MISTER BIG APPLE

by

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(Based on "BEL AMI" by Guy de MAUPASSANT)

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OPENING CREDITS

Different SNAPSHOTS of a TAXI DRIVER'S ACTIVITIES in New York streets. He is in his late thirties, rather good-looking guy and self-confident. Badly shaved, he wears denim, a shirt open on a tee shirt and a used leather jacket. His name is GEORGE LeROY.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George is stuck in the Broadway heavy traffic jam and getting pissed, horn BLARING.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George is arguing and shouting with drivers and other taxi drivers.

INT. OXO’S DINER - NIGHT

George is eating at the counter of a small restaurant with R’n’B music where men are playing pool in the back room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

George is getting out from the subway, walking home by himself in the rain, and covering his head with his jacket. As he enters his small low-class hotel, prostitutes cheer him.

INT. TAXIS DEPOT - DAY

In a large taxi depot, George is leaned over his yellow cab, his hands in the engine grease.

INT. CAB - DAY

Driving by the WTC twin towers, George smiles in the rear-view mirror to A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN who looks back to him with disdain.

THE SNAPSHOTS ARE INCREASINGLY QUICKER, TO BE A SUCCESSION OF STILLS-LIKE TO FINALLY SUDDENLY STOP ON--
EXT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

George waiting in his taxi in front of Kennedy airport.

A CUSTOMER, most certainly a businessman, gets into the cab.

CUSTOMER
(to George)
Manhattan, 72nd.

The cab moves off.

INT. CAB - DAY

As George is driving off the airport, his eyes meet the customer's in the rear-view mirror where a Triumph logo key ring is hanging. The man looks busy, studying papers. Suddenly, George realizes he knows him.

GEORGE
(to the rear-view mirror)
Major Forrest?

FORREST
(emerging from his papers)
Beg your pardon?

GEORGE
Don't you recognize me? George LeRoy. Kuwait City. Desert Storm.

FORREST
(stunned)
What the hell?

GEORGE
I barely recognized you without your uniform and a few more pounds.

FORREST
Talk for yourself. You’re as always badly shaved.

GEORGE
You look exhausted, bud. Have to admit I used to know you more tanned.
FORREST
I had better days. Two weeks ago, my doctor found some odd stuff in my blood. I'm waiting for the results.

George keeps looking at his friend's eyes in his rear mirror.

GEORGE
Well. You perfectly know what I think about doctors?

GEORGE & FORREST
(in unison)
Keep your stuff for the towelheads, Doc! You could kill'em all by yourself!

They laugh.

GEORGE
You look alright to me. I saw you once on TV. What network are you on?

FORREST
CBC.

GEORGE
CBC. No shit. You should pocket. (a beat)
How long has it been since we saw each other?

FORREST
Ten years? And what about you?

GEORGE
Well, as you can see. I'm a fucking cabby. I couldn't find any better--yet.

FORREST
And you make it?

GEORGE
I'll have better days.

A beat.

FORREST
So, you haven't bought your Bonneville yet?
GEORGE
(showing the key-ring)
I still have the key ring. It’s a beginning

A beat.

FORREST
At what time do you finish?

GEORGE
You're my last ride.

FORREST
I buy you a drink?

GEORGE
You bet you do!

The cab speeds up on the highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - EVENING

George's cab pulls over in front of the main entrance of the Ritz-Carlton Central Park Hotel where a VALET PARKING is awaiting.

As soon as the cab stops, the valet parking opens Forrest's back door and lets him step out.

The valet parking stays barely slack-jawed when he sees George stepping out of the cab driver seat and handing him the cab keys.

GEORGE
(to Forrest)
Always dreamed of doing that.

Forrest smiles at him, amused. Forrest and George enter the hotel.

INT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - CLUB LOUNGE - EVENING

The Ritz-Carlton Club Lounge is a cozy place with relaxing environment, accented with fresh flowers, candlelight, and music, mainly frequented by regular customers. Most of them greet Forrest as he enters, but no one seems to notice George. As if he wasn't there.
Forrest and George sit at one of the tables with striking views of Central Park and a MAITRE D' comes to them.

MAITRE D'
(with a French accent)
Good evening Monsieur Forrest.

FORREST
Bonsoir François.

MAITRE D'
Your regular, Monsieur?

FORREST
(nodding)
With two glasses.

The maitre D' gives a disdainful look at George and steps back to the counter.

FORREST (cont’d)
(to George, after a long beat)
I can't believe it. It's a small world.

Although a certain satisfaction to be here, George looks quite uncomfortable, not exactly on his own ground.

GEORGE
You're the last person I ever thought meeting.

FORREST
C'est la vie, my friend. What about Brown, Curtis, Wilcox and the others. Any news of them?

GEORGE
Nope. Never heard of them anymore.

The maitre D' comes back with a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket and two flute glasses. He waits by the two men.

George cannot avoid having an astounding smile.

GEORGE (cont’d)
(impressed)
Veuve Clicquot? Wow!
FORREST
Tell me about it. CBC's Amex.
(confidentially)
When it's not on the house.

Forrest nods to the maitre D' who pours the champagne.

CLOSEUP ON George's distorted face through the filling champagne glass.

Forrest raises his glass to toast. George does the same.

FORREST (cont’d)
To our reunion, Private LeRoy.

GEORGE
To us, Major Forrest.

The two glasses CLINK.

At this very moment, George meets a YOUNG WOMAN's eyes who was observing him for a while. She is seated, alone, at the bar, scanning the place. She is between 25 and 30 year-old, blonde with long hair. Her name is RACHEL.

After having sized George up for a while, She smiles at him. George averts his look, but Forrest has noticed her.

FORREST
(to George)
You're catching eyes.
(a beat)
Too bad for you She is a hooker.

George doesn't even notice.

FORREST (cont’d)
Talking about women George, are you married?

GEORGE
(chuckling)
You're kidding? Me, married? With all those chicks running around?

George drinks a sip of his champagne, appreciating each drop, while Forrest drinks as if it's simple water.

FORREST
With a handsome mug like yours, you should be a success. Always been jealous of you. You had all the women you wanted.
GEORGE
(bitterly)
Yep. But never the one I’d really like to.

FORREST
Don't tell me you're still looking for Mrs. Right?

A beat.

GEORGE
In fact, I never came to New York City to rot in that rat trap where I'm living right now. I expect more from life. I have richer dreams. When I was a kid, a lousy hag-witch told me I would meet a woman who will take me over silver towers. Well, I perfectly know that all this is bunch of crap, but no one can stop me believing.

Forrest can't help smiling.

FORREST
Who could ever thought that big mouth Private LeRoy was a dreamer?
(a beat)
But get down to us, would you?
(serious)
Tell me. If I'm talking about Saddam Hussein or Noriega, you see who I'm talking about, don't you?

GEORGE
Yeah. As everybody. I read papers and watch TV. Why?

FORREST
You already know as much as a reporter.
(a beat)
Listen. I'm looking for someone to give me a hand for a job at CBC Are you up to it?

GEORGE
(shrugging)
Yeah. Why not?
FORREST
You know, being a reporter these days, is like being back in Iraq. You have to fight to find the facts, dodge the other reporters' bullets and set up your own flag as high as you can and fuck everybody. And as a cabbie, you're used to listen to people, talk to them. Give your point of view. Know what they really think.

GEORGE
(nodding)
Yeah. I get what you mean.

FORREST
I have a gift that very few people have in this trade: the hunch. It never deceived me. Neither did you. You know, I owe you one. I wouldn't be here today talking to you, if you didn’t get my ass out this fucking truck.

George smiles again and freezes a bit when he sees the Rachel coming to them. Though She rather fancies George, She talks to Forrest.

RACHEL
Good evening.

George looks embarrassed by the situation while Forrest always keeps that amused look.

RACHEL (cont’d)
(to Forrest)
I don't know your friend yet, but if he wants to buy me a drink, that could very easily be done.
(to George)
No?

FORREST
(to George)
What do you think George?

She now stares at George with a come-hither look.

RACHEL
(staring at George)
Yes. What does George think?
George just shakes his head.

FORREST
(to Rachel)
Sorry, pretty.

RACHEL
Pity, really. He is quite cute. I think he could make me do something silly, George.
(to George)
See you, I hope.

