

GETTING IT

Original Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY IN 1982 - BUSY AVENUE - A DAMP SPRING DUSK

The heart of the city bustles with the energy of rush hour traffic as umbrella'd pedestrians jockey for position against horn-pounding motorists.

Looming high above the battling denizens are crowded apartment buildings, their glistening faces dimming as night approaches and the city lights twinkle on.

A BILLBOARD AD

It displays the current cover of a slick regional magazine. Suddenly it LIGHTS UP proclaiming this month's bold headline, "WHAT DO MEN REALLY WANT?", above a discreet "Vaginal Orgasm: Demand Yours."

JUST BEYOND IT

We see an even more compelling billboard ad for "CHECK MATE", a video-dating service. We MOVE TOWARD the "CHECK MATE" sign to get a better look...

But then, as we get closer, a flash of movement just below the sign catches our eye and we CLOSE IN TO ISOLATE an apartment window. Through a gap in the curtains we can SEE someone prancing about inside.

TIGHTER STILL TO SPY inside -- JERRY PEDERSEN, a young professional, is dancing by himself like a maniac. His clothing is strewn about the room and he wears only his underpants and his stereo headphones. We HEAR NOTHING BUT THE TRAFFIC outside, so his pantomime of passion would look pretty comical even without the effect of his worn out underwear, his grandiose, melodramatic posturing, and his periodic entanglement in the headphone cord.

We're close enough now for the TINNY TREBLE of his MUSIC to reach us through the headphones. It's a stirring song of romantic yearning, but the distorted way we're hearing it can't possibly move us like it does Jerry.

We strain to see his face clearly but no luck so far -- he's moving too much, leaping in and out of view, turning his back.

Behind him we catch glimpses of his television set featuring a beautiful couple in misty embrace... Selling toothpaste. Covering his walls are huge colorful photos of stars, solar systems, and galaxies. A telescope stands prominently near the window.

The song ends. Jerry poses for a moment in reverie, embracing himself in mock ecstasy.

Now his FACE FILLS THE SCREEN as he comes to the window, but it's screwed up in a ridiculous squint, trying to see distance. He pops down below the window, then pops up again with his glasses on.

Jerry peers out at us with an intense and longing expression, looking us straight in the eye as we spy in at him. It's a very personal moment as we study his face -- it's pleasantly handsome, open and guileless, wearing glasses that would suit Clark Kent.

Jerry takes a deep breath and looks ready for action.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY

Jerry arrives at his thirteenth floor ELEVATOR with an invigorated swagger, pushes the down-button with a flourish, and waits...

In a moment a thought strikes his fancy. He pulls out a pad and pen and quickly jots it down:

$$1 = \Omega_M + \Omega_\Lambda + \Omega_k$$

He looks satisfied. Finally the elevator doors open and Jerry steps in --

INT. ELEVATOR

And suddenly our super Jerry reverts to a mild-mannered alter ego, for there in the elevator stands --

A GORGEOUS WOMAN

She smiles at him. Jerry has become awkward and self-conscious. He presses thirteen without thinking. The door stays open.

He presses thirteen again, getting more awkward as they stand there doing nothing.

Jerry gets perturbed now and stabs hard at the thirteen several more times, wondering why nothing is happening --

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE  
Pleeease mister --!

Jerry notices for the first time a LITTLE GIRL and her doggy on a lease, occupying the elevator with them --

LITTLE GIRL  
(Continuing)  
We have to go!

The doggy starts to whimper and squirm.

Jerry reacts as he realizes what he's been doing. There's another awkward wait for the elevator door to finally close, as Jerry feels particularly stupid. They begin to descend.

Occasional glances between Jerry and the Woman. Jerry begins to unconsciously stroke his brow and chin with his pen, a nervous reaction designed to make him look deep in profound thought --

-- but with the wrong end of the pen --

INT. GROUND FLOOR ELEVATOR DOORS

As they open and the little girl races out with her doggy, glancing back at the strange man in the elevator --

Jerry has ink all over his face. The Woman is trying to keep a straight face.

GORGEOUS WOMAN  
(Delicately)  
You're, uh -- drawing on your  
face.

She exits graciously. Jerry stares at his pen as the doors close in front of him.

INT. VIDEO-DATING SERVICE - DUSK

A sign: "CHECK MATE". Shelves of videocassettes, each cassette bearing several female first names.

A hand picks a videocassette from one of the shelves. It is Jerry. He adds this tape to a stack of them under his arm. Beside him appears a heavily made-up, snotty-looking PRINCESS. She leers at Jerry, catching his eye as he passes by. Jerry smiles weakly and heads for --

TWO BOOTHS

Set side by side, each with a television monitor and video player. Jerry ENTERS FRAME and pulls up a chair at one of the booths. He puts on headphones, inserts a tape into the machine, and pushes fast-forward -- producing a lot of snow on his monitor.

Now the PRINCESS sits down at the adjacent booth and inserts a tape of her own. Immediately her monitor plays the image of a HULK of a man facing us in medium shot --

VOICE OF INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

What would you say is your favorite pastime?

HULK

(ponderously)

Well, I'd say mostly I like to stay home and clean my gun collection, yeah... I have quite a collection, yeah... a woman to me is like a semi-automatic weapon --

The Princess plugs in her headphones and the SOUND CUTS OFF. She puts it into fast-forward. MEANWHILE Jerry's monitor shows an interview with a woman, which we also can't hear because of the headphones. The woman strikes us as a SLOB. Jerry soon pushes fast-forward. MEANWHILE the Princess's monitor plays an interview with a real WIMP of a guy. Jerry plays another -- a woman who looks like a real SPACE CADET. He shakes his head, ejects the tape, and selects another. It plays -- and by this woman's mechanical demeanor, she could be MR. SPOCK'S SISTER.

DISSOLVE TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - JERRY - NIGHT

Hours have passed. Jerry looks tired and disappointed. Beside him is a long list of women's names, each one "X"ed out. He slowly removes his headphones and puts them down --

-- inadvertently pushing a button that switches the TV monitor to a LOCAL BROADCAST -- an interview format that could be mistaken momentarily for one of the dating-service tapes --

Jerry's attention is riveted by the image of PAULA MASON being interviewed --

FEMALE INTERVIEWER (O.S.)

Your article, "What Do Men Really Want?", certainly pulls no punches. But aren't you over-reacting?

PAULA

I've barely started --

Jerry is going gaga over Paula -- she is cute and strong and --

It CUTS to a COMMERCIAL.

Like a slap in the face Jerry realizes what has happened. His expression sinks even lower than it was before.

He ejects the last tape and adds it to his pile.

FULL SHOT - THE WHOLE VIEWING ROOM

A dozen monitor booths just like Jerry's.

In one booth, a woman is watching a tape of Jerry himself...

Standing behind this woman are the SLOB and the SPACE CADET, frozen in passing on their way to their own booths, drooling over Jerry's video image...

Another seated woman turns around and cranes her neck to get a look too.

There is something odd about each of these women. The tableau holds until suddenly --

Across the room, Jerry pops up from behind his booth.

As one, all four women look up and stare motionlessly at Jerry, miraculously materialized in real life before their very eyes...

Jerry freezes, sees they are playing his tape, feels their hungry eyes pinning him to the wall, and wishes he could dematerialize.

Jerry slinks nervously out of the room...

EXT. UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

To establish.

EXT. ASTRONOMY BUILDING

Telescope dome on top. It is early evening and the stars have just come out.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jerry sits at a computer-terminal video screen in the middle of a typical office cluttered with books, papers, and half-eaten sandwiches.

The VIDEO SCREEN displays a crinkled horizontal line that snakes slowly by. Once in a while a sharp peak will come along and Jerry will freeze the image and magnify the peak, jotting down numbers.

Now he turns a dial -- back, and forth --

INSERT - SATELLITE

A radio-telescope satellite floats far above the Earth. The telescope tilts slowly at the command of Jerry's dial-turning, back and forth, searching the stars...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE STARRY NIGHT SKY

PANNING gently back to earth again, to the university, catching a glimpse of the gaily colored lights of a roller coaster ride at the fairgrounds.

BACK TO JERRY'S OFFICE

Jerry gazes out the window, dejected.

After a moment there comes a youthful VOICE from outside the office doorway --

DELIVERY BOY (O.S.)  
Just do some equations for me and  
I'll cut you in on the profits!

Out the doorway, in the hall, we SEE it is the delicatessen DELIVERY BOY calling after someone who is leaving him far behind --

DELIVERY BOY  
Yeah well nobody understood  
Einstein either! That's why I  
know I'm right!

Jerry reacts to the obnoxious Delivery Boy, rushing back to his work and pretending not to notice him. The Delivery Boy struts in with Jerry's dinner order.

DELIVERY BOY  
Hey, Doctor Pedersen...

He sidles up to Jerry, who tries to ignore him.

DELIVERY BOY  
(confidentially)  
Listen, uh... I scratch your back  
and you'll scratch mine, right?

Jerry moans.

DELIVERY BOY  
(continuing)  
You want me to show you the town?  
Get you some McQ?

JERRY  
Mc'what?

DELIVERY BOY  
McQ. 'Meaningful Quickie.'  
(on Jerry's perplexed look)  
You know -- connecting.  
(finally)  
You want to meet some babes?

JERRY  
Oh.  
(turns back to his screen)  
No, no... the kind of woman I  
want, you can't just pick up like  
that.

The Delivery Boy regards Jerry for a moment.

DELIVERY BOY  
(finally)  
Well I can tell you one thing --  
if you're looking for them to  
advertise, it won't be on that  
channel.

The Delivery Boy leaves and Jerry looks up, irritated, then  
ponders that thought for a moment.

Jerry hardly reacts at all as AARON enters.

AARON  
Still at it?

Jerry forces a lopsided smile and returns his attention to  
his video screen as Aaron crosses the room and picks up a  
toolbox. Aaron is a co-worker -- a technician, not a  
scientist -- not much to look at, but clearly a man who has  
happily found his niche in the world.

JERRY  
See this screen?  
(Aaron stops and looks)  
On here I am searching for X-rays  
coming from the edge of the  
universe, from a kind of star  
that might not even exist.  
(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

I'm betting that there is one out there, because of the Neutrino Constant, but there's a catch -- if I look at large areas it'll be too faint to see, and if I look at small areas I'll probably miss it.

(morosely)

I'll be looking forever...

(pause)

You know why I'm looking?

AARON

Beats me.

JERRY

To prove that the universe is inside out.

AARON

(facetious)

Spacey.

JERRY

Inside out. Can you imagine it?

AARON

(shakes his head)

I just make things work.

JERRY

I can't imagine it either.

(laughs cheerlessly)

How about that?

Aaron can see how fatigued and forlorn Jerry is.

AARON

(finally)

Take a break, Jerry.

(looks out the window  
and gets a pleasant  
thought--)

Ever been on the old roller-coaster at the fairgrounds?

JERRY

(flinching at the  
very idea)

God, are you kidding?

A pause.

AARON  
There's this club I know...  
(beat)  
Why don't we, uh...

THE COMPUTER VIDEO SCREEN

Goes BLANK as it is CLICKED OFF.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Crowded. A charged atmosphere. Jerry and Aaron enter and make their way toward the bar. Jerry is withheld. As they order drinks we NOTICE women glance at Jerry but then look away when he sees them.

Aaron immediately strikes up an easy conversation with a pleasant lady next to him at the bar.

Next to Jerry is an East Asian girl with beautiful long hair. As though inspired by Aaron's cue, Jerry turns to the girl --

-- and just as he does, she flips her hair back over her shoulder in cool detachment, REVEALING on her lapel a bold BUTTON that reads clearly: "NO". Her body language says the same.

Jerry stops short and turns back.

He watches Aaron and the lady again. Aaron is lighting up a pipe in an elaborate ritual that seems to intrigue the lady.

Now Jerry's attention is caught by someone across the room.

ACROSS THE WAY - REVERSE ANGLE

Over the shoulders of two women, KNOCKOUT and SIDEKICK, favoring Jerry in the b.g. To observe Jerry, you could easily misread his reserved shyness as an air of casual superiority and aloofness.

KNOCKOUT  
(sighs)  
What a doll.

SIDEKICK  
Go for it.

KNOCKOUT  
(nervous laugh)  
Me? Be serious.

Jerry looks over and sees her looking. They both look away. She looks back, but he's suddenly found a fascinating spot on the wall to study.

BACK TO JERRY AND AARON

Aaron turns to Jerry confidentially.

AARON

That babe you're hot for -- she's looking you over.

Jerry peeks again but she's turned away.

JERRY

Her? No way. It's your imagination.

AARON.

Go buy her a drink.

JERRY

No, no, look at her -- she's a knockout. I'd be floored in the first round...

ACROSS THE WAY AGAIN - WITH THE TWO WOMEN

SIDEKICK

Yeah, you're right. Those kinda guys are all alike... his ego would never even fit through your door.

KNOCKOUT

Let's leave.

MOVING WITH THEM as they head out. We pass right by Jerry and Aaron. The women ignore them as they pass. We STAY on Jerry and Aaron -

JERRY

(to Aaron, his point proven)

See? Good thing I didn't make a fool out of myself.

(wisely)

You have to face reality, Aaron.

Jerry gestures over his shoulder at the East Asian girl, who still wears the "NO" button prominently on her breast.

JERRY

You'd probably try and pick her up.

AARON  
 (considers the  
 prospect happily)  
 Why not?

Jerry gives Aaron a look.

AARON  
 (continuing)  
 That's why I like roller-  
 coasters. Fear becomes  
 excitement.

JERRY  
 Huh?

But Aaron is heading for the dance floor with his new  
 acquaintance...

After a while, Jerry spies another woman to be enthralled  
 with -- across the way, CHRISTINE, sitting with her  
 GIRLFRIEND.

JERRY'S POV - CHRISTINE

As we ZOOM IN SLOWLY to pick her out and the lighting gets  
 romantic and the din of the nightclub fades away...

Christine is very beautiful in an unusual, exotic way, and  
 full of cheerful energy.

AT CHRISTINE'S TABLE

CHRISTINE  
 (to her Girlfriend)  
 I got a telegram -- he'll be here  
 next week.

GIRLFRIEND  
 Look, don't get your hopes up,  
 honey, take it from me -- your  
 hubby ain't gonna come running  
 back home to you.

CHRISTINE  
 All he has to do is whistle. I'll  
 do the running.

Pause. Christine is gazing discreetly in Jerry's direction.

GIRLFRIEND  
 There are other men.

CHRISTINE

I doubt it.

GIRLFRIEND

(indicating Jerry, across)

So then who have you been  
drooling over for the last hour?

Christine looks caught off guard and embarrassed.

WITH JERRY LATER

Time crawling by as he watches the people on the dance floor enjoying themselves. Aaron is making his way through the crowd back to Jerry. He arrives, excited --

AARON

Come on, man, I got us some  
dates.

Aaron leads the way and they recede from us a little until we SEE where they are headed -- to Christine's table.

Even from a distance it's immediately clear that Aaron has claimed Christine -- he sits close to her and they start joking together, but she looks a little intimidated and makes glances at Jerry. Jerry is immediately monopolized by the Girlfriend. She's plain looking but very aggressive. She gestures to the waitress for drinks for Jerry. And the more overbearing she gets, the more stiff and passive Jerry becomes.

