven. She slams it down on the counter.

PINKY

We could have a nice quiet dinner before you go to the bar. Everything you made looks real good.

MILLIE

I'm not hungry. You eat it. I'm going out.

Millie leaves. Pinky sits down at her sewing machine.

HIGH SPEED FILM - Two strips of film running side by side. One upside down, the other right side up. They are twin images of Millie and the three boys from the Bar. Millie is dancing with all three boys. She turns from one to another in an endless round. They are all having a terrific time.

Pinky is in the bedroom. She is lying on the bed in her nightgown. After a minute she gets up and opens the night table drawer. She reads a letter, replaces it. She goes to the closet and takes out one of Millie's dresses. She holds it up to herself before carefully rehangng it. She looks through the dresser drawers, the desk and finally under the mattress. She finds the diary, and opens it to the last entry.

"New guy in shipping crazy about me. Should I say yes or no?
Also, that cute guy from downstairs that I go swimming with all the time asked me to the movies for next week.
(more)

The other girls are jealous cause whenever I go down there the boys ignore them. However, that is not my fault."

A door slams. Pinky looks up guiltily. She rushes to the bed and shoves the diary beneath the mattress. Millie comes into the bedroom. Pinky moves casually away from the bed. Millie doesn't notice.

MILLIE

I know it's your turn to sleep in the bedroom but you gotta be a pal and take the living room. All right?

Pinky agrees. The two girls go into the living room. Edgar is there. He goes into the bedroom. Millie turns to Pinky.

MILLIE

Thanks. See you in the morning.

Pinky is shocked that she's with Edgar.

MILLIE

Why don't you mind your own goddamn business for a change...

PINKY

I just....

MILLIE

Ever since you moved in here you been slowin' me up and holdin' me back. No one wants to hang around with you around. Don't drink, don't smoke, don't drive, don't swim, don't ball - what the hell is wrong with you anyway?

Pinky has begun to edge toward the door. Millie follows her, screaming all the way.

MILLIE

If you don't like it you can just move out. Anytime suits me. Anytime at all.

Pinky runs out the door. Millie slams it closed behind her.

MILLIE

And stay out!

Pinky stands looking down at the pool. Her breathing is jagged and she is crying a little. Down below Willie makes her way to the laundry room, a hamper of clothes balanced against her swollen stomach. Pinky looks back towards the apartment. Willie disappears into the laundry room.

We're looking up from below the surface of the pool. Sounds are muffled. Pinky is far away, her body wavy and fragmented. Suddenly she hurtles towards us. The surface is broken by the impact of her body. She plunges to the bottom, strikes hard, then slowly floats toward the top.

Faces up above, seen through a film of water. They change, come together, break apart. Their mouths move but we can't hear what they're saying. We are lifted out of the water. It slides off our face. We close our eyes.

The group is hovered over Pinky's body. Blood seeps from the back of her head, mixes with the puddles of water of the deck. Everyone is talking at once. "What happened." "She must have fallen." "Did you see what happened?" "She's not breathing." "Is she dead?"

The door to Millie's apartment is thrown open. Millie hangs in the doorway for a moment then races down the steps. Edgar appears behind her, buttoning his shirt.

Someone is thumping on Pinky's chest. He stops every so often and feels for a pulse then tries again. Millie stands a few feet away. Her lips move and she is swaying slightly from side to side. Edgar has disappeared. Willie watches from the door of the laundry. Sirens. The rescue squad pulls up followed by a police car. They make their way through what is now a large crowd. They kneel beside Pinky's body. One man takes her pulse.

PARAMEDIC

No pulse.

While one paramedic prepares an injection the other begins cardio vascular resuscitation. There is no response. The policemen circulate through the crowd looking for witnesses. Each story varies from the one preceeding it.

Pinky's body is now hooked up to an IV machine and a monitor. The monitor does not register a heartbeat. A needle is jabbed into her right arm. Suddenly there is a jump on the monitor. The paramedic signals his partner.

PARAMEDIC

We got a pulse.

IN THE HOSPITAL

Millie waits alone in the visitors lounge. She looks out a window at the film lab across the street. A young intern enters the room and goes to her.

INTERN

You're the roommate?

Millie nods. The doctor tells her that Pinky's in a coma and there's no way to tell if she'll come out of it or not.

INTERN

The best thing for you to do is see if you can locate a relative. Does she have parents?