Rachel steps back to the bar and joins another GIRL. There, She whispers something to her girlfriend who turns to George.

Forrest pours himself another glass of champagne and turns to George.

FORREST
Well. You surely still succeed with women. Don’t you know it could drive you very far in this city.

GEORGE
(cynically)
Where do you want me to go with that kind of girl?

FORREST
Stop it, would you? You will find your guardian angel one day.
(a beat)
Listen. Tomorrow night, my wife and I'll invite some people to dinner and--

GEORGE
(interrupting)
You're married?

FORREST
I didn't mention it? For three years now. Come. I'll turn the occasion to introduce you to her. My boss will be there and two or three journalists.

GEORGE
Alright, why not, but--

FORREST
But?
GEORGE
(embarrassed)
I've-- nothing proper to wear.

FORREST
My father used to say: in New York, if you want to make it, better have a suit than a bed. And you see where I am.

He reaches for his wallet and hands George a two hundred dollars bills.

FORREST (cont’d)
Take that. You'll give them back later. Buy yourself a suit. And be there tomorrow at eight. Here's my card. It's on Broadway.
(he hands him a card and gets up)
I go. Wanna stay for a while?

GEORGE
As long as I am with a bottle of champagne, I’d stay in Hell flames.

FORREST
(laughing)
Boy, you haven't changed.
(they shake hands)
So, tomorrow night?

GEORGE
(nodding)
Tomorrow night.

Forrest leaves and steps out of the bar.

George fills his champagne glass up and feels more comfortable. He scans up the whole room, his glass in hand. His eyes meet Rachel's again. She leaves her girlfriend and steps back to George.

RACHEL
Feel better now, George?
(She seats by him.
Confidentially)
My apartment is not very far you know.

GEORGE
But-- I just have twenty bucks.
Rachel sizes him up with mischievous eyes.

RACHEL
(shrugging)
Never mind. Let's say, you'll be my dessert.

George drinks his flute glass of champagne up.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. USED CLOTHING STORE - DAY

From the street, we can see George inside a used clothing store, buying a suit.

INT. FORREST’S BUILDING - HALL - EVENING

The hall of a modern high-class building. As George, very elegant in his rented suit and closely shaved, enters, a DOORMAN welcome him. He seems to have much consideration for George.

DOORMAN
Sir? Can I help you?

GEORGE
I am expected at Charles Forrest's.

DOORMAN
Yes Sir. Nineteenth floor. Door one seven nine zero.

George thanks him with a nod and enters the elevator.

INT. FORREST’S BUILDING - ELEVATOR - EVENING

George is alone in the elevator, facing his own reflection. Somehow, he seems to be having difficulty to recognize himself: he is facing an elegant man, quite far from the everyday taxi driver he used to know. He tries several smiles.

Suddenly, something bothers him: he has just noticed a DARK SPOT on his white shirt, barely hidden by his tie.

Elevator doors slide open.
INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - EVENING

Forrest apartment door opens and a woman in her late thirties (MADELINÉ) appears. She holds a long cigarette between her fingers. Dark long hair with serious and sweet black eyes, She looks at George. Then, She smiles at him and raises her hand.

MADELINÉ
You should be George. I'm Madeline, Charles' wife.

They shake hands. Intimidated, George enters and they walk in a long couloir.

MADELINÉ (cont’d)
Charles told me how you met yesterday. I'm glad he invited you.

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

They enter a loft-like living room with numerous windows onto New York and a wood-burning fireplace. Furniture is a mix-up of modern and country. Some paintings are hanged on the walls. At the other end of the room, a long table is set with drinks and cocktail-snacks and a HIRED-WAITER is waiting for the guests to come.

Apparently, George is the first arrived.

On a private terrace, Forrest is talking on the phone.

Madeline nods to George to have a seat. He sits down.

MADELINÉ
(confidentially)
I am sure that you will make your entrance in the world tonight.

She gives him a reassuring smile. Forrest, while talking on the phone, sees George and waves to him.

GEORGE
Forr-- Charles led me to hope that he might be able to get me a job and--

MADELINÉ
(interrupting)
I know.
MADELINE (cont’d)
That’s Charles’ Pygmalion side. I heard you like champagne too.

She nods to the hired-waiter who brings a champagne glass to George when the doorbell RINGS.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Would you excuse me.

She leaves George alone in the living room, facing the hired-waiter at the other end of the room, his champagne glass in hand. George lows his eyes to the dark spot on his shirt and tries to hide it.

Forrest, his phone conversation over, steps into the living room.

FORREST
I hardly recognized you. For the job I've told you about, it'll rest with you.

Suddenly, he stops, stares at George’s shirt for a while with a sorry smile.

FORREST (cont’d)
Come with me.

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – EVENING (LATER)

George and Forrest are back in the living room. George has a new shirt and a silk tie.

Forrest takes him to a South-American woman who is the same age than Madeline and talking with her. Dark hair and tanned skin with sparkling brown eyes, She is CLOTILDA RAYUELA. As soon as She sees George, Madeline has a smile meaning: that's better this way.

MADELINE
(to Clotilda)
Clotilda, may I introduce you to an old friend of Charles, George LeRoy.
(to George)
My closest friend, almost a sister, Clotilda Rayuela.

Clotilda gives a shy smile to George who does not know what to say.

THEN, THEIR EYES MEET
For a while, they stay wordless. Clotilda is about to talk when the doorbell RINGS again.

GEORGE
(to Clotilda)
Would you like some champagne?

CLOTILDA
Yes, please.

She speaks with a slight lovely South-American accent. George turns to the hired-waiter and beckons him as he saw Madeline do a few minutes before. The hired-waiter hands Clotilda a glass of champagne, and another glass to George.

GEORGE
(toasting to Clotilda)
To one of the most beautiful woman
I ever saw in my life.

Clotilda bursts into laughter.

CLOTILDA
Oh, dear God. You don't seem getting out a lot. Anyway, thank you for the compliment. That’s awkwardly cute.

Embarrassed, George is blushing. He is about to answer when Forrest who enters with a couple interrupts him.

The man, in his early sixties, is tall, red-haired and beard, self-confident. He is ROY WALTER. The woman, younger, wearing black, is one of these women who can afford spending more of their time tanning than working.

She is French and her name is VIRGINIE.

FORREST
(to George)
George, I wanted you to meet my boss Roy Walter and his wife Virginie.

George shakes Walter's and his wife's hands.

WALTER
(to George)
Charles told me many good things about you. I should admit we need young blood, men who'd been on the field, just like you.
FORREST
(to Walter)
George fought by my side and saved
my life in Iraq. If you're looking
for experience and the right word,
George is your man.
(to George)
Isn't it, George?

GEORGE
(giving tit for tat)
I just love extreme situations.

WALTER
(to George)
Perfect. We need someone like you to
write some original commentaries. John
Doe's point of view, but who has seen
action from the inside.

FORREST
(to Walter)
Why not let George come tomorrow to
the Studios to write something
down?

WALTER
(to Forrest)
Very well.
(to George)
By the way, I want you to meet two
of the strong pillars of my
editorial staff.

George turns to a weird couple he didn't notice earlier. The
man, a huge black man, as tall as wide, looks like an athlete
stuck in a suit. He is NORMAN STEINER. The woman looks more
masculine than the man does. Her name is DIDI HAMON.

WALTER (cont’d)
Norman Steiner, our sport reporter.

Sharp nod from Steiner to George.

WALTER (cont’d)
No need to introduce you Didi
Hamon, our weekend anchor you
should have seen a lot on TV.

This time, it is George's turn to sharply nod to Didi.
MADELINE
(interrupting)
Sorry to interfere gentlemen, but
dinner is ready.

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT – DINNER ROOM – NIGHT

Madeline and Forrest are seated on each end of the dinner
table. On one side, we can see Virginie Walter, Didi Hamon
and Walter. On the other side, facing the first ones, Norman
Steiner, Clotilda and George.

George remains wordless as dinner is on. He observes each
one, studying, getting ready for his “entrance in the world”.

Several quick SHOTS on the guests around the table on
George's P.O.V.:

- men chatting to each other
- George embarrassed with his silver's choice
- Didi having a dekko to Clotilda
- Madeline discreetly helping George with his silver's choice
- George looking discreetly at Clotilda
- Madeline's good willing eye on George
- George talking softly to Clotilda
- different closeup on of mouths eating, drinking, mixed with
closeup on Clotilda's mouth, ear, eye, hand--

The shots are faster and faster to become a whirl-like, to
stop suddenly on a surprised George's closeup on as someone
is talking to him.