INT. MEN'S WASHROOM - JERRY AND AARON

At adjacent urinals. No one else around.

AARON

(incredulous)

You like Christine? Well hey,  
pal, say no more -- she's yours.  
To me they're a dime a dozen.

JERRY

(forlorn)

No, no, she thinks I'm a fool --  
when I get nervous I do this  
moronic sort of chuckle -- she  
keeps noticing it, you know, and  
giving me weird looks.

INT. WOMEN'S WASHROOM - CHRISTINE AND GIRLFRIEND

At the mirror, primping together.

CHRISTINE

That guy Jerry makes me feel like  
a real fool.

GIRLFRIEND

Why?

CHRISTINE

He keeps laughing at me.

INT. NIGHTCLUB

The four of them meet up on their way back to the table.

JERRY

(to Christine)

Well hi. Heh, heh.

She gives him an awkward and paranoid look. The two  
women move on ahead --

WITH CHRISTINE AND GIRLFRIEND

CHRISTINE

(to Girlfriend)

See?

WITH JERRY AND AARON

JERRY

(to Aaron)

See?

CUT TO:

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Someone is dancing close with Christine. Both of them  
look O.S. as the floor starts to clear a little to make  
room for --

AARON AND THE "NO" GIRL

Dancing up a storm. Aaron is an enthusiastic dancer and  
he is teasing wild abandonment out of the "NO" GIRL. People  
cheer.

PULL BACK now and in the f.g. --

AT A TABLE - JERRY AND THE GIRLFRIEND

Jerry looks trapped, oblivious to Aaron and the girl steaming up the place in the b.g.

GIRLFRIEND

You're an astronomer, huh? Well I dabble in the occult myself.

Jerry looks pained.

GIRLFRIEND

(before he can correct her)

Down the hatch!

Jerry slugs down another shot. She's getting him drunk.

GIRLFRIEND

(nonstop)

That's it, good boy -- I'd ask you to do my horoscope for me but I already had it done, I'm a Libra, I bet you could tell, now don't tell me yours, let me guess.

We lose what she's saying in all the NOISE and MUSIC but it's clearly a one-way conversation. She's oblivious to him as a human being, effectively talking to herself. Jerry nods vaguely. She rubs his thigh.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - GETTING LATE

Jerry exits, accompanied by Aaron with his arm around the waist of the "NO" Girl. She still wears the button as she cuddles Aaron.

AARON

(to Jerry)

You can drop us both off at my place.

The "NO" Girl giggles. Jerry is incredulous.

AT JERRY'S CAR

As the three arrive. Jerry lets the girl in first, closing her door and looking at Aaron

JERRY

How come -- How --?

Aaron smiles and shrugs.

AARON  
 (holds up his pipe)  
 "Woman say yes to men who smoke  
 Raleigh's."

Aaron gets in the car and Jerry just stands there,  
 confounded.

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICES OF THE SLICK REGIONAL MAGAZINE - DAY

To establish. It's the publisher of the magazine whose  
 cover we saw on the billboard ad earlier.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - A DESK - DAY

Clearly marked with the sign: "EDITOR". Now FOLLOW Paula as  
 she enters VIEW, pacing irately with a bunch of dead  
 flowers in her hand, and scratching her neck. We recognize  
 her instantly as the woman Jerry saw in the TV interview --

PAULA  
 (in mid speech,  
 upset)  
 Now just a minute here -- we're  
 friends, and this is not fair  
 play. You're practically  
 threatening my job if I don't  
 come up with a blockbuster  
 article to save your ass!

She stops waving the dead flowers and scratches her neck  
 more intently. And now we SEE the woman she's arguing with,  
 her EDITOR, who looks at Paula incredulously for just a  
 moment.

EDITOR  
 (finally)  
 Get ahold of yourself, Paula.  
 (takes her by the  
 shoulders)  
 This is an opportunity, not a  
 predicament.

Paula relaxes.

PAULA  
 (apologetic)  
 Sorry.  
 (laughs at herself)  
 I think I was about to call you a  
 male chauvinist pig.

She scratches at her neck again, then goes to a nearby vase of flowers and selects from it the old dead and wilted ones. A couple other flower vases punctuate the office, stuffed with old and new flowers.

EDITOR

Take them all. There's some more in the back there.

(noticing Paula scratching)

You want some ointment for that itch?

PAULA

It doesn't help.

EDITOR

Oh. So it's just nerves, then... Don't worry so much.

PAULA

Easier said than done.

She picks more dead flowers from another vase and adds them to her collection. Then she stops and we can see her deliberately forcing herself not to scratch at her itch. She sighs a long breath, then picks up the last bunch of dead flowers and plops the whole lot of it down, OUT OF VIEW --

PAULA

(satisfied)

There...

And now we SEE REVEALED -- she has put the dead flowers not into the garbage, but into a nice white florist's box with pretty ribbons.

EDITOR

What's the occasion this time?

PAULA

His birthday.

EDITOR

You make me feel pretty pleased with my ex-husband...

(then, ironically)

You must really love him.

Paula looks affronted --

EDITOR

(on Paula's look)

It's a fine line, as they say.

PAULA  
 (scratching again,  
 wrapping the box)  
 This happens to be purely a  
 matter of principle. To remind me  
 I won't be fooled again.

EDITOR  
 Fooled?

PAULA  
 Subjugated. Men subjugate. And I  
 answer to no one.

We can guess she's over-reacting, and bitter. The Editor gives her a tempering look.

PAULA  
 (on Editor's look)  
 Except my editor -- don't worry,  
 you can bank on me. You'll have  
your story.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The same scene again.

AT THE BAR - JERRY

And he's busy lighting up a pipe, just like Aaron did.

Jerry blows a big puff of un-inhaled smoke... The guy next to him gives Jerry a look. Jerry tries to wave the smoke away --

His hand connects with the drink-hand of a passing man, knocking the drink clear out of his hand and into the air straight at a passing woman, who reacts fast enough to actually catch the glass.

Jerry jumps up frantically, grabs the glass from the stunned woman, hands it back to the man, and anxiously apologizes.

JERRY  
 I'm terribly sorry, let me pay  
 you for that --

And as he pulls out his wallet he looks again at the woman -- it's Christine, from before. And she has banana daiquiri all over her face.

Jerry hastily deals with the man and then pulls out his handkerchief and tries to wipe Christine's face --

JERRY  
 (as he wipes her  
 face)  
 Oh god, am I sorry -- Do you  
 remember me?

His efforts are smearing her makeup all over, and finally she unstiffens and comes to life, heading for the Ladies' Room.

Jerry follows her as she heads into the washroom --

JERRY  
 Can I make it up to you? Buy you  
 a drink? A dinner?

Oblivious, he enters the washroom with her.

JERRY  
 (entering)  
 A mink coat?

There's a SHRIEK from inside and Jerry rushes out embarrassed.

CUT TO:

AT A TABLE - JERRY AND CHRISTINE

Christine looks good as new, except for a large wet spot over her left breast. Jerry is trying to be at ease.

CHRISTINE  
 (nervous)  
 No really, it's fine.

JERRY  
 (settling back with  
 his pipe)  
 Mind if I smoke?

CHRISTINE  
 Pipe smoke makes me sick.

JERRY  
 (as quick as that)  
 Oh don't worry, I don't smoke.

He puts his pipe away. She gives him a look.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE NIGHTCLUB - MUCH LATER

The crowd has thinned out.

WITH JERRY AND CHRISTINE

Still at their table, relaxed with each other now, laughing together.

CHRISTINE

That's right, I know just what you mean --

JERRY

We really seem to understand each other, don't we?

CHRISTINE

Yeah. We must both be made from the same recipe of, uh... paranoid introversion.

JERRY

Exactly. With just a dash of manic-depression.

CHRISTINE

And don't forget the obsessive compulsive garnish.

They chuckle.

CHRISTINE

But we're quite different, too. I mean -- I bet you were the high school president, right? Something like that?

JERRY

No. Nothing like that.

There's a pause as they gaze at each other.

JERRY

(finally)

I think you're awfully attractive.

CHRISTINE

(doesn't take compliments very well)

Well, you know, you're pretty cute yourself.

JERRY

(not too gracious about  
compliments himself)

No... really?  
(thinking it over)

CHRISTINE

In fact...  
(this is hard for  
her to say)  
I'm amazed you're even interested  
in me.

JERRY

It's like -- I figured you were  
way out of my league.

(beat)  
What did you just say?

CHRISTINE

(equally  
incredulous)  
What did you just say?

They both laugh and then grin at each other for a long  
moment.

JERRY

I've never felt like this before.

CHRISTINE

Me neither.

He takes her hand. She's getting a little nervous.

JERRY

I think I'm falling in love.

CHRISTINE

Gulp.

Jerry kisses her tenderly, hesitantly. She likes it but  
it gets her a little flustered --

CHRISTINE

Hold on. This is too fast. I --  
I have to get used to this.

JERRY

(sits back)  
You're right. Of course.  
(very mature)  
We shouldn't be naive about this.  
(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

We have to be careful. We have to be realistic.

(then passionately)

Will you stay with me tonight?

Christine gives him a look.

JERRY

(on her look,  
rationalizing)

I mean -- we have this hypothesis to test, right? So we have to experiment to prove it.

(facetious)

You can trust me, I'm a scientist.

Christine smiles and shakes her head.

CUT TO:

INT. A WHITE ANSWERPHONE

A RING, then the tape cuts in-

CHRISTINE'S VOICE

Hello, this is Christine, we can't come to the phone right now, but please leave your number and your call will be returned.

...BEEEP!

JERRY'S VOICE

Hi, Christine, this is Jerry.  
Can we meet again tonight?

CUT TO:

INT. A BROWN ANSWERPHONE

Framed at an angle to the shot of the white answerphone, the way you'd shoot a standard two-person conversation, so it LOOKS LIKE THE TWO MACHINES ARE TALKING TO EACH OTHER.

CHRISTINE'S VOICE

(warmly)

Hi, Jerry. I'm really sorry I missed your call...

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE ANSWERPHONE

JERRY'S VOICE  
 You know, I can't believe how  
 much I enjoy being with you...

CUT TO:

INT. BROWN ANSWERPHONE

CHRISTINE'S VOICE  
 (lightly)  
 See you tonight, love --  
 (SMACK! there's a  
 kissing sound)

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE ANSWERPHONE

JERRY'S VOICE  
 {playfully}  
 Mmmm... what a kiss...

WIDER ANGLE - REVEALING CHRISTINE

listening to the playback of her machine, having just  
 gotten home from work. But before Jerry's message is  
 finished there's a KNOCK at the door. She goes to it and  
 looks through the peephole.

She gasps with surprised excitement...

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - JERRY - NIGHT

His dining table is all set and he paces with nervous glee.

Finally there's a knock. It's Christine --

JERRY  
 Welcome!

He ushers her in and hugs her, then gives her a bouquet and  
 a long kiss... She's stiff but he doesn't notice.

JERRY  
 (beaming)  
 I wrote you a poem.

With a flourish he unfolds a long computer printout that  
 almost hits the floor. He clears his throat, about to read  
 --

CHRISTINE  
 (gathering courage)  
 Wait! Jerry -- um...  
 (finally, blurting  
 it out --)  
 I'm getting back with my husband.

ON JERRY

He grins a wide grin and laughs like it was a great joke. Then the grin becomes frozen.

JERRY  
(through his frozen  
grin; a statement)  
You're kidding.

CHRISTINE  
(she means it)  
I'm sorry.

Jerry is stunned. Christine takes his hand and looks squeamish.

JERRY  
(finally)  
Well. I'm terribly happy for you.

An awkward pause.

CHRISTINE  
(consoling)  
You know, it -- it probably  
wouldn't have worked with us  
anyway. I feel I know you too  
easily, and you like me too  
much...

JERRY  
(confused)  
Too easily? Too much?

CHRISTINE  
Really I'm more comfortable with  
men that are more, well --  
mysterious. And who don't like me  
so much. I'm adjusted to that,  
you know?

JERRY  
Mysterious?

Jerry paces the room. He can't stand still. He looks lost, and desperate, spacing out...

CHRISTINE  
What are you thinking?

Jerry gets an odd look in his eye, glances at his watch, then hits the television remote-control button. The television comes on with a test pattern. He carefully scrutinizes it, then picks up the phone and dials.

JERRY  
(into phone, in a  
deliberate voice)  
Ground zero? We've been  
compromised. Don't destabilize  
yet. Right. Terminate with  
extreme prejudice.

He hangs up. Christine is mystified.

CHRISTINE  
What was that?

Jerry gets up and crosses the room --

JERRY  
If I want you to know, I'll tell  
you. A man needs room to move.

She watches him apprehensively as he rips up a dried leaf from an exotic plant in the corner and shreds it into his pipe.

JERRY  
Gotta keep the ball rolling.  
There's more that meets the eye.

He sits at the table and puts a foot up on it as he lights his pipe --

JERRY  
How about some service?

Christine finally catches on. She shakes her head, goes to him, hugs him affectionately, and sits on his lap feeling sorry for the poor fool.

CHRISTINE  
Sorry.  
(smiles)  
But that was a great performance.

Jerry sighs in defeat, accepting the situation.

CHRISTINE  
Don't take it personally, okay?

JERRY

(giving her a look)

Oh I see, this is just a little habit of yours, like kleptomania. You're compelled to break a new heart every day.

CHRISTINE

(convincing)

Look at it this way -- you always thought the women you wanted were out of your reach, right? Well... you could have had me, if the circumstances were different.

JERRY

Oh great, that makes me feel a lot better.

CHRISTINE

Don't you see? Now you know it's possible to get what you thought you never could!

Jerry considers. Nods reluctantly.

JERRY

...But what are the odds?

CHRISTINE

That's not the point.

(pours wine)

Come on. Let's celebrate your new lease on life. Huh?

(holds up her glass, encouraging)

Born again! You've only begun to fight!

Jerry clinks his glass to hers sadly.

INT. LARGE SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jerry is plodding toward the express cash register. He looks withdrawn, introverted, off in his head.

The computerized cash registers are the new VOCALIZING type. Their inhuman "VOICES" recite prices down the whole line of cash registers.

Ahead of Jerry is a female BEAUTY having her groceries packed, and a hot-shit LADIES' MAN paying for his. He is coming on to her --

LADIES' MAN  
My name's Rex, what's yours?

COMPUTER  
Chicken of the Sea.

LADIES' MAN  
How 'bout your number?

COMPUTER  
Two forty nine.

The Beauty is not reciprocating. Jerry watches.

LADIES' MAN  
I'll give you mine then -

But she is already pushing out her cart and the Lady's Man can't find a pen or blank paper -- he grabs a felt-pen marker and, walking along with her, writes out his phone number across the length of a BANANA in her groceries. She laughs.

LADIES' MAN  
Think of me when you're lonely.

COMPUTER  
Special sale this week only.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Jerry exits and turns down the street, mingling with the rush hour pedestrians.

JERRY'S POV - THE PASSING PEDESTRIANS

We see virtually nothing but the attractive women who pass. Anyone else only comes into view fleetingly.

