

SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Written by Bob Boyczuk

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PRINCIPAL CAST LIST

HOWARD PENSKE is in his mid-forties, short, rotund and balding. He wears rumpled and ill-fitting suits and looks rather comical. He is socially inept, unaware that he often says and does inappropriate things. He is frequently child-like in his obliviousness.

SUE GOOD is in her mid-twenties, tall, attractive, ambitious, aggressive, sexy, and caustic. She has no qualms about using people to achieve her ends.

DAVID HULL is in his mid-thirties, a good-looking man, quiet, an observer of life more than a participant.

ESTHER LAWLER is in her mid-forties, intelligent, attractive, educated, and well spoken.

BLACK SCREEN:

ESTHER (V.O.)

Imagine a woman.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE BACKDROP - DAY

An ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN in tight jeans, a form-fitting sweater, and red Converse All Star sneakers, smiles at us.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

She's invited you over.

The ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN's clothes change to a black teddy, but she still wears the sneakers. She proffers a martini.

She's upset.

The ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN's smile fades. She twists the fabric of her teddy disconsolately with her free hand, but still extends the martini.

You're her best friend.

A PLAIN WOMAN replaces the ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN. The PLAIN WOMAN wears a shapeless sweater, loose pants and orthopedic shoes. She holds a beer bottle from which she takes a big swig.

She confesses her fear that her husband is having an affair.

The beer bottle disappears. In one hand she now holds a shirt with a large red lipstick stain on the collar and in the other a bottle of Jack Daniels. She takes another swig.

You know he is. Do you tell her?

HOWARD (V.O.)

Am I a man or a woman?

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

C.U. on DAVID, a man in his late twenties, opening his eyes. He was visualising the imaginary woman. DAVID sits at the back of an adult ed class. He looks at HOWARD, a short, balding man wearing a rumpled suit. HOWARD holds a pen poised above a small, spiral bound notebook with colored tabs. His desk is cluttered with smudged and dog-eared papers. One row behind is SUE, an tall, attractive woman in her early 20's wearing a tailored suit with a short skirt. ESTHER, the teacher, stands in front of HOWARD. She resembles the YOUNG ATTRACTIVE WOMAN as we first saw her, and wears similar clothes, including the sneakers, although she's in her mid 40's.

ESTHER

What?

HOWARD

I need to know if I'm a man or a woman.

SUE

Don't you know by now?

Scattered laughter.

MALE STUDENT #1 (O.C.)

Yeah, tell us Penske.

HOWARD

(ignoring comments)

I can't answer the question unless I know if I'm supposed to be a man or a woman.

ESTHER

It doesn't matter Mr. Penske. The question posits a generic ethical dilemma. You could be either.

HOWARD

But I'd answer differently.

ESTHER

I don't see the relevance --

HOWARD

Suppose I'm a woman. Maybe I'm the one having the affair with her husband.

ESTHER

Okay. Pretend you're a man.

There's more laughter and HOWARD turns red. He scribbles furiously in his notebook. ESTHER looks around the class and the laughter dies. She turns her attention back to HOWARD.

Well, Mr. Penske? Would you tell her?

HOWARD stops scribbling and looks up tentatively.

HOWARD

Depends.

ESTHER

On what?

HOWARD

Am I gay? If I am, then I could still be having the affair with her husband.

SIMON, a well dressed, effeminate man, looks at HOWARD.

SIMON

Definitely not.

ESTHER

(trying to be patient)

No, you're not gay. You're not a woman. You're not black or Hispanic or transsexual or disabled. Just be who you are. Howard Penske. What would Howard Penske answer?

HOWARD

I thought these were supposed to be generic questions.

SUE

Imagine you're a generic balding loser.

HOWARD glares at her.

ESTHER

Ms. Good, please. Let Mr. Penske answer.

Turns to HOWARD.

You're you. Just be completely honest.
Would you tell her?

HOWARD
Still depends.

ESTHER
On what?

HOWARD
Does she have a big ass?

DAVID, observing this exchange, glances at ESTHER's ass.

ESTHER
(taken aback)
I don't see how that's relevant.

HOWARD
I don't like big asses.

MALE STUDENT #2 (O.C.)
What's wrong with big asses?

SUE
(to HOWARD)
Be thankful you don't have to see
yourself waddling down the aisle every
day.

HOWARD
(to SUE)
Hey, I'm just answering the question.
She said to be completely honest.

ESTHER
Yes. I did. Perhaps you could
enlighten us then. What does her
appearance have to do with your answer?

HOWARD smirks, and says the following smugly, as if he believes
he has the right answer.

HOWARD
If she's got a nice ass, I'd tell her.
Then maybe she'll get back at her rat
bastard husband by having sex with me.

There are groans from the rest of the group. HOWARD is pelted with assorted objects from all over the room.

SUE

Christ, what a visual.

HOWARD's expression shifts back and forth between embarrassment and anger.

ESTHER

Would you care to answer the question
Ms. Good?

SUE

Of course. What I'd do is --

DAVID

Penske's right.

The class falls silent. Everyone turns their attention to DAVID.

SUE

It speaks. And I thought it was just
the strong silent type.

ESTHER

(to DAVID)

In what way?

DAVID

These questions never have simple
answers. We don't live in a vacuum.
You've got to know about the situation
before you can answer the question.

ESTHER walks down the aisle towards DAVID.

ESTHER

We frequently have to make decisions
without having all the facts at hand.

DAVID

Not me.

ESTHER

Doesn't that kind of thinking lead to
paralysis? You become so obsessed with

the gathering all the facts, that you never make a decision.

DAVID

Better no decision than a bad one.

ESTHER

To be human is to make choices. Even if they turn out to be bad choices.

DAVID

I'd rather not make bad choices.

ESTHER

So you think it's better to pass quietly through life creating as few ripples as possible?

DAVID

That's not what I said. Just that the question you posed is too artificial. Life is much more complicated.

ESTHER

Can't we learn from general examples and apply those lessons to real life?

DAVID

Maybe. But not to real estate. And that's what we're all here to learn about. Real estate. We're liars and manipulators by trade.

ESTHER

Well. That was, ah, refreshingly candid. But aren't you being a bit hard on everyone here?

DAVID

(to the class)

Who here can't imagine manipulating someone for their own sexual gratification?

MALE STUDENT #2 (O.C.)

Does she have a big ass?

ESTHER

I don't think --

DAVID

(to class)

If you've lied to someone to get them into bed in the last week, raise your hand.

A few hands go up.

In the last month?

More hands go up. A FEMALE STUDENT looks in astonishment at MALE STUDENT #3 next to her who's just raised his hand. He becomes aware of her stare.

MALE STUDENT #3

(to FEMALE STUDENT)

I swear I love you.

He follows her gaze to his hand, which is still raised.

I was thinking of someone else. Honest.

DAVID

In the last year?

Everyone holds up their hand now except for HOWARD, SUE and ESTHER. ESTHER slowly raises hers, and SUE follows suit. In the background, the FEMALE STUDENT raises both hands while glaring at the MALE STUDENT #3.

ESTHER

If your point is that we all give in to our baser natures from time to time, well, you're right. Maybe that's why we need to study ethics. It's a boom market out there right now. That's why most of you are here. But what will you do to make a sale when the market goes bust? This course is about understanding these temptations and, with a bit of luck, rising above them.

ESTHER turns and walks down the aisle.

DAVID

(staring at her ass)

I guess.

MALE STUDENT #2'S VOICE (O.C.)

Can I put my hand down now?

ESTHER turns at the front of the room and catches DAVID staring at her. DAVID looks away in embarrassment.

DAVID

All I'm saying is that Penske answered honestly. No one else here would have. Maybe we should draw a lesson from that.

ESTHER

I suppose there's a lesson in there somewhere, although I'm not quite sure what it is.

SUE

(quietly to HOWARD)

Don't ask congenital idiots ethical questions?

HOWARD shoots her a look then leans towards his neighbor.

HOWARD

(whispering)

What's a genital idiot?

SUE

What a clown.

HOWARD

Don't call me a clown! I hate clowns!

The school bell RINGS. SUE rises quickly, bumping HOWARD's desk and knocking loose his papers. People gather their things and rise. Esther grabs a sheaf of paper from her desk.

ESTHER

(to class)

Before you leave I have an announcement to make. As most of you know this is only a part-time position for me. I've been offered a full-time job at another college that begins immediately. I've accepted this position so this will be my last class. Tomorrow you'll have a different instructor, Mr. Schroeder.

(MORE)

To give you something to work on, I've photocopied a list of questions about ethical dilemmas. Please read the questions, and give them some thought before tomorrow's class. And be nice to him.

ESTHER hands out copies as people file past. HOWARD is still on his hands and knees collecting his papers. As DAVID rises, HOWARD looks up from the floor, one arm clutching papers to his chest, and their eyes lock momentarily. DAVID looks away, moving quickly towards the door. As he passes ESTHER she hands him a paper, holding onto it for a second longer than is necessary. Their eyes lock momentarily. DAVID is pushed through the door by the tide of exiting students.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA, SELF SERVE FOOD LINE - DAY

A shot frames the dessert section of a self-serve cafeteria. BLAND, ELEVATOR-LIKE MUSIC plays in the background. DAVID moves into the shot, pushing a tray along the metal runners. He pauses before the jello. His gaze moves back and forth between red and green, as if he's having trouble deciding. A tray bumps into his and HOWARD enters the shot.

HOWARD

Like my Dad says, there's only one real choice to make.

DAVID looks at him quizzically.

HOWARD

The decision we make each morning to go on living.

HOWARD winks, grabs a red jello and moves out of the shot. DAVID stares after him.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA, TABLE - DAY

DAVID sits at a table by himself. On the tray in front of him are two half-eaten jellos, one red and one green. He eats mechanically, taking a spoon first from one jello, then from the

other. On the table next to his lunch tray is the list of questions ESTHER gave them earlier. DAVID becomes aware there is

(MORE)

someone standing behind him. He turns around and finds HOWARD staring intently at him through narrowed eyes. HOWARD exits. DAVID frowns in puzzlement and picks at his lunch again.

SUE (O.C.)

Here's a question for you: would you lie to get your teacher in the sack?

DAVID looks up, a forkful of pie halfway to his mouth. SUE wiggles into the seat next to him. She has a large black handbag over her shoulder.

I saw the way you were looking at her.

DAVID

I wasn't looking at her.

SUE

Ha! Now who's lying?

DAVID looks peeved, but has no answer.

SUE (CONT'D)

Embarrassed by your mommy complex?

DAVID

I don't have a mommy complex.

SUE

Whatever. My guess is that she'd be a lousy lay anyway. Probably too ethical to have any fun.

SUE smiles and places her hand on his arm. DAVID pulls away. He still holds the forkful of pie.

SUE (CONT'D)

But then maybe lofty ethical beings like you aren't interested in having fun.

DAVID

I like fun.

SUE

You can do much better than her. And with someone more your sister's age than your mom's.

DAVID

I'm not --

SUE

You aced the Property Law exam, didn't you?

DAVID

I did okay.

SUE

How about we get together this weekend? First, you can help me with Property Law. Then afterwards, we can have some fun!

DAVID eyes her tight outfit. Then seems to think better of it.

DAVID

I'm pretty busy --

SUE grasps his wrist and draws the forkful of pie to her mouth where she closes her lips around it and slides it off the fork seductively. DAVID watches, riveted, as she chews and swallows.

SUE

Too busy to study?

SIMON walks past them carrying a tray and DAVID glances at him. SUE looks at SIMON and then back at DAVID.

SUE (CONT'D)

Or maybe it's not the same kind of studying I like.

DAVID

I like studying as much as the next guy.

SUE raises her eyebrows.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Straight studying. That's my kind of studying. And lots of it. Sometimes I'll study two or three times a day.

SUE
Really? You don't look like much of a
scholar.

SUE appraises him.

SUE (CONT'D)
You wouldn't be lying again, would you?

DAVID stares at her, nonplussed. SUE picks up the sheet of
questions and writes her number on the back.

SUE (CONT'D)
Call me if you get an urge to study.

ESTHER walks into the cafeteria. She spots DAVID and SUE,
hesitates, then makes her way towards their table. SUE places
the sheet face up on the table.

ESTHER
May if I join you?

SUE
I was just leaving. Have to bone up on
my Property Law.

SUE rises as ESTHER sits opposite DAVID. SUE taps the list of
questions with her forefinger.

SUE
(to DAVID)
Think about it. It's not really such a
difficult question.

SUE exits, blowing a flirty little kiss to DAVID behind ESTHER's
back.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ROCCO's P.O.V. ROCCO watches ESTHER sit down opposite DAVID.
ROCCO's hand rises into the shot and we see he is holding a
cigarette. He takes a long, menacing drag. C.U. on tip of

cigarette glowing brightly, accompanied by the amplified sound of the cigarette BURNING.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

DAVID and ESTHER sit across from one another.

ESTHER

Did I interrupt something?

DAVID shakes his head distractedly while watching SUE walk away. ESTHER picks up the list of questions. On the back is SUE's number writ large and staring DAVID in the face. ESTHER is unaware of the number.

ESTHER

It's nice to see someone is actually discussing the questions.

DAVID stares at her but says nothing. ESTHER places the sheet back on the table.

ESTHER

Do you mind if I ask you a question that's not on the sheet? A sort of off-the-cuff exercise?

DAVID shakes his head. ESTHER looks at him intently.