WALTER (O.S.)
So, finally, George, tell us what
brought us this Desert Storm?

George realizes that everybody is looking at him. For a few
seconds, he looks confused and takes over as he gets
Madeline's eyes.
GEORGE
Well, although huge deals with Kuwait and promises not held by our former President, we proved to the whole world we could be ready for prime time news.

An embarrassed silence takes place, finally broken by Walter’s laughter.

WALTER
(laughing)
Excellent! Excellent! That's what I'd call a pertinent and impertinent analysis at the same time!

George raises his eyes to Madeline who nods. She still has that good willing stare.

BACK TO:

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Guests are back in the living room for liqueurs. Walter is talking with Forrest, as George is standing in a corner, glass of brandy in hand, facing Steiner who left his severe look.

STEINER
(obviously flirting)
If you need a helping hand, don't bother to call.
(he hands his card)
I've always been interested in new talents.

In the meantime, at the other end of the room, seated on a sofa, Clotilda seems to be trapped by Didi.

Madeline comes to George.

MADELINE
(whispering)
Do not neglect Virginie Walter.

At the same moment, he meets Clotilda's despaired look. George smiles to her.

GEORGE
(to Steiner)
Excuse me.
George comes to Virginie. She is alone by one of the windows, smoking. She slightly gives a jump as he gets closer.

**VIRGINIE**

George.

**GEORGE**

Your husband being busy, please congratulate him for me for the high quality of his programs.

**VIRGINIE**

Why don't you come to dinner one of these days? You'll tell him by yourself. Roy is very sensible to these kind of compliments.

**GEORGE**

(almost bowing)

With a deep pleasure.

Virginie stares at him with amazed and ravishing eyes. Then, she turns back to the window offering New York by night. Clotilda paces to George.

**CLOTILDA**

(low voice)

Help.

(confidentially)

That lousy anchor is trying to grab me into her bed.

She nods to Didi.

**GEORGE**

Do you want me to talk to her?

**CLOTILDA**

No. You're cute.

(with a smile)

Madeline just told me you wanna be in journalism? Great deal. It looks like your entrance have been noticed by that old Walter.

(a beat)

We'll see again then.

She puts her hand on his arm.

**CLOTILDA** (cont’d)

Bye George.
She steps away, very natural, gives her regards to Madeline who walks her to the door. When Madeline comes back to George, She has a cigar box in hand.

MADELINE
Cigar?

GEORGE
No, thanks. I don't smoke.

MADELINE
You don't smoke?
(nooding to George’s glass)
You've barely drank your brandy. Come on George, you should certainly have some kind of vice?

GEORGE
(charming)
It's all depends what you mean by vice?

She smiles at him when Forrest collapses on the floor and interrupts them. They all come to him to help him to sit on a chair. George steps to Forrest who's very pale.

GEORGE (cont’d)
You're sure you're alright? Do you want--

He is interrupted by Madeline who pulls him by his sleeve.

MADELINE
(confidentially)
Charles doesn’t like to inspire pity.

George simply nods and turns to Forrest.

GEORGE
I gotta go.

They shake hands.
FORREST
Drop to my office by two.
(cordial)
Keep the shirt and the tie. Let's say it'd be your welcome gift.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

George's hotel room door opens and George enters. The squalid room is tiny, with a bed, a table, a chair and a cupboard. Clothes are thrown everywhere and there are pizza leftovers on the table. Wallpaper is torn and mold in some places.

From the neighborhood, we can hear SHOUTING AND CRYING.

George lets himself fall on the bed, tired and thoughtful.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CBC BUILDING - DAY

George is standing at the foot of a high glass building in Manhattan. Looking up, he can see the letters CBC above the entrance and a large banner with the up-to-date news.

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

George steps towards a HOSTESS, CBC huge logo is hanged on the wall behind her. The girl rises her eyes to George.

GEORGE
George LeRoy for Charles Forrest.
I'm expected.

The hostess picks up her phone and turns to George with a smile. After few seconds, Forrest comes to get George.

FORREST
Ready to enter the fray?

GEORGE
(self-confident)
I'm already in.

FORREST
(winking)
Come with me.
INT. CBC STUDIOS – EDITING ROOM – DAY

George and Forrest are in a video editing room. On one of the monitor, a time-coded documentary.

FORREST
Alright then. Try something up-to-date but simple. A real point of view where nobody has been before. Let your instinct drive you.

INT. CBC STUDIOS – EDITING ROOM – DAY (LATER)

George is leaned over a Sheet of paper. On the TV SCREEN, the documentary is still played. He starts to write something down, stops, reads it, and, finally, crumples up the Sheet of paper.

INT. CBC STUDIOS – NEWSROOM – DAY

George steps into the newsroom where a contagious frenzy runs. He seems lost in this rumble and looks for Forrest. When he sees him, he walks to him. Forrest looks "assaulted" by questions from everywhere

GEORGE
Forrest. Could you --

FORREST
(sharply)
I'm busy George. Listen, go to see Madeline. She'll give you a hand.

GEORGE
But, She should have something else to do and--

Forrest is already gone. George stands for a while in the middle of the offices and, finally, steps out.

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING CORRIDOR – DAY

Closeup on of a finger ringing a bell.

Door opens and Madeline appears. She wears a sweatshirt and her face is sweating.

MADELINE
George. I was expecting you sooner.
He is about to leave.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Don't act childishly. Come in.

CUT TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

Madeline and George step in the large living room. TV is on in front of a stationary bike.

MADELINE
I'm gonna change. Give me five minutes.

She steps out, leaving George by himself. He scans the room and finds pictures under frames on a table. Some of them show Forrest along with statesmen or movies and TV stars. Others are dedicated.

Through an half-open door, we can hear Madeline's voice.

MADELINE (V.O.) (cont’d)
Pour yourself a drink. I'm sorry I don’t have any champagne.

George does not know what to do at first. Then, he takes a bottle of whiskey and pours some in a glass. He lets himself drop in a large leather armchair, sipping his whisky. He feels good. Once again, he scans around the room, nodding and enjoying the moment.

Madeline reappears, just showered, dressed with a kimono, smoking a cigarette. George gets up in a jump.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Please, follow me.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - MADELINE OFFICE - DAY

They enter a room with a large desktop and a computer on it. On the walls, several magazines front pages with Madeline's pictures when she used to be a model.

MADELINE
This is my lair.

She sits down in front of a computer by a TV set and a VCR, gives George a seat by her, takes a remote control, and switches the TV and the VCR on.
MADELINE (cont’d)
I'm delighted to work with you.

She gives George her most beautiful smile.

TIME CUT:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - MADELINE OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

The COMPUTER SCREEN is filled with a compact text.

GEORGE
(reading)
--and for the most pitiful victims of this media war, the Oscar goes to all these oiled birds. They never understood a single second this man's craze.

Madeline still looks at him with her beautiful good willing smile.

MADELINE
Good. Now, sign your name.

George is hesitating.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Go on. Sign.

With two fingers, George clumsily types

GEORGE LeRoy

As the printer is on, Madeline turns to George, studying him with her eyes.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Tell me, George. What do you think of Clotilda?

GEORGE
She is very attractive.
(a beat)
But not as much as you.

George stares at her with persistence. Madeline lowers her head.
MADELINE
She is sweet, smart and funny.
Well, such qualities her husband
doesn't appreciate much.

GEORGE
(stunned)
She is married?

MADELINE
He is a businessman always abroad.
And when he is home, they always
fight like cats and dogs.
(she crushes her
cigarette)
Call her one of these days.

George keep sipping every word she says, staring.
Embarrassed, She writes down Clotilda's phone number and
hands it to George.

MADELINE (cont’d)
I have to chase you away now. I'm
expecting someone.

They stand up. She hands him the Sheets of paper from the
printer.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - CORRIDOR - DAY

Madeline walks George to the main door. As she opens, they
are facing a middle-aged man. Elegant and man of breeding,
WORTH looks embarrassed. The same embarrassment takes over
Madeline. She smiles to George.