This narrow attention continues till we get used to it and it suddenly turns into --

FANTASY - JERRY DRESSED AS THE LADIES' MAN

He ENTERS the same moving POV shot, carrying a large bunch of bananas with his phone number written across them, suggestively handing them out to various women as we PASS them.

Behind him, the women can be seen peeling and nibbling on the bananas.

Suddenly a soliciting Cult Member FILLS THE SCREEN holding out a pamphlet, and --

ON JERRY

He jumps, STARTLED OUT OF HIS FANTASY. He takes the pamphlet automatically and hurries on.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT

On the STEREO the stirring romantic MUSIC from the opening scene is playing, only this time LOUD AND CLEAR, really moving. Jerry, in contrast, slumps in his armchair, brooding.

Jerry hears a KNOCK at his door. He goes and opens it.

A HAND thrusts in, nearly punching Jerry in the face.

The hand is holding a business card and behind the MUSIC we can make out some kind of hyper sales pitch.

Jerry takes the card and the hand withdraws.

Closing the door, Jerry stands in thought a moment. He seems to be getting an idea.

He walks to the full-length mirror. He waves politely at his reflection, and hands out the business card in offering. Then he smiles again, tips an imaginary hat, and graciously walks away...

ON JERRY

He dials his phone. He is standing in front of one of his large wall posters of galaxies in outer space. The stars FILL THE ENTIRE FRAME behind him, and Jerry himself is silhouetted in back-light --

JERRY

(into phone)

Christine? This is Jerry. Yeah, fine. How are you? Really. Yeah, well, I just called to ask you a question.

(significant pause)

Imagine that before you and I met, we had passed in the street, okay? And I handed you my business card -- or no, let's say I had a note actually prepared, just in case -- that said I wanted to meet you. And my phone number. If I'd done that, would you have called me?

(listens)  
 I'd seem weird? Yeah, I know, but  
 would you have called me?  
 (listens)  
 Naive? Well, maybe, but -- would  
 you have called me?  
 (listens)  
 Unorthodox? Of course. But would  
 you --  
 (listens)  
 Too desperate, huh?  
 (sighs, gives up)  
 I see your point. Well, it was  
 just an idea --  
 (surprised)  
 You would? You'd call?  
 (laughs)  
 Hey, thank you, that's all I need  
 to know.

CUT TO:

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

MOVE IN SLOWLY on Jerry watching his television without the  
 sound on. An old Hollywood romance.

Jerry is deep in thought. Finally, he speaks aloud --

JERRY  
 (composing)  
 Once in a long while...

His words appear typed out on his television screen,  
 superimposed over the movie. And now we SEE that he's  
 typing on a keyboard on his lap --

JERRY  
 (continuing)  
 ...I catch a glimpse of a woman  
 like you who has a -- um...

The letters continue on the television but he changes his  
 mind, shakes his head, and the letters disappear. A pause,  
 then he tries again --

JERRY  
 There is something special about  
 you that intrigues me. I prepared  
 this note for those rare moments  
 when I cannot stand to miss the  
 chance to meet someone...

The letters type out and his composed speech continues in  
 VOICE OVER into the next scene as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - JERRY'S POV - DAY

As he strolls along, on the lookout, and we SEE only the attractive women, just like before.

JERRY (VOICE OVER)

We might like each other. We might not. The point of this note is that I simply would like to know.

(beat)

I want to meet you... But I do not want to bother you. I leave it to you, then, to call me if you like. My name is Jerry, and my number is two-six-six, oh-five-six-two.

Various ANGLES on various streets, but no one has yet kept his attention.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Jerry buys a ticket to see "An Officer and A Gentleman" (suggested).

INT. THEATRE - JERRY

He finds a seat. Glances around casually.

There! Who's that? Take another look. Wow. It's Paula, the woman on the television. And she's alone.

Jerry is smitten. He knows this is going to be his first attempt.

The lights dim. The magic reflections from the movie screen flicker over the audience...

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

Jerry inconspicuously dabs the corners of his eyes and checks to see if anyone's looking -- what he sees is a lot of other people in weepy, rapturous delight.

But no Paula -- she's gone already!

EXT. THE THEATRE - NIGHT

The audience pours out, crowding the lobby. Through their midst a wave rolls toward us, finally parting the crowd in front of us -- it's Paula, aggressively bumping her way through. She is royally pissed off at the movie.

And behind her now we can see Jerry, struggling to catch up to her.

ON JERRY

Following Paula. You can feel his tension. Fumbling with his wallet to pull out a folded piece of paper, his note.

Coming up alongside her --

JERRY  
(politely)  
Excuse me --

Paula is startled, then sees him and his friendly expression --

JERRY  
(matter-of-fact,  
offering the note)  
I'd like to give you this --

ON PAULA

She looks perplexed but takes the note. She stares after him, intrigued, as he turns and walks away. Finally she opens the note.

ON JERRY

He gets out of her sight and we see the tension drain away. Relief. It's done. He smiles. A MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT starts, and continues, linking the next SERIES OF SCENES.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - JERRY - DAY

Passing the lingerie department. Staid-looking women browse amid blatantly sexual displays of underwear. A mannequin in bra and panties poses suggestively with a large feather. Some kids have pulled its panties down to mid-thigh and are running away giggling.

Jerry can't help looking and chuckling. Then between the mannequin's legs we SEE, across the way, WOMAN TWO, who rivets Jerry's attention.

He maneuvers closer.

She sees him. He pretends to look with great interest at the clothing racks. Another woman gives him a strange look and he blushes as he realizes he's looking through bras and panties. He makes an impulsive decision -- takes out his note and awkwardly approaches her.

Politely, he offers her the note. Apprehensively, she takes it.

QUICK CLOSEUP - HER HAND

with a wedding ring.

CLOSER - ON THE RING

ON JERRY

Walking away, feeling foolish.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - JERRY - DAY

Tailing WOMAN THREE through the obstacle course of rush-hour pedestrians.

CAMERA jerkily tries to FOLLOW CLOSELY her left hand, which keeps moving too fast as she strides and digs through her purse. Finally it stops long enough to SEE her ring is not on her wedding finger.

She stops at a window display. Jerry stops too and pretends to admire the display. Gets his note out. Politely gets her attention. She takes it absently, like he was just another proselytizer, and turns back to the window display -- a female mannequin is holding a huge sausage suggestively. She smiles at it wistfully then turns to her huge boyfriend who just emerged from the store.

Jerry scoots around the corner to cross the street, but has to wait for the light to change. The couple, arm-in-arm, appear beside him, waiting to cross too. They start reading Jerry's note together. They look over at Jerry.

Jerry tries to look nonchalant and turns and crosses at the other crosswalk. But now the light has changed. A car screeches to a halt in front of him.

He jumps in fright, and then is so flustered that he keeps on crossing the street, still trying to look nonchalant as cars honk angrily and swerve to avoid him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUS - JERRY - NIGHT

Bored and sleepy.

Until CAROL, a pretty, soft, kind-looking, young woman passes in the aisle and takes a seat on the other side behind him. We can see his pulse quicken. The adrenaline rush.

He gets his note out. Waits for her stop. Furtive glances. She notices him staring.

The bus stops to let someone on. Jerry glances back just in time to see Carol about to get off at the rear exit.

Jerry hurries to the rear exit trying to look casual. But the doors open just before he arrives and she's out.

The bus is on its way again and the doors close -- on Jerry's outstretched arm --

EXT. THE BUS - CAROL

As the bus accelerates slowly next to her, a protruding hand passes by and stuffs something into her handbag --

--she jumps at the apparition, then sees Jerry smiling through the door window and his hand waving sheepishly.

She looks puzzled and pulls out the note as the bus recedes down the street with the hand wriggling to retract itself. In a moment her consternation turns to a warm grin.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - ROAD - DAY

As Jerry jogs into view, working out tension and engrossed in the music from his Sony Walkman headphones.

He reaches his parked car. A woman cyclist in red approaches and as Jerry gets into his car she comes to a stop nearby --

JERRY'S POV - WOMAN FIVE

The cyclist is a platinum blond -- but now he can't see because the sun is in his eyes.

ON JERRY

He's getting pretty cocky about this note business, and he's seen enough to be motivated again. But she has taken off. He starts the car and turns it around to follow her, but there's no trace.

Suddenly a flash of red as she zooms by again. Jerry is excited. He follows with his car.

FROM BEHIND THEM

As Jerry's car comes up beside her, matching speeds. She looks over apprehensively and Jerry holds his note out the passenger window --

JERRY'S POV - WOMAN FIVE

As she takes the note -- But she's old! Old enough to be his mother!

ON JERRY

Reacting. Speeding away. Feeling like a fool.

But he has to stop at a light. He sees Woman Five coming up beside his car, and he frantically rolls up his window before she stops beside him. She tries to get his attention but he pretends he doesn't notice her -- his headphones are on.

Relief as the light finally changes.

The MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT FADES OUT...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Jerry is showering. His telephone sits on the bathroom counter.

The phone rings. Jerry snaps to nervous alert, turns off the shower, steps out and picks up the receiver. Thick shampoo lather covers his head.

JERRY

Hello?

MAN (filter)

Hello are you Jerry?

JERRY

Yes.

MAN (filter)  
I'm calling about the note you  
gave my girlfriend yesterday.

JERRY  
Oh. Yeah.

MAN (filter)  
Is this a joke?

JERRY  
No.

MAN (filter)  
What's it supposed to mean?

JERRY  
Well, um, exactly what it says.  
But, uh, she's not available so,  
uh, that's cool.

MAN (filter)  
Wait a minute.

A pause. Then a woman's voice.

WOMAN (filter)  
Hello.

JERRY  
Hi.

WOMAN (filter)  
What's this note supposed to  
mean?

JERRY  
Well, uh... just what it says.

WOMAN (filter)  
Is this some kind of joke?

JERRY  
No it's not. But, uh -- heh --  
(trying to lighten  
it up)  
-- if you really want one I'll  
see what I can do -- heh, heh...

WOMAN (filter)  
Do?

JERRY  
Maybe I can think of one.

WOMAN (filter)

One what?

JERRY

Uh... never mind.

WOMAN (filter)

Wait a minute.

Long pause.

MAN (filter)

Now listen here, buddy, is this  
some kinda joke?

Jerry looks at himself in the mirror with a pained  
expression, at the shampoo oozing down into his face.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

We pick out Jerry at a booth table. The WAITER takes two  
menus from the table and leaves, REVEALING the other  
occupant -- Paula. She looks as nervous as Jerry. There is  
a vase of phony paper flowers on their table.

JERRY

This situation makes you nervous,  
doesn't it?

(before she can  
deny it)

Same here. But it's worth it, you  
know?

PAULA

(paranoid)

What do you mean by that?

JERRY

(perplexed at the  
question)

Well, uh...

All through this dialogue Paula regards Jerry with an  
unexpectedly soft and affectionate expression whenever he's  
not looking at her. But a good part of the time he is  
looking at her and she looks away nervously.

PAULA

(expecting a hassle)

I'll tell you right now, I intend  
to pay for my own meal.

JERRY  
(cheerful)  
Great. That means we have a  
mutual attraction.

Paula is getting really squirmy.

PAULA  
(rising)  
Excuse me.

Jerry watches her go. He looks unsure of what he's doing.

INT. WASHROOM -PAULA AT THE MIRROR

Scratching insanely at her neck. She peers closely in the mirror to see if she can see anything. She stops and looks around in frustration. She's very uptight -- we can imagine gears in her head turning frantically...

Now her expression changes abruptly -- a look of relief, and of calm, determined, purpose.

INT. THE RESTAURANT - THEIR TABLE - JERRY AND PAULA

Paula returns. She doesn't look nervous anymore, but perhaps ready for a fight.

PAULA  
(sitting)  
Listen, I have to tell you  
something now. I'm starting a new  
article. A feminist one.

JERRY  
Great. I've always thought of  
myself as a feminist, as a matter  
of fact.

PAULA  
I see. Well, you're not going to  
like this then --  
(takes a breath)  
I believe that love was invented  
by men to dominate women.

JERRY  
Huh?

PAULA  
I don't believe in love.  
(MORE)

PAULA (CON'T)

I wanted to meet you because I'd like to study you. For my article. I want to know what happens with these notes you give out.

Jerry suddenly becomes stiff and formal.

JERRY

Oh. I see.

PAULA

(coy)

I wouldn't mind having sex with you, if that makes you feel any better.

That shocks him some more. He clears his throat and fidgets with a false air of detached interest.

JERRY

Oh. I see...

The Waiter arrives and puts down a candle for romantic atmosphere. Jerry winces at it and starts to gesture it away, but the Waiter has left again.

PAULA

It's in the history books.

JERRY

Pardon me?

PAULA

Romantic love was invented by the medieval troubadours to get their kicks. It never existed before that.

JERRY

Yeah, well... It's a real experience to me. It's a... it's a transcending of myself, it's, it's --

PAULA

(prodding)

Neurotic insecurity. You need someone to boost your ego.

JERRY

(a beat, offended)

Well thanks for the diagnosis,  
Doc, how much do I owe you?

(a beat, tries again--)

Look, I'm just searching for a  
woman who's ideal for me.

PAULA

Exactly. You want an ideal, not a  
real person.

(looking for a fight)

You men are great at making up  
lofty excuses for your selfish  
needs.

The Waiter has returned to light the candle.

JERRY

(outraged)

Oh yeah? And what of all the  
sacrifices men have made for  
love? Huh?

PAULA

For "love", not for a woman.

A fight is developing. Just as the Waiter lights a match  
for the candle, Jerry in his fervor grabs his wrist --

JERRY

(to Waiter)

Have you ever been in love?

WAITER

Oh, yes.

JERRY

(to Waiter)

Didn't you sometimes feel that  
you would do anything for your  
loved one?

The Waiter gingerly transfers the lit match to his other  
hand --

WAITER

Well, ah, I would say...

Paula grabs his free match-hand --

PAULA  
(to Waiter)  
Sure -- and didn't you also feel  
afraid of losing her? Not having  
her to use anymore?

The Waiter is desperately trying to blow out the match while both hands are held by Jerry and Paula. They finally release him.

JERRY  
What about the experience! The  
yearning, the longing --!

Jerry grabs the Waiter's match-hand just as he's lit another one --

JERRY  
(to Waiter)  
Have you ever felt that?

WAITER  
Well I, um...

Just as the Waiter takes the match with his other hand, Paula grabs that wrist again --

PAULA  
(to Waiter)  
Yeah, and have you ever noticed  
it feels a lot like being  
insecure?

JERRY  
(to Waiter)  
How can that be an invention!  
Huh? That all-consuming flame of  
passion!

The Waiter drops the match as it burns his finger. It lands on the paper flowers, which burst into flames --!

All three just stare at this miniature inferno.

It fizzles out as abruptly as it started.

A few diners clap. Paula and Jerry look at them, then back at each other, embarrassed. Finally they smile at each other in challenge.

INT. OFFICE-TOWER HALLWAY - CAROL

As she wheels toward us a new compact photocopying machine. We recognize her right away as the sweet-looking woman from the bus. She wheels it into --

INT. SECRETARIAL POOL

Four desks and three other SECRETARIES, and a big oak door to the BOSS's office.