ESTHER

(slowly)

Imagine a woman. She's a teacher. She's attracted to a student. She's noticed the student seems to be attracted to her. To complicate matters, she's somewhat older.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN BEDROOM - DAY

DAVID imagines himself on a diapering table. ESTHER, dressed in the same black teddy DAVID imagined earlier, holds a container of baby oil. She pours some into her hand and advances towards him.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ESTHER

She's an authority figure, but doesn't want to use this authority to pressure him into anything he doesn't want to do.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

DAVID imagines himself dressed as a young boy, being spanked by ESTHER.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ESTHER

Fortunately, she's been offered a teaching position at another college which starts immediately. A good position teaching real philosophy courses. The issue of authority vanishes. Now her only problem is how to make her feelings known to the student before she leaves for good.

For the first time DAVID notices ESTHER is twisting a ring on her left hand. He stares at what appears to be a gold wedding band. ESTHER follows his gaze and covers her ring with her other hand.

Oh, yes. Did I mention she's in a loveless marriage?

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY, SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

DAVID imagines himself as a teenager, peering through a door that is slightly ajar. O.S. sound: loud and vigorous LOVEMAKING issuing from the room.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ESTHER smiles weakly and tries to look nonchalant, but fails. There's an awkward pause.

You don't talk much for an aspiring real estate agent.

DAVID appears confused and slightly embarrassed. He looks away, then back to ESTHER.

ESTHER
(laughing nervously)
I've got to remember to take the ring off next time.

Now ESTHER seems flustered.

Not like I do this a lot. Or even ever. Or not before I was married. I mean since. Oh, shit.

She pulls out a pen and quickly scribbles her phone number on the front of the list of questions.

There's my number. I'd like it if you called. A lot.

She bites her lower lip like something's just occurred to her.

But not at night. Or on the weekends.

ESTHER rises. She is becoming increasingly flustered.

If you don't want to call, I understand. No hard feelings. We'll see you around. Bye bye. Au revoir. Arrivederci.

She points her finger at him like it's a gun and winks, making a clicking sound. Then her face falls in dismay.

You seem like a nice guy. When I was younger nice meant the same thing as boring. So I married an exciting asshole who wasn't very nice. Now he's just an asshole.

ESTHER puts a hand affectionately on DAVID's shoulder.

You're too nice to be a real estate agent. There's a lot of sharks out there that'll eat you alive.

MUSIC from Jaws accompanies the following action. In the background DAVID sees SUE enter from one side, her large handbag clutched under her arm and sticking out behind her like a fin. HOWARD enters from the other side, his lunch tray under his arm, also sticking out like a fin. He is staring at DAVID and seems unaware of SUE. As they pass HOWARD yelps and falls behind a row of lunchroom tables as if he's been tripped. SUE passes out of the scene and a WOMAN enters carrying a tray.

HOWARD (O.C.)

Look out!

The WOMAN trips, and she and her lunch tray CRASH to the ground behind the lunchroom tables. We hear HOWARD's agonized yell. ESTHER is oblivious to what is happening behind her.

ESTHER

I could use someone nice in my life.
Call me. We'll have a non-threatening coffee.

ESTHER smiles and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

ROCCO's P.O.V. ROCCO watches ESTHER stand and exit the cafeteria. Rising, he stubs out his cigarette in an overflowing ashtray, grinding it deeply into the ashes. He follows ESTHER.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

DAVID exits the classroom building, crosses a drive and stops on a narrow strip of lawn. Reaching in his pocket, he withdraws and unfolds the list of questions, turning it from side to side. A white Lexus drifts to a stop in front of him. On the passenger seat is a spiral bound notebook with multi-colored tabs, but the driver is invisible. The power window on the passenger side rolls down. HOWARD leans over the passenger seat so he can see DAVID.

HOWARD

Hi.

DAVID

Hi.

HOWARD reaches over and opens the door.

HOWARD

Wanna go for a ride?

DAVID

Uh, thanks, but class starts in....

DAVID checks his watch.

HOWARD

Forty-five minutes.

DAVID

Yeah. Gotta go.

HOWARD

Okay. Suit yourself.

DAVID starts to walk around the car. HOWARD speaks loudly as DAVID he moves away.

But I know some things about...

The window on the passenger's side goes up. Then the driver's side goes down and HOWARD pokes his head out.

...a certain someone who likes you.

DAVID stops.

DAVID

Who?

HOWARD

Someone you were just talking to.

DAVID

If you're going to tell me Esther's married, I know that already.

HOWARD

No shit?

HOWARD picks up his spiral bound notebook and opens it at a tab. The notebook is filled with small, crabbed writing. HOWARD flips pages, until he finds a blank space, then scribbles a few words.

HOWARD

Thanks.

DAVID

What are you writing?

HOWARD snaps the notebook shut and sticks it behind his back.

HOWARD

Nothing.

DAVID

Yes you were. In that notebook.

HOWARD

What notebook?

DAVID

The one behind your back.

HOWARD cranes his neck in a feigned attempt to look behind him. He turns back to DAVID shrugs.

HOWARD

I don't see anything.

DAVID

Right.

DAVID starts to walk away. Behind him HOWARD opens his door and runs after DAVID. In one hand he holds the notebook. He clutches DAVID's sleeve.

HOWARD

It's... it's a kind of diary. Yeah.
That makes sense. Doesn't it?

DAVID reaches for it and HOWARD pulls it back.

A private diary.

DAVID

Were you writing something about Esther?

HOWARD
(feigned shock)

No!

(a beat passes)

Yes.

DAVID
Why?

HOWARD
You like her. I can tell.

DAVID
For God's sake --

HOWARD
Come on. Get in the car. I'll tell you
a secret. Something you should know.

DAVID hesitates. HOWARD waves his notebook.

I promise.

DAVID allows HOWARD to drag him back to the passenger seat.

CUT TO:

INT. LEXUS - DAY

HOWARD is already in his seat doing up his seatbelt. The seat is too far back and HOWARD too low to see properly over the steering wheel. DAVID climbs into the passenger seat. The notebook is on HOWARD's side of the dashboard. On DAVID's side is a pink umbrella. As soon as DAVID closes his door the locks snap down.

LEXUS
Please fasten your seatbelts.

HOWARD
Buckle up....

HOWARD steps on the gas and the car jerks forward. He drives tentatively. The car weaves and drifts in the school driveway.

HOWARD

Stupid road.

DAVID

Okay. What did you want to tell me about Esther?

The car bumps up onto curb and back down onto the drive. DAVID puts his hand on the dash to brace himself. He is still clutching the list of questions.

HOWARD

Stupid curb. About Sue, not Esther.

The notebook slides over to DAVID's side of the dash. He can now see a hand-lettered title: HOWARD PENSKE'S ENEMIES. On each tab is a name. The car stops where the school drive meets the street.

DAVID

Let me out.

HOWARD

She'll just use you. She doesn't care about anyone but herself.

DAVID spies a pair of red high heels sticking out from under HOWARD's seat. HOWARD, whistling nonchalantly, nudges them with his heels until they disappear under his seat.

DAVID

I just remembered something I have to do.

HOWARD

She's not who she claims she is. Like those guys on the X-Files.

DAVID

What the hell are you talking about?

HOWARD

It's a TV show.

DAVID

I know it's a show.

HOWARD

With aliens and stuff.

DAVID
What about Sue?

HOWARD
You should watch it. It's pretty good.

DAVID
I don't care about the Goddammed show!

HOWARD stares at him fiercely, then stomps on the accelerator. The car squeals into the street and is almost sideswiped by an approaching car. DAVID, who hasn't done up his seatbelt, is thrown around.

HOWARD
I don't like it when people swear at me.

DAVID
Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

HOWARD drives faster.

HOWARD
You should really listen to me. I like you.

DAVID
Can you please slow down?

HOWARD
You stuck up for me in class. That's why I'm helping you now. "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." My Dad made that one up. He's good with words.

DAVID
(looking out window)
That's a red light.

HOWARD
Uh huhn.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHT STANDARD - DAY

C.U. of traffic camera on the light standard. We hear it click.

CUT TO:

INT. LEXUS - DAY

HOWARD leans forward and cranes his neck to look up at the camera as they race through the intersection, narrowly missing more cars and some pedestrians.

HOWARD

ONE!

DAVID

Are you crazy?

HOWARD

Don't call me crazy. It's not nice.

DAVID

Sorry. I lost my head. Can you please slow down a bit?

DAVID works frantically to get his seatbelt on.

HOWARD

You can't trust anything she says.
She'll use sex to get what she wants.

DAVID

Who?

HOWARD

Sue.

DAVID and HOWARD approach a busy intersection where there is a line of cars waiting to turn left. HOWARD accelerates down the right lane.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIGHT STANDARD - DAY

C.U. of another camera on the light standard. We hear it click.

CUT TO:

INT. LEXUS - DAY

HOWARD turns left from the right lane, amidst honks, squealing breaks, and shouted obscenities. DAVID looks ill.

HOWARD

TWO!

DAVID

Please! Let me out. I feel sick.

HOWARD

Some fresh air will fix you right up.

HOWARD lowers the window on DAVID's side. The breeze snatches the list of questions from his hand and sucks it out of the window. The list disappears under a street cleaning machine.

Better?

DAVID

You stupid little --

HOWARD

Look! Drive-through ice cream!

HOWARD swings the car into the parking lot of an ice cream stand. HOWARD enters a drive-through lane. DAVID tries the handles, but the doors are locked. As he looks around he sees a large gym bag in the back seat with a bat sticking out.

What flavor do you want?

DAVID stares at HOWARD in disbelief.

Tough decision. Okay, I'll choose for you.

The car turns the corner of the building and an intercom in the shape of a clown's head appears.

HOWARD

I hate clowns!

DAVID grabs the handle of the bat and pulls it out of the bag to threaten HOWARD. A lacy black bra dangles from the end. DAVID is nonplussed. HOWARD takes the bat from DAVID's hands.

HOWARD

Thanks.

HOWARD steps out of the car and smashes the clown's head. DAVID fumbles with his belt but can't get it undone. HOWARD returns to the car and throws the bat in the back seat.

We'll get ice cream tomorrow. Okay?

HOWARD accelerates backwards out of the lot and onto the street.

DAVID

Please. I just want to go back.

HOWARD

Okay.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Lexus speeds down the street towards another intersection.

EXT. LIGHT STANDARD - DAY

C.U. of a third camera on the light standard. We hear it click.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET NEAR AN INTERSECTION - DAY

DAVID (O.C.)

Oh God, no.

The Lexus roars into the intersection and drives in a tight circle throwing traffic into chaos. Pedestrians scramble to get out of the way. In the background we can hear DAVID's screams.

CUT TO:

INT. LEXUS - DAY

HOWARD

THREE!

HOWARD accelerates out of the intersection. They approach the school. HOWARD drives the car up over the curb, across the grass, and into an empty parking spot in the school lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

HOWARD steps out of the Lexus, carrying his notebook. He leans into the car.

HOWARD
Don't trust her.

HOWARD walks away. A beat passes and the passenger side door opens. DAVID stumbles from the car. He staggers over to a tree and clutches it for support. ESTHER drives past in a Tercel, smiles and waves, then drives out of shot. A black Gremlin, with a shadowy figure at the wheel, follows. As the Gremlin passes, a cigarette is flicked out of the window and strikes DAVID in the chest. SUE walks into the scene. She waves at DAVID as she passes by, and blows him a kiss. She walks over to the Lexus, gets into the driver's side, starts up the car and drives off, a hub cap falling off as she turns into the street. Just after she drives out of shot, a long line of police cruisers drive through the shot following her, their lights flashing.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION LOT - DAY

TITLE ON SCREEN: "Six Months Later." A new suburban home sits on a dirt lot surrounded by an empty field. Foundations have been laid for half a dozen other homes, but no construction is taking place. To the side is a dilapidated sales office with a false front. Next to it, a large, fading sign advertises the development. SUE's car is parked behind the sign.

C.U. of a newspaper blowing across the lot. The paper catches on a man's pant leg. We can now see the paper is the "Real Estate News" and a large headline proclaims "Boom Market Goes Bust!" A hand reaches down, peels the paper off. Pan up to DAVID. He

bunches the paper and throws it away. It tumbles across the lot and blows underneath a fence. On the other side of the fence stands a FARMER who stares at DAVID. Next to the FARMER is a cow. DAVID smiles wanly at the FARMER, then turns and walks back to the office.

CUT TO:

INT. SALES OFFICE - DAY

DAVID enters and flicks the light switch up and down a few times, but nothing happens.

DAVID

Dammit.

DAVID makes his way cautiously to a back room.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

DAVID enters and lies down on a couch. He covers his eyes with his arm and sighs. C.U. on DAVID's head. Pan to DAVID's crotch where a hand enters the shot and hovers. The hand descends slowly and begins rubbing his crotch. C.U. on DAVID's head.

DAVID

Power's out again....

SUE (O.C.)

(in a mechanical way)

Love me?

DAVID lifts his arm and glances down at SUE who is kneeling next to the couch. SUE wears high heels, a tight skirt and a satin blouse. She looks bored. DAVID drops his arm over his eyes again.

DAVID

Do you have to do that now?

SUE

Don't you care about me?

DAVID

What if someone comes in?

SUE

They'll have to wait their turn. Now answer the question.

DAVID lifts his arm and looks at her.

DAVID
How are we supposed to show a home if
the buyers can't see it?

SUE
You're not making this any easier.

DAVID
We haven't had a single prospect all
week.

SUE
Times are hard -- which is more than I
can say for you.

DAVID
You seem pretty blasé.

SUE
I've got the situation --

SUE redoubles her efforts.

SUE (CONT'D)
-- well in hand.

DAVID
This isn't working.

SUE gives up.

SUE
What the hell is wrong with you?

DAVID
We haven't sold anything in two months.

SUE
It's just a little slump.

DAVID
(muttering)
We can't go on this way.

SUE
(beginning to panic)
What did you say?

DAVID
I said, 'It can't go on this way.'