MADELINE
A very close friend of mine, Edward
Worth.
(to Worth)
George LeRoy.

George and Worth exchange glances and George leaves as Worth
enters.

Door closes immediately.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter's office is a large room with glass walls. On numerous
TV screens are broadcast most of the U.S.
TV programs, sound down low. Walter is on the telephone when Forrest and George enter.

    WALTER
    (on the phone)
    --I don't give a damn with the authorization. You hear me? Fuck the FBI. You manage as you usually do.
    (a beat)
    He wants a car? I'm gonna think about it.
    (he hangs up.
    To Forrest)
    FBI guys are getting greedier.
    (to George)
    You're a man of one word. A good point. Let's see.

Forrest takes the Sheets from George's hands and gives them to Walter.

    FORREST
    I worked with him. You should like it.

Walter takes the Sheets and pages through.

    WALTER
    (to George)
    It looks good. I'll let you know.

    FORREST
    (to Walter)
    You remember? We talked about hiring him to replace Willing.

    WALTER
    Yes, Yes. Of course. With the same wages. Make him an exclusive contract.

Walter is already back to work. George and Forrest look at each other and step out of the office.

    DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

George's hotel room has been cleaned up. No more clothes to lay around. George is seated comfortably on his bed, watching CBC News hosted by Didi Hamon on a brand new TV set.
DIDI
(on TV)
We're starting tonight a series of documentaries about Desert Storm.
Commentaries are by George LeRoy.

As the documentary starts, George's cell telephone is BUZZING. George answers.

CUT TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS FORREST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Forrest is seated in his office in the darkness only lighted by a TV wall where the Gulf War documentary is broadcast. Stuck in his suit and very pale, Forrest looks exhausted.

FORREST
(on the phone)
So, how do you feel hearing your name on TV?

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Let’s say, interesting.

INT. CBC STUDIOS FORREST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

FORREST
(on the phone)
Hey, George.

GEORGE (V.O.)
(on the phone)
What?

FORREST
(on the phone)
You're doing good.

Forrest hangs up.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

CONNIE, the hostess, raises her head to US.
CONNIE
Good morning, Mister LeRoy. I call
Mister Forrest at once.
(she picks up her phone)
Charles? Mister LeRoy is here.
(she hangs up.
To George)
He is on his way.

Forrest is already here.

FORREST
Got the second one?

George hands him the sheets and Forrest take a glimpse at them.

FORREST (cont’d)
Fine. Fine.

They start to walk along the CBC editorial newsroom.

GEORGE
Do you think you could already
provide me an advance?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

George's cab is driving through the New York heavy traffic.

INT. TAXIS DEPOT - DAY

George's cab drives into a large hangar where are parked
hundred of taxis. As soon as George is getting off his cab, a
Puerto Rican young man (LUIS) paces towards him.

LUIS
Where have you been? Rizzo's gone
berserk.

GEORGE
(very quiet)
Wanna have a little fun Luis?
Follow me.

Luis follows him, with an amused smile. They did not walk for
long when a Mediterranean fat guy in his fifties (RIZZO)
stumbles down in the depot, frantic.
RIZZO
(yelling)
What's that fucking shit?! You disappeared a whole day with my cab! You had a journey to Vegas or what?! Peggy kept calling you, but no answer! You're a fucking pain in the ass, LeRoy!! Capish?! Do you know how many scums like you are waiting for your fucking job?! You've got nothing to answer, don't you?

GEORGE
Oh, yes.

He PUNCHES him on the nose. Rizzo is sent a few feet back. Luis cannot help smiling as Rizzo gets up, dizzy, with a bloody nose.

GEORGE (cont’d)
I quit. You hear me? You won't shit on me anymore Rizzo. I’m gonna work for CBC.
(to Luis)
I told you you'd have fun.

He steps out under Luis' laughing eye.

Dissolve to:

INT. TAILOR’S STORE – DAY

George is inside a tailor’s shop, picking different elegant suits.

INT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL – CLUB LOUNGE – NIGHT

Well dressed, George enters the Ritz-Carlton bar. This time, his entrance is noticed and he is welcome several times by people he does not know. George comes directly taking a seat at the same table as he did before with Forrest.

Francois, the Maître D’, comes to him, smiling.

FRANCOIS
Good evening Sir.

GEORGE
Bonsoir Francois. A glass of champagne.
François glances at him, meaning: I know you but where from?

As he returns to the bar, George scans the entire room. The same regular customers. Two or three girls at the counter.

INT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - CLUB LOUNGE - NIGHT (LATER)

George had drunk his glass of champagne. He puts a ten on the table and leaves. At the very moment he crosses the door, he comes up against Rachel.

    RACHEL
    (happy)
    How amazing how I kept thinking of you for two days.

CLOSEUP ON GEORGE'S AMAZED LOOK

    RACHEL (cont’d)
    Tonight, if you're free.

    GEORGE
    But-- I can't afford anything. I've just bought this suit and--

Rachel stares at him skeptical and shrugs.

INT. RACHEL APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rachel and George are lying in a dark bedroom. As Rachel is sleeping on her belly, naked, George is fixing the ceiling, hands under his head, thinking, and smiling.

    DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - OFFICES - DAY

George walks through the offices. A large clock shows 10:30. Suddenly, Forrest, furious, comes up.

    FORREST
    (sharply)
    George, where the hell have you been?! I've got a new job for you. You'll meet Thomas Gossip in one hour at the Waldorf for an interview.
GEORGE
Who?

FORREST
Gossip! Fuck, George! Wake up! It's a job where you never stop! Move your ass! I won't always be behind you!

GEORGE
But-- My commentaries?

FORREST
Forget that shit! Move!

George does not answer. He figures out that the entire editorial staff is looking at him with a smile. He turns to them spitefully and walks out.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

George steps toward the reception desk, talks to the RECEPTIONIST who fingers him a man seated in the hall.

THOMAS GOSSIP is in his forties, incredibly tanned, very "jet-set", sunglasses fixed on the nose, and backpack on the shoulder.

George steps to him.

GEORGE
Thomas Gossip?

Thomas gets up, a backpack on his shoulder.

THOMAS
LeRoy? You're half of a hour late.

GEORGE
Couldn't find a fucking taxi.

THOMAS
That's this city plague. Okay. We are expected by a sixteen year-old kid, top of the Billboard. The new Lolita of the Year. Fiona Hanes.

GEORGE
Who?

They step forward the elevator and enter.
INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - ELEVATOR - DAY

GEORGE
Gossip is your real name?

THOMAS
You're a funny guy, aren't you? An alias, of course. The Stars chaser, the paparazzi of the interview. That's me.
(low voice)
Better than Smith anyway, isn't it?

George smiles at him, accomplice. The elevator doors close.

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Thomas and George are pacing to a suite door. There, Thomas opens his backpack and takes a teddy bear out.

THOMAS
The kid loves them.

Thomas knocks on the door and a huge black BODYGUARD opens.

THOMAS (cont’d)
(to the bodyguard)
Hi Willy. What’s up?

The bodyguard gently winks to him and looks at George

THOMAS (cont’d)
It’s okay. He’s with me.

They enter the suite.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - FIONA HANES SUITE - DAY

An hotel suite flowed with flowers and teddy bears.

A young girl wearing an overused sportswear, is sitting on a sofa, listening to a Walkman, swaying: FIONA HANES. As soon as she sees Thomas, she takes her earphones out and jumps on him.

FIONA
Thomas honey!

Thomas gives her his teddy bear.
THOMAS
I bought it for you in Paris.

FIONA
It’s huge.
(seeing George)
The other’s not bad neither.

THOMAS
Tss, tss… You can’t touch him. He’s still brand new.

FIONA
Pity. Thomas, are you coming to my soiree ?

THOMAS
You perfectly know I wouldn’t miss it.

FIONA
Will you bring your--
(staring mischievously at George)
"teddy" ?

THOMAS
Everything you wish, sweetheart.

FIONA
(to George)
See you on Saturday, then.

She drops Thomas, comes back to her sofa and puts her earphones the head.

Thomas drags George back to the suite door.

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - ELEVATOR - DAY

GEORGE
And the-- interview?