CAROL  
(a cheery  
announcement)  
Here she is! The latest model.

The Secretaries applaud. They gather round as Carol plugs the machine in behind a low partition, where we can't quite see it, and sets it up to run.

MS. BROWN  
How should we christen it?

CAROL  
I know.  
(opens top and leans  
her face down to it  
-- a FLASH!)  
Yeew! I think I'm blinded.

MS. GREEN pulls out the copy, a photo of Carol's face.

MS. GREEN  
Hey this is great. Let me try.

Suddenly the festivity stops as they all freeze, listening. We hear a peculiar CLUMPING SOUND of hard heels. The Secretaries swiftly, smoothly, and quietly disperse to resume their desk work, just as a crotchety older woman enters, MRS. CRUMM. She walks up to one desk, unceremoniously drops some papers onto it, looks around suspiciously, and leaves. There are sneers behind her back.

CAROL - STILL AT THE MACHINE

CAROL.  
(a devilish look)  
I've got a present for Mrs.  
Crumm.

We can't see behind the partition, but it looks like she's reaching under her skirt and pulling down her underwear. Carol sits up on the machine. Pushes the button.

A FLASH from below --

CAROL  
 (pleasantly shocked)  
 Oooh! It's warm.

Ms. Brown gets the copy. She snickers at it. The others look at it and laugh too.

CAROL  
 (conspiratorially to  
 Ms. Brown)  
 Slip it under her office door.

Ms. Brown sniggers and rushes off with the copy. Ms. White, as opposed to the others, looks worried about all this.

MS. GREEN  
 Let's make one for Mrs. Rumble!

CAROL  
 Coming right up.  
 (FLASH!)  
 Oooh...

MS. BLACK  
 And Mister Ulving!

Another flash! and "oooh..." It's becoming a mass production.

Ms. White stands guard at the doorway nervously.

We HEAR a THROAT CLEAR gruffly. All eyes turn to face --

THE BOSS

A stern stuffed shirt, facing Carol.

Carol smiles stupidly and turns red.

CAROL  
 (a beat, sheepish)  
 Does this mean I don't get my  
 promotion?

The Boss's murderous look answers that.

INT. THE SAME RESTAURANT AGAIN - EVENING

We FOLLOW the Waiter we met before as he carries a tray of food past the booths. Suddenly we SEE Jerry ahead in one of the booths. The Waiter sees him too, and abruptly changes course and heads away from him nervously. But we STAY on the booth --

BOOTH - JERRY AND CAROL

On their desserts. Carol is warming to him, sweet and open. Jerry is at ease and confident. The natural child in him shows.

CAROL

That's my favorite movie, too.

JERRY

Remember when she turns to stone and then slowly erodes away?

CAROL

That was incredible. Really.

A pause, as they gaze at each other for a long moment.

CAROL

You have so many fascinating things to say.

JERRY

Only because you appreciate them so much.

(beat)

How come you never went to college?

CAROL

I don't know. I never finished high school.

(uneasy)

I've always felt too dumb.

JERRY

Dumb? Well you may be ignorant, but you sure aren't dumb. You're brighter than women I know with college degrees.

CAROL

(bashful)

Really?

JERRY

I can talk to you.

CAROL

Well you know, I've been thinking lately I'd like to get an education.

JERRY

You'd love it. You would. I can tell.

CAROL

But I wouldn't know where to start.

JERRY

Well, uh ... I could help you.

CAROL

Really?

JERRY

Sure. I'd love to.

CAROL

(considers)

I'd like to learn about science. You seem to appreciate it so well.

JERRY

Once you know the basics, it's amazing. You see the thing is-- once you know a lot, only then do you know just how much you don't know. My favorite saying is this.

(with emphasis)

'The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.'

CAROL

Oh, I like that...

JERRY

(excited)

You get it? Like for example in sub-atomic physics, magical things happen -- everything is a particle and a wave at the same time, electrons teleport themselves, or even go backwards in time... Space and time become one, normal cause-and-effect just doesn't exist... There's even this new theory that the universe is like a hologram.

CAROL

Yeah?

Jerry goes on getting more and more engrossed in his story. It's too much for Carol to follow but she doesn't mind -- she adores his enthusiasm. We don't need to understand it either.

JERRY

A hologram is a three-dee photograph done with lasers, right? But the thing is that each piece of the film contains the whole image on it. It's just that with a smaller piece you see it through like a smaller "window", right?

We NOTICE the Waiter setting a nearby table. He listens carefully to Jerry and watches them both.

WAITER'S POV - JERRY AND CAROL

Carol is very romantically lit now -- all the stops are pulled to exaggerate the fact that Jerry's words are actually seducing her, making her swoon. Heavy eyelids and all that.

JERRY

So just like a hologram, every part of the universe has in it all the information for every other part. It's all connected.

Her dreamy, rapt attention excites him even more. She puts her hand on his.

JERRY

(passionately)

And then! There's this other theory that our minds are holographic too, and so the two holograms could be connected, which could explain telepathy, and even life-after-death! In fact --

CAROL

Can I kiss you?

A dramatic pause, and then... they lean eagerly across the table and embrace in a lingering, yearning, overwhelming, cosmic, kiss.

The Waiter gawks at them in amazement.

INT. THE RESTAURANT'S KITCHEN

The Waiter looks over at the pretty HOSTESS who is on her cigarette break. He is thinking slyly, formulating a plan. He pulls himself into a fine figure of a man and approaches her.

WAITER  
 (attempting to be  
 suave)  
 Jeanie, I have discovered  
 something.

HOSTESS  
 Huh?

WAITER  
 There is space -- lots of space,  
 and lots of time, too, and it's  
 all in a giant ho-lo-graph...  
 (getting closer,  
 trying to look  
 suggestive)  
 It's true, um, baby. We are  
 connected by laser beams.

HOSTESS  
 Bug off, huh?

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Sun-dappled and pastoral. The ground is covered with tiny twigs and needles. We HEAR someone making funny PURRING SOUNDS. REVEAL Jerry and Carol in romantic embrace. The purring sound comes from Jerry.

They break. They start to stroll and we FOLLOW. Carol has a guitar over her shoulder. They walk in silence. The only sound is the CRUNCHING of their feet in the thick layer of tiny twigs. It's a beautiful, peaceful sound.

JERRY  
 (a whisper)  
 Listen.

Carol stops. Jerry walks about slowly and carefully, looking at Carol, as they both drink in the soothing, delicate, delicious Rice-Krispies SOUND.

CAROL  
 It's so beautiful.

JERRY  
 I've never heard anything like it  
 before.

Carol finds a place to sit with her guitar, as we PULL BACK to a wider angle.

JERRY

Look what you do to me.

He looks up at the trees and the sky and gestures in rapture --

JERRY

I must be in love!

Carol starts to tune her guitar. Just tuning it, that's all.

JERRY

(over-reacting to  
the guitar)

Oh! That's beautiful!

Carol looks at him quizzically while continuing to tune up. Jerry realizes and laughs, embarrassed. Carol laughs too. He sits with her. We have STOPPED PULLING BACK and in the f.g. now are --

TWO TREE TRUNKS

The roots of the smaller one intertwine with the roots of the larger. And on the DISTANT SOUND of Jerry's PURRING again, we --

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S BEDROOM

Carol and Jerry in bed in a position that matches, on the screen, the shape of the intertwined roots.

Carol is snuggled in Jerry's arms, asleep. Jerry regards her lovingly. Then, with the very same look, he turns toward the side-table --

ON THE SIDE-TABLE

Atop a mess of torn-up gift-wrapping is a stack of books. They are textbooks on physics, and chemistry, and biology, and astronomy. Hold for that to register.

CLOSEUP - THE ASTRONOMY TEXTBOOK

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT SKY - THE STARS

Deep dark heavens with lots of stars. We HEAR SPLASHING noises. PAN DOWN TO REVEAL below --

EXT. BACKYARD POOL - NIGHT

The Editor and her husband recline at the side of their backyard pool, sipping drinks and gazing up at the stars, lit solely by the weird wavy-lined light from under the surface of the water. There's another loud SPLASH.

EDITOR

(to husband)

Mars is at its zenith tonight,  
hon.

She turns and looks toward the pool and her husband follows her look --

EDITOR

(continuing)

What effect could that be having  
on our two guests...?

The CAMERA follows their look TO REVEAL Paula, in her bathing suit, crouched on the diving board looking down at the water. REVEAL FURTHER that she is holding a microphone down toward Jerry, who treads water just below the diving board. The cord runs back to a tape recorder.

PAULA

(to Jerry, like an  
on-the-spot-  
reporter)

I say it's infatuation. How do  
you respond to that?

JERRY

(treading water)

Look, we've already argued about  
this. All I have to say is --  
Carol and I are in love, and  
we're committed to each other,  
and everything's great, even my  
job. Why don't you interview  
her?

Jerry swims to the side of the pool while Paula keeps training the microphone on him.

PAULA

(persistent)

Then you admit you can't justify  
yourself.

Jerry climbs out of the pool, hops onto the diving board, and takes the microphone away from Paula. Then he lifts her up and throws her into the water. She surfaces, looking miffed.

JERRY  
 Your research is finished.  
 There's no more story.  
 (he dives in)  
 It's love!

Jerry swims under water across to the other side. Paula meanwhile goes to the side where the Editor and her husband sit.

PAULA  
 (to Editor)  
 Don't worry, I'm still on his case.

EDITOR  
 (meaningfully)  
 I know.

PAULA  
 (a quick look)  
 I mean I'll get a good article out of this yet.

Jerry surfaces at the other end and calls excitedly --

JERRY  
 Paula! Let me show you something!  
 Put on a scuba mask, and when I say, lean back under water so you're looking at me upside down!

Paula shrugs, finds a scuba mask.

JERRY  
 Ready? Okay, now!

Jerry ducks under and starts to dog-paddle upside down just under the surface of the water. Paula takes a breath and does what he said --

PAULA'S POV - JERRY UNDERWATER

A surreal sight: we're looking upside down but it looks right-side-up. The only light is from inside the pool and it reflects off the undersurface of the water.

Jerry looks like he is crawling toward us along a weird shiny surface that undulates like jelly. As he crawls, his hands and feet break through this surface and disappear into black void below it. It's a fascinating trick.

TOPSIDE

Jerry and Paula break surface and remove their masks.

JERRY

Isn't that something?

He goes to the side to catch his breath. Paula watches him with intrigue and a soft smile. Then as he swims toward her, she puts her mask back on, obscuring her face.

PAULA

You're weird.

Jerry scowls. He puts his mask back on too, and moves to confront Paula. They butt their masks together, face to face, glass to glass, and try to push each other back in the water --

FULL SHOT - THE POOL

As their two heads, locked mask-to-mask, travel jerkily back and forth, back and forth, along the edge of the pool, like goats butting heads...

INT. CAROL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jerry gets up from the dinner table with a martini in hand and approaches Carol, who slumps on the living-room sofa, toking on a joint.

JERRY

(he sits)

Don't you have your science class tonight?

CAROL

I'm too tired from work.

JERRY

You have an exam tonight, don't you?

CAROL

And I don't like tests.

JERRY

(puzzled)

But you were doing great.

(he shrugs)  
Oh well. How's your reading?  
(picks up a book,  
opens at the  
bookmark, looks  
surprised)  
You've only read two pages?

He leans toward her and she slumps down more.

CAROL  
I'm a slow reader.

JERRY  
In three weeks?

CAROL  
I don't like pressure.

JERRY  
Pressure? But I'm trying to help  
you.

CAROL  
I know, but... how can I ever do  
anything if you always expect me  
to?

JERRY  
(confused)  
Huh? What should I expect?

CAROL  
Nothing.

JERRY  
(puzzled)  
You mean I can only help you if I  
don't care?

CAROL  
Why do you always twist my words  
around? It's just that... you're  
always so sure I'll find it easy.

JERRY  
But you will, I guarantee.

CAROL  
I'm afraid I won't.

JERRY  
(affectionately)  
Come on, honey, don't be stupid.

CAROL  
See? I'm stupid.

Jerry regards her, perturbed. He gets up and fixes himself another drink. Carol hunches on the couch forlornly, wanting to be hugged -- but Jerry doesn't pick up on that.

CAROL  
I feel depressed.

Jerry returns and sits opposite her.

JERRY  
(into his problem-solving mode)  
Maybe you have an iron deficiency. Why don't you ever take those vitamins I bought?

CAROL  
I will.

JERRY  
That's what you say about everything.

CAROL  
No I don't.

JERRY  
You do.

CAROL  
See? I can't do anything right.

JERRY  
(a beat, he shakes his head)  
That's also what you say about everything ...  
(thinks)  
Maybe if you could have orgasms, like your doctor said, to relieve tension --

CAROL  
Stop analyzing me!

JERRY  
(taken aback)  
How else can we figure out the problem?

CAROL  
I don't want to figure it out!

JERRY

Then why did you bring it up?

CAROL

You just don't understand!

JERRY

Of course I don't understand.  
That's why I'm trying to figure  
it out.

CAROL

Well stop trying to figure it  
out!

JERRY

You don't want me to understand?

CAROL

Oh!

(she goes to the  
window, back  
turned)

You just don't understand!

Jerry looks bewildered.

INT. THE RESTAURANT - DAY

We FOLLOW the Waiter again as he carries drinks. This time  
he looks cautiously curious.

He arrives at the booth where Jerry and Paula are in mid  
conversation --

JERRY

We may be having problems... but  
I do love her.

Paula is taking notes. The Waiter is listening in -- they  
notice him and he slinks away.

CUT TO:

LATER - WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

returning with their salads, and taking the opportunity to eavesdrop momentarily again --

PAULA

But people always have reasons  
for why they think they love  
someone.

JERRY

(like an authority)  
Nope. You must love the whole  
person, that's the key.

The Waiter leaves, pondering over this new gem of wisdom he's overheard.

DISSOLVE TO:

WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

as he redirects a busboy who was about to clear their salad dishes, and arrives to do it himself instead --

PAULA

So why did you choose Carol?

JERRY

I had my reasons.

The Waiter looks confused as he leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

bringing the main course now --

JERRY

Love lifts me above the ordinary  
realities of life.

The Waiter leaves, thinking how profound that is.

DISSOLVE TO:

WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

bringing the wine --

JERRY

Love keeps me anchored in  
reality.

The Waiter leaves totally confused again.

DISSOLVE TO:

WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

taking the dishes --

JERRY

One thing I've learned is you  
have to work at it.

The Waiter leaves, nodding to himself about that one.

DISSOLVE TO:

WITH THE WAITER AGAIN

bringing coffee --

JERRY

You have to let it happen  
naturally. You can't force it.

The Waiter leaves, bewildered again, and now we STAY WITH  
Jerry and Paula...

PAULA

Jerry, you know what I think? I  
think you're really worried.

JERRY

Not at all. I've got it all under  
control.

PAULA

You're trying too hard. You're  
afraid I'm right.

JERRY

Hah! Hah! Well how could you  
understand anyway... You're --  
you know what I think? You're  
afraid of love. And you have to  
hide all your fears in all this -

-

(points to her  
notes)  
--this bullshit!