The apartment. Night. Millie walks up the stairs trying to avoid looking at the pool. The blood has dried on the deck leaving rust colored designs along the concrete.

Millie enters the apartment. She looks around for Pinky's purse, finds it, and takes out the address book. She opens it. There are hardly any entrys. The first one is Pinky's own name with the address of Millie's apartment neatly written beneath. Farther down the page there is a listing for Beau and Incy Rose followed by a P.O. Box and a Texas address but no phone number.

Millie calls long distance and gets an operator in the town. The operator tells Millie that she knows the Roses but they don't have a phone and they live a few miles out of town.

The operator suggests that Millie leave a number where she can be reached. The operator will give the message and number to the mailman who gets out to the Rose's home. They can come into town and call Millie. Not knowing what else to do, Millie agrees.

THE LAB

Millie circulates trying to take up a collection to get a gift for Pinky. Not only is no one interested in contributing, the prevailing attitude seems to be that Pinky never existed.

Lunch. Millie punches her card. The slot where Pinky's used to be is empty. Millie starts to cry. Her name is paged, she picks up the phone, and an out of town operator comes on the line.

OPERATOR

Collect call for Millie Lamour
from Incy Rose. Do you accept
the charges?

Millie says yes. Before they are connected, however; a company operator clicks on the line.

CO. OPERATOR

You may not accept a collect call
on a company line.

Millie tells the operator it is an emergency. The operator refuses. Millie asks the operator to tell Mrs. Rose to pay for the call and she will pay her back. There is silence. The operator gets back on the line and tells Millie the Roses can't pay because they are at a phone booth and don't have any change. Millie finally asks if it would be all right if she charges it to her home number. There is a discussion between the two operators and they agree. The call is put through. It is a bad connection and hard to make out the words. Millie explains that Pinky's condition is very serious and that the Roses should come out as soon as possible.

THE HOSPITAL

Millie approaches the nurses station.

MILLIE

Can I see her for a minute?
I just want to see her. I'll
leave right away, okay?

NURSE

Well, just for a minute.

PINKY'S ROOM

She is in a double room but there is no one in the next bed. She looks very pale and her breathing is slow and regular. Her eyes are closed. Tubes and machines and monitors are attached to various parts of her body and it is difficult for Millie to get near her. She takes the unconscious girl's hand.

MILLIE

Your mom and dad are gonna be
here any day now, Pinky. Then
everything will be okay.

THE APARTMENT

Millie is asleep. The phone rings and she sits up and grabs it.

MILLIE

Yes?

It is Mrs. Rose. They are at the bus station. Could Millie pick them up? She struggles out of bed.

BUS STATION

Millie enters the small, bus station. The waiting room is empty except for two little old people. Millie goes outside to the platform. A marine sitting on his duffle bag stares at her. They are the only people there.

Millie goes back inside and inquires of the man behind the counter if a bus has come in from Texas. The little old lady comes up to Millie.

LADY

Are you Millie?

Millie nods.

MRS. ROSE

I'm Pinky's mother and this is my husband.

Millie shakes hands. Mr. and Mrs. Rose look at her strangely. It is hard for Millie to believe that Pinky's folks are that old.

THE HOSPITAL

Mr. and Mrs. Rose look down at their daughter. She is still in a coma.

MR. ROSE

That's Pinky all right.

Mrs. Rose turns to Millie.

MRS. ROSE

That doctor says it was interior bleedin' and somethin' about a concussion.

MR. ROSE

Give her the present, Incy.

Mrs. Rose takes a small package out of her purse. She holds it towards Pinky then gives it to Millie. She tells Millie she might as well open it. Millie unwraps the gift. It is a placard reading "In this kitchen bright and cheery/ Daily chores I'll never shirk/ So bless this little kitchen Lord/ and bless me as I work."

MRS. ROSE

It's for the kitchen.

MR. ROSE

We got one just like it at home. Pinky always kind of liked it.

MRS. ROSE

You can put it up in your kitchen and it'll be a real nice surprise for her when she gets home.

Millie tries to smile. There is a silence. Mrs. Rose looks around the room.

MRS. ROSE

What are we supposed to do now?

THE CAR

Millie is driving along the dark highway. Mrs. Rose is in front and Mr. Rose is sleeping in the back seat. Spittle edges out of the corner of his mouth.