THOMAS
I’ll do it on my own. What do you want to get from a kid like her? A bit a sex, but not too much. A lot about her parents. And, above all, her last CD. I have so much left from my last interview. I’ll fix it with the editor.
THOMAS (cont'd)
(winking)
Editing, it's magic.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - DAY

Thomas and George separate in front of the hotel. George takes his cell phone out and dials a number.

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Madeline? It's George. I'm sure you can do me a little favor.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

A door opens on a PUERTO RICAN WOMAN in her fifties. George is facing her.

PUERTO RICAN WOMAN
Si?

GEORGE
Please, tell Mrs. Rayuela, George LeRoy wants to see her.

The domestic nods, lets George enter and disappears in the apartment.

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clotilda steps in the hall. She looks completely surreal. She is wearing a swimsuit with a straw hat and sunglasses. Her body is oiled. She reaches her hand out to George.

CLOTILDA
I thought you forgot me.

Clotilda takes his arm and walks him off in the living room. Then, they step out on a sunny terrace.

EXT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - DAY

Clotilda takes a seat on a deck chair, in the sun. George, stays up, does not know exactly what to do. He finally takes a look upon the panorama.
GEORGE
Quite a view.

CLOTILDA
(ironically)
You came here to talk about my view?

GEORGE
(charming)
I just wanted to know if Didi Hamon followed you?

CLOTILDA
(ironically)
It's nice to know you worry, but I'm okay.

GEORGE
(charming)
Not worry. Maybe quite jealous.

Clotilda slightly low her glasses, quite provocative.

CLOTILDA
So, George, tell me everything about you.

GEORGE
There's not much to say. I'm just an ordinary guy trying to make his way into a new world, that's all.

The domestic arrives with a tray of cold drinks. As soon as she puts it down, she leaves.

CLOTILDA
(to George)
Sit by me.

She makes him some room on the deck chair.

As she talks, a succession of CLOSEUP ON GEORGE'S P.O.V. on Clotilda's brassy body: her lips, her sweaty throat, a breast curve, one of her oily thighs--

CLOTILDA (cont'd)
I think we're gonna be good friends.

GEORGE
(charming)
Just friends?
CLOTILDA
(ironically)
Well. I don’t know.

George hesitates to put his hand on her leg, when a six year-old little girl steps on the terrace, WINNIE.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
This is my daughter, Winnie.

Quite surprised, George smiles to Winnie.

GEORGE
Hi, Winnie.

CLOTILDA
Winnie is a wild little animal. Most of the time, she would stays in her bedroom, in her books or watching cartoons.

GEORGE
(to Winnie)
One day, I'm pretty sure we'll play together.

Winnie does not answer, sizing George up.

CLOTILDA
(puzzled)
What have you done to her? When a stranger talks to her, she usually runs away.

Winnie does not move, keeping staring at George. He gets up.

GEORGE
Well, I better leave you between ladies.

Clotilda gets up at her turn and steps with George into the living room.

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOTILDA
I don't like having people here but sometimes I invite Madeline and Charles at the restaurant. But just the three of us is quite sad. Be ours on Saturday night.
GEORGE
(with assurance)
I'll be there.

They shake hands.

George’s thumb caresses Clotilda’s back of the hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS – DAY

George is in one of the CBC video rooms watching several news on tapes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. “WINDOWS ON THE WORLD” RESTAURANT – NIGHT

A very posh restaurant with a cozy atmosphere and high windowpanes opening over New York City. Though most of the customers are dining quietly, from one table at the back of the room, quite apart, we can hear a FEMININE LAUGHTER.

CLOTILDA'S LAUGHTER

Around a small table, Clotilda, slightly drunk, Forrest, Madeline, and George are finishing having dinner. Forrest, very pale, looks worried, elsewhere. Madeline is rather relax, facing George who seems having fun.

CLOTILDA
--so, this bitch said to him: "If I love gangbangs, what can I do about it? Take your ticket as everybody else".

An OLD LADY turns to her, shocked. They laugh, except Forrest. Clotilda gets up.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
(confidentially)
I can't stand it anymore. I have to pee.

She hurries ahead the Ladies' room.

GEORGE
(to Forrest)
What's wrong? If you could see your face.
Forrest forces himself to smile at him, sadly. A maître D’ comes to the table.

MAITRE D
(to Forrest)
Mister Forrest. Telephone.

Without a word, Forrest leaves the table.

MADELINE
(to George)
I worry about him. I expected this dinner would cheer him up.
(sigh)
Even when I manage to make him switch off his cell phone, someone always manages a way to call him.

She drinks a sip of champagne.

MADELINE (cont’d)
You’re not coming to see me anymore.

GEORGE
Can’t you guess why?

MADELINE
(innocently)
No.

GEORGE
Because— I’m in love with you. Oh, just a little, but I don’t want to fall head over heels in love with you.

MADELINE
(calmly)
You know, nobody’s ever in love with me for long. It pointless and I let it know straight away. If you came earlier and told me so, I’d have reassured you.

GEORGE
(sighing)
As if I could control my feelings.

MADELINE
George, for me a man in love no longer exists. He’s an fool, or rather a dangerous fool.
MADELINE (cont'd)
I usually stop having any close relationship with men who love me or claim to. First, because they bore me. And secondly, because they’re like a mad dog that may suddenly have a fit. So, look at me. I’ll never be your lover. Never. Do you understand?
(with a smile)
It's quite preferable you prefer Clotilda.

She drinks her champagne up.

INT. "WINDOWS ON THE WORLD" RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

The four of them are standing in the restaurant hall. Forrest looks exhausted. As Madeline looks sober, Clotilda, half-drunk, laughs for nothing.

CLOTILDA
Maybe I've drunk too much.

GEORGE
(to Clotilda)
Would you like me to take you home?

He cannot help turning to Madeline who agrees with a smile.

CLOTILDA
Frankly, please. Tonight, I don't know where I'm living.

Forrest is already out. They follow him.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - INT. CAB - NIGHT

A cab speeds up through the New York streets. Clotilda is now silent, George by her side. She looks like sleeping, eyes wide open. George is lowing his head to his hands, then to Clotilda's knees.

She sighs.

Suddenly, as she jus sent a signal to him, George turns to her, takes her hand and kisses it. Then, he draws Clotilda to him.

CLOTILDA
(whispering)
No, George. Por favor.
They kiss.

CLOSEUP ON THE CAB DRIVER'S EYES WATCHING THE COUPLE IN HIS REAR-VIEW MIRROR

The cab pulls over in front of Clotilda's building and stops.

Clotilda steps out quickly, breathless. She slams the cab's door, nearly on George's nose. She walks on a few meters, then steps back to the cab, and opens the back door. She leans to George.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
Tomorrow. Two o'clock. My place.

She slams the door again and rapidly disappears into her building.

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

George is lying on his bed, in the dark, only lighted by TV static. He does not sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Under the silken Sheets, George and Clotilda are making love, both sweating.

Then, George rolls back by Clotilda's side, breathless. Clotilda reaches for a pack of cigarettes and lights one up. She cuddles up to him.

GEORGE
(surprised)
You don't smoke? Do you?

CLOTILDA
Always after making love.
(a beat)
Maria took Winnie to the park.
That's why I could welcome you today. Then, it will be different.
(a beat)
I'll come to your place.

GEORGE
No.
CLOTILDA
Why?

GEORGE
I'm living in an hotel. Not quite a palace.

CLOTILDA
So what? I'll come to see you. Not your room.

GEORGE
That bothers me.

CLOTILDA
Don't you ever want to see me again?

GEORGE
(kindly)
You fool.

CLOTILDA
Next Sunday, I'll show you another way to get high.

George is going to answer, but She kisses him, puffing out her smoke into his mouth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Closeup on a small plane propeller with a roaring engine.

On a country airfield, a colored Eagle II plane is ready to take off on the runway.

E/I. PLANE - DAY

Inside the plane, Clotilda is seated in front of George, a leather helmet on head. As Clotilda looks overexcited, George, on her back, like asking what He is doing there.

CLOTILDA
(nearly shouting)
Is that your first flight?

GEORGE
(nearly shouting)
Yeah.
CLOTILDA  
(nearly shouting)  
You're gonna love it!

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY
The Eagle II darts and quickly climbs, and Zooms.

E/I. PLANE - DAY
George's hand clenches and tries to grab something inside the plane. He turns livid.
In front of him, Clotilda is shouting and laughing.