PAULA

Hah! On the contrary! You're so  
afraid of not having love that  
you have to hide your fears in  
all this bullshit!

JERRY

Listen, this is your work, not mine, and you'd better be careful because you're biting the hand that feeds you!

PAULA

How can I help it if you insist on feeding the hand that bites you?

JERRY

(throws up his hands)

Christ, what is this anyway! I've had enough...

He starts to get up from the booth --

JERRY

(rising, indignant)

Hands don't even bite --!

Jerry acts like he's triumphed with that comeback -- Paula just looks at him askant. He slaps a few bills onto the table for his meal.

PAULA

(dismayed)

Take it easy will you --

JERRY

Forget it! No more studying me!

PAULA

Wait a minute, that's not fair!

JERRY

(retrieving his coat)

I said forget it!

PAULA

Just admit you're not so sure of yourself!

In his state Jerry is putting his coat on upside down. His arms are in and the rest of it hangs inside-out from his shoulders --

JERRY

(stalking off like that)

I know exactly what I'm doing!

Paula looks furious.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - JERRY - DAY

As he leaves, struggling with his coat to get it on right.

He collides headlong with a passing woman -- recoiling and landing on his ass as his coat flings up and a flurry of small folded papers, his handout notes, fly from the pocket and scatter about the sidewalk.

ANDREA, the woman he bumped into, is unruffled and regarding Jerry with interest, as he picks himself up.

ANDREA

Are you alright?

JERRY

(disoriented,  
automatic)

Ah -- fine-thank-you-how-are-you?

He picks up a note hastily. Then he sees a person picking one up with curiosity -- he dashes over and snatches it from them. They give him a weird look as he picks up another one from the sidewalk.

Another person starts to read one of the notes -- Jerry snatches it away fiercely, as though the person was a peeping tom.

Andrea has the last two. She hands them to him unopened.

Now he really sees her for the first time. She is taller and older than him, with a distinctive grace and maturity. Her eyes look clear and perceptive. He stares at her for a moment. She smiles back.

Hesitantly, he hands her back one of the notes, then edges quickly away.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Under the same canopy of trees we were under with Carol and Jerry earlier. All the forces of Mother Nature are co-operating to produce the quintessence of pastoral beauty. Except --

JERRY (O.S.)

Look, what's the matter with you?

CAROL

I don't know... I'm just not good at that sort of thing...

JERRY  
 (fuming)  
 But you promised you'd pay that  
 fine two months ago --

CAROL  
 Do you have to keep bugging me  
 about it --?

Tension is building to a head.

JERRY  
 (finally exploding)  
 Goddamnit we haven't make love  
 for a whole month now!

CAROL  
 (playing the victim)  
 Don't pressure me!

JERRY  
 Wha --?  
 (aghast)  
 I've been waiting patiently the  
 whole time!

CAROL  
 Exactly -- you've been waiting.

JERRY  
 (throws up his  
 hands)  
 I can't take this anymore -- It's  
 too much! Even my work is going  
 down the tube because of you.

CAROL  
 (getting out  
 cigarettes)  
 Good! I've had it with your  
 stupid work!

A cute little friendly squirrel has been following them,  
 looking for a handout. It has hopped up close to Carol. She  
 threatens it with her foot as if to kick at it.

JERRY  
 Boy, everyone thinks you're so  
 sweet -- what an act!

CAROL  
 (icily)  
 I am sweet!

She lights her cigarette and flicks the flaming match right at the squirrel. It yelps and scurries off.

A couple of young lovers pass nearby with a radio that plays the romantic MUSIC of a string ORCHESTRA in high fidelity. Jerry whirls toward them --

JERRY  
(at the couple)  
Bug off!

They look at him in alarm.

JERRY  
You people with your damn loud music disturbing the peace! If you can't appreciate nature why don't you go back where you belong!

They give him weird looks and hurry away. Jerry and Carol continue walking in silence... till a branch hits Jerry's face -- he strikes back at it angrily, causing it to whip back and hit him harder --

JERRY  
(swiping at it)  
That's it. We're leaving. I can't waste any more time here.

CAROL  
We just got here, and I'm not leaving till I've finished enjoying myself!

She puts down her guitar, hard. A string SNAPS.

JERRY  
Oh yeah?

A butterfly alights on his shoulder. He brushes it off as if it were vermin --

JERRY  
Well if you're going to enjoy yourself, you'll have to do it without me!

CAROL  
Fine!

Close by, a nest of baby birds have been CHIRPING AWAY in chaotic unison --

JERRY  
(to the birds)  
Shut up!

The birds STOP COMPLETELY.

JERRY  
(to Carol)  
I'm leaving without you then.

CAROL  
I said fine.

They part ways.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jerry stares numbly at the snaky line on his video screen.  
He looks scruffy and haggard.

A graduate student ASSISTANT stands over his shoulder.

ASSISTANT  
Still nothing?

JERRY  
Not a nibble.

ASSISTANT  
(exiting)  
I'll see if Aaron is coming in.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - MORNING

A cozy mess. Aaron dead asleep under a heap of blankets.  
His PHONE RINGS. He awakens and answers it, mumbling  
acknowledgement. Then he slowly hauls his reluctant body  
out of bed, fumbles sleepily for his bathrobe, and goes  
straight out the front door --

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - MORNING

Aaron's house sits only a stone's throw from the  
fairgrounds with its giant rollercoaster.

EXT. THE TOP OF THE ROLLER COASTER

As the train reaches the summit -- with ONLY AARON aboard,  
in the front seat. It PLUNGES down the first drop and  
careens off around the turns to the sound of Aaron HOWLING  
in delightful fright.

## AT THE LANDING

The OPERATORS watch as the train pulls to a stop and Aaron gets out. He looks absolutely wide awake now, ready to start a fresh new day.

AARON

Morning Jake. Henry.

A new rookie operator gives Aaron a very dubious look as he walks off in his bathrobe. Jake explains --

JAKE

(to the new guy)

Caffeine makes him nervous.

## INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - JERRY AND AARON

Aaron goes to the equipment and Jerry sits back and sighs gloomily.

Aaron sets down his tool box and maneuvers behind the equipment. Jerry gets up and stretches his cramped limbs.

JERRY

Guess I'll go for coffee.

Suddenly a couple of indicator lights blink and a big peak glides by on the screen --

AARON

Abracadabra! Let there be light.

JERRY

What did you do?

AARON

I plugged it in.

(at Jerry's  
stupefied stare)

That's a technical term. I'd be glad to explain it to you if you like.

JERRY

(outraged)

How did I miss that?

AARON

The devil made you do it?

JERRY

Just look at me. I've been  
burning my eyes out all week  
watching static!

(shakes his head,  
emphatically --)

My mother always warned me not to  
get involved with a woman when  
I'm trying to prove the universe  
is inside out.

AARON

Oh, a woman's to blame, huh? Hey,  
that's a good one -- and it only  
cost you a week's work.

JERRY

What did?

AARON

Being right.

JERRY

Being right?

Aaron doesn't respond right away.

AARON

(finally)

Why do angels have wings?

JERRY

(put off)

Do I get a prize if I answer  
before the gong? Look, I've got  
problems right now, okay?

AARON

Okay.

Aaron packs up his tools and heads out. Jerry watches  
Aaron.

Aaron pauses as he notices Jerry watching him.

AARON

(as though he'd been  
asked)

Because they take themselves  
lightly.

Aaron smiles warmly and leaves.

INT. THE RESTAURANT AGAIN - NIGHT

Very busy tonight. To one side we see Jerry waiting nervously.

We SEE the Waiter. He has a look of anticipation as he notices Jerry across the restaurant.

Andrea arrives now. We see her and Jerry greet each other somewhat formally, shaking hands.

They are shown to a booth.

ON THE WAITER

He goes for Jerry's table but is dismayed to see a Big Waiter taking their order already --

Oh well, he has his hands full tonight anyway.

FROM A DISTANCE

Jerry and Andrea seem to be hitting it off.

THE BOOTH - JERRY AND ANDREA

Jerry impressed, Andrea happy and almost maternal.

ANDREA

The holographic universe? Oh, I'm very intrigued by that theory too. In fact, I just held a seminar at the Art School with an artist who takes it as the basis of his work.

JERRY

Really? I can't imagine what that would look like.

ANDREA

I'll show you some time -- I have a book of his paintings.

JERRY

How long have you been teaching at the Art School?

ANDREA

Two years.

JERRY

You sure know a lot of fascinating stuff.

ANDREA

So do you.

JERRY

Yeah, but I feel I'm missing a lot. I've always been interested in art, but I really know nothing about it.

ANDREA

Well you may be ignorant, but you're not dumb.

(beat)

I think you might be good at it.

JERRY

Thanks. But I wouldn't know where to start.

ANDREA

Well -- I wouldn't mind guiding you a little.

JERRY

Yeah?

Jerry gets a weird look all of a sudden -- deja vu?

WITH THE WAITER

He gets free for a moment. Anxious to check up on Jerry, he maneuvers closer --

WAITER'S POV - THEIR BOOTH

But there's too much NOISE from a busboy stacking dishes nearby. We can only tell that Andrea is reaching the climax of an impassioned monologue, and that Jerry is listening to her in total rapture, enthralled.

In fact, he is now lit in soft romantic lighting, just like Carol was before. They hold hands.

ON THE WAITER

Reacting -- there he goes again!

INT. ASTRONOMY BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Paula stands apprehensively before the door to Jerry's office. She gathers her courage and determination. Raises her hand to knock...

--The door flies open and Jerry strides out, walking on air --

JERRY

Paula! What a surprise! A lovely day for a lovely lady!

Paula is tongue-tied for a beat, then launches into her speech --

PAULA

Jerry --

But Jerry is sweeping down the hallway. Paula rushes to catch up --

PAULA

Jerry, you can't pull the rug out from under me just like that --

Jerry flicks open the stairwell door as though it were made of paper --

-- but when it swings back on Paula it stops her dead with its inertia.

And they are taking the stairs up --

PAULA

At this point, I can't finish my article

Jerry is springing up the stairs effortlessly, two at a time, so graceful he could be riding a fast escalator --

JERRY

Now you can! Ask all you want! I've got the right woman this time!

Paula struggles to keep up with him flight after flight of stairs --

JERRY

(continuing)

I see where I went wrong -- wait till I tell you about it -- this is hot!

-- they come to a conference room door --

JERRY

But first -

Jerry opens the door with a flourish and addresses the occupants.

JERRY

Let us sing praises to the  
Neutrino Constant!

Jerry glides into a roomful of studious scientists. They look at him askant as he floats across the room.

Paula is left puffing from the exertion.

She rolls her eyes in disgust and disbelief.

Then laughs, shakes her head, pleased.

EXT. HOUSE WINDOW - DAY

Steadily moving in CLOSER as the heads of Jerry and Andrea thrash into and out of view inside, accompanied by a lot of muted noise. Andrea is on top, hauling Jerry around in a fit of sexual passion. He looks like he's riding a bucking bronco. We HEAR a CRASH --

INT. BEDROOM

They lie tangled on the floor. The room is a disaster area.

CLOSE ON JERRY

Under Andrea -

JERRY

(gasping  
incredulously)  
I can't... take it anymore...  
It's too much ...

ANDREA

Aha!  
(playfully)  
Your tongue still works.

She moves her body up, BLOCKING the SCREEN with her back. Starts to move down --

JERRY

Wait a -- mmff...

INT. ART GALLERY

A large painting of a soup can label.

Jerry and Andrea look at it...

ANDREA  
(very serious)  
You see, Warhol achieved  
perfection of flatness.

Jerry shrugs. Shakes his head at it.

JERRY  
Seems pretty silly to me.

Andrea glares at him.

JERRY  
What's the matter?

She turns and walks away irritated --

ANDREA  
Nothing!

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Playing "Last Tango In Paris". Andrea and Jerry come out.

Andrea is obviously very moved by the film. She even wipes  
a tear from her eye.

INT. JERRY'S CAR - JERRY AND ANDREA - NIGHT

Moving through traffic. Andrea looks preoccupied, musing.

JERRY  
(while driving)  
It just didn't make sense to me.

Andrea looks perturbed.

JERRY  
(continuing)  
Why did he treat her like that?  
Why did she keep coming back to  
him?

Andrea simmers with irritation at Jerry's questions.

JERRY  
(continuing)  
And why did she shoot him?  
(beat)  
Andrea?

Now she's boiling --

ANDREA

Shut up. You're making me sick.

Jerry is taken aback. He almost sideswipes a parked car.

ANDREA

God, I don't know what I ever saw  
in you...

JERRY

Hey, I know I'm not Leonardo da  
Vinci, but Jesus, Andrea --

ANDREA

Let me out right now.

JERRY

What?

A tense pause.

JERRY

(continuing)

Give me a break, okay? Please?

ANDREA

Let me out.

JERRY

(in hurt  
resignation)

I'm driving you home at least.

ANDREA

No! Stop the car.

He finally pulls over.

She opens the door, steps out, and turns to him with  
reproach.

ANDREA

You're so... so... insipid!

She stalks away righteously into the night. Jerry just  
stares after her, looking ill.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - JERRY - NIGHT

Leafing through a dictionary --

JERRY  
 (reading)  
 Insincere... Insinuate...  
 (turns page)  
 Insipid. One -- lacking spirit.  
 Vapid. Dull. Two -- lacking  
 flavor. Tasteless. Bland.

He thinks, seriously concerned. All the life drains out of his face.

INT. OFFICE OF THE MAGAZINE EDITOR - DAY

Paula and Editor in conference.

EDITOR  
 Look Paula, I trust your  
 instincts, you know that. But  
 you've just got to get more  
 material that speaks for itself.  
 More facts and fewer assumptions.  
 (beat)  
 Okay? Can you do it?

PAULA  
 I assume so...

INT. ASTRONOMY BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Jerry plods slowly down the hall in a slump...

Paula appears near the stairwell door, Jerry sees her.

JERRY  
 (sounding cheery)  
 Paula! Nice day isn't it?

Jerry lumbers toward the stairwell door, reaching to push it open...

... but fails to open it far enough and actually collides with it before making it through...

JERRY  
 (sounding cheery)  
 Hey, I think you've got your  
 article now! What more can I tell  
 you? You've got it all!

Jerry negotiates the steps like wading in molasses...

JERRY  
(sounding hyped up)  
I mean it's definitely going to  
last, me and Andrea, this is  
really it, boy, it's hot! Really  
hot!

He finally reaches the top of the first flight... then  
stops with his foot on the first step of the next flight,  
changes his mind, and shuffles toward the nearby elevator  
instead.

JERRY  
(sounding happily  
satisfied)  
So there's no reason to meet  
anymore, you've got all your  
material now. Great news.

They stop at the elevator. Observing Jerry, Paula doesn't  
believe him for a minute.

PAULA  
(finally)  
Think it over, Jerry -- there  
might be something I can do for  
you.

The elevator opens and Jerry slouches in.

JERRY  
I don't think so.

Paula props her foot up on a trash bin, exhibiting her legs  
in all their glory, as she bends to adjust her shoe, her  
breasts peeking right out of her loose blouse.

PAULA  
Try me.

A flicker of interest from Jerry.

Nearby two astronomers catch a glimpse of Paula and collide  
with each other.