MRS. ROSE

So she just fell through the railing and landed in the pool.

MILLIE

That's right. It was a terrible accident.

MRS. ROSE

That's Pinky to a t. She always was clumsy. One time she was jumpin' up and down on the bed and hit her head against the wall and had to have five stiches.

Mr. Rose begins to snore. Mrs. Rose peers out the window at the barren landscape. They pass the tavern in the desert.

MRS. ROSE

This sure does resemble Texas.

They pull up to the apartment building.

THE APARTMENT.

Millie and the Roses walk past the four boys who live in the lower apartment. There are three new girls with them.

MILLIE

Pinky's in a coma but they're pretty sure she's gonna come out of it. There are her parents. They came all the way from Texas.

Everyone says hello but they don't seem too interested. Millie shows the Réses to the bedroom. She tells them the bedroom is theirs as long as they stay. She'll sleep in the living room. Mrs. Rose picks a nice spot on the kitchen wall for her gift. They say goodnight and retire to the bedroom. Millie turns off the lights and goes out on the balcony. She stares down at the pool. Her hands hold tightly onto the railing. She stands there for a long time.

Suddenly she hears Mrs. Rose moaning, the sounds of someone in pain. Millie runs to the door of the bedroom - throws open the door. The old man and woman are making love. They look up at Millie standing in the door. There is no shame on their faces, only accusation. Their privacy has been violated. Millie shuts the door.

THE HOSPITAL

The next day, Millie and the Roses rise as the doctor comes into the waiting room. He tells them Pinky regained consciousness just after they left the night before and that they can visit with her but not to let her talk too much or get excited.

They go into Pinky's room. Millie stands a little apart. Pinky turns slowly to face them. Mr. and Mrs. Rose approach the bed.

MR. ROSE

You've had quite a sleep haven't you.

Pinky stares at them.

MRS. ROSE

After you had your fall Millie here called us and told us to come out right away.

Pinky looks at Millie.

MILLIE

Hi.

Pinky looks at Mr. and Mrs. Rose.

PINKY

Who are you supposed to be?

Mr. and Mrs. Rose look at each other.

MRS. ROSE

Now don't joke that way Pinky.
It's your mom and dad.

PINKY

GET OUT OF HERE.

Mrs. Rose backs up. Millie edges to the door.

PINKY

I don't have any parents! My
parents are dead. Who are you!

Pinky is screaming, a nurse comes in. Pinky continues to yell. "My parents are dead! My parents are dead!" She begins to struggle. The nurse turns to the Roses and tells them they better leave the room.

Another nurse comes in and holds the shrieking girl down while they give her an injection. Millie is whitefaced, pressed up against the wall. The nurses indicate for her to leave.

Millie goes out into the hallway. The doctor takes her aside.

DOCTOR

I'm going to tell you the same thing I told Pinky's parents. She obviously has temporary amnesia. It's not good but it's not uncommon in cases like this. Since the sight of her parents obviously agitates her I suggested that it would be better if she didn't see them for awhile. She seems to recognize you or at least feel comfortable around you so as soon as she gets a little of her strength back we'll turn her over to you. Barring complications her recovery from that point on should be fairly rapid.

Millie thanks the doctor and goes to collect the Roses from the waiting room. They aren't there. She hurries after the doctor and asks him if they mentioned where they were going. He's not sure but he believes they said they were going back to Texas.

THE BEDROOM

Pinky is propped up in bed watching Millie straighten up the room. Millie talks nonstop.

MILLIE

There was a really good sale at Robinson's last week and they had a door prize of a years subscription to Vogue but you don't find out till next week who won. If I do then you can read it while you recuperate.

Pinky watches every move Millie makes. Millie continues.

MILLIE

If you were wondering why some of the other kids from the lab didn't come to visit you it was because I told them not to. I didn't want them wearing you out.

Millie pauses to light a cigarette.

PINKY

Well, I sure hope I'm not pregnant.

Millie dumps the wilted flowers in the vase on the night table into the garbage.

MILLIE

Why would you be pregnant?

Pinky becomes evasive.

PINKY

Being in the hospital. You know. All those doctors.

Millie doesn't say anything. Pinky reaches over and picks up a pack of cigarettes. She lights one and puts it in her mouth. Millie stares at her.

PINKY

What.

MILLIE

Since when do you smoke?