SUE
No you didn't. You said 'We can't go on
this way.'

DAVID
I was talking about the market slump.

DAVID reaches down and places her hand on his crotch and lies
back.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Don't stop.

SUE looks at him suspiciously, but resumes her rubbing.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Ah. That's it....

SUE
Don't you mean 'That's we'?

DAVID
(faking)
Ooooh. Ahhh.

SUE
There's nothing going on down here.

DAVID
You can fake all you want. But if I try
to fake even once....

SUE
If we had sex on a regular basis I
wouldn't mind the occasional fake.
Hell, I'd even be happy to pretend to
wipe it up afterwards.

DAVID
At least I don't use sex to get what I
want.

SUE
What the hell is that supposed to mean?

DAVID

It's just that sometimes I wonder....

SUE
Wonder what?

DAVID
(distantly)
Maybe it's time for a change....

SUE
I knew it! You want to dump me!

DAVID
That's not true. We've been going out
for almost a year now --

SUE
(dryly)
Six months.

DAVID
Six months. And I don't think it's a
good idea for people in a relationship
to work together.

SUE
So if we weren't going out things would
be okay?

DAVID
Right.
(a beat passes before
he realizes what he's said)
No.

SUE
You want to break up?

DAVID
Did I say that?

SUE
What are you saying?

DAVID
This real estate thing isn't working
out. Esther was right. I'm not cut out
to be a real estate agent.

SUE

Esther?

DAVID

(realizing his mistake)

My mom.

SUE

Your mother died three years ago.

DAVID

We got a second opinion.

SUE

Jesus, David, you're not still pining over that ethics teacher? She's probably in an old folks home by now.

DAVID

I have guilt issues around my mother. After all, we buried her alive.

SUE

You don't take any of this seriously, do you? This is my career we're talking about!

DAVID

Your career?

SUE

I meant our life together.

DAVID

Look, I'll quit, and you can stay on.

SUE

You know goddamned well they'd can my ass the minute you left. The only reason I'm still here is that you threatened to quit if they fired me.

DAVID

Is it my fault they like me?

SUE fakes crying.

SUE

(sobbing)

You said you loved me. If you loved me,
you'd care about my career.

(SUE covers her face with
her hands)

You used me.

(she peeks at DAVID through
her fingers)

And now you're going to throw me away
like a spent kleenex.

DAVID

Used you? No. It's just --

SUE stops crying and becomes angry.

SUE

Can't you ever think of anyone but
yourself? Christ, you're selfish.

DAVID

I helped you out on your tests.

SUE

Big deal. You gave me some pointers.

DAVID

I helped you cheat.

SUE

You weren't complaining at the time.

SUE leans forward, her breasts pressed seductively against DAVID.

SUE (CONT'D)

(in a sultry voice)

In fact, you seemed pretty grateful.

DAVID

I... I was lonely.

SUE

You said you'd do anything for me. That
you loved me.

DAVID

It was in a moment of passion.

SUE

So you lied.

DAVID

Not really.

They regard one another. SUE pulls back.

SUE

You're going to bail on me, aren't you?

DAVID

(looking away)

I wouldn't bail.

SUE

(scornful)

Of course not. You can't bail if you never get on the plane.

DAVID

You know I'm afraid of heights.

SUE

(contemptuously)

Of any kind.

DAVID

Look, I gave real estate a chance. Now I want to try something different.

SUE

That's your answer to everything, isn't it? When things don't work out exactly like the little fantasies in your head, you move on.

DAVID

(embarrassed)

Fantasies?

SUE

I've seen your eyes glaze over more times than I can count.

DAVID

I --

SUE

Do you love me?

DAVID

Maybe I could study drafting. I was always pretty good at sitting around and drawing pictures.

SUE
You're dodging the question.

DAVID
Do we have to have this discussion now?

SUE
It's either that or sex.

For a moment they regard one another in silence.

DAVID
Okay. I'll take the sex.

DAVID covers his eyes with his arm again.

SUE
Lucky me.

C.U. of SUE looking miffed. Out of shot she begins rubbing DAVID again. C.U. of DAVID's head. O.S. sound of a ZIPPER BEING OPENED. DAVID furrows his brow in concentration.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

In his fantasy, DAVID stands with his back to the teacher's desk. A WOMAN, dressed like SUE, stands in front of him. We can't see her because her back is to the camera. The WOMAN pushes DAVID slowly back onto the desk, sweeping books and papers out of the way. As she climbs on the desk we see she wears red sneakers. DAVID murmurs with pleasure.

SUE (V.O.)
About damn time.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

MEL (O.C.)
Hello?

DAVID swings his legs off the couch knocking over SUE, and then yelps as he falls off the couch on top of her. At the far end of the room MEL SOLOMON opens the blinds and the room is bathed in

light. Next to MEL stands his wife, MINNIE. They are an older couple, both in their 70s. MEL and MINNIE wear matching Bermuda shorts, white walking shoes, Hawaiian shirts and gaudy sunglasses. MINNIE has a cane.

MINNIE

Hello?

MEL

You real estate agents?

MINNIE

Of course they're agents. What else would they be?

DAVID and SUE disentangle themselves and scramble to their feet.

MEL

They could be anybody.

MINNIE

Like Donny and Marie maybe?

MEL

Donny and Marie were brother and sister. They wouldn't be rolling around on the floor.

MINNIE

You don't know that for sure.

MEL

Would they lie about being brother and sister?

MINNIE

No. Not about that.

MEL

You mean that they --

MINNIE

I didn't say they did. I just said that we don't know, do we?

MEL

(to SUE and DAVID)

So, are you Donny and Marie?

SUE extends a hand while DAVID fumbles with his zipper.

SUE

Sue Good.

MEL looks from her hand to where DAVID fumbles with his zipper. He doesn't take her hand.

MEL

Glad to meet you.

MINNIE

She was so beautiful. So beautiful.
You've got to admit it would be a
temptation.

DAVID

David Hull.

DAVID extends his hand. MINNIE cuts in front of MEL and shakes DAVID's hand vigorously.

MINNIE

I'm Minnie Solomon. This is my husband
Mel.

MEL

Maybe we could see the house?

MINNIE

(to DAVID)

Wouldn't you want to make love to Marie?
I mean, if she were your sister?

MEL

Leave the boy alone. He's got a job to
do.

MINNIE

All I'm saying is that she's beautiful.
And she's got class. Not like the trash
on TV today.

MEL

Are you going to start again? Should I
apologise just because I like a good
action show like Baywatch?

MINNIE

I didn't say anything about Baywatch.
But since you brought it up --

SUE

You folks might be interested to know
that all these homes come with a
satellite dish and one year's free
service.

MEL

(to MINNIE)

It's the most popular show in the world!
Can all those people be wrong?

(to SUE)

How many channels?

SUE

Seven hundred and fifty-two.

MEL whistles. DAVID shoots SUE a look at her obvious lie.

MEL

That's a hell of a lot of channels.

SUE

They say there's a Baywatch rerun on
fourteen times a day.

MEL looks thoughtful.

MINNIE

I don't want you staring at that trash
all day long!

SUE

And of course it comes with a
programmable channel lock.

MEL

But we don't have kids.

MINNIE

Just Mel.

MEL

I don't want to live in a development
with a lot of noisy kids!

SUE
No kids. This is well-planned
retirement community.

DAVID looks at her sharply.

DAVID
Well, it's not exactly a retirement
community....

SUE
Yes. More like a retirement Mecca!

SUE steers the couple out the door, signals for DAVID to follow.

MINNIE
What about Sonny and Cher? They could
be Sonny and Cher? If he had a big
moustache and she had smaller
breasts....

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE OF SONNY AND CHER SHOW - DAY

DAVID is dressed as Sonny and SUE as Cher. DAVID looks around in
disbelief.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

MINNIE, MEL, SUE and DAVID walk across dirt yard to the model
home. SUE links arms with DAVID and sings the first few bars of
'I've got You Babe', then laughs at her imitation of Cher. DAVID
looks pained. In front of the sales office is the SOLOMON's
Toyota. The FARMER and his cow still stand at the fence, and
watch them enter the house.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, MODEL HOME - DAY

SUE enters followed by MINNIE, MEL and DAVID. The house is
gloomy.

MINNIE
It's awfully dark.

DAVID
The power's out --

SUE
Because they're laying new underground,
15 kilovolt lines. No ugly overhead
wires!

MEL bumps into a chair.

MEL
Ouch.

MEL rubs his shin.

MINNIE
Are you all right?

MEL
I said, 'Ouch,' didn't I? Do you say
'Ouch' when you're all right?

SUE
(solicitously)
Oh my gosh. Are you hurt, Mr. Solomon?

SUE bends to examine his injury, the material of her skirt
tightening. MEL stops rubbing and stares at her ass.

MEL
Yes. Only lower.

SUE bends lower and her skirt pulls tighter. She rubs MEL's leg.

DAVID
Maybe we should get you to a doctor.

MEL
I'm feeling much better.
(to SUE)
You have nice hands.

MINNIE
Mine aren't good enough for you now?

MEL
What about your arthritis?
(to SUE)

Higher.

(to MINNIE)

You know what the doctor said....

MINNIE

That doesn't seem to bother you when I
cook three meals a day.

MEL

You love cooking.

(to SUE)

Higher.

MINNIE

Since when? Since never, that's when.

MEL

(ignoring MINNIE)

Higher.

SUE is well above his shin and kneading his thigh. DAVID grabs
SUE by the elbow and pulls her away.

DAVID

Would you folks excuse us a moment?

MINNIE

Take two.

MEL

But my leg still hurts!

DAVID drags SUE across the room. The dialogue below is
whispered.

DAVID

What are you doing?

SUE

Selling a damn house!

DAVID

By rubbing an old man's thigh?

SUE

At least he's got a woody.

DAVID is shocked. SUE walks over to the SOLOMONS. DAVID
follows.

SUE

This will be a model for all future retirement communities!

DAVID

Don't you mean retirement Meccas?

SUE

The homes were designed by a distinguished team of retired architects.

MINNIE

Like the tampons?

SUE

I beg your pardon?

MEL

Why would architects design tampons?

MINNIE

Like the ones in the commercial.
Designed by women for women.

SUE

Exactly.

MEL

Does this look like a tampon? We're not buying a tampon, we're buying a house.

MINNIE

Good thing too. If it was a tampon you wouldn't have the guts to buy it.

MEL

What the hell does that mean?

MINNIE

The last time I asked you to buy tampons you refused.

MEL

That was in the 60's! Men didn't do those things in the 60's!

MINNIE

(to SUE)

There seem to be an awful lot of stairs
for a retirement home.

MEL

What in God's name do you need a tampon
for now? You stopped menstruating in
the winter of '62. God, what a long
winter that was.

SUE

(to MINNIE)

It's like a Stairmaster, but without the
inconvenience of going to the gym.
Keeps the joints limber.

MEL

I don't see a bathroom down here.

SUE

Motivation for climbing the stairs.

MEL

How distinguished were these architects?

SUE

Very.

MINNIE

(looking out window)

That's an awfully big yard to take care
of....

SUE

You know those tampons sure looked
strange to me when I first saw them, but
boy was I glad to have them!

DAVID grabs SUE by the elbow and starts to drag her away.

DAVID

Why don't you folks have a look around
on your own? Without us pesky
salespeople bothering you.

MEL

(to MINNIE)

There they go again.

MINNIE

Young people.

DAVID pulls SUE away from the SOLOMONS to the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR, MODEL HOME - DAY

DAVID and SUE stand framed in the doorway. Behind them MEL wanders around tapping walls, while MINNIE climbs the stairs -- very slowly. The FARMER watches DAVID and SUE.

DAVID

They're not stupid. They can see it's not a retirement home.

SUE

They're terrific prospects. In a few years Pa will burst a vessel and I'll be reselling for poor widowed Ma.

DAVID

Sue --

SUE

Just back up my pitch, okay?

DAVID

I won't lie to them.

SUE

Guaranteed to sign an offer in the next hour.

DAVID

Give it up. It's not going anywhere.

SUE

Nothing goes anywhere in your life.

DAVID

What does that mean?

SUE

You don't give a damn about my career, do you?

DAVID

Sure I do. I wish you every success.

SUE
Christ. That's the sort of thing you'd
say to someone you're dumping.

DAVID
Can't we discuss this later?

SUE
If you loved me, you'd be more
supportive of my career.

DAVID
I am supportive.

SUE
Do you love me?

DAVID
Real supportive.

SUE
It's a simple question.

DAVID
There are no simple questions.

SUE
You can't say it, can you?

DAVID
Sure I can.

SUE
Go ahead.

DAVID
(quickly)
Love you. Happy?

SUE
Could you say it any faster? I almost
made out one of the words.

DAVID
What do you want from me?

SUE
You're going to leave me, aren't you?

DAVID
No. Never. Probably not.

SUE
Probably not?

DAVID
People change.

SUE
Bastard!

SUE storms out of the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

SUE walks across the lot to the sales office as the FARMER watches her. Behind him his cow munches on some grass.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, MODEL HOME - DAY

DAVID stands in the doorway staring after SUE. MEL has disappeared and MINNIE is on the fifth step.

MINNIE
Hey. I'm limber.

DAVID turns towards MINNIE.

MINNIE (CONT'D)
I need help down the stairs.

DAVID
Oh. Sorry.

DAVID hurries over to the stairs and helps her down.

MINNIE
You're such a nice boy.

DAVID
I wish it were true.

MINNIE

Go after her. That's what she wants.

DAVID

I'm not sure that I want to.

MINNIE

I know what you mean. When I first met Mel I couldn't have imagined us lasting forty years later.

DAVID purses his lips and looks off to the side, trying to imagine his future with SUE.