CLOTILDA  
(nearly shouting)  
You're all right?

GEORGE
Mmm mmm.

EXT. COUNTRY - DAY
The Eagle II is still climbing and flies on tailspin, leaving behind a smoke trail. Then, She does some "kicks" and ends with a looping.

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY
By the runway, several persons are watching the plane figures.

MAN #1
Who's up there?

MAN #2
The upper crust goofy.

MAN #1
(chuckling)
Okay. I'm not asking.

E/I. PLANE - DAY
Inside the plane, George, face clutched, holds with his hands on each part of the fuselage. As a trapped animal, he doesn't know which way to turn. Clotilda is still overexcited.
CLOTILDA
(shouting)
You're okay?! Wanna go down?!

GEORGE
(shouting)
If you don't mind. Before we die!

CLOTILDA
(shouting)
Okay! We're going home!

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

The Eagle II flies upside down, dives, makes a last looping before flying back to the landing stripe.

EXT. AIRFIELD - HANGAR - DAY

Clotilda and George are getting off the plane. As George steps on the ground, Clotilda has to hold him up. He looks dumbfound.

CLOTILDA
Poor sweetie. Everybody gets this way on the first time. But, next time, you're gonna love it.

George looks at her, exhausted.

GEORGE
(bitterly)
Next time, it'll be the flight simulator for me.

She smiles and comes to him, wheedling, and embraces him.

CLOTILDA
(whispering)
I want you. Now.

She kisses him with passion and pushes him onto the Eagle II wing.

FADE TO BLACK:
INT. CBC STUDIOS - EDITOR ROOM - DAY

George is in the editor room. Leaned over a TV monitor with Thomas Gossip and an EDITOR, he is watching the young star Fiona Hanes’ interview.

The editor freezes the frame as George's cell phone is BUZZING. George answers.

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Yeah?
(a beat)
Wait a second.
(he takes a pen)
Fifty-fourth and Third Avenue.
Fifteenth floor. Door fifteen twenty-six. At six? I'll be there.

CLOSEUP on George's puzzled look as he folds his cell phone up. He leans again over Thomas' shoulder as the interview resumes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUILDING - DAY

An elevator door slides open and George walks down a long corridor. He stops in front of a door and KNOCKS. After a few seconds, door opens and Clotilda appears, smiling.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

As George enters, Clotilda hugs him and starts to kiss him with passion. Then, she closes the door behind them and takes George in the apartment. The main room is rather large with a simple table and a sofa.

CLOTILDA
What do you think?

GEORGE
Nice place.

Without a word, Clotilda takes his hand and takes him to the bedroom.
INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A queen-size bed takes all over the room. Clotilda sits on the bed and invites George to take place by him. George sits too.

CLOTILDA
Soft, isn't it?

GEORGE
(curious)
Where exactly are we?

CLOTILDA
(obviously)
But, in your apartment, George.

GEORGE
What?!!

CLOTILDA
I rented it under your name and paid three months in advance. It's not far from my place. It would be easier to see each other.

GEORGE
But, I--

CLOTILDA
You don't like it?

GEORGE
(getting up)
I can't accept.

CLOTILDA
I know. But, I do insist. It's my way to tell how much I care for you.
(a beat)
Tell me you like it.

George sits back and starts to kiss her.

GEORGE
I LOVE it.

She escapes from his embrace.
CLOTILDA
My husband will be back home tonight.
(she arranges her hair)
Settle the place as you like. I’ve got my own key.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT
George steps out the building, the apartment keys in his hand.

He stops, raises his head up to the top of the building with a smile. Then, he lowers his eyes to his hand where he makes the keys jingle with the TRIUMPH key ring.

DIFFERENT QUICK SHOTS SHOWING GEORGE IN SEVERAL SITUATIONS, MIXED WITH SHOTS OF NEW YORK THROUGH THE SEASONS:

INT. OFFICE - DAY
George interviewing a politician.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY
George is wildly making love to Clotilda in the apartment.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
By Clotilda, George is checking a note in a classy restaurant with his Amex.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY
Central Park in autumn.

INT. BANK - DAY
George is in a bank with a BANKER.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY
George is making love to Clotilda.
INT. TAILOR - DAY
George is buying a haute couture suit.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT
George is redecorating the apartment.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - ROCKFELLER CENTER - NIGHT
The Rockefeller Center Christmas tree with SKATING PEOPLE.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT
George and Clotilda in a casino, playing dices.

EXT. STREET - DAY
George in front of an ATM: his maximum amount had been reached.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT
George is seated in the sofa, worried. A KEY NOISE and Clotilda steps in happily. George tries to smile as she kisses him.

    CLOTILDA
    I'm so excited. Christmas always makes me feel this way. Where do you want to take me out tonight?

    GEORGE
    (tired)
    I'd rather spend the evening here.

    CLOTILDA
    But I want to go out.

    GEORGE
    So, go-- by yourself.

    CLOTILDA
    (bitterly)
    Listen dearie. If I ask you to take me out, so you do.
CLOTILDA (cont'd)
If you act just like my husband, what the point, for me, having a lover?

GEORGE
(upset)
Fuck your hubby.

CLOTILDA
Who do you think I am?!

She notices he does not move.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
Fine. Bye.

She steps toward the apartment door. In one jump, George gets up and catches her up by the arm.

GEORGE
Stop it.

CLOTILDA
You're hurting me.

He lets her go and sighs.

GEORGE
Okay! If I'm not taking you out tonight, that's because I've got a reason.

CLOTILDA
What reason?

George lowers his head, not knowing exactly what he is going to say.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
You're lying!!

She steps once more to the main door and George catches her up again.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
Leave me!

GEORGE
Alright! You want that fucking reason?! I'm flat broke!

Clotilda looks at him, astounded.
CLOTILDA
You're-- what?

GEORGE
I can barely afford buying you a taco around the corner.

Clotilda keeps her eye on him and sits on the sofa, dumbfounded. She raises her hand up to George. He steps forward.

CLOTILDA
My darling. I couldn't know. I'm the one to be forgiven. But-- How did you--

GEORGE
(improvising)
My mother-- A very serious operation-- and--
(nearly crying)
I even had to borrow some money.

CLOTILDA
I'll lend you some!

GEORGE
No. I've enough debts.

He kneels to her. She embraces him.

CLOTILDA
Come on, my little man. It's not that bad. We won't go out tonight, that's all.

They kiss with passion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Sunrise. George is alone, lying in the bed. A sunray caresses his face and wakes him up. His hand reaches out for Clotilda, but cannot find her.

George wakes up slowly. He takes a glimpse to the alarm clock and finds on the bedside table--

A $100 DOLLAR BILL

George cannot believe it.
SEVERAL SHOTS OF THE BEDSIDE TABLE WITH MORE AND MORE BILLS EACH TIME

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

In one of the CBC offices, George is seated facing Steiner, taking notes. As Steiner is speaking, he is coming behind George and, obviously cruising, puts his hand on his shoulder. As a natural reaction, George gets his hand out.

CUT TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - EVENING

On the evening news set, George is chatting with Didi Hamon.

INT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - CLUB LOUNGE - NIGHT

Clotilda and George enter the Ritz-Carlton bar and are hosted by François.

FRANCOIS
Bonsoir Monsieur LeRoy. It'd been months we haven't seen you.

GEORGE
Bonsoir François.

CLOTILDA
(floored)
You knew this place?

GEORGE
I used to come before-- sometimes.

CLOTILDA
Why did you never take me here?

GEORGE
Never crossed my mind.

As they sit at a table, George scans the room, looking for Rachel. Reassured, he realizes she is not here.

GEORGE (cont’d)
(to François)
My regular.

François walked back to the bar.
CLOTILDA
You used to come here by yourself?

GEORGE
This is the very first place where Forrest took me when we met.
(a beat)
By the way, how is he? I haven't seen him for a while at CBC. And I’m so busy and--

CLOTILDA
(interrupting)
Don’t you know? He is very bad. Maybe dying. Finally, they find a lymphomas he certainly caught during the Gulf War.

Livid, George does not answer. At first, we think that is because of Forrest disease, but we realize he has just seen Rachel walking down the bar. She sees him and gives him a discreet nod. George acts as if he has not seen her.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
You should pay him a visit before he leaves for Key West with Madeline.
(she stops, annoyed)
Do you know that girl at the bar?