Pinky looks at the cigarette in her hand and crushes it out.

PINKY

I used to. I mean I quit...I think I'll take a nap now. I'm a little worn out.

Millie pulls down the shades and turns off the light.

HIGH SPEED FILM

A woman rides across the beach on a black stallion. Her hair blows in the wind and the horses hooves send fine sprays of ocean water shooting in the air. She reins the horse in and dismounts into the arms of a handsome young man. There is some leader and then we see the same thing again.

Millie is on the phone at work.

MILLIE

Are you okay?

PINKY'S VOICE

Yeah. I'm just resting.

MILLIE

Want anything special for dinner?

PINKY'S VOICE

No.

There is the faint sound of a voice and Pinky suppressing a giggle.

MILLIE

Who's there with you.

PINKY'S VOICE

Nobody. It's just the tv.

Pinky hangs up the phone. Edgar pops open another can of beer. It sprays Pinky in the face. They laugh.

Millie is in the foreman's office at the lab. She tells him Pinky is almost ready to come back to work. He doesn't know who she is.

MILLIE

Pinky Rose. She worked in positive assembly. She was a viewer. The one who had the accident.

The foreman says that she's been replaced and they don't need any more viewers at this time.

Pinky is sitting crosslegged on the bed. A cigarette dangles from her lips. She is writing in Millie's diary. She stops to think then writes some more. She hides the diary behind the night table and goes to the sewing machine. Pinky tries to turn the machine on. After a few false starts she hits the right button. She feeds the material through the machine. It is pulled from her hands and tears. It is apparent that she has no idea how to use the machine.

Millie gets out of the car loaded down with packages, mostly groceries. She makes her way past the pool. The same group is sitting around, talking and laughing as usual. They have a barbeque going. Hot dogs and hamburgers are being cooked. Millie smiles as she makes her way past them. The fact that Pinky is sitting among them, talking and laughing with the rest, doesn't register for a moment. Then Millie retraces her steps.

MILLIE

You shouldn't be out of bed.
Are you sure you feel all
right?

PINKY

I'm fine.

Everyone is staring at Millie as if she were an intruder. Millie enters the apartment. She looks under the mattress for her diary. It is gone. She bends to look under the bed then spots it behind the night table.

She is surprised to find that it's been moved. She is even more surprised to find a series of entries in other than her own handwriting. She reads the most recent one and we read over her shoulder.

"Not sure I feel any better about this roommate than I did the last one. Remember how relieved I was when she moved in with her boyfriend? Oh well. C'est la vie. I guess you got to get along as best as youccan."

Millie is confused...and scared. She realizes that Pinky is taking on her (Millie's) personality.

Millie is in the foreman's office. He asks her what her social security number is, and she tells him.

FOREMAN

I'll have to see your card if you're to continue here. One of you girls is mistaken about who she is.

Millie walks out of the lab into the parking lot. She searches through her purse for the keys as she crosses the lot. She finds them and looks around to get her bearings. She doesn't see her car. She walks back and forth a few times. It's gone. She re-enters the building.

Millie is standing in the lot with two policemen. They are taking a deposition.

POLICEMAN

What makes you think it was stolen?

MILLIE

Well it was here this morning and now it's gone.

They continue to question her as to make of the car, its identifying marks, whether the windows were opened or closed, etc. They finish and tell her if they turn up anything they will contact her; she says she has no way of getting home. They ask her where she lives and she tells them she lives all the way out in Newhall near the Dodge City tavern.

The policemen know Edgar and agree to drive her home.

They arrive at Dodge City. The lot is empty except for one car - Millie's VW.

It is cool and quiet in the bar. And no one is there but Willie. The policemen say hello and then ask Willie if she knows who pulled up in the VW parked outside.

WILLIE

Her friend.

She gestures to Millie. The policemen go over to Millie and ask her what kind of joke this is?

WILLIE

They're all out back.

The policemen start to head out of the bar. Millie follows. Willie grabs Millie as she passes and holds her arm tight enough for it to hurt.

WILLIE

Keep your friend away from my husband.

Millie pulls her arm free. She follows the policemen out the door.

THE DESERT

Heat waves rise from the ground partially obscuring the men firing guns. Pinky has a bottle of beer in one hand and a pistol in the other. She is firing with as much enthusiasm as the men. She waves when she sees Millie. Edgar comes over to greet the policemen.