CUT TO:

EXT. A TWO-STOREY HOUSE - DAY

The house resembles the Cleaver's house in "Leave it to Beaver". A car pulls into the drive and DAVID gets out dressed like Mel, wearing Bermuda shorts, white walking shoes, a Hawaiian shirt and gaudy sunglasses. He also carries a briefcase. SUE opens the door. She is dressed in a leather miniskirt, spike heels, and an apron. She has no top on and the apron barely conceals her breasts. Her hair is dishevelled, her face flushed, and she holds a bowl of batter she is stirring it with a wooden spoon. A tanned, well-muscled young man, wearing only cut-offs and sneakers and holding a pair of garden shears, pushes past.

YOUNG MAN

Let me know if that nasty old drain gets clogged again.

ESTHER

(to YOUNG MAN)

I will. Thanks so much.

The YOUNG MAN passes DAVID, ignoring him.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

(impatiently, to DAVID)

Did you get my tampons?

CUT TO:

MINNIE

Isn't the sex good?

DAVID

What?

MINNIE

You know. Intercourse. Unless you prefer non-penetrative sex. I like oral sex myself. It gives me a feeling of power.

DAVID

(uncomfortable)

Couldn't we talk about the house?

MINNIE

Mel doesn't like it though.

DAVID

The house?

MINNIE

Blow jobs.

DAVID

We've got a wonderful financing package. Very affordable.

MINNIE

Selfish bastard. What does it hurt to let someone go down on you once in a while?

DAVID

Have you seen the kitchen? There's an island with a built-in range!

MINNIE

Is it my fault if I have to go elsewhere for a bit of pleasure from time to time?

MINNIE smiles seductively at him.

MINNIE (CONT'D)

Did I tell you what a nice looking boy you are?

DAVID

Excuse me. I've got to, uh, go some place else.

MINNIE

(encouragingly)

Good for you.

CUT TO:

EXT. MODEL HOME - DAY

DAVID runs across the lot and into the sales office while the FARMER watches.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

DAVID enters the sales office and passes into the back room. The shades have been shut again and the room is gloomy. SUE lies on the couch, her back to him. As soon as she hears DAVID enter, she begins sniffing.

DAVID

Um, you okay?

SUE

I'm crying, aren't I? Do you cry when you're okay?

SUE turns and sits up on the couch, wiping her eyes.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

SUE

For what?

DAVID

(hesitating)

I'm not sure.

SUE lies down again, her back a wall to DAVID.

SUE

You've got to do something before you can be sorry for it.

DAVID walks over to the couch and places a hand on her shoulder.

DAVID

Look, I'm sorry. What else can I say?

SUE says nothing, but her sniffing stops. DAVID strokes her. SUE guides his hand down along the curve of her body, then hooks his fingers under the hem of her skirt. SUE's breathing

quickens. She reaches back and pulls DAVID until his crotch presses against her buttocks.

SUE

You won't let me down, will you?

O.S. SOUND: A CAR HORN.

DAVID pulls away.

SUE

Shit!

SUE punches the couch. The CAR HORN SOUNDS AGAIN IMPATIENTLY.

DAVID

I'd better go see what the Solomons want.

SUE

Fuck the Solomons. Stay here.

DAVID

They'll come looking for us.

SUE

Then let's really shock them this time.

DAVID

They'd probably want a foursome.

The HORN SOUNDS AGAIN, A LONG SUSTAINED BEEP.

DAVID heads for the door.

SUE

Wait!

DAVID

They're prospects.

DAVID exits. SUE collapses onto the couch.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A vintage Cadillac is parked in front of the model home next to the SOLOMON'S car. HOWARD sits in the driver's seat, his notebook on the dash. He wears a ruffled suit and wrap-around

sunglasses. He leans on the horn. DAVID frowns and hurries across the lot, the FARMER and cow watching him.

DAVID
What are you doing here?

HOWARD
Dad sent me out.

HOWARD nods at the SOLOMON's car.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Prospects?

DAVID
Maybe.

HOWARD
Dad isn't happy. You guys haven't posted anything on the board in two months.

HOWARD opens the glove compartment. It crammed full of candy bars. He pulls one out and starts unwrapping it.

DAVID
There's nothing happening out here. No bulldozers, no graders, no construction workers. Half the time we don't even have power.

HOWARD
We're not the developers. We're the sales agents.

DAVID
But your dad can talk to the developers....

HOWARD
'Don't bring me problems, bring me solutions.'

DAVID
Another one of your Dad's sayings?

HOWARD
Yeah. He came up with that one yesterday. Wanna here more? 'When the
(MORE)

tough go, the going gets tough.' No, that's not it. It's 'When the tough get going --'

DAVID

Couldn't you get Sue out of here, give her some real leads?

HOWARD

There aren't enough leads for the guys back at the office. All they do is sit around all day drinking coffee. 'Coffee doesn't grow on trees.'

DAVID

Dad again?

HOWARD nods and bites into the candy bar.

DAVID

You said you were my friend.

HOWARD

(petulantly)

I got you this job. I even got one for Sue. When nobody was taking on new agents.

(proudly)

Howard Penske doesn't forget his friends.

HOWARD offers DAVID the bar.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

But business is business.
Bite?

DAVID

No. Howard, I'm asking you as a friend, couldn't you get Sue out of here, give her a few leads --

HOWARD

Don't you want her around anymore?

DAVID

Yes.... I mean no.

HOWARD

(brightening)

Are you two breaking up?

DAVID

No.

HOWARD

(hopefully)

I can fire her if you like.

(he pauses)

But don't you think it would be more honest if you confronted her.

DAVID

We're not breaking up.

HOWARD

Then you don't want her out of here.

DAVID

I just want her to be happy.

HOWARD

So you do want her out of here. You just don't want to feel guilty about it.

DAVID

She needs some leads.

HOWARD

Maybe you two should see a therapist.

HOWARD crams the rest of the candy bar in his mouth, crumples the wrapper and throws it on the ground.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Is that a real cow?

MEL emerges from the model home and walks towards HOWARD and DAVID.

DAVID

Look, Howard --

MEL

The basement's leaking. And it hasn't rained for weeks.

HOWARD

The foundation is sweating. Happens to all new houses.

MEL

I'd rather have a basement full of rain than sweat. Who are you?

HOWARD pulls a card out of his jacket and proffers it to MEL.

HOWARD

Howard Penske of Penske Realty. Do you know if that's a real cow?

MEL

Cow's real. Not sure about the farmer. So, do you have any houses that don't sweat?

HOWARD

I like sweat.

MEL

I don't want to live in a house that smell's like a Frenchman's armpit.

DAVID

It's not really sweat.

HOWARD

Say you're at the beach and it's a hot day. A beautiful woman in a bikini walks by, shiny with sweat....

MEL

Like on Baywatch?

HOWARD

Great action show.

MEL

I don't think women understand that show.

HOWARD

It's too complicated. Did you know the house comes with a satellite dish?

MEL

Yeah, the girl told me. I wouldn't mind seeing a fine sheen of sweat on her.

HOWARD

My point exactly.

MEL

You're good.

HOWARD

Thanks. Have the kids shown you the other models. The non-sweating ones?

MEL

No. They've been fighting.

DAVID

We weren't fighting --

HOWARD

Happens all the time. Just ignore it.

MEL

So, are you here to give us the pitch? The kids are likeable, but they're not much on selling.

HOWARD

Yeah, I know what you mean.

(looks at DAVID)

But Howard Penske doesn't forget his friends.

MEL

That explains a lot.

HOWARD reaches for his book and thumbs through it.

HOWARD

I could tell you things.

MEL

So, you going to sell us a house?

HOWARD

(flipping pages)

Like to, but they've got to learn sometime. Do you mind?

MEL

No problem. But can I call you later for the real pitch?

HOWARD

Sure.

DAVID, who looks exasperated, takes MEL by the elbow and steers him toward the sales office.

DAVID

If you'd like to wait in the office for a moment, I'd be happy to go through the other floor plans we have.

MEL

You're not going to hurt me again?

MEL's momentum carries him towards the sales office while DAVID swings around and returns to the car. MINNIE emerges from the model home and walks slowly towards the car.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

SUE sits on the couch in the dark. She's taken her blouse off and wears a sexy black bra. She's feeling her breasts in a critical way, as if she's trying to determine if they're still good. SUE hears MEL stumble into something in the outer office. SUE plumps her breasts and places herself in the same position she was in when DAVID left moments before, her back to the door. MEL enters the back room.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

DAVID stands next to the car while HOWARD scribbles in his book. As they talk, MINNIE walks towards them.

DAVID

Howard, listen to me. Can you get Sue some leads?

HOWARD looks up from his notebook. In the background, MINNIE pauses, then heads for the sales office.

HOWARD

Oh, yeah. Sue....

HOWARD thumbs one of the tabs on the notebook and flips pages until he finds a blank page. HOWARD writes in big letters, "RELATIONSHIP BREAKING UP".

DAVID
We're not breaking up.

HOWARD adds, in parentheses, "DAVID IN DENIAL". He snaps the book shut and throws it on the dashboard.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

SUE lies on the couch her back to MEL.

SUE
Come here.

MEL hesitates. SUE hooks a finger under the hem of her skirt and hikes it higher on her thigh. MEL stares at her exposed thigh, then moves towards her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

DAVID stands next to HOWARD's car.

HOWARD
Get in. We've got to go.

DAVID
What?

HOWARD
Dad sent me out to get you. We've got a hot lead for you.

DAVID
I don't need a lead. Give it to Sue....

HOWARD
Sorry. They requested you. Not Sue.

DAVID
But I've got Mr. Solomon waiting in the office.

HOWARD

Sue can handle him.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM, SALES OFFICE - DAY

Without looking around, SUE reaches behind and fumbles with MEL's zipper. SUE undoes his zipper and reaches inside his pants.

SOUND FX: THE CRINKLING OF PLASTIC.

SUE (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

MEL

Depends. Can't be too careful at my age.

C.U. SUE -- she freezes. MINNIE enters the back room. MEL and SUE don't notice her.

SUE

Mr Solomon?

MEL

Please, call me Mel.

MINNIE

Is that you Mel?

MEL

Who else would it be?

MINNIE opens the blinds. The FARMER stands just outside the window staring in. In front of MINNIE, SUE is on the couch with her hand in MEL's pants.

MEL

(to SUE, feigning shock)

What the hell is your hand doing in my pants?

MINNIE blanches. Outraged, she hobbles out of the office as fast as she can.

MEL

Wait!

MEL turns to chase after MINNIE.

SUE

My hand!

MEL struggles towards the door, dragging SUE off the couch.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

DAVID reluctantly climbs into the passenger seat of HOWARD's car. MINNIE creeps out of the sales office. O.S. we hear a shriek and a crash. DAVID and HOWARD watch as MINNIE moves towards her car. Another crash comes from the sales office and more shouts. DAVID gets out of HOWARD's car and hurries to MINNIE.

HOWARD

(to DAVID)

Get back in the car!

DAVID

(to MINNIE)

Is everything all right?

MINNIE

Pimp!

MINNIE swings her cane around and cracks DAVID across the shin. DAVID yelps and grabs his shin. MINNIE gets in her car. DAVID hops back to HOWARD's car, wincing in pain. HOWARD opens the passenger door.

HOWARD

Ready?

DAVID collapses into the seat.

DAVID

Did you see that?

It takes MINNIE several tries to close her car door. MEL stumbles out of the office, doing up his zipper. He moves slowly towards the car but it squeals off just as he reaches it.

MEL

Wait! I can explain!

MEL ambles after the car.

HOWARD

Looks like Sue blew that one.

HOWARD starts the car and backs out, forcing DAVID to swing his legs inside the car. DAVID turns in his seat to see SUE stumbling out of the office, her blouse half on, one high-heel shoe on, the other in her hand. HOWARD swings the car around and onto the road.

HOWARD
(waving at cow)
Bye cow!

SUE
(to HOWARD and DAVID)
Come back you bastards!

HOWARD and DAVID drive out of shot, DAVID staring back at SUE. SUE drops her shoe, grabs a rock, and throws it after the car.

SUE
Shit, shit, shit!

The FARMER steps out from behind the sales office. He looks SUE up and down.

FARMER
What's your asking price?

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD'S CADILLAC - DAY

HOWARD drives quickly, making several abrupt turns, and humming to himself. DAVID sits in the front seat looking uneasy and glancing backwards.

DAVID
Maybe we should go back.

HOWARD
Where?

DAVID
To the site.

HOWARD
Why?

DAVID
Didn't you see her?

HOWARD

Yeah. She was driving pretty fast for an old lady.

DAVID

Not Minnie! Sue!

HOWARD

Who's Minnie Sue?

DAVID

Sue! Sue!

HOWARD

Oh, her.

HOWARD increases speed.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

She knows how to take of herself. Besides, I got you this hot lead.

(brightly)

You're going to love it!

DAVID

I don't care about the lead!

DAVID looks glumly out the window. HOWARD glances over at him.

HOWARD

What's the matter, buddy?

DAVID

I'm not your buddy.

HOWARD

You always say that when you're mad. Have a chocolate bar.

DAVID

I'm not mad.

HOWARD

You want an ice cream?

DAVID

No.

HOWARD

Ice cream always cheers me up.

DAVID
I'm fine.

HOWARD
(angrily)
Except at that place with the clown!

DAVID stares at HOWARD.

HOWARD
(remembering himself)
You could get the sprinkles. My
treat....

DAVID
(irritably)
I said no.

HOWARD
You don't have to yell.

HOWARD abruptly swings the car into the parking lot of a seedy bar and squeals to a halt.

DAVID
Why are we stopping?