The elevator door closes. Paula resumes a decent posture,  
looking frustrated, wondering what to do now.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - DAY

ON AARON

Sitting at a dresser mirror, beginning to apply clown  
makeup.

At the BOTTOM OF THE FRAME, the tail of a CAT glides by smoothly.

Across from Aaron sits Paula.

ON PAULA

She looks disconcerted but determined.

Again, the cat's tail glides by, behind Paula, and this time we HEAR a ROLLING sound.

PAULA

Doesn't he confide in you?

AARON

No, he doesn't.

PAULA

But with a little encouragement from you...

AARON

Ms. Mason, I do not betray confidences.

Aaron picks up the cat and strokes it affectionately and we NOTICE something very, very odd -- this cat is wearing tiny custom-made roller-skates on all four paws.

Aaron puts it down again OUT OF OUR VIEW and we can hear it WHIZZING across the floor. (We will NEVER ACTUALLY SEE the cat skating.)

PAULA

(very serious)

Look, I don't think you realize that --

(she can't help watching the cat, but tries to keep from laughing)

-- this is a --

(she bursts uncontrollably into laughter)

-- hah! hah! -- serious -- hehehee! matter.

AARON

More than simple professional interest.

PAULA  
(regaining her  
composure)  
We've started something that has  
to be followed to completion.

AARON  
I see. Does Jerry know you feel  
this way about him?

PAULA  
What? No, you don't understand,  
you see my thesis --  
(sees cat again)  
-- is that --

It breaks her up again -- she can't finish.

Aaron looks out his window.

AARON  
Would you like to join me shortly  
on the rollercoaster?

Paula looks at Aaron, perplexed at the suggestion. She  
looks out the window toward the nearby roller-coaster.

PAULA  
(makes a face)  
You won't catch me on one of  
those things.

The PHONE RINGS. Aaron answers it. Paula overhears.

AARON  
Good morning. Jerry! You sound  
terrible.  
(listens, concerned)  
You want to talk about it? Come  
on over, but I have to leave in  
an hour, I've got kind of a  
second job on Saturdays... Okay,  
fine. I'm at 321 Birch.

Aaron hangs up and returns to Paula.

AARON  
I'm going to have to ask you to  
leave now.

Paula stands up indignantly --

PAULA

Goddamnit, if you're going to lie  
at least be professional about  
it!

She heads for the door in a huff --

PAULA

I've got a good mind to --!

She almost trips over the cat as it WHIZZES by her feet.

She stops short, can't stop from laughing again.

Then looks flustered, can't maintain her anger, gives up,  
and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. AARON'S HOUSE - SHORTLY

A car pulls up. It's Jerry. He gets out and plods over to the front door. He looks as low as you can get, anguished and numb. In fact his expression looks so extreme it's actually comical. Before he can ring the doorbell, the door flings open and Aaron greets him with his entire clown costume on -- silly hair, red-ball nose, goofy clothes and all.

AARON

(gesturing  
clownishly)

Morning, Jerry, make yourself at  
home.

Jerry's expression does not change a bit on seeing Aaron.

JERRY

(deadpan)

Hi, Aaron. You look different.

He goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - JERRY AND AARON - A WHILE LATER

Jerry sits morosely slumped on the couch, totally preoccupied with himself and indulging completely in his despairing mood. He looks like his mind is off on another planet at the moment.

Aaron smiles and waves his hand in front of Jerry.

AARON  
 (observing Jerry)  
 Boy, whatever you've got, it must  
 be expensive.

Jerry finally returns Aaron's look.

JERRY  
 (theatrically  
 morbid)  
 Are all women weird, Aaron?

AARON  
 Maybe the ones you go for.

JERRY  
 (finally)  
 I thought I had found love.  
 (a sigh)  
 But now, I just don't know...

AARON  
 (empathetic)  
 You think it has to be a  
 particular way.

We HEAR the cat's skates again. Its tail glides by once in  
 front of Jerry.

AARON  
 That's Alice. Part of my act.

Jerry watches the cat blankly for a moment.

JERRY  
 (no reaction)  
 Nice cat.  
 (engrossed in his  
 musing again)  
 I don't know what to do... I  
 simply can't get what I want...

AARON  
 Can you want what you get?

Aaron has picked up a few juggling pins. He starts to  
 practice juggling them -- obviously still learning the  
 skill.

JERRY  
 You mean... I have to accept them  
 as they are.

AARON  
 (juggling)  
 You don't have to do anything --  
 Whoops!

A pin flies loose and bounces directly off Jerry's head --  
 BONK!

JERRY  
 (immediately, not  
 even flinching)  
 That's it! That was the whole  
 problem with Carol and Andrea.  
 Acceptance.

The cat's tail passes in front of Jerry again.

JERRY  
 That must be it. The key to love  
 is acceptance!  
 (beaming now)  
 Of course! I'll show Paula yet...

Now he seems to see the cat for the first time. He stares  
 after it incredulously --

JERRY  
 Ohmygod look at that...  
 (laughs spontaneously,  
 pointing at the cat)  
 Will you get a load of that!

Jerry is in a great mood all of a sudden. He looks intently  
 at Aaron --

JERRY  
 (warmly)  
 You are great, you know! How did  
 you do that?

AARON  
 Do what?

JERRY  
 I came in here hopelessly down,  
 and now I'm -- I'm inspired!

AARON  
 Well great -- keep up the good  
 work!

Suddenly Jerry frowns and rubs the top of his head.

JERRY  
 (surprised)  
 Ouch.  
 (then looks curiously  
 at Aaron)  
 Hey, why are you dressed like  
 that?

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

The "Note Giving Sequence" MUSIC starts again --

Jerry appears, looking around covertly like a spy...

Sees a woman of interest.

Follows her cautiously to get a better look...

A quick score with his note and he's gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

SHOPPING MALL - JERRY - DAY

Still looking. Drawn to another woman. Not sure. Following inconspicuously. Receding from us...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EDITOR'S BACKYARD POOL AGAIN - LONG SHOT - NIGHT

After a swim, Paula sits in a slump at the edge of the pool while her Editor stands nearby shivering under a large towel. The Editor heads inside. We MOVE IN toward Paula, across the pool...

It starts to rain lightly. Phosphorescent droplets speckle the surface of the water, lit up from below.

As we CLOSE IN on Paula we see that she is looking pensively at something sitting in front of her on the edge of the pool...

... two scuba masks, butted together, glass to glass.

Tableau.

Then gently she pushes one of the masks over the edge. It makes a distinctive PLOPF into the water.

UNDERWATER

The scuba mask settles on the bottom by itself.

## THE SKY AND THE ROOF OF THE HOUSE

It is partly clearing now and some stars are visible again.

Finally... the PLOPF of the other mask.

## EXT. THE ZOO - DAY

On a woody path. CLOSE IN ON a couple who stroll the path. It's a glorious late afternoon. The low rays of the sun filter through the trees, lighting the couple's hair in romantic halos.

The couple is Jerry and LAURA. Jerry has his arm around her.

## TWO SHOT - JERRY AND LAURA

Jerry is lively but with a trace of desperation.

JERRY  
(serious)  
I love you, Laura.

Now we NOTICE Laura's demeanor -- she's depressed. Her arms hang uselessly at her sides, and she stares blankly at the ground ahead. Her voice has a helpless and tragically poetic ring to it.

LAURA  
Everything is grey... I exist but  
I never live... Nothing ever  
attracts me... I have no  
motives...  
(beat)  
I'm not much fun to be around.

JERRY  
Yes, but you're going through a  
profound experience.

They arrive at the first of the animal cages, the lions, and stop. A male lion reclines slothfully against the bars, watching them.

LAURA  
Life is so futile...

JERRY  
Ah, the futility of life, yes. I  
admire the -- the courage you  
must have to -- to face it like  
that.

LAURA  
I feel no desires.

JERRY  
Ahh -- then it must be like  
enlightenment. Like Buddha.

LAURA  
It feels horrible.

JERRY  
Oh, Laura, if only I could share  
it with you!

The lion has been regarding them both with an expression  
that could be disgust.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE THE LION CAGE

Looking over the lion toward Laura -- as slowly, the lion  
raises his leg...

Suddenly the onlookers gasp and jump back in alarm as we  
hear WATER RUNNING.

ON LAURA

She stands there soaking wet. Everyone stares, speechless.  
But Laura has simply not reacted at all.

She turns slowly away from the cage with the same blank  
look, as though nothing has happened. Jerry regards her  
with misgivings.

JERRY  
(reconsidering)  
Of course, you could just be  
depressed.

INT. A STAGE SET - DAY

Jerry waits expectantly in the shadows behind the struts  
and wall-flats of the set itself, listening to VOICES from  
behind the wall --

VOICE (O.S.)  
Take sixteen!  
(a CLACK!)

KAREN (O.S.)  
(sensually)  
My panties? They're 'Cool N'  
Dry'.

(suddenly bitchy)  
Oh, god. That's it!

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
(fuming)  
We can't take another break,  
Karen!

KAREN (O.S.)  
(defiant)  
Well I'm taking one! My lover is  
here for me!

High-heeled footsteps and KAREN rounds the corner of the set and starts toward Jerry. She is peculiarly reminiscent of Faye Dunaway as Joan Crawford in "Mommy Dearest". Jerry smiles and offers a welcoming kiss but she coldly sidesteps him.

KAREN  
Just leave me alone.

JERRY  
(submissively)  
What's wrong?

KAREN  
You. You and your romantic  
groveling. That absurd note.

JERRY  
But you said last night you liked --

KAREN  
(turning on him  
melodramatically)  
Jerry, we can't continue this  
sham any longer!

And she stalks off again, back the way she came. Jerry watches her, then turns slowly away, wounded and tormented.

INT. THE STAGE EXIT - DAY

Jerry is about to exit. His air of desperation is getting worse.

Suddenly Karen sweeps up on him, all loving and apologetic -- he brightens up --

KAREN

(cuddling him)

Jerry -- I'm sorry. Forgive me. I didn't mean to say that. You know it's not the real me that says those things. I wasn't myself. I love you. This is the real me now.

She kisses him.

JERRY

I need you, Karen. But you confuse me.

KAREN

That's the way I am. I have feelings. Besides, sometimes I wonder if you really care about me.

JERRY

How could I care more?

KAREN

(getting touchy again)

You could show it -- you could get angry when I'm mean to you!

JERRY

(pleading)

But I love you no matter what you do. That's how true love is supposed to be.

They are interrupted --

LIGHTING MAN

Karen? Can I get you for a lighting test?

Karen changes her style again, swooning over Jerry, and again he brightens up.

KAREN

Oh, Jerry, I guess it's just that I can't believe a man as wonderful as you can be real...

(takes him coyly by the hand)

Come on -- let's pretend this little incident never happened, okay?

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP KAREN - LIGHTING TEST

She sits patiently, lit entirely from one side in hard, direct light. Her expression is warm and loving, but one side of her face is in dark black shadow.

The light goes out. Dark black.

Light on again from the other side this time, lighting the other side of her face now. And the comparison is eerie as hell -- this side of her face looks cold and hateful.

Maybe we don't even catch it the first time, but as the light switches back and forth on her TWO FACES, this creepy schism is unmistakable.

ON JERRY

Watching her from the sidelines. Noticing it now. Horrified at this apparition of his lover.

STAGEHAND  
(oblivious to what  
we plainly see)  
Classy lady, man.

Jerry looks sick -- and we should be wondering why the hell nobody else is struck by this vision...

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

The Waiter arrives at a table where a rich European TOURIST is trying to impress a young lady.

WAITER  
Can I take your order, sir?

With a flourish the TOURIST hands the Waiter some money --

TOURIST  
Yes. Here's a little something to  
start you off, and there'll be  
more at the other end.

But the Waiter hears --

MAÎTRE 'D (O.S.)  
(calling)  
Pedersen, party of two? Pedersen?

--and he's distracted.

TOURIST

(very precise)

Now -- We will start with a  
Chateau Loudenne, nineteen  
seventy six. Give us half an hour  
and then bring two chef's salads  
with Roquefort, followed by two  
fillet mignon, rare, without the  
potatoes --

The Waiter is trying to catch sight of Jerry, but can't.  
He's not listening to the order --

TOURIST

(continuing)

Then the strawberry mousse,  
followed in half an hour by two  
amarettos. Thank you.

WAITER

(totally distracted)

I'll give you more time to  
decide, sir --

-- and the Waiter vanishes. The Tourist is shocked.

NEAR JERRY'S BOOTH - THE BIG WAITER

As he arrives to serve Jerry, the Waiter scoots in front of  
the Big Waiter, cutting him off and stopping him short.

Ready to serve the booth, the Waiter glances back at the  
Big Waiter, who is fuming at him.

AT THE BOOTH - JERRY AND AARON

The Waiter arrives -- surprised and dismayed to see Aaron  
instead of another woman --

WAITER

Oh--!

They give him odd looks.

AARON

Two beers, please.

ACROSS THE RESTAURANT

Both the Tourist and the Big Waiter are complaining to the  
Maitre d'.

AT THE BOOTH - JERRY AND AARON

Jerry looks unsettled and fidgety. He has Aaron's attention.

AARON

You seem to be frustrated.

JERRY

I don't know what to think any more.

AARON

And you're fighting it.

JERRY

Well of course. What do you expect?

AARON

Me? Nothing.

JERRY

So what's the solution then?

AARON

You need a solution? I mean-solutions just make more problems, right?

JERRY

Huh?

AARON

Just... be frustrated if you're frustrated.

JERRY

Be frustrated? But that's still a problem.

AARON

Only if you say it is. It is what it is.

JERRY

(sarcastic)

Heavy, Aaron. Heavy.

But he thinks it over for a moment.

JERRY

(finally)

I'm frustrated, huh?

(turns inward, then,  
with certainty)

I'm frustrated.

(closes his eyes)  
I'm letting myself be  
frustrated...

After a few moments, he looks calmer. Eyes still closed, he seems to be lightening up...

AARON  
(finally)  
Still frustrated?

JERRY  
Yeah...

AARON  
Still a problem?

JERRY  
(starts to smile,  
surprised at  
himself)  
Not right now...!

Jerry opens his eyes, feeling better. Aaron looks pleased.

JERRY  
(amazed)  
How did you do that?

AARON  
(puzzled)  
You always ask me that.

He sees that Jerry still wants an answer --

AARON  
(continuing)  
I didn't do it.

Jerry considers that... and chuckles, a little baffled.

The Waiter brings their beer and leaves.

Jerry is now regarding Aaron intently --

INSERT - JERRY'S POV - AARON

All done in diffusion and rim-light, romantic lighting. It even looks like he has a halo.

JERRY  
You know who I really love?  
(a beat)  
You.

Aaron smiles.

JERRY  
(continuing)  
We have a great friendship. I  
feel really good around you.

AARON  
Hey, I love you too, man.  
Absolutely.

Jerry has an oddly fervent look.

JERRY  
I mean -- since when do you have  
to be sexual to be in love?  
Right?

Just then, we SEE the Waiter pass with a tray --

JERRY  
I'm in love with you, Aaron --

INSERT - WAITER'S REACTION

The Waiter has passed their booth now and we HEAR a  
terrible CRASH! of dishes. People turn to look.