EDGAR

Well look what we got here. All dressed up in their Sunday blues. How ya doin' boys.

Millie goes to Pinky. Pinky tells her that she got the car so she could go pick up some ammo for the guys and that she intended to pick Millie up at the end of the day but she didn't notice the time. Pinky fires another shot.

PINKY

One of the guys from the apartment
drove me in.

THE APARTMENT

Pinky is lying on the couch watching TV. Millie folds a pile
of laundry.

MILLIE

You've been messing around with
Edgar.

PINKY

So?

Pinky goes and gets a peach from the refrigerator. She lies
on the couch and begins eating it.

MILLIE

Willie told me to tell you to
stay away from him.

Pinky doesn't say anything.

MILLIE

I don't want you running around
with that kind of man. There
are a lot of nice boys you could
be seeing.

There's no response.

MILLIE

And another thing. Why did you
put my social security number
on your W-4 form?

PINKY

I didn't.

MILLIE

The foreman says you did...
What's your number?

Pinky says she doesn't know it by heart. Millie wants to
see her card.

PINKY

I don't have to show you my card.
Anyway I don't even work there
anymore so it's your problem.

She throws the unfinished peach in the general direction of the garbage. It misses and splats on the floor. Millie gets up and picks it up.

MILLIE

Don't do that. Peaches are expensive. If you don't want the whole thing cut off a piece and wrap the rest up and leave it in the frig.

Pinky gets up.

PINKY

Oh my God! Do you mind if I breathe or should I ask permission to do that?

She turns off the TV and goes into the bedroom. She starts changing out of her clothes into a bathing suit. Millie follows her in.

MILLIE

I'm only telling you these things because I care about you and I want you to be a good person and a happy person but you have to have some consideration for others Pinky.

Pinky wheels on her.

PINKY

Don't call me that! Don't ever call me that again. How many times do I have to tell you to call me Mildred. My name's Mildred. Got that? MILDRED!

She slams out the door. Millie is terrified. She suspects

what we have been afraid of for some time; that Pinky has become Millie. She goes to the diary for confirmation, opening it and reading the last entry which is in Pinky's handwriting.

"Edgar's okay but he's pretty old. But it's more fun with him than working in that crummy lab. I've been wondering about my background lately...who they were...what they did. Maybe I can trace them. Lammoreaux's a pretty unusual name."

Millie looks up. Pinky is standing in the doorway. Millie drops the diary and gasps. Pinky slowly advances towards her.

PINKY

Who told you you could read my diary? That's mine. That's private. Who said you could read it?

She grabs it off the bed. Millie flinches.

PINKY

If you ever touch it again I'll go away and never come back. You'll never see me again.

She puts the diary under her arm and goes out the door.

It is night. The pool area is empty, the water still except for reflections bouncing off its surface, and we see Pinky's face shimmering on the water.

Millie is asleep on the foldout bed in the living room, and the only sound to break the silence is her measured breathing. A hand moves toward Millie, hovering above her shoulder, then hesitates and withdraws. Millie suddenly awakens with the feeling that someone is watching - the feeling of being vulnerable. She opens her eyes and sees Pinky standing over her. Pinky is naked, tears roll down her cheeks. Millie, naked also, pulls the sheet tighter around her.

PINKY

I can't sleep.

MILLIE

What's the matter?

PINKY

I don't know. I'm scared.

She pulls the sheet down.

PINKY

I want to sleep with you.

She crawls in next to Millie and puts her arms around her. Millie lies rigid. Pinky closes her eyes. Slowly Millie starts to relax and puts her arms around Pinky, holding her close, and begins to hum a soft wordless song. She looks at Pinky's blonde head cradled on her breast and sees that Pinky is asleep. It is as if Millie accepts the role of becoming Pinky's mother.

Hours later, Pinky and Millie sleep soundly as a key is turned in the lock. Millie awakens first. The door swings open and Edgar reels in, very drunk. He sees the two girls and heads straight for them. Pinky is awake now too. Edgar mutters something about what fine luck it is to find the both of them together. Millie puts her arm protectively around Pinky.

MILLIE

Get out of here before I call
the police.

Edgar has stumbled over to the bed as Millie continues to tell him to leave.