HOWARD switches off the engine, grabs his notebook, jumps out of the car and heads to the bar. DAVID stays in his seat staring dubiously at the dilapidated structure and the line of motorcycles outside.

DAVID
(shouting after HOWARD)
Is this the vendor?

HOWARD disappears inside the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEEDY BAR PARKING LOT - DAY

DAVID sighs and climbs out of the Cadillac. He trudges, with a slight limp, up to the bar and pushes through the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SEEDY BAR - DAY

DAVID stands in the doorway. HOWARD sits on a stool at the bar, his notebook and pen in front of him. At the back of the room are several BIKERS lounging around a pool table, wreathed in a cloud of smoke. A large BIKER enters the bar bumping into DAVID. The BIKER curses and pushes past. On the back of the BIKER's jacket is the gang's name, CONUNDRUMS, and their colors which include a handheld scale with question marks on either side of the scale. HOWARD gestures at DAVID to join him. DAVID reluctantly walks over.

 HOWARD
Sit down, pal.

 DAVID
I'm not your pal.

 HOWARD
Great place, huhn?

Several BIKERS look up from the game of pool. Two walk towards them.

 DAVID
 (whispering)
Are you crazy?

 HOWARD
Why are you whispering?

 DAVID
 (talking low, but
 trying not to whisper)
I'm not whispering.

 HOWARD
 (talking low like DAVID)
Yes you are.

The two BIKERS walk just behind them. DAVID climbs onto the stool next to HOWARD to get out of the way. One of the BIKERS brushes DAVID lightly as he passes.

 HOWARD
Hi fellas!

The BIKERS ignore HOWARD and walk out the door.

 HOWARD (CONT'D)
 (looking after the BIKERS)

That wasn't very nice.

HOWARD opens his book and scribbles something. The BIKERS at the back of the room watch HOWARD writing.

DAVID
Bikers aren't nice people.

HOWARD
No. I meant you calling me crazy.

DAVID
(exasperated)
Howard, what are we doing here?

HOWARD snaps the notebook shut.

HOWARD
It's what friends do. We'll have a beer
and you can tell me all your troubles.

DAVID
I don't want to tell you my troubles.

HOWARD
One beer.

DAVID
At 11:00 in the morning?

HOWARD
(insistent)
It's what friends do.

DAVID
I'm not your friend!

A large, burly bartender glides over.

BARTENDER
What d'ya want?

HOWARD
A beer for my pal. And do you have any
ice cream?

BARTENDER
You've got to be kidding.

HOWARD

With sprinkles?

BARTENDER
Are you trying to be a smartass?

DAVID
(placating)
No, no. He likes ice cream.

BARTENDER
We don't have ice cream.

HOWARD
Okay, I'll have a milk.

The BARTENDER places his fists on the bar.

BARTENDER
No milk.

HOWARD
What do you steam for your cappuccino?

The BARTENDER leans forward.

DAVID
He doesn't mean anything --

BARTENDER
The machine's broke.

The BARTENDER points to a large cappuccino machine at the end of the bar.

HOWARD
What about cream for your coffee?

BARTENDER
Yeah. We got that.

HOWARD
One glass of cream, please.

The BARTENDER and DAVID look at HOWARD.

HOWARD
What?

The BARTENDER leaves to get the drinks. As HOWARD and DAVID talk, we can see the BARTENDER draw a beer and open a dozen tiny creamers and pour them into a glass.

HOWARD

You know what you need, buddy? You need to close a deal.

DAVID

A deal?

HOWARD

Yeah. That'll make you forget about Sue.

DAVID

I'm not trying to forget Sue.

HOWARD

Let it go.

DAVID

We haven't broken up.

HOWARD

Move on with your life.

DAVID sags.

DAVID

(sourly)

What life?

HOWARD

See? Isn't this great? Two buddies talking.

DAVID looks away from HOWARD and stares morosely at his reflection in the mirror behind the bar. When he talks again it's as if he's forgotten HOWARD is there.

DAVID

She says that I'm too passive.

HOWARD

(feigning shock)

No!

DAVID

And she's right.

HOWARD

Would a passive guy be drinking a beer
at 11:00?

DAVID

I've drifted through life, avoiding all
the hard decisions.

HOWARD

Like whether to get hard or soft ice
cream?

DAVID

(fiercely)

I keep telling myself I have plenty of
time to make the life I want. It's
always, 'Later....'

HOWARD

Do you see a washroom in here?

DAVID

Only now it's 'later'. I'm thirty-five
and I still have no idea what I want!

HOWARD

My eyeballs are floating.

DAVID

We've been going out for a year now --

HOWARD

Six months.

DAVID

-- and I don't know how I feel about
her.

HOWARD

Do you see a can in here?

DAVID

How can I relate to someone who's
twenty-five? She doesn't even remember
Duran Duran!

HOWARD

She's got a great ass.

The BARTENDER returns with the drinks.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
(to the BARTENDER)
Where's the little boy's room?

DAVID
Maybe I made a mistake....

CUT TO:

EXT. A TWO-STOREY HOUSE - DAY

The house is the same one DAVID fantasized before, resembling the Cleaver's house in "Leave it to Beaver". A car pulls into the drive and DAVID gets out, wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase. He walks to the front door. ESTHER opens the door. She is dressed like a sexy, modern June Cleaver, except for the red sneakers. She holds a martini. Smiling, she proffers it to DAVID. In the background is a wizened Japanese gardener who pauses in his work and nods deferentially to DAVID.

CUT TO:

INT. SEEDY BAR - DAY

With his thumb, the BARTENDER indicates the washroom is at the back of the bar. DAVID becomes aware of HOWARD again.

DAVID
And I hate this job!

HOWARD
(joining in with enthusiasm)
So do I!

DAVID
(his anger sapped)
No you don't.

HOWARD
Yes. Yes I do. I hate this job!

DAVID
Agreeing with someone doesn't make you
their friend.

HOWARD

I hate this job more than you do!
Double stamp it!

HOWARD smiles triumphantly. He takes a swig of his cream,
leaving a cream moustache. DAVID looks away.

BARTENDER
Me, I love my job.

DAVID
(irritably)
Who asked you?

BARTENDER
Snippy.

HOWARD
You're better off without her.

DAVID
What do you know about it?

HOWARD
You said, 'Maybe we should go back.'

DAVID
So?

HOWARD
If it was my girlfriend, and I was
really worried, I'd have said, 'Take me
back!'

BARTENDER
He's right.

DAVID
(to HOWARD)
Shut up and drink your cream.
(to BARTENDER)
And you go fix your cappuccino machine.

BARTENDER
Geez. What a grouch.

HOWARD
He gets that way sometimes.

HOWARD slides off his stool.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Back in a sec.

DAVID

Where are you going?

HOWARD

To shed a tear.

HOWARD trots off to the back of the bar and pushes through a plywood door. 'Conundrums Clubhouse' has been spray painted on the door. The BARTENDER, wiping glasses, leans over to look at HOWARD's notebook.

BARTENDER

'Howard Penske's Enemies'? Who's Howard Penske?

DAVID slides the notebook away from the BARTENDER. The BARTENDER pretends indifference and ambles away. DAVID stares the notebook, glances at the washroom, then flips open the cover. Pasted inside the first page are several pictures of clowns. DAVID turns the page to find pictures of mimes. On the third page is a tab, and written at the top of the page in large block letters is the name BRENT HAYWARD. DAVID flips through pages and pages of writing. Each tab corresponds to a new name. Near the back of the book the writing suddenly stops, then starts again, but upside down. DAVID turns the book upside down and flips back pages until he reaches the last page. It is the only one to have a tab in the upside down section of the notebook. At the top of the page is the name DAVID HULL. DAVID closes the notebook and on the back cover is a hand lettered title, HOWARD PENSKE'S FRIENDS.

FAT BIKER (O.C.)

What's in the book, faggot?

DAVID looks up as a FAT BIKER and SKINNY BIKER take seats on either side of him.

SKINNY BIKER

Yeah. What's in the book?

FAT BIKER

You narcs? Maybe spying on us?

SKINNY BIKER

Fucking cream-drinkers.

DAVID pulls the notebook off the bar. Behind DAVID, HOWARD emerges from the washroom and walks towards them.

DAVID
(nervously)
Nothing. Just a notebook. Say, can I
buy you guys a beer?
(to BARTENDER)
Two beers for my friends!

At the word 'friends', HOWARD stops in his tracks, a few feet away.

SKINNY BIKER
(to FAT BIKER)
I'd really rather have a cappuccino.
Beer gives me gas.

BARTENDER
Machine's broke. How many times do I
have to say it?

DAVID
I'll go get one! Be right back --

SKINNY BIKER
(to BARTENDER)
Maybe you should put up a sign.

As DAVID slides off the stool the FAT BIKER grabs his arm.

FAT BIKER
If it's nothing, then you won't mind us
having a look.

HOWARD walks up and snatches his notebook from DAVID's hand.

FAT BIKER
Just a minute, shorty --

HOWARD
(to DAVID)
You called them your friends.

DAVID
(nervously, to HOWARD)
Howard, we have a little problem
here....

BARTENDER

Are you talking about the cappuccino
machine again?

The FAT BIKER swings DAVID around so he is bent backwards against
the bar.

HOWARD
(to DAVID)
You wouldn't call me your friend.

BARTENDER
That's not very nice.

DAVID
(nervously, to HOWARD)
They're not my friends --

FAT BIKER
What?

BARTENDER
(to DAVID)
Make up your mind.

HOWARD
I thought you were my friend.

SKINNY BIKER
(to DAVID)
Aw, you've hurt the fat guy's feelings.

The SKINNY BIKER laughs loudly.

FAT BIKER
(to SKINNY BIKER)
He's not so fat.

The SKINNY BIKER looks incredulously at the FAT BIKER.

SKINNY BIKER
What?

FAT BIKER
There's no reason to call him fat.

SKINNY BIKER
He's a fat bag of guts.

FAT BIKER

He's big-boned.

SKINNY BIKER

Says who?

FAT BIKER

(becoming angry, shaking DAVID)

Says me, you stupid fuck!

The SKINNY BIKER leaps off his stool, knocking it backwards. He pulls a switchblade.

SKINNY BIKER

Don't call me stupid!

The FAT BIKER stands up. The two bikers face each other with DAVID sandwiched between.

HOWARD

Yeah, don't call him stupid.

FAT BIKER

Stay out of this you fat fuck.

HOWARD

You shouldn't call each other names.

FAT BIKER

He started it!

HOWARD

You're friends, aren't you?

The two BIKERS look at each other, then nod.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

My Dad says friends respect each others' feelings. They don't name call.

The FAT BIKER's expression softens. He sits down again.

FAT BIKER

The little faggot's got a point.

SKINNY BIKER

(still angry)

I'm not stupid.

FAT BIKER

Okay, okay. I'm sorry.

The SKINNY BIKER puts away his switchblade, but still looks miffed.

SKINNY BIKER
All right, then.

Both BIKERS are suddenly shy at their reconciliation.

HOWARD
(to DAVID)
See, that's what friends do.

O.S. sound: SEVERAL MOTORCYCLES PULLING UP BEHIND THE BAR. The walls shake and dust drifts down from cracks. DAVID, HOWARD and the two BIKERS look towards a door on the back wall swings open and crashes into the wall behind. Several extremely large BIKERS are silhouetted in the doorway. As they step into the bar we can see they are dressed in clown costumes complete with greasepaint, making them a grotesque cross between bikers and clowns. HOWARD shrieks and runs out the front door.

DAVID
(desperate)
Howard! Wait!

FAT BIKER
What's the matter with him?

SKINNY BIKER
I think the clowns scared him.
(to DAVID)
It's for the parade. We do it every year.

DAVID
I'm sure the kids will love them.

FAT BIKER
Are you mocking us?

DAVID
No! not at all. I mean, you'd have to be secure in your masculinity to dress like that.

SKINNY BIKER
What the hell does that mean?

DAVID
Faggots wouldn't do it.

SKINNY BIKER
Are you calling us faggots?

The SKINNY BIKER pull his knife again. DAVID's desperation grows and he tries to edge away. He glances down at the feet of the stool on which the FAT BIKER sits.

FAT BIKER
Where are you going?

DAVID
To get a cappuccino?

FAT BIKER
We're not finished yet.

DAVID looks again at the legs of the stool. He shouts and suddenly kicks at a leg. But the stool doesn't move and DAVID winces in pain and starts hopping, the BIKER still holding his arm.

SKINNY BIKER
Now that's stupid.

FAT BIKER
Hey! What did we say about name calling....

SKINNY BIKER
I didn't call you a name! I called the faggot a name!

DAVID
(pointing to back of room)
Narcs!

The two bikers look and DAVID tears his arm free and breaks for the door, half running, half skipping. The two BIKERS watch him with puzzled expressions. The FAT BIKER picks up HOWARD's pen from bar.

FAT BIKER
Hey, you forgot your pen!

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT, SEEDY BAR - DAY

As DAVID emerges from the bar he runs into the side of HOWARD's car and falls to the ground, the wind knocked out of him. The car is parked right outside the door, engine running. HOWARD has his dark glasses on.

HOWARD
(cooly, not looking at DAVID)
Get in.

Gasping, DAVID struggles to his knees, opens the door and falls into the car.

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD'S CADILLAC - DAY

HOWARD stares straight ahead. DAVID manages to pull himself inside the car and close the door.

DAVID
(gasping)
Thank God! I thought you'd left!

HOWARD
(cooly)
Howard Penske doesn't forget his friends. Even when they forget him.

HOWARD turns slowly to stare at DAVID, but does not drive.

DAVID
Go, go, go!

HOWARD squeals off, clipping the row of motorcycles and knocking over several. DAVID watches in horror.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Faster!