JERRY  
(oblivious)  
It's the perfect solution.

WAITER'S VOICE (O.S.)  
(apologizing profusely)  
Oh, I'm terribly sorry, madam.

AARON  
Solution?

JERRY  
We could get a place together.

AARON  
And leave my roller coaster?

JERRY  
And then all I would need is a  
woman for pure, uninvolved, sex.  
And -- hey, of course! I have the  
perfect solution for that, too!

AARON  
Solution?

JERRY

Paula. The writer. I bet she'll  
have sex with me if I let her  
study me again.

AARON

You're kidding.

JERRY

Nope. She once proposed it  
herself.  
(he sits back,  
pleased--)

--while in the b.g. we SEE the Maître d' escorting the poor  
Waiter unceremoniously out of the restaurant...

JERRY

(grinning at Aaron)  
That would be it. Mission  
accomplished.

AARON

(laughs, shakes  
head)  
You never cease to amaze me...

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A car approaches...

INT. CAR - PAULA

Looking at the passing houses.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE - DAY

A newly spiffed-up living room, two stereos, a few unopened  
packing boxes. It's immediately clear that Jerry has moved  
in with Aaron.

Jerry reclines in an armchair with a beer, watching the  
ball-game on television.

Aaron enters from the kitchen wearing rubber gloves and an  
apron. Jerry looks up at him, looks around the house --

JERRY

(mellow)  
What a charming domestic scene.

We HEAR the WHIZZING of tiny roller-skates...

JERRY

Except for one detail.

They watch Alice the cat pass off-screen. Aaron picks her up and looks at his watch --

AARON

Looks like I'll have to meet Paula another time. It's just as well -- I'd probably just add to the tension.

JERRY

I'm not nervous, actually.

Aaron gets his coat.

JERRY

I'll be at work tonight, if you need me.

AARON

Everything going okay?

JERRY

That depends --  
(jesting)  
-- considering that I am on the verge of totally destroying reality as we know it!

AARON

(as he leaves)  
Well, I certainly hope your insurance will cover it.

Aaron leaves by the back door.

EXT. THE FRONT OF AARON'S HOUSE - PAULA'S CAR

As it pulls up and parks across the street.

INT. CAR - PAULA

She double checks the address, looking apprehensive and uncertain. She takes a long deep breath and lets it out in a relaxing sigh. Then grimaces and scratches at her neck again. She sees herself in the rearview mirror and laughs nervously.

INT. THE HOUSE

The doorbell rings. Jerry answers the door with a nervously lecherous grin at Paula, who marches in very businesslike and purposeful, unbuttoning her coat.

PAULA  
(formally)  
Good afternoon, Doctor Pedersen.  
I will be your sex surrogate for  
today's session --

And before Jerry can reply she astonishes him by slipping off her coat -- stark naked underneath.

PAULA  
(abrupt)  
Let's get started then shall we?  
Where's your bedroom?

And she leads Jerry into the bedroom like a panting dog at her heels...

INT. BEDROOM - JERRY AND PAULA IN BED

Jerry slips under the covers with Paula. They touch, entwine. Paula is tense, she is off in her head somewhere, not looking at Jerry, concentrating on acting erotic.

In contrast, Jerry at this moment finds himself feeling unexpectedly tender, watching her, being with her. Looking at her as he kisses her.

Paula accidentally opens her eyes and sees Jerry totally there and smiling at her. A sudden twinge of panic hits her and she GASPS.

JERRY  
(startled)  
What is it?

PAULA  
(looking for a  
diversion)  
Uh -- uh -- a spider! Over there!  
Eeek!

Jerry leaps about trying to find the spider, thrashing about in the sheets, clearly a man with a fear of spiders.

Finally he stops, still a little nervous about it.

JERRY

(shaky)

I -- I don't think there is one,  
Paula.

Paula looks nervous and embarrassed. They both laugh. Jerry is about to settle down again.

PAULA

Look, Jerry, uh, that's really  
ruined my mood, you know?

She perches on the edge of the bed. She scratches herself.

PAULA

Look, why don't I interview you  
first?

She puts on Jerry's bathrobe. Jerry looks frustrated.

PAULA

(continuing)

So it's not on our minds, you  
know?

JERRY

(sarcastic)

Oh good idea, I haven't been able  
to think of anything else since  
you got here.

PAULA

(ignoring his tone)

I'll get the tape recorder.

Paula hustles out of the bedroom.

She returns with the recorder. Sits cross-legged on the bed in front of Jerry, turns on the tape, and sets the microphone down practically in his lap --

PAULA

Alright -- defend yourself.

Jerry pulls the sheet up in front of himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSEUP ASHTRAY - LATER

As Paula flicks ashes into it.

## FULL SHOT - THE BEDROOM

And they are still half-naked on the bed, but they're seriously engrossed in argument as the tape rolls on --

PAULA

That still doesn't make you "in love" with Aaron. It's just friendship.

JERRY

No it's not. Friendship is when you share common interests. And we don't.

There's a long pause. Paula is musing it over.

JERRY

(finally)

Anything else I can do for you?

PAULA

Look, I'll tell you again, I have thoroughly researched the whole subject --

JERRY

And I am the subject.

Paula moves closer to him to put out her cigarette.

PAULA

(a twinkle in her eye)

Sure -- and you're guilty until proven innocent.

JERRY

I don't need to prove anything. It's your article.

Paula's body language tells us she's getting turned on by this argument. In contrast, Jerry is getting gruff and feisty.

PAULA

What makes you think you're so special?

JERRY

Maybe because there's this fanatical journalist hanging on my every word.

Paula is clearly horny now, but Jerry doesn't notice yet.

PAULA

And you'll be hanging on your words when I get through with you.

JERRY

I can hold my own against you.

Her breasts are almost in his face. Now he notices --

PAULA

Go ahead --  
 (she grabs him in a  
 private place)  
 -- hold it against me.

They growl at each other and burst into a frenzy of lust...

As we discreetly DRAW BACK.

INT./EXT. PAULA'S CAR - DUSK

Looking out the driver's window at Paula as she walks toward us from the house and gets into her car.

When she's seated we can see her expression -- incredulous, exhausted, bliss. Behind her the rear windshield frames the neighboring rollercoaster. She turns back to the house, where Jerry leans against the door frame.

CLOSE ON JERRY

With the same blissful expression. And now --

FADE OUT...

FADE IN:

INT. PAULA'S OFFICE SPACE - PAULA AND EDITOR - DAY

The tape recorder is on Paula's desk, where she sits, playing back a recording of Jerry being interviewed. We only distinguish that it's his VOICE playing under the following conversation.

EDITOR

Look, Paula, I'm getting nervous about this article. There's a lot at stake here and it's a tight deadline.

PAULA

Trust me. Okay? Just trust me.  
I'm breaking new ground here.  
This is going to be the New  
Journalism of New Journalism.

The Editor sighs, gives in for the moment. They both look toward the tape recorder, and we listen --

JERRY'S VOICE (on tape)

No... I still feel the same  
toward Aaron, it's just that...  
it's just that he seems kind of  
--distant.

PAULA'S VOICE (on tape)

He's changed?

JERRY'S VOICE

Well, no. I just expected it  
would be different, I guess. He  
spends so much time with other  
people.

PAULA'S VOICE

Have you told him how you feel?

JERRY'S VOICE

No.

PAULA'S VOICE

Why not?

JERRY'S VOICE

I don't know... it's just not  
that easy, you know.

PAULA'S VOICE

Coward!

SOUNDS of Paula tickling Jerry, Jerry LAUGHING and pleading for mercy, the RUSTLING of bed sheets.

Paula reaches over and turns off the machine before it goes any further, looking slightly embarrassed.

INT. AARON AND JERRY'S KITCHEN -DAY

Aaron is busy cooking something on the stove. Jerry enters. He looks like he has something to get off his chest.

JERRY

Aaron?

AARON

Hi, Jerry. I'm making your favorite -- soggy spaghetti with burnt sauce.

JERRY

I'd like to talk to you about something.

AARON

Shoot.

JERRY

Well... it's about us --

The phone RINGS. Jerry goes to answer it.

JERRY

(into phone)

Hello?

(to Aaron)

It's Jason. From the lab.

AARON

Would you watch the sauce for me?  
Thanks..

(takes phone)

Jason?

(listens)

You sound pretty upset. Trouble with Doctor Ward?

(listens)

The last straw, huh? I know how you feel. You want to come over? See you soon then.

(returning to Jerry)

You were saying?

JERRY

Well, it's just that lately I've been feeling --

The DOORBELL rings.

AARON

That must be Doctor Hill. Sorry, can you take this? Thanks.

Jerry looks dismayed as Aaron heads for the front door.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

AARON

(opening door)

Oh -- Doctor Ward.

DOCTOR WARD

Can you spare a few minutes,  
Aaron?

AARON

Of course, come in. You look  
pretty upset .

DOCTOR WARD

Yes, I am. It's trouble with  
Jason. It's the -- it's the last  
straw.

AARON

I know how you feel.

INT. KITCHEN - JERRY

On the phone as he stirs the sauce --

JERRY

(into phone)

Hi, Paula. It's Jerry. Listen,  
how would you like to have  
another "interview"? I know we've  
already had one this week but --  
oh great. You're coming here?

INT. LIVINGROOM - AARON AND DOCTOR WARD

Another ring of the DOORBELL. Doctor Ward looks on as Aaron  
goes and opens it. A hulk of a graduate student stands on  
the porch looking upset --

AARON

Jason. Come in. Uh...

Jason steps in and is shocked to see Doctor Ward. They  
exchange fierce looks...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE - THE LIVINGROOM WINDOW - CLOSE SHOT -JERRY

We are outside the house LOOKING IN at Jerry. He's looking  
out the window. Waiting. Irritated. Now he looks over  
to what is beside him in the living room, and in a --

FULL SHOT - THE WINDOW

we SEE that Jason and Doctor Ward are standing near him and  
are chatting away happily, sipping drinks, laughing, the  
best of friends now.

Jerry looks over his shoulder into the living room within, and we FOLLOW FOCUS -- we SEE Aaron talking with an elderly woman who looks to be at the end of her tether. Aaron is listening to her sympathetically.

Jerry exits from view in the f.g. while Jason and Doctor Ward remain. We hear FOOTSTEPS on the front porch O.S. and the the front DOOR OPENING.

JERRY (O.S.)  
(warmly)  
Hi.

INT. JERRY'S BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Jerry and Paula lie naked under the sheets after a bout of wild abandon. The microphone hangs from the headboard and the tape recorder is running.

PAULA  
Your problem is you're in so-called "love" with some sort of saint.

Jerry smiles wryly.

JERRY  
But it's still love.

PAULA  
Is it? Even if he loves everyone else just as much?

Jerry sits up, more tense.

JERRY  
Wait a minute now. Let's reason this out.

During Jerry's confused speech, we watch Paula, who listens to him with a wry smirk --

JERRY  
(with meticulous  
logic)

I'm jealous because Aaron spends more time with other people. I care more about him, therefore I'm jealous. Now if he is spending more time with others to make me jealous, then he must care more about me. If he cares more about me, then he must be jealous of you. If he's jealous of you, then he must be trying to make me jealous. And if he's trying to make me jealous, then he must care more about me. So I must stop seeing you so he won't be jealous.

PAULA  
(a beat)  
Talk about grasping at straws.

JERRY  
Aha! So you're jealous too.

PAULA  
What?

JERRY  
Of me? Or of him?

He stares at her a moment in challenge.

PAULA  
(finally)  
Nice try.

Jerry regards Paula with a curious intensity. Then he looks away. Withdrawn and tense.

Long pause. Finally a reaction --

JERRY  
Damn him.

PAULA  
Hey, don't blame him.

Jerry stares numbly at her.

PAULA  
If you were homosexuals it would probably be different.

Jerry frowns uneasily. Then he remembers the recorder is on, turns to it and hits it angrily with his fist, shutting it off.

His whole body sags, deflated. He stares at the floor, looking hopeless and sad. Paula notices, surprised at how much it's affecting him.

She cradles him in her arms, comforting him, his head on her breast. After a moment she begins rocking gently back and forth.

Paula looks maternal. And lost in melancholy reverie.

INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Aaron at Jerry's bedroom door. He knocks.

AARON  
(through the door)  
Jerry? Telephone.

Aaron returns to the dining table where he, Jason, Doctor Ward, and the elderly woman are all playing cards.

Jerry comes to the phone.

JERRY  
(into phone)  
Hello...? What do you mean...?  
Tomorrow? But -- I'm not ready.

INT. BEDROOM

Jerry storms back in --

JERRY  
I have to look through a million  
stars by tomorrow morning!  
(starts pacing  
about)  
Impossible! How can they do this  
to me?

Paula feels sorry for him, he looks so pathetic right now.

PAULA  
Is there anything I can do?

JERRY  
No, no... Yes! I could do it with  
your help! But it might take all  
night...

PAULA  
What do I do?

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. MOVING CAR - JERRY AND PAULA - NIGHT

As Jerry drives like a maniac and explains to Paula.

JERRY  
(very scientific)  
The master program has all the spatial co-ordinates of every star in the intergalactic region between here and Andromeda represented as a three-dimensional array, and by moving through this array, we have to locate and record all the configurations of seventh-magnitude triple star systems that occur within a distance of two light-years from every x-ray source that radiates at wavelengths of less than a millionth of a centimeter. The X-ray stars --

Paula, as you can imagine, looks progressively more dubious.

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - PAULA AND JERRY - NIGHT

But in contrast to the tone of Jerry's instructions, they now look like excited kids, hunched over his video-screen and working the controls as colored dots swim about on the video-screen.

JERRY  
Alright you mother, we've got you cornered!

PAULA  
Six greenies! We hit the jackpot!

JERRY  
Okay... easy now ... Hold it! A little more!

The instrument makes a BEEP!

PAULA  
Got it!

JERRY  
How's the angle?

PAULA  
Good.

JERRY  
Record it!

Paula hits a button and there's a BOOP! and a blinking light. Jerry sets dials. There's more computer NOISE and lights.

JERRY  
Next quadrant -- go!

They fix on the screen again as stars float by, casting colored dots on their faces.

PAULA  
We're getting faster. We're gonna make it...

JERRY  
(to the screen)  
Come on... Come on...

PAULA  
Greenies! At the top!

JERRY  
Great. There's a reddie! Whoa!  
Slow down!

PAULA  
Whew! Almost passed it!

All through this we have been PULLING BACK to a WIDE SHOT as they cheer each other on and the BEEPS and BOOPS continue.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JERRY'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Jerry and Paula lying in bed. Jerry exhausted but wide awake. Paula curled up on his chest, comfortably at home, falling asleep.

A moment.

JERRY  
I can't fall asleep now.

PAULA

Mmm...

Pause.

JERRY

We work well together, you know.

PAULA

(eyes still closed)

Mm. It was fun.

JERRY

Sometimes I think I even enjoy  
arguing with you.

Paula smiles dreamily, half asleep.

Jerry is looking at her. He's getting an odd expression,  
and he seems surprised at himself, and it's clear to us  
what he's surprised about, we've seen this expression  
before: he's falling in love.

JERRY

I've never had this kind of...  
friendship... before.