GEORGE
(innocently)
What girl?

CLOTILDA
The one, there, a bit vulgar. She doesn't stop staring at us.

With a neutral air, George turns to Rachel, then to Clotilda.

GEORGE
Never seen her before.
(a beat)
I'll visit Forrest. When I think I could catch the same fucking--

Rachel who stands right behind him interrupts George.

RACHEL (O.S.)
Hi, George. Finally back in town?

George does not answer, not even turning back to her.
RACHEL (cont’d)
Turned blind and deaf?

Clotilda cannot believe it. George finally faces Rachel.

GEORGE
(to Rachel)
Listen, sweetie. Go back to work.

RACHEL
Hey, little shit. When you screw a girl, at least say hello to her.

Without a word, Clotilda gets up in a jump and gait down the hall. George gets up under Rachel's laughing eye.

GEORGE
Clotilda! Wait!

CUT TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - NIGHT

It is a rainy night. Clotilda rushes out and hails a cab. She gets into the taxi, slams the door, and the car speeds up, leaving George in the rain, looking at the cab moving away.

GEORGE
(to himself)
Shit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The DOORBELL RINGS at the Forrests.

Madeline appears and opens the door, smoking. George is on the footstep.

MADELINE
(whispering)

George steps in.

GEORGE
I've heard for Charles.
MADELINE
(whispering)
He is asleep. Doctors are very pessimistic. His days are now counted.
(she sighs)
Do you want a drink?

GEORGE
Yes, please.

They sit on a sofa. Madeline pours George and herself a whisky.

MADELINE
I thought you should have been seeing Clotilda tonight?

GEORGE
Let's say, we had-- a kinda hassle.

Forrest's voice can be heard from a nearby bedroom.

FORREST (V.O.)
(weakly)
Maddy! Who is it?!

MADELINE
(to George)
Excuse me.

She gets up and disappears in the bedroom, leaving George by himself sipping his whisky.

Then, Madeline comes back to George.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Charles is very sorry not seeing you. He says hello.

GEORGE
Do the same for me.

She sits down by him.

MADELINE
George. May I talk to you straightfully?

GEORGE
Of course. You always did.
MADELINE
Pay a visit to Mrs. Walter. She--appreciates you-- a lot. I'm sure you would gain much. Take my advice.

Their eyes meet. They keep staring.

GEORGE
If I get it right, you're like a guardian angel to me?

MADELINE
(thinking)
Guardian angel?
(nodding with a smile)
Done. I'm your guardian angel.

GEORGE
Madeline. If you ever need--

She gently puts her finger on his mouth with a smile.

MADELINE
(whispering)
I know.

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

A huge manor on the Long Island coast. All the windows are lighted. A cab stops in front of the entrance. George gets off and looks at the mansion, impressed. He adjusts his tie, as nervous as he is going to enter on stage.

INT. WALTERS MANOR - LOBBY - NIGHT

The door opens and Virginie appears, smiling.

VIRGINIE
George. I'm glad you here.

She takes him by the arm and takes him in.

VIRGINIE (cont’d)
You'll always be welcome here.
INT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

They cross large rooms, some of them are decorated for Christmas, and they arrive in a huge living room where a large fireplace is burning.

INT. WALTERS MANOR - DINNERS ROOM - NIGHT

In this room, a dozen of people are here. We recognize Didi Hamon, Steiner and Thomas Gossip. George makes a well-noticed entrance among a small group of YOUNG GIRLS who sizes him up, silently laughing. Walter is talking with a man George knows: Worth. As soon as he sees George, Walter turns to him.

WALTER
George. May I introduce you Senator Edward Worth.

George approaches them. Worth shakes his hand.

GEORGE
We already met, didn't we? At the Forrests I think.

WORTH
(haughty)
Could be.

Walter takes them two apart.

WALTER

GEORGE
But, I'm not a--

WALTER
Tomorrow, you'll have a politics heading. I know what you're worth.

GEORGE
But-- (he realizes he can't refuse)
Thank you Sir.
WALTER
Call me Roy. By the way, you can also thank my wife who inspired me that good advice.

George looks to Virginie. From the other side of the room, she smiles at him and raises her glass. George nods to her with a smile.

WALTER (cont’d)
Your impertinence could break the audience. I'm sure that an attack on the Administration by asking the right questions to Edward would have a clout on the public opinion. Isn't it Edward?

WORTH (haughty)
Absolutely.

George stares at Worth with amused eyes.

GEORGE
Why not?

WALTER
We have a deal? I'll see you tomorrow at nine in my office.

Walter drags Worth along. George steps away to Virginie.

VIRGINIE
Any good news?

GEORGE
Thanks to you.

VIRGINIE
Please, don’t mention it. I'm know you'll hit the lens.

GEORGE
How could I thank you one day?

They are interrupted by a 17 year-old red-haired young girl (SUSAN) from the small group.

SUSAN
Mum. Would you introduce me?
VIRGINIE
(slightly amazed)
George, Susan, my daughter.
(to Susan)
George LeRoy.

Susan shakes George's hand.

SUSAN
Nice to meet you.

She fixes him intensely.

VIRGINIE
Susan is just here for Holidays.
She is studying in Paris.

SUSAN
Yeah, bank law.

GEORGE
Sounds great.

SUSAN
(cynically)
Awesome.

George cannot help smiling. His smile freezes when he sees Clotilda entering the room. Virginie sees her too, leaving Susan and George to welcome her.

SUSAN (cont’d)
Are you married Mister LeRoy?

GEORGE
I’m not. Are you?

Susan laughs loudly.

SUSAN
Are you kidding? Life's too short for this kind of crap.

GEORGE
You're perfectly right.

SUSAN
Don't tell my mother. She wouldn't appreciate. Well. She never appreciates anything coming from me.

(confidentially)
You won't be surprised when you'll know her birthday is on Halloween.

Clotilda's voice RESOUNDS behind George.

CLOTILDA (V.O.)
Senor LeRoy. Don't you forget your friends?

George turns to her. Clotilda raises her hand to him. Mistrustful, George takes her hand to shake it.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
I see you prefer young girls. Of course. Younger is the fruit, bitter it is.

GEORGE
But nothing's worth high flying rides, isn’t it?

Clotilda holds his hand tightly, smiling. She squeezes it that strong for few seconds. Susan notices it and steps away.

CLOTILDA
(confidentially)
I missed you, you fool.

GEORGE
I missed you too. When do I see you?

CLOTILDA
I'll call you.

She releases George's hand and joins the other guests. Thomas approaches George.

THOMAS
Not bad. Clotilda Rayuela is a good match.

GEORGE
What do you mean?

THOMAS
George, I do deserve my nickname 'cos I see, I feel everything. But, don't worry. I know how to be discreet with my friends. By the way, what do you think of little Susan? In a few years, She'll worth a few million dollars. And with her father dreaming of politics--
THOMAS (cont'd)
(nodding to Worth)
Look at our dear baby-kisser,
protector of morale, ex-CIA. When I
think he fucks Forrest's wife.

GEORGE
What?!!

THOMAS
(surprised)
You're the only one to ignore it.

GEORGE
Does Charles know it?

THOMAS
Of course, he does. He owns her
everything. She made him. Some
people even says she should signs
his programs. Well, if you ask me,
I would do the same.

GEORGE
How come?

THOMAS
She got burned about ten years ago
in a sex, drugs and politics
scandal. She didn't come off
unscathed. Today she needs a man of
straw. It'd been fucking stupid to
waste her journalistic talent.

George is thinking.

GEORGE
(as to himself)
Of course.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BIKE DEALER STORE - DAY
In a bike dealer store, George in front of an used motorbike.

A TRIUMPH 750 BONNEVILLE

DEALER
Was not easy to find her, pal, but
a friend of mine from Glasgow
unearthed it on Internet.

George details the bike with admiration.
GEORGE
(admiring)
She is just perfect.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

A Cromwell helmet with Climax goggles on head, George easily makes his way through New York traffic jam on his bike.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EVENING

In sight of Clotilda's building, George is stopped on his Triumph. He takes his cell phone out and dials a number.

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Clotilda? You never called me back.

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Clotilda is on the phone, quite embarrassed. Behind her, in the apartment, we can see a man, her husband, playing with the little Winnie.