HOWARD drives quickly.

HOWARD
Why did you call them your friends?

DAVID
Because they were going to kill me!

HOWARD

Am I your friend?

DAVID
Geez, Howard, can we talk about this
later?

HOWARD
No.

HOWARD jams on the brakes. Behind them a car swerves, narrowly missing them, its horn blaring. DAVID glances back nervously at the seedy bar which is still in sight.

HOWARD
We'll talk about it now.

DAVID
They weren't my friends, Howard!

DAVID sees several BIKERS emerge from the bar and gesticulate angrily at their motorcycles.

HOWARD
And what about me? Am I your friend?

DAVID
Yes!

HOWARD
Prove it.

One of the bikers points at HOWARD's car. DAVID looks panicky. He snatches up HOWARD's notebook from the dash.

DAVID
Your book! I wouldn't let them have it!
That's what started the whole thing!

HOWARD contemplates this for a beat.

HOWARD
Okay, then.

HOWARD grabs the notebook and throws it back on the dash. In the background the bikers struggle to untangle their bikes. Several run on foot towards the car. HOWARD stomps on the accelerator and roars around a corner. Then he jams on the brakes, and DAVID is thrown forward so that he has to break his momentum by putting his hands on the dash.

DAVID

What now?

HOWARD

We're here.

HOWARD reaches in his pocket, extracts a crumpled listing and shoves it at DAVID.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

The name's Spencer. Three bedroom detached. You owe me.

HOWARD reaches across and opens DAVID's door.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN - DAY

DAVID stumbles out of the car and onto a front lawn. His suit is a mess. The door closes. A candy bar flies out of the open window and DAVID catches it. He holds the crumpled listing in his other hand. HOWARD's car roars off. DAVID watches it momentarily. O.S. the SOUND OF MOTORCYCLES. DAVID ducks behind a tree as a pack of motorcycles roars past. He watches them until the sound diminishes. Then he steps out from behind the tree and turns to the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. A TWO-STOREY HOUSE IN AN OLDER NEIGHBOURHOOD - DAY

DAVID is nonplussed to see the house is identical to the one in his earlier fantasy.

SFX: THE HOUSE TRANSFORMS INTO A DIFFERENT, BUT VERY SIMILAR, HOUSE.

DAVID blinks and shakes his head. He realizes the house is not the one from his fantasy. DAVID smooths his suit, brushing off dust. He limps up to the front door. Before he can ring the bell the door is pulled open by ESTHER. She wears a sweatshirt, faded jeans and red sneakers, but holds no martini.

ESTHER

Why didn't you call?

DAVID looks from side to side, then proffers her the candy bar.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

I can't really blame you. But I'd like to know why.

DAVID
I, uh, lost your number.

ESTHER
Oh.

DAVID
It blew out the window.

ESTHER
Strong winds in your house?

DAVID
I was in a car...

ESTHER
Yes.

DAVID
...and it blew out the window...

ESTHER
I see.

DAVID
...and it was sucked under a street cleaning machine.

ESTHER
Of course.

DAVID
That's the way it happened.

An awkward moment of silence passes. DAVID lowers the candy bar. In the background HOWARD's car roar by, followed by an angry swarm of motorcycles.

ESTHER
I guess I shouldn't have requested you.

DAVID
For what?

ESTHER
As my agent.

DAVID

Oh, right.

ESTHER

If you're uncomfortable I can get a different agent.

DAVID

No. I'm fine.

ESTHER appraises him for a beat.

ESTHER

Okay. Come in.

ESTHER takes the candy bar from his hand and steps back.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Limping, DAVID follows ESTHER into the living room.

ESTHER

Sit down.

DAVID sits uneasily. ESTHER sits next to him, her thigh next to his.

ESTHER

How much?

DAVID

(confused)

How much?

ESTHER

For the house. How much do you think I can get?

DAVID

Oh, yeah.

DAVID unfolds the crumpled paper on his thigh and looks at it.

DAVID

It says E. Spencer on the listing.

ESTHER

Lawler was my married name. Spencer is
my maiden name.

She holds up her hand, displaying her ringless finger.

DAVID
I'm sorry.

ESTHER
I'm not.

DAVID
(awkwardly)
It's probably a good thing.

ESTHER
You mean because I got the house?

DAVID
No. I mean because you're no longer
trapped in a loveless marriage.

ESTHER
There's that too.

Their eyes lock for a moment. Embarrassed, DAVID looks away,
smoothing the listing again.

DAVID
This listing is old. What happened to
the last agent?

ESTHER
I didn't like him.

DAVID
No action?

ESTHER raises her eyebrows.

DAVID (CONT'D)
On the house.

ESTHER
Very little.

DAVID
(awkwardly)
You said you requested me....

ESTHER

I saw an ad in the paper. Your picture
doesn't do you justice.

(warmly)

You're much nicer looking in person.

DAVID

(embarrassed, speaking quickly)

Howard likes to put bad pictures of his
agents in the paper. He thinks it makes
us look vulnerable.

ESTHER

(sweetly)

It does. Howard?

DAVID

Howard Penske. His dad owns Penske Real
Estate. We were both in your class.

ESTHER

That was a while ago.

DAVID

I wanted to call you.

ESTHER

You're just saying that to assuage your
guilty conscience. I don't need a
consolation prize.

DAVID

No, really.

ESTHER

So why didn't you call me?

DAVID

I swear I lost your number.

ESTHER

Then why not ask the school?

DAVID

They'd never have given me your number.

ESTHER

They'd pass on a message.

DAVID furrows his brow but says nothing.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

It was my age, wasn't it?

DAVID

No.

ESTHER

Then what was it?

DAVID

You were older.

ESTHER

At least it had nothing to do with my age.

DAVID

What I meant was that you've already had your life.

ESTHER

I'm not dead yet.

DAVID

You've been lots of places, seen lots of things --

ESTHER

Been with lots of men?

DAVID

Done lots of things I haven't.

ESTHER

You were afraid I'd be bored by you?

DAVID

You scared me.

ESTHER

Good.

DAVID

It all seemed too much. A beautiful, sophisticated woman...

ESTHER

Keep going.

DAVID
...who was married.

ESTHER
I've been trying to forget that.

DAVID
If you hadn't been married....

They lock gazes again. This time ESTHER looks away. Both are embarrassed. DAVID puts the listing on the coffee table. ESTHER smooths her hair with the hand holding the candy bar.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
Well, then. Would you like a tour?

DAVID
It's traditional.

They both rise from the couch at the same time and bump, throwing each other off balance. DAVID grabs her shoulders to steady her, and ESTHER puts her hands on DAVID's hips, one hand still curled around the candy bar, its end sticking out of her fist. Their faces are only a handspan apart and the sexual tension between them is palpable.

ESTHER
Sorry.

DAVID
My fault.

ESTHER
Shall we?

DAVID
Yes.

ESTHER
Start on the second floor?

DAVID
The tour?

ESTHER
Yes.

DAVID

Fine.

ESTHER pulls away from DAVID and climbs the stairs. DAVID follows.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY, ESTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

DAVID follows ESTHER down the hall.

ESTHER
The master bedroom?

DAVID
Why not?

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

C.U. of a crumpled candy wrapper laying on the floor at the foot of the bed. Pan up the length of the bed to DAVID and ESTHER under the sheets. DAVID holds up the edge of the sheet and looks underneath, while ESTHER stares at the ceiling. Although they are close to each other, they are not touching.

DAVID
I think I've got chocolate down there.

A moment passes in silence.

ESTHER
You're not going to get all weird on me now, are you?

DAVID
What do you mean?

ESTHER
A lot of men get weird after they have sex.

DAVID
Not me.

DAVID drops the sheet and attempts a smile. He tries to put his arm under ESTHER's shoulders, but instead manages to snag her hair and push her head sideways.

DAVID

Sorry.

(beat)

Do you have the time?

ESTHER

See what I mean?

DAVID

I'm not getting weird. It's just that I
have a dinner...

(hesitates)

...appointment.

ESTHER

You have a date.

DAVID

No. Not really.

ESTHER

You don't have to feel guilty.

DAVID

Right.

ESTHER

I mean it. You couldn't anticipate this
was going to happen.

DAVID

Absolutely.

ESTHER

What you planned earlier has no bearing
on what just happened.

DAVID

I'm seeing someone.

A beat passes as ESTHER absorbs this information.

ESTHER

It slipped your mind, did it?

DAVID

Listen, I --

ESTHER puts her fingers on his lips.

ESTHER
We're both adults. It's okay.
(beat)
At least with me....

DAVID
(defensively, through
her fingers)
What's that supposed to mean?

ESTHER moves her fingers away.

ESTHER
That I bear you no ill will.

DAVID pulls his arm out from under ESTHER's shoulders, again snagging her hair, and sits up in bed.

DAVID
You make it sound like I've done
something wrong.

ESTHER
If the condom fits....

DAVID
You think I'm cheating on her.

ESTHER
Call it an educated guess.

DAVID
You asked me out when you were still
married.

ESTHER
That was different.

DAVID
You're right. Adultery is more serious.

ESTHER
More serious than forgetting you're
seeing someone?

Both cross their arms and stare at the ceiling in silence.

DAVID
We might be breaking up.

ESTHER
You don't know?

DAVID
Howard says we are.

ESTHER
Howard makes your decisions?

DAVID
I'm not sure. I'll have to ask him.

ESTHER
If you're breaking up, there are hints.
Like she becomes distant, you stop
having sex...

DAVID
It's complicated.

ESTHER
(overlapping)
...you catch her poisoning your dog or
hanging your cat.

DAVID
I don't have a cat. But lately my
turtle's been suspiciously lethargic.
And the little plastic tree's gone
missing from his island.

ESTHER
Then it's definitely over.

DAVID
We're in transition.

ESTHER
In transition?

DAVID
I don't think the relationship has legs.

ESTHER
What does that mean?

DAVID
(miserably)
I don't know.

ESTHER
Okay, when was the last time you told
her you loved her?

DAVID
(hesitating)
A while ago.

ESTHER
How long a while ago?

DAVID
(pretending to calculate)
Let's see. It's August. And my
birthday was three months ago.... I'm
not sure exactly.

ESTHER
You told her today, didn't you?

DAVID
She made me.

ESTHER
Was this before or after you possibly
broke up?

DAVID
I didn't mean it.

ESTHER
So you lied to her.

DAVID
Not exactly.

ESTHER
Then you do love her?

DAVID
It's not as simple as that.

ESTHER
Do you have feelings for her?

DAVID stares at the ceiling, thinking.

DAVID
I suppose I have some feelings for her.

ESTHER
Big feelings, little feelings?

DAVID
Medium feelings.

ESTHER
And you don't think you love her.

DAVID
Probably not.

ESTHER
But you're not sure?

DAVID
(hesitating)
I'm pretty sure.

ESTHER
Maybe you should ask Howard.

DAVID
Is there anything wrong with questioning
your feelings?

ESTHER
Yes. If it keeps you from experiencing
them.

DAVID
I just want to be certain.

ESTHER
Of what?

DAVID
Of what I'm feeling. Or not feeling.

ESTHER
You sound very confused.

DAVID

I always get confused when I cheat on someone.

ESTHER

Feelings are confusing. But sometimes you just have let them take their course.

DAVID

And that's why you got married?

ESTHER

When I did it, it felt right. If I'd spent all my time scrutinizing my feelings, I'd be like you: paralyzed and single.

DAVID

You're single too. Remember?

ESTHER stares at her ringless finger, then at DAVID.

ESTHER

(forlornly)

What the hell am I doing here?

DAVID

What feels right.

DAVID strokes ESTHER's hair. She hesitates for a moment, then melts. She snuggles up to him. ESTHER runs her finger in small circles on his chest. DAVID kisses her on the brow. ESTHER pecks him on the cheek. Their lips meet and what starts as a chaste kiss becomes more ardent.

ESTHER

(whispering in DAVID's ear)

That's the problem with chocolate. Once you have one....

DAVID

... you want to finish the whole box.

They kiss passionately.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID lies face down into a pillow, and ESTHER is snuggled next to him. Both are drowsy.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ROCCO's P.O.V., his hand holding a lit cigarette. He takes a drag, then flicks away the cigarette. His hand goes out of shot and returns holding a key which he uses to unlock the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

O.S. SOUND: A DOOR OPENING.

DAVID and ESTHER are still in bed, but ESTHER's eyes are wide open now. She sits up and listens intently. DAVID stirs.

DAVID
(muffled)

Mmm?

ESTHER looks panicky. She shakes DAVID.

ESTHER
(quietly)

Wake up!

DAVID
Whaaa....?

ESTHER
(quietly)
You're late for your dinner appointment!

DAVID blinks. He fumbles for his watch on the night stand and groggily looks at it. O.S. sound: HEAVY FOOTSTEPS DOWNSTAIRS. DAVID turns his head towards the hallway door which is open a crack.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What was that?

ESTHER
(whispering)
A raccoon?

DAVID
(whispering)
In your house?

ESTHER
(whispering)
They're very smart.

DAVID
(listening, then whispering)
Footsteps! A robber!

DAVID scrambles out of bed and in his distraction grabs ESTHER's panties, struggling into them. Oblivious to his mistake, he takes the shade off a bedside lamp, jerks its plug out of the wall and raises the lamp as a weapon. DAVID creeps towards the door. At the same time ESTHER slips out of bed and pulls on a robe. She goes to the window and glances out.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A black Gremlin sits in the driveway

ESTHER (O.C.)
Oh, oh.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID stands at the bedroom door listening, the lamp base raised. ESTHER tiptoes over to him and leans over his shoulder. The following exchange is whispered.

ESTHER
I don't think that lamp will do you much good.

DAVID
Why not?