He caresses her. He's thinking.

JERRY

Paula? Do you ever think of  
having children?

Paula stiffens. Her eyes snap open. She rises and looks at  
Jerry in barely concealed alarm.

PAULA

Why did you have to ask that?

JERRY

Just curious.

Paula gets up and starts hastily getting dressed.

PAULA

(dismayed)

Oh sure. Oh god. Well that's it,  
buster. That's it.

JERRY

(alarmed)

What are you --

Paula's fear has turned to anger --

PAULA

(mad)

That naive act of yours is pretty clever. Get me to sleep with you, work with you, feel sorry for you. Then go for the jugular -- "Don't you want children? Don't you think your children should have a father?" No thanks!

JERRY

Do you have to be so touchy? You're always ready for a fight!

She packs up her tape recorder. Jerry grabs his pants.

PAULA

You bet I am. Thanks for the research material. You're going to be exposed for the -- the self-centered, underhanded, dominating -- oh!

(flustered and close to tears)

I'll send you an autographed copy.

She flees from the room.

JERRY

Paula!

He follows out after her.

INT./EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAWN

Paula opens it and heads out for her car, as Jerry's neighbor is leaving for work.

PAULA

(calling back)

All you really want me for is love!

JERRY

(calling after her)

No! I don't love you! All I want is sex!

The Neighbor does a double-take. Paula slams her car door.

CUT TO:

INT. JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry is just sitting there, Looking ornery.

JERRY

Oh yeah?

He is telling her off good and proper.

JERRY

(continuing)

Well you are right about one  
thing -- I don't need you!

(points accusingly)

And now we SEE that he's talking to a photo of Paula inset  
on the page of her magazine article.

JERRY

(continuing)

And I will always have one love  
-- my work! I defy you to prove  
that's not love!

He closes the magazine and shoves it aside. He starts to  
pace around his cramped office...

JERRY

(mumbling to himself)

Damn right... I've had it all  
along... Sure -- my work is my  
true love... yeah...

He sits down in front of his equipment and papers and puts  
his hand atop the video monitor, his one and only.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE - TIME ELAPSED

Jerry works on his calculations, completely absorbed,  
driven.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OFFICE - LATER STILL - DAY

And God knows how many days or weeks have passed now. Still  
bent over his calculations, Jerry has been neglecting his  
appearance, even his health, obsessively devoted to his  
experiment.

Now something stumps him. He gets up and exits down the  
hall to --

INT. ANOTHER OFFICE

Jason is there doing paperwork as Jerry enters.

JASON  
(looks up)  
Hi. Doctor Ward is in his lab.

JERRY  
Do you have the new measurement  
of the Neutrino Constant done  
yet? I need it.

JASON  
Yeah, we finished it last week.

Jason hunts through piles of papers. Jerry waits.

JERRY  
(idly)  
Jason, don't you ever get sick of  
making these piddly refinements  
on things we already know about?

JASON  
(shrugs)  
Somebody's got to do it.

JERRY  
I guess so.  
(a bit pompous)  
But the creative stuff is my  
line.

JASON  
Here it is, the Neutrino  
Constant. Oh, yeah -- turned out  
it isn't constant.

JERRY  
What do you mean?

JASON  
It changes.

Jerry grabs the paper and stares at it in alarm. Searches through it frantically -- is this really true? Could there be some mistake? He looks more and more horrified.

JERRY

(outraged)

The Constant isn't constant?  
Don't you know my whole theory is  
based on the constancy of this  
constant!

(beat)

How could you do this to me!

ON JASON

He stares at Jerry, speechless.

CUT TO:

A BIG OFFICE TRASH CAN

It is empty.

Some papers drop into it. They are Jerry's calculations and  
graphs. More papers fall in. In bigger and bigger bundles.

Then some reference books -- Plunk. Plunk. Plunk.

Some CLATTERING and TEARING noises, a GRUNT, and then  
WHUMP! down into the trash can plummets Jerry's video  
monitor, to cap the pile.

Hold a beat.

INT. JERRY AND AARON'S HOUSE - DAY

We hear a GIGGLE.

Jerry enters and walks into the middle of the living room.  
He stops with a puzzled frown. Does another quick giggle.  
Continues to pace.

We FOLLOW him as he wanders from place to place aimlessly,  
in a confused state, switching unpredictably from anger to  
self-pity, to silly giggles. He turns on the television,  
then off again. Giggles. Looks anguished. Goes to the  
fridge, takes out some food. Forgets it. Ends up in the  
living room again.

We HEAR the roller skates of the cat. It is following him  
as he paces. Sometimes we see its tail skimming by in  
circles around Jerry's legs. It won't stop. Jerry directs  
his irritation at the cat, finally chasing it out of the  
living room.

Then he slumps onto the sofa. Beside the sofa he picks up  
something -- a spool of recording tape that Paula must have  
left behind. He stares at it. He looks desperate.

Aaron passes by in his bathrobe and gives Jerry a friendly smile on the way to the bathroom, pausing for a moment as he sees Jerry's expression.

AARON  
 Something wrong?  
 (no response)  
 Well let me know if there's  
 anything I can do for you.

Aaron heads into the bathroom --

And just at that moment Jerry seems to be struck by a shocking revelation. He stares at the floor with a furrowed brow... We can feel the gears in his head grinding away like mad...

JERRY  
 (profoundly)  
 That's it... I've been ignoring  
 it all along...

Dramatic pause. We HEAR the SHOWER turn on O.S. in the bathroom, but Jerry is too self-absorbed to notice --

JERRY  
 (announcing)  
 Aaron! We should be homosexuals!  
 (beat)  
 We should be real lovers...  
 (getting zealously  
 keyed-up)  
 We -- We must sleep together.  
  
 We must -- have sex with each  
 other. It's the logical solution  
 do you see? It's simply a -- a  
 barrier to be overcome. It just  
 takes courage. I mean -- it can't  
 be so bad after all, now can it?  
 I mean everyone is doing it these  
 days, aren't they? Gay is  
 fashionable. They say it's only a  
 matter of conditioning. It's  
 learned! We can learn it!  
 (He rises, with  
 revolutionary  
 fervor)  
 Of course! We must be liberated!  
 Men of the nineteen eighties! No  
 question about it!  
 (resolutely)  
 I can ignore it no longer --!

INT. BATHROOM - AARON

Loud SHOWER NOISE. Aaron is naked and struggling with the shower head, which sprays water in all directions.

AARON

Jerry, the shower head is leaking!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM

JERRY

(fanatical)

It has come to a head!

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

NOISY.

AARON

It needs tightening!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM

JERRY

(more fanatical)

-- must turn full circle!

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM

NOISY.

AARON

Do we have a wrench?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVINGROOM

As Jerry approaches the bathroom door --

JERRY

(more fanatical still)

This is it!

Aaron steps out the bathroom door, stark naked, right in front of Jerry --

AARON

Okay -- let me have it.

Jerry freezes. Staring at Aaron's body. His eyes bug out.  
Gulp!

ON AARON

Bewildered, he looks down at himself to check what's wrong.  
Seems okay to him.

He looks quizzically back at Jerry.

ON JERRY

He's so tensed up he looks like he's about to explode.  
Aaron grabs his robe and puts it on.

Now finally Jerry's tension is released -- he explodes  
alright -- in hysterical laughter. Uncontrollable waves of  
laughter take possession of him...

He laughs on and on and on until he's practically weeping.

Finally it subsides somewhat.

JERRY  
(through his gasps)  
I'm crazy... I'm nuts.

Jerry's mood continues -- an incredulous humor at his own  
absurdity.

Aaron can't help chuckling too.

Jerry grins like a fool. His posture and movements now seem  
surprisingly fluid and graceful, light as a feather  
compared to the rigid heaviness he had at the start of the  
scene. Aaron sees this.

There's a pregnant pause, interrupted by the RING of the  
phone. Jerry takes it.

JERRY  
(into phone) ·  
Hello? Doctor Ward. Yeah ... Uh  
huh... You're kidding...

Finished the conversation, Jerry hangs up and slowly turns  
to Aaron.

JERRY  
Incredible. I thought my theory  
had been shot to pieces. But it's  
not. When you recalculate, it  
turns out that all stars have the  
quality I was looking for. Every  
one...

AARON

Fantastic.

JERRY

And you know what this means --  
It means the universe really is  
inside out!

(giggles)

Which is how I feel right now...

(beat)

I feel like I -- like I just lost  
something. A weight.

AARON

Great. I can see it, man.

Jerry hugs Aaron, then stands back, looking like he can't  
believe how he's feeling right now.

AARON

You just gave up trying to get  
it.

Aaron watches Jerry with an empathetic smile. He sees  
something new in Jerry, something that maybe we can see  
too.

AARON

And you know, the crazy thing is  
-- I swear I can see it in your  
eyes, Jerry -- the crazy thing is  
that now you've really got it..

Jerry mulls that over...

CUT TO:

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - PAULA AND EDITOR - DAY

Paula looks proud and feisty. The Editor holds out a  
manuscript.

EDITOR

(appreciative)

This is heavy stuff, heavy.  
Scathing. Almost too hot to run.

(winks)

Almost.

She extends her hand and they shake.

EDITOR

Good show. Now I just need the  
release form and I'll get this to  
the presses.

Paula suddenly looks stopped short..

EDITOR

(on Paula's look)  
You got him to sign a release,  
didn't you?

Paula looks like she's like to crawl under the table.

EDITOR

WHAT!· How could you forget that?  
That's the first thing -- Oh,  
Christ, I can't risk a libel suit  
over this.  
(no ifs, ands, or buts)  
Get a release from him -- now!

INT. CAR - MOVING WITH PAULA - NIGHT

Scratching as she drives. Tense and worried.

EXT. AARON AND JERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aaron and Jerry emerge together in high spirits.

Paula's car pulls up behind the house, just in time to see  
Jerry and Aaron disappear down the hill toward the roller  
coaster.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - NEAR THE ROLLER COASTER - NIGHT

The huge, brightly lit roller coaster fills the frame  
colorfully, dwarfing the figures of Aaron and Jerry as they  
head for the main gate.

Paula runs up behind them --

THREE SHOT - MOVING

As Paula arrives --

PAULA

(apprehensive)  
Jerry.

Jerry and Aaron turn as she arrives beside them, but they  
don't stop walking --

JERRY  
 (a warm welcome)  
 Paula! What are you doing here?

PAULA  
 (carefully)  
 Look, I'll be frank, Jerry. This  
 is strictly business. A minor  
 formality -- I...  
 (almost wincing to  
 get it out)  
 I need your signature on this.

She hands him the release agreement form. He takes and looks at it as they continue through the gates and head for the roller coaster straight ahead.

PAULA  
 (continuing)  
 It, uh, gives me the rights to  
 your story.  
 (a deep breath,  
 plunges in)  
 Now look, I know what you're  
 going to say...

Jerry hands the paper back and she takes it.

PAULA  
 (continuing)  
 And I want you to know I'm  
 willing to offer a substantial --

She glances at the paper and stops in mid-sentence --

INSERT - THE PAPER

Jerry has already signed it.

ON PAULA

She stops, incredulous. Jerry and Aaron continue on, then stop and turn back --

JERRY  
 Coming with us?

THREE SHOT - WALKING

As Paula catches up.

PAULA  
 What's the catch? Huh?

Jerry smiles and hugs her lightly.

JERRY

That's something I like about you, you know? You're always ready for a fight.

She looks at him. He looks completely candid and at ease, not looking for anything.

PAULA

(more subdued)

You know this may make you, um, "well known", don't you?

JERRY

Ah -- speaking of making each other famous -- I've got another story for you. My experiment is going to be a big controversy pretty soon. You can have first crack at it.

Something magical is going on between them. We read their expressions. There's a bright, unveiled look in Jerry's eyes. He is right there with Paula, just soaking her in exactly how she is. And he's happy.

A veil seems to have lifted from Paula's eyes too. She returns his look. For the first time she looks vulnerable, willingly vulnerable, undefended.

A strong undercurrent of affection flows between them, as they arrive at the end of the lineup at the roller coaster.

AARON

(to Paula)

Should I get you a ticket?

PAULA

(noticing where she is)

Oh, uh, yeah, okay. Just a minute, I have to make a phone call.

She goes to a phone booth nearby. Aaron watches her and smiles. Jerry is looking at the roller coaster.

AARON

That's great.

JERRY

What?

AARON

The affect you have on Paula.

JERRY  
I'm not doing anything.

AARON  
Exactly.

PHONE BOOTH - PAULA

PAULA  
(into phone, hesitant)  
Listen, I got the release --  
Yeah, yeah. But listen, um, I  
want to hold off on the article  
for a bit. I have a... a new  
angle, I think.  
(there's YELLING  
over the receiver)  
I don't know yet. I might want to  
do a rewrite. Okay?  
(YELLING continues)  
You're a pal. Bye.

AT THE ROLLER COASTER LANDING

The next batch of people prepare to get on. Jerry and Aaron are soon to get on too, as they watch Paula hurrying to meet them.

A few cars down from them we SEE someone we recognize -- the Waiter from the restaurant, with a girl. Jerry sees him too, and without hesitation he steps over to him and shakes his hand. The Waiter is surprised but he really looks pleased as Jerry hustles jauntily back to join Aaron and Paula.

Aaron ushers the two of them onto the car together and stands back. Jerry gives him a look.

AARON  
I'd rather watch.

THE FRONT CAR - PAULA AND JERRY

Jerry and Paula sit in the front car. The roller coaster starts to move, and we STAY MOVING WITH THEM.

They hold hands on the bar. They look only at each other.

There is love in Paula's look, uncertainty in her voice --

PAULA  
(warily)  
You know I... I don't need you.

JERRY  
 (a happy discovery)  
 Yeah, you know -- I don't need  
 you either.

PAULA  
 (happily)  
 I'm fine as I am.

JERRY  
 (with love)  
 Me too...

As the train finally reaches the summit, they lean slowly  
 toward each other, just about to kiss until suddenly --

Whoahhh! Their eyes widen in alarm as WHOOSH! they plummet  
 straight down, out of view.

FULL SHOT - THE ROLLER COASTER - NIGHT

SCREAMS of delight from both Jerry and Paula as the train  
 careens around the bends at break-neck speed. We DON'T SEE  
 them anymore, just the train and the maze of track. And as  
 the excited screams continue, we TILT UP SLOWLY toward the  
 dark night sky...

Soon all that fills the screen is the --

STARRY HEAVENS

We HOLD on the heavens as the SCREAMS of delight slowly  
 recede from us, fading away, and now replaced by a new  
 background sound -- the BEEPS and BOOPS and CLICKS of  
 Jerry's computer. And finally, in VOICE OVER, the familiar  
 sounds of Jerry and Paula working the controls together...

JERRY'S VOICE (V.O.)  
 Come on, come on...

PAULA'S VOICE (V.O.)  
 Up there!

JERRY'S VOICE  
 Great! Whoa! Slow down!

PAULA'S VOICE  
 Whew! Almost passed it! There --!

JERRY'S VOICE  
 How's the angle?

PAULA'S VOICE  
 Good.

JERRY'S VOICE  
Okay, got it!

BEEP!

FINAL FADE OUT.