CLOTILDA
(on the phone)
Sorry, wrong number Sir. There's no John here. Just me and my husband--

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EVENING

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Okay. I get it.

Upset, he hangs up and speeds away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OXO'S DINER - NIGHT

George steps into the bar seen in sequence #4. Most of the customers salute George. He sits at the counter. OXO, the bartender, comes to him.

OXO
Hey George. It's been a while.
GEORGE
Yeah. Almost a year.

OXO
You finally remember your old friends?

GEORGE
Gimme a beer.

Oxo hands him a beer and notices the helmet.

OXO
You finally bought your Bonnie?
With your new job, you should make a lot of money?

GEORGE
(jaded)
Yeah.

OXO
Fuck. You've sure kicked Administration's ass the last time.
You and your Senator had some fun.

GEORGE
(with hatred)
He is not MY senator.

He drinks his beer up and beckons for another.

OXO
Okay. Anyway, we had fun.

He hands George another beer.

GEORGE
(as to himself)
This motherfucker screws my best friend's wife.
OXO
So, what's the point? None of your fucking business. If he really is a your best friend, you would take the advantage to fix things up in front of all America.

GEORGE
(aggresive)
That's why you're still a bartender and I'm on TV.

OXO
(upset)
Stop shitting on me.

GEORGE
(disillusioned)
Yeah.

OXO
Luis was here the other day. His wife just had a baby.

GEORGE
(cynical)
Great. Breaking news.

OXO
Listen George. If you came back to fuck with me, you buzz off. Okay?

GEORGE
Okay. I beat it. I even wonder why I came here.

He gets up, takes his helmet, leaves a twenty on the counter and steps out, frenzied.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

It is pouring rain.

On his Triumph, George speeds up in the streets. Rage can be read on his face beaten by the rain. He speeds through a first traffic light, then a second one. But he does not slow down.

Suddenly, A cab looms from a street and surprises George. He breaks. The bike skids on its side, dropping George on the street.
But his sleeve gets stuck on the bike handlebar and drags him on the wet street where he slides for 150 feet. The bike gets crushed under a delivery truck emerging at the intersection.

George sees the truck wheels approaching and begins to SCREAM. The truck tries to brake on the wet street, and manages to avoid George in a tire SQUEAKING and FIREWORK OF SPARKS.

At this very moment, George's sleeve tears and the Triumph get crushed under the truck wheels and EXPLODES, making the truck tilts up on its side just inches from George in a loud metal crash.

THEN, SILENCE COMES BACK

Shook up, George tries to stand up and collapses on the rainy street, knocked out.

FADE TO BLACK:

GEORGE’S DREAM

George is walking down a long hallway surrounded by a white blinding light. He seems incredibly relaxed. The white corridor then turns to a mansion-like corridor where paintings under frames are hanged on the walls.

We can see portraits of Madeline, Clotilda, Didi, Winnie, Rachel, Virginie, Susan and Connie.

The portraits look now animated and all the women are saying in unison the same word: GEORGE.

Each one of them says it her way. All voices are mixed and become one, ECHOING and fading away.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

George is seated on a hospital bed, is foot bandaged. He looks exhausted. Clotilda is facing him.

CLOTILDA
You scared me to death when you called me.
GEORGE
(reassuring)
If I called myself that it wasn't that bad.

CLOTILDA
I thought I'd lost you.

George sighs.

GEORGE
Never saw death that close. Even in Iraq. That's the very first time I realize how life can be precious.

George's cell phone is BUZZING. He answers and, with a grave face, listens. He hangs up.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Charles is dying. I have to go to Key West.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALTER OFFICE - DAY

Helped with crutches, his foot still bandaged, George enters Walter's office. His boss is so busy he has not notice George's presence. After a short while, he raises his head up.

GEORGE
You know that Forrest won't come back. So, I won't nick his job.

WALTER
What do you mean, his job?

GEORGE
Let me host his Sunday morning program. I know debates and my heading doesn't give me enough time to develop some important points.

Walter sighs.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Roy, I bet your ass I can do better than him. You wanna blow the score?

WALTER
Well. Are you sure you can make it?
GEORGE
(self-confident)
A pol can't be worse than the truck which nearly killed me.
(a beat)
Nobody scares me anymore.

Walter is still thinking.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Gimme two shows and you'll see what I really worth when I let steam go. You'll even want to gimme a raise.

WALTER
I'm gonna think about it. Take some rest. And some strength.

He leans back over his work, forgetting George's presence.

INT. PLANE – DAY

George is in one of those inner line planes in First Class, sipping a glass of champagne poured by a STEWARDESS. As the woman steps forwards, George cannot help staring at her butt with appreciative eyes.

EXT. THE KEYS BRIDGE – EVENING

Facing the sunset, a private plane is flying over the long bridges connecting the Keys.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – EVENING

Standing with his crutches at the foot of Forrest's bed, George is with Madeline. She is holding her husband's hand.

Forrest is covered with a white Sheet. Two transparent tubes are connected to his nose and a drip attached to his arm. He looks weak and seems to be sleeping to the rhythm of the electrocardiogram FEEPING at his side.

As the electrocardiogram's alarm SOUNDS, TWO NURSES are rushing into the room, followed by a DOCTOR. He feels Forrest's pulse and injects him something, but in vain.
The doctor switches the electrocardiogram off. Madeline bursts out crying in George’s arms.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FORREST'S MANSION - TERRACE - DAY

Weary, Madeline hands a beer to George. She wears a black dress. They are facing the ocean on a huge mansion terrace.

GEORGE
Are you tired?

MADELINE
Exhausted.

GEORGE
What are you gonna do now? Did Charles have a life insurance?

MADELINE
Thank God, I don't have to worry about that.

GEORGE
(reassuring)
If you ever need me. Your guardian angel will always be there.

She gently smiles and lights a cigarette.

MADELINE
(in a breath)
I know that.

GEORGE
Yesterday, at the funeral, you were very brave. I admired you. If only I could have your strength.

Madeline fixes the ocean.

GEORGE (cont’d)
(sighing)
Madeline. Listen to me very carefully. What I'm gonna tell you today, maybe I won't have the guts to do it back in New York.

Madeline keeps smoking.
GEORGE (cont’d)
I don't have much to give you. Nor a fortune, or security. But, I'm ready to do anything to make you happy. I'm not proposing to you. It's not the appropriate time and place. But, I rather think about a kind of—association between two partners. Let's work together Madeline. Help me to reach the top as you did with Charles.

MADELINE
(amazed)
You knew about Charles?

GEORGE
That's not the point. Walter gave me his program. I need you, Madeline, as you need me.

Madeline crushes her cigarette and turns to him.

MADELINE
I want to think about it.
(she sighs, gets up, and faces the ocean)
One more thing. Don't tell anybody.
No one needs to know.
(a beat)
You better leave today. I'd like to be alone for a few days.

Despite his crutches, George gets up and comes closer to her. He takes her in his arms. He hugs her, but Madeline does not react.

George smells her hair and closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CBC STUDIOS – OFFICE – DAY

A middle aged secretary (MARTHA) KNOCKS on an office door and enters. The office is a large room, with value furniture, and a windowpane over Manhattan.

Behind the large desk, a leather armchair is turned towards the windowpane.

The secretary stays at the doorstep and slightly COUGHS.
The armchair turns to her and George appears. He looks like a kid caught in the act.

SECRETARY
Good morning, Mister LeRoy. I'm Martha, your secretary.

GEORGE
Oh, yes. My secretary.

SECRETARY
Do not hesitate if you need something.
GEORGE
(firmly)
Very well, Martha. First of all, I want a complete check of my team, Forrest's address book and I take my coffee black and no sugar.

She is about to step away.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Martha.
(with a charming smile)
Call me George.

Martha looks at him, astounded and steps away. Self-confident, George proudly puts his hands on his desk.

GEORGE (cont’d)
My secretary.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. YACHT - NIGHT

A big yacht at sea where a party is on. About hundred people are drinking, talking loud, dancing to the sound of techno music.

Fiona Hanes celebrates her success and 2KY. She is half drunk, smoking pot and talking loud. She goes from one guest to another and arrives to Thomas.

FIONA
(shouting)
Everything's okay?!

THOMAS
(shouting)