EDGAR

Can't call the cops on Edgar. No.
Gonna be a daddy soon. Can't
put daddy's in jail...Come on,
Pinky, give old Edgar a cuddle...
I'm not goin' back there. No sir.
Screamin' and makin' noises. Not
a man's place I told her. That's
woman's stuff.

MILLIE

What are you talking about?

EDGAR

It's gonna be a boy, a big ole boy baby. Hey let's us go out and celebrate. Have a drink. Okay?

MILLIE

Is Willie having her baby?

Edgar nods happily.

MILLIE

And you left her alone?

EDGAR

That's woman's stuff. She don't need...

Millie gets out of bed and starts throwing on her clothes. Edgar moans at the sight of her.

MILLIE

Pinky, you get dressed.

Pinky doesn't want to go, but Millie will not take no for an answer, so Pinky dresses. Edgar crawls onto the bed, and by the time the girls leave, he has fallen asleep.

THE DESERT HOUSE

Willie is lying on a cot in a dark corner of the room. Her hands twist the sheets and sweat beads glisten on her upper lip. She barely looks up as Millie and Pinky enter. Millie rushes to her, but Pinky waits across the room, staring. Millie takes Willie's hand and tells her everything is going to be all right. Willie struggles to get a few words out.

WILLIE

A doctor. Something's wrong.

Millie wipes the sweat from Willie's face, telling her that everything is going to be all right, then she goes to Pinky and speaks to her in a whisper.

MILLIE

Take the car and go call an
ambulande. I'm afraid.

She gives Pinky the keys. Pinky backs slowly toward the door.

MILLIE

Hurry.

Pinky moves outside. The desert sky is black and there are very few sounds. A little light spills out from the windows of the house. She gets halfway to the car, hesitates, and goes back to the house. She watches through the window, unable to move.

Through the window she sees Willie's labor and Millie's efforts to help. Finally, the baby's head appears and Millie pulls it out. The umbilical cord is wrapped around the baby's neck. It is dead. Millie gently lays it down on the cot. Willie's eyes are closed.

Millie goes outside, blood covers her hands and stains the front of her dress, and sees Pinky still standing at the window.

MILLIE

It's a boy.

No answer.

MILLIE

The baby's dead.

PINKY

I know.

Millie slaps her hard across the face, the blood leaving a red hand print on Pinky's cheek. Pinky doesn't move.

THE HIGHWAY

A small delivery truck drives along the road. It pulls up in front of Dodge City. The sign has been changed, and it now reads THE WHEEL. A delivery boy takes a pad from the passenger seat and goes into the bar.

THE BAR

It takes his eyes a second to adjust to the darkness after the strong glare of the sun, and he squints to see Pinky seated behind the bar. She is reading a movie magazine and sipping on a beer. She looks up at him.

BOY

I got a couple cases of Seagrams outside. I need someone to sign for it.

PINKY

Why don't you come back later?

BOY

Cause I only get out here once a week.

Pinky gets up slowly.

PINKY

Okay, okay. Cool your jets. I gotta go get my mother.

She goes into the back room. The boy looks around the bar. All the guns and Wyatt Earp memorabilia have been taken down. Pinky comes back and takes her place at the bar. She flips open the magazine.

PINKY

She'll be out in a minute.

Millie comes out of the back room, wiping her hands on her apron, and asks the boy what can she do for him.

BOY

You running this place now?

MILLIE

That's right.

He hands her the pad.

BOY

Sign at the two spots with the x's.

As she signs.

BOY

Sure was terrible what happened to Edgar. I thought he knew just about everything about guns. I can't figure out how he could have shot himself like that.

Millie hands him the pad.

MILLIE

It was a terrible accident. Would you mind putting the cases in the back, please?

The boy goes out, and Millie turns to Pinky.

MILLIE

I don't want you drinking so much of that beer, Mildred. I told you before Coka Cola's what a girl your age should be drinking...or milk, if I could get you to swallow it.

PINKY

I only had one.

The delivery boy enters from the back and says the cases are stacked against the far wall. Millie thanks him, and he leaves. Millie tells Pinky she wants her to help with the supper tonight.

MILLIE

It's time you learned how to run a house and do some cooking.

The two women leave the bar and walk across to the house in the desert.

We remain outside as they enter the house chattering about supper. Their voices drift toward us across the hot afternoon. It probably takes us a minute to notice Willie's face staring out the window. Hold on her and then

FADE OUT