ESTHER
Because he might have a gun.

DAVID

I saw a report on Sixty Minutes. Most people who break into houses don't carry weapons.

ESTHER

On the other hand, if it's a crazy man....

DAVID

Maybe we should make some noise to scare him away.

ESTHER

Won't work.

DAVID

Why not?

ESTHER

My ex-husband doesn't scare easily.

DAVID looks at her over his shoulder.

DAVID

I beg your pardon?

ESTHER

He still has a key. And his car is in the driveway.

DAVID

You didn't change the locks?
(going into his real estate patter)
You know that's one of the leading facilitators of acquaintanceship crime.

ESTHER

Acquaintanceship crime?

DAVID

Where the victim is acquainted with the perpetrator.

ESTHER

But he doesn't know you.

DAVID

Not me. You. You're the victim.

ESTHER
I wouldn't bet on that.

DAVID
What do you mean?

ESTHER
He's insanely jealous.

DAVID stares at her.

DAVID
You said you were divorced.

ESTHER
Separated.

DAVID
How separated?

ESTHER
(looking away)
Pretty much separated.

DAVID
Is it a big separation or a little
separation?

ESTHER
Oh, medium, I'd say.

O.S. sound: A CRASH AND A MAN'S VOICE MUTTERING.

DAVID
You still live with him, don't you?

ESTHER
Not in the strictest sense.

DAVID
In what sense.

ESTHER
In the sense that he wasn't supposed to
be home until tomorrow.

DAVID
Great.

ESTHER

It's an arrangement of convenience.
Until we can sell this place.

DAVID

And does he conveniently sleep in the
same bed as you?

ESTHER

He sleeps in the basement. We hardly
see each other. We're practically
strangers. Heck, it might not even be
him.

DAVID

Who else could it be?

ESTHER

You can't expect me to know every single
person who comes and goes in this house.

ESTHER and DAVID regard each other for a moment.

DAVID

Look. We're all adults here. I'll talk
to him.

ESTHER

Did I mention Rocco always carries a
gun?

DAVID

Rocco? Great. An insanely jealous guy
named Rocco who carries a gun. If Rocco
doesn't ventilate me, remind me to write
Sixty Minutes.

O.S. sound: HEAVY FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS.

ESTHER

He's coming upstairs! You've got to get
out of here before he finds you!

ESTHER looks around the room.

DAVID

And go where?

ESTHER

The window!

ESTHER hustles DAVID over to the window. DAVID looks out at a narrow, steeply pitched roof below the window ledge.

DAVID

Um, I don't think this is such a good idea.

ESTHER sweeps up his clothes from the floor, shoves them into DAVID's arms and tries to propel him out the window. DAVID resists. O.S. sound: FOOTSTEPS IN THE HALL APPROACHING THE ROOM. DAVID and ESTHER freeze. The footsteps pause near the bedroom door, then reverse. In a moment we hear WATER RUNNING in the bathroom. ESTHER gets DAVID halfway through the window.

DAVID

He's in the bathroom. I'll sneak out the front way.

ESTHER

He always leaves the door open.
(angry)
And the seat up!

DAVID

Did I mention I'm afraid of heights?

ESTHER

It's not that high.

DAVID

I'll take my chances.

The water stops and the FOOTSTEPS approach again. ESTHER kisses DAVID passionately.

ESTHER

Call me?

Before DAVID can answer, ESTHER shoves DAVID completely out the window just as the bedroom door swings open.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID clings to the steeply-pitched roof under the window, clutching his clothes. A raccoon, only a few feet away, stares at him. DAVID glances down at the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID's P.O.V. from the roof. The landscape below spins sickeningly.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID groans quietly. He begins sliding slowly down the roof, then, with a whimper, tumbles over the edge.

ROCCO'S VOICE (O.C.)

What the hell was that?

ESTHER

Raccoon?

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAVID extracts himself from the bushes. He stumbles towards the street and onto the sidewalk. An OLDER WOMAN walking a lap dog passes, pretending not to notice him, while the dog barks and snaps at him.

HOWARD (O.S.)

Over here buddy!

DAVID looks to his left to see HOWARD sitting on the hood of his Cadillac, eating a candy bar. HOWARD tosses the wrapper away and slides off the hood.

HOWARD

So, how did it go?

Speechless, DAVID stares at HOWARD.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

(appraising DAVID)

I think you'd look better in French cut.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, ESTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ROCCO's P.O.V. He stands in the window watching HOWARD's car drive past. The raccoon sits on the roof staring at ROCCO.

ESTHER (O.C.)

See anything.

ROCCO

Roadkill.

The raccoon looks perturbed and scuttles off.

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD'S CADILLAC - NIGHT

DAVID sits glumly next to HOWARD who whistles happily to a Duran Duran tune on the radio. HOWARD notices DAVID's funk.

HOWARD

What's the matter buddy?

DAVID

I'm not your buddy. Why did you send me there?

HOWARD

Looks like you did okay.

DAVID

That's not the point. You knew it was Esther's house!

HOWARD

You didn't want to see her?

DAVID stares out the window but doesn't answer.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

So what's the problem? I just helped you do what you wanted to do.

DAVID

She lied to me.

HOWARD

Most people lie.

DAVID

She's married.

HOWARD

So?

DAVID

Her husband wants to kill me.

HOWARD

I love this part.

DAVID looks at him. HOWARD cranks up the radio and hums along.

DAVID

Howard!

HOWARD turns the radio down.

HOWARD

Geez, you don't have to yell.

DAVID

Can't you have a conversation like a normal person?

HOWARD stomps on the brakes and turns to DAVID.

HOWARD

Of course. Those Mets sure stink this year, don't they?

DAVID

Howard, why are you doing this?

HOWARD

You helped me. I'm trying to help you.

DAVID

I don't need your help.

HOWARD

(glancing at DAVID's panties)
I wouldn't be so sure about that.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

HOWARD's car moves out of shot. A black Gremlin passes through the shot, following.

EXT. FRONT DRIVE, DAVID'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

DAVID, now dressed in his own clothes, steps out of the car, buttoning up his shirt. HOWARD leans towards him.

HOWARD

I'll pick you up at ten for the special promotion.

DAVID

What special promotion?

HOWARD

The parade. Dad wants Penske Real Estate represented. You ride around in a car for a couple of hours waving at people, giving out flyers --

DAVID

Why don't you do it?

HOWARD

(angry)

I hate parades! They're full of clowns!

(calm)

Besides, I suggested you.

DAVID

What about Sue?

HOWARD

She can be in the parade next year.

DAVID

No, I mean did you tell her I wouldn't be at the site tomorrow?

HOWARD

Yeah. So, can I fire her now?

DAVID

No!

HOWARD

Whatever.

HOWARD tosses ESTHER's panties out the window. They hit DAVID and fall to the ground. HOWARD pulls out.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACK GREMLIN - NIGHT

ROCCO's P.O.V. He watches DAVID walk away from HOWARD's car, then exits his car.

EXT. BLACK GREMLIN - NIGHT

ROCCO's P.O.V. Still holding the cigarette, ROCCO stoops and retrieves the panties. He scrunches them up and jams them in his pocket. Then he drops his cigarette onto the sidewalk and grinds it menacingly underfoot.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOWARD'S CADILLAC - DAY

It's a bright sunny morning and HOWARD is driving DAVID into the country. On the seat between them is a package of balloons and what looks like a large canvas knapsack with shoulder straps. DAVID, who is initially lost in thought, becomes aware of the countryside.

DAVID

I thought you said the promotion was part of the parade.

HOWARD

Yeah.

DAVID

The parade's downtown.

HOWARD

Right.

DAVID

Then what are we doing out here?

HOWARD

It's a surprise.

DAVID

Howard....

HOWARD

Don't worry, you're still in the parade.

DAVID

I don't care about the parade. I want to know where we're going.

HOWARD

It's my idea. Dad thought it was great.

DAVID

(sourly)

Congratulations.

HOWARD

My Dad and I don't appreciate sarcasm.

Miffed, HOWARD cranks up the radio to ear-splitting volume. DAVID snaps it off.

DAVID

I've got a lot of things on my mind.

HOWARD

Dump her.

DAVID

It's not that simple.

HOWARD

It's only as complicated as you make it.

DAVID

I don't want to make a bad decision.

HOWARD

If you don't make any decisions, you may as well be dead.

DAVID stares at HOWARD, contemplating what he's just said.

CUT TO:

EXT. A FUNERAL - DAY

ESTHER and SUE stand front and center in a crowd of mourners at graveside. Both are distraught and weeping. Although they wear black, SUE wears tight-fitting black leather and ESTHER still wears her red sneakers. HOWARD stands next to them wearing his rumpled suit and licking a chocolate ice cream cone.

SUE
I never thought he'd go through with it.

ESTHER
It's the only real decision he's ever made.

SUE
(wistfully)
I didn't really know anything about him.

ESTHER
Nobody did. But then he didn't really know himself either.

HOWARD
(pointing)
Look! Emu!

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD'S CADILLAC - DAY

HOWARD is pointing out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMU FARM - DAY

Shot of emu grazing.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

HOWARD's Cadillac turns onto a small dirt road off the main road. A moment later ROCCO's black Gremlin also turns onto the same road. A moment after that ESTHER's red Tercel follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

WIDE CRANE SHOT: A farm house with a barn opposite. SUE's Lexus is parked in front of the house and SUE is leaning on it. HOWARD's Cadillac drives into the shot and stops next to SUE's car.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

HOWARD picks up the package of balloons and hops out of the car. DAVID exits the car. SUE is smoking, and is clearly agitated and DAVID is uncomfortable.

HOWARD
(to SUE)
What are you doing here?

SUE
Your dad sent me.

HOWARD
He didn't change his mind?

SUE
No. But he sent a package for --

HOWARD
No time!

HOWARD runs to a tap at the side of the house.

DAVID
(to HOWARD, not wanting
to be alone with SUE)
Where are you going?

HOWARD
I've got to fill my water balloons!

HOWARD tears open the package of balloons, and begins filling them at a tap. ROY, a grizzled old timer, opens the screen door to the house. He's got a wad of chewing tobacco in his mouth. He spits out a long, brown stream, part of which splatters on DAVID's shoes. In the background, HOWARD fills water balloons.

ROY
(to DAVID)
You the rest of the Real Estate people?

DAVID
Yes.

SUE
(to DAVID)
I waited two hours last night.

ROY
Your stuff is on the kitchen table.

DAVID
(to ROY)
What stuff?
(to SUE)
I'm sorry. Completely forgot.

ROY
Costume.

SUE
I tried calling you at home.

DAVID
(to ROY)
What costume?
(to SUE)
I got home late.

SUE
I brought it. Howard's dad thought it
would be a nice touch.

DAVID
(to SUE)
I went out for a drink with Howard.

SUE
(incredulous)
With Howard?

DAVID
I was trying to get some leads for you.

ROY
The costume is for the parade.

ROY spits.

DAVID
This just keeps getting better.

SUE
I'll say.

ROY

Beg pardon?

DAVID/SUE

Nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

WIDE CRANE SHOT: The black Gremlin parks behind the farm house so it can't be seen. ROCCO's small figure exits the car and creeps around the side of the house until he can see the yard. He watches DAVID, SUE and ROY enter the house.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, FARM HOUSE - DAY

DAVID enters the kitchen. On the table is a clown's outfit.

ROY

(pointing to a door)

Change in the washroom.

DAVID

(to SUE)

Does Howard know about this?

SUE

(shrugging)

Why don't you ask him. After all,
you're drinking buddies.

DAVID exits the kitchen followed by ROY. SUE stays, smoking furiously.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM YARD - DAY

ROCCO's P.O.V. ROCCO sees DAVID and ROY exit the farm house. He ducks back behind the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

WIDE CRANE SHOT: ESTHER's Tercel pulls in behind the farm house, out of sight. ESTHER exits the car and sneaks around the side of the farm house, watching ROCCO's back.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM YARD - DAY

DAVID walks towards HOWARD and ROY walks over to the barn, opens the doors wide, and disappears inside. HOWARD fills balloons from the tap and adds them to a growing pile as he and DAVID talk.

DAVID

I'm not going to do this, Howard.

HOWARD

(looking up from tap)

Dad says if you don't do this, I have to fire you.

DAVID

Go ahead.

HOWARD

And Sue too.

DAVID

Sue? She hasn't done anything!

HOWARD

Feeling a little guilty, are we?

DAVID

I thought you were my friend.

HOWARD

Okay, so I won't fire you.

DAVID

I can't believe you, of all people, would want me to put on --

HOWARD reaches into his pocket and pulls out several slips of paper.

HOWARD

I've got some new leads.

DAVID
What are you saying?

HOWARD
If you do this, I'll give them to Sue.

DAVID
Promise?

HOWARD
Cross my heart.

DAVID hesitates, then marches back into the farm house.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

WIDE CRANE SHOT: ROCCO sneaks across to the screen door and enters. ESTHER follows. HOWARD is so engrossed in filling his water balloons he doesn't see either of them.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, FARM HOUSE - DAY

SUE, still smoking furiously, paces. She stops outside the door of the washroom and talks to DAVID who is inside changing.

SUE
I tried calling all night. You never
picked up.

ROCCO enters the kitchen. For the first time we see he's a short, slight, bespectacled man who looks more like an accountant than a thug. He pulls out a gun; his hand shakes violently. When he speaks, he has a stutter. SUE notices ROCCO.

SUE
What the hell?

ROCCO
W...who are you?

DAVID, dressed in a clown's outfit, emerges from the bathroom.

DAVID
I was beat. I turned off my answering--

Shocked, DAVID stares at the gun. Unseen by ROCCO, ESTHER enters.

ROCCO
S...so, you're the clown who's been
fucking my wife.

ROCCO pulls out ESTHER's panties and dangles them in front of
DAVID.

SUE
What?

ESTHER
Ex-wife.

Surprised, ROCCO pulls the trigger. The bullet shatters the
light fixture above the table. ROCCO looks as startled as DAVID,
ESTHER and SUE. ESTHER grabs the panties.

ROCCO
(to ESTHER)
What are you doing here?

ESTHER
I followed you. I thought you might try
something stupid.

ROCCO
(determined)
I...I'm glad you came. Now you can
watch while I kill him.

SUE
(to DAVID)
You were fucking his wife?
(to ESTHER)
Are you his wife?

ESTHER
(to ROCCO)
You're not going to kill him.

ESTHER steps towards him. ROCCO waves the gun at her.

ROCCO
(hysterically)
I m...mean it this time!

DAVID grabs ESTHER's arm and pulls her back, shielding her behind him. SUE's anger intensifies.

DAVID
(to ESTHER)
He looks like he means it.

ROCCO
S...shut your pie hole, clown boy!

SUE
(looking at ESTHER)
Where were you last night?

ROCCO
On m...my roof.

ESTHER
Our roof.

SUE
On her roof? Is that code for something?

DAVID
I was drinking with Howard?

SUE
(to DAVID)
You had a beer with Howard on her roof?
(to ESTHER)
You're her.

ESTHER
What?

DAVID
(to SUE)
No she's not.

ESTHER
(to SUE)
You look familiar.

ROCCO
(to SUE)
W...who are you?

ESTHER
(remembering)

Sue!

SUE
(to ROCCO)
The clown's girlfriend.

ESTHER
(to SUE)
You're her.

DAVID
(to ESTHER)
No she's not.

ESTHER
I knew you looked familiar.

ROCCO waves the gun around wildly.

ROCCO
Everyone s...shut up!

A moment of silence passes in which ESTHER, SUE and DAVID exchange glances.

SUE
(to DAVID)
Were you on her roof?

DAVID
In a manner of speaking...

ROCCO
(waving the gun)
I'm n...not going to say it again!

DAVID
Please! Let's not do anything hasty.

SUE
(sourly)
Why the hell not? A snap decision would be a refreshing change.

DAVID
I make lots of decisions every day.

SUE
Do you love me?

ESTHER
Not according to Howard.

SUE
Fuck Howard.

ESTHER
What about me?

SUE
He's already fucked you.

ESTHER
No, I mean he has feelings for me.

SUE
He said he loved you? Great. There goes
my job.

ESTHER
He said it felt right.

SUE
Then let's ask him.

ESTHER and SUE both turn to DAVID.

SUE (CONT'D)
Well? Who do you love?

ROCCO
(aiming gun at DAVID)
It b...better n...not b...be Esther!

SUE
(to ROCCO)
Who are you again?

ROCCO
It was m...my r...roof too!

SUE
I see. Then you'd be her husband.

ESTHER
Ex-husband.

SUE

So you're her crazed, gun-toting ex-husband.

ROCCO

Glad to m...meet you.

During the above exchange, DAVID edges towards the door.

ROCCO

Where d..do you think you're g...going?

DAVID

To get a cappuccino?

ROCCO

Answer the question, B...bozo!

SUE

You're not going to weasel out of it this time.

DAVID

These questions never have simple answers.

SUE

Same old bullshit.

(pointing to ROCCO)

At least he's made up his mind who he loves.

DAVID

He's crazy!

ROCCO

I'm n...not the one dressed like a c...clown.

O.S. sound: a LOUD ENGINE WHINE from outside.

ROCCO (CONT'D)

W...what's that?

SUE

It's the plane.

(to DAVID)

When they told me you were doing this, I couldn't believe it.

DAVID and ESTHER look out the kitchen window. They see a large, dilapidated plane sitting in the yard between house and barn, ROY's in the pilot's seat. On the side of the plane are the words ROY'S PARACHUTIN SKOOL. HOWARD runs into the shot carrying two water balloons and loads them into the cockpit.

DAVID
(nervously)
Plane? What's the plane for?

SUE
The promotion.

ROCCO
What p...promotion?

SUE
David's going to parachute into the square where the parade ends.

DAVID blanches.

ESTHER
I thought you were afraid of heights.

SUE
So did I.

ROCCO
You're afraid of h...heights?

DAVID nods.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
P...perfect!

ROCCO waves his gun, towards the door.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
R...right. Everyone into the p...plane.

DAVID
What?

ROCCO
You h...heard m..me!

DAVID
No way I'm getting into that plane.

ROCCO pulls the trigger, intentionally this time, shattering bottles on a shelf behind DAVID. DAVID, ESTHER and SUE duck.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

DAVID, ESTHER, and SUE emerge from the farm house, followed by ROCCO, who waves the gun. They climb into the plane. HOWARD is filling another balloon, his back is to them.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN OF THE PLANE - DAY

Behind the pilot and co-pilot's seat is a low-ceilinged cabin with an open door. DAVID and ESTHER sit on the floor facing forward, ROCCO and SUE sit with their backs to the pilot. On the floor between the forward seats are three parachutes. ROY grabs one and shoves it into DAVID's arms.

ROY

You folks 'bout ready to go?

ROCCO

Y...you b...bet!

ROY notices ROCCO's gun for the first time.

ROY

Is that a gun?

ROCCO points the gun at ROY.

ROCCO

Y...you b...bet it is! N...now g...get
g...going!

ROY spits out the window, then taxis the plane through the yard.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

HOWARD, who is filling another water balloon, notices the change in the sound of the PLANE'S ENGINE and looks around.

HOWARD

(shouting over the engine)
Hey! You forgot the banner!

HOWARD runs to his car and grabs the bundle from the front seat. He catches the plane just as it is about to leave the yard. Opening the door, he throws in the bundle and swings himself into the co-pilot's seat. HOWARD's bundle lands in the pile of parachutes. C.U. on the pile of parachutes. HOWARD's pack looks very similar.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN OF THE PLANE - DAY

At HOWARD's feet is a pile of water balloons.

HOWARD

(to ROY)

You were supposed to wait for me!

HOWARD picks up a water balloon.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I wasn't finished filling my balloons.

(turning to back of plane)

And who are all these --

HOWARD shrieks when he sees DAVID's clown outfit. DAVID is oblivious. His fear of heights has petrified him. HOWARD frantically tries to unbuckle himself and open the door, but when he does so, the ground outside is whizzing by in a blur. He shrieks again and slams the door.

HOWARD

Stop the plane!

ROY

No can do.

ROCCO pokes the gun into the side of HOWARD's head. HOWARD freezes.

ROCCO

S...shut up, s...shorty.

HOWARD slowly turns his eyes to look at ROCCO.

HOWARD

Careful with that thing. As my dad says, guns kill people.

ROCCO

G...guns don't kill p...people. Rocco
kills p...people.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

WIDE CRANE SHOT: the plane taxis down a grass runway and takes
off.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN OF THE PLANE - DAY

DAVID is immobilised with fear. ESTHER and SUE glare at DAVID.
ROCCO holds the gun on all of them. HOWARD puts the water
balloon in his lap and reaches into his pocket. ROCCO notices
the movement.

ROCCO

H...hey! W...what are you d...doing?

HOWARD

Getting something to eat.

HOWARD withdraws his hand slowly, pulling out a candy bar. He
peels back the wrapping.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Okay?

HOWARD glances out the window of the cockpit. Below, the city
crawls by.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Look! You can see my house!

ROCCO

Is everyone here c...crazy?

HOWARD

That's not a very nice thing to say.

ROCCO

I'm surrounded by c...clowns!

HOWARD

Don't call me a clown!

HOWARD grabs the water balloon and heaves it at ROCCO. It explodes when it hits him in the face. At the same time ROCCO pulls the trigger. The bullet misses everyone but cracks the forward windscreen. ESTHER and SUE wrestle with him. HOWARD stabs ROCCO in the eye with the chocolate bar. ROCCO screams and drops the gun. SUE scoops it up and points it at ROCCO.

ROCCO
My eye! My eye!

HOWARD
(looking at his chocolate bar)
My chocolate bar! My chocolate bar!

SUE
(over her shoulder to ROY)
Take us back.

HOWARD
No can do.

SUE looks around. The pilot's seat is empty and the door is open. The plane starts to roll and SUE grabs the control yoke and steadies it. DAVID's horror intensifies. He clutches the parachute more tightly.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
He bailed.

ESTHER looks out a window.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIR PLANE - DAY

ESTHER's P.O.V.: we see an open parachute behind the plane.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR PLANE - DAY

ROCCO grabs HOWARD's bundle and slips on the shoulder straps.

ROCCO
S...so long, s...suckers!

ROCCO bails out of the plane.

HOWARD

(to ROCCO)
Come back you bastard!
(angry)
He took my banner!

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - DAY

ROCCO is free falling. He grabs a ring and pulls it. A long, piece of white cloth snakes out of his backpack and unfurls. It is a banner that reads PENSKE & SON REAL ESTATE.

ROCCO
O...oh, oh.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN OF PLANE - DAY

ESTHER and HOWARD stare out the window.

HOWARD
Look!
(delighted)
That's me! "And son"!

C.U. on ESTHER. She turns. HOWARD is strapping himself into a parachute. He reaches for the door.

HOWARD
See you later.

ESTHER
Wait! There's only one parachute left!

HOWARD, SUE and ESTHER look at the parachute DAVID clutches.

HOWARD
Wow. Quite a dilemma. Good luck
sorting it out.

HOWARD opens the door, then pauses.

HOWARD
(to SUE)
Oh yeah. You're fired.

SUE
Shit!

HOWARD jumps from the plane. The plane drones on, ESTHER and SUE eyeing DAVID and the last parachute. DAVID looks from one to the other. He extends the parachute between the two women.

ESTHER
(to SUE)
You take it!

SUE
(to ESTHER)
No, you take it.

ESTHER
He loves you. Remember?

SUE
Not according to Howard.

ESTHER
I'm pretty sure he wants you to have it.

SUE
(annoyed)
Who can tell.

ESTHER
You've got a point.

SUE
Let him choose.

ESTHER
Good idea.

ESTHER and SUE stare expectantly at DAVID. DAVID looks from one to the other, then drops the parachute on the floor between them. Screwing his eyes shut, he throws himself from the plane. Both women stare after him, shocked.

ESTHER
My God!

SUE
Jesus, he really didn't want to make a decision, did he?

ESTHER
You take the parachute!

SUE

No need. I know how to fly.

ESTHER

(shocked)

What?

SUE

I just wanted David to make a decision.

ESTHER

Guess I can't blame you for that.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIR PLANE - DAY

DAVID, dressed as a clown, free falls without a parachute. His eyes are closed. Then he opens them. At first he is terrified, but then he relaxes, fascinated by the pattern of the landscape below. Free falling is better than any fantasy he's ever had. We can see by his expression he feels relief and contentment.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

WIDE SHOT: A parade is passing. A float of school children is followed by a group of burly, tattooed clowns on noisy motorcycles, spewing exhaust and frightening babies and small children in the crowd. HOWARD drifts down into the midst of the clown bikers, shrieking.

SKINNY BIKER

(pointing)

It's the fat cream drinking faggot!

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM FIELD - DAY

The FARMER works on a tractor while his cow idly watches him. He pulls out a rag and wipes his hands. Taking out a cigarette, he raises his hands to light it. Hearing something, he pauses. WIDE SHOT of FARMER, his cow and the tractor in the foreground. In the background, ROCCO, screaming, plummets into the field a hundred yards away, the banner flapping wildly behind him, then piling on top of him. The FARMER lowers his hands. He walks over to ROCCO and looks down at the pile of the banner. A moment

later DAVID silently plummets to earth a bit further on. The FARMER walks over to him and stares at him a moment.

FARMER

We don't get many clowns around here.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. A FUNERAL - DAY

C.U. of a grave stone which bears the following epitaph: "All human actions are equivalent and all are doomed to failure. -Sarte" PULL BACK to reveal DAVID HULL's name above the epitaph. PULL BACK again to reveal a pastor and a handful of mourners gathered around a coffin. As in DAVID's fantasy, ESTHER and SUE stand at graveside. Unlike his fantasy, both wear dignified, mourning attire. HOWARD, however, stands next to them dressed in his rumpled suit licking a chocolate ice cream cone. He has a black eye and several band aids stuck on his face and hands.

HOWARD

Kind of ironic, isn't it?

ESTHER

What do you mean?

HOWARD

He finally made a decision.

SUE

Did he? Maybe he just didn't want to choose between us.

ESTHER

(to coffin)

I guess we'll never know.

SUE

Who cares. I've got a job interview to go to.

SUE exits.

HOWARD

(looking directly
at the camera)

So long, buddy. Howard Penske won't forget his friend.

HOWARD takes a big bite out of his ice cream and winks. RAPID PULL BACK TO EXTREME LONG SHOT IN WHICH THE PEOPLE AT THE FUNERAL REMAIN TINY FIGURES AS SEEN THROUGH A PAIR OF BINOCULARS. PULL BACK FURTHER THROUGH THE HEAD OF THE OBSERVER to reveal DAVID in a body cast sitting in a wheel chair next to a window. A nurse holds the binoculars for him. An orderly enters with a lunch cart and wheels it up to DAVID. He places a covered tray on a table next to DAVID and pulls off the lid revealing a mushy Salisbury steak, runny potatoes and withered vegetables. Turning the cart he reveals a large covered platter. The nurse lowers the binoculars so DAVID can see.

ORDERLY

So, what will it be today?

The ORDERLY pulls the lid off the platter revealing an array of red and green jello. C.U. on DAVID's panicky eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.

ROLL CREDITS.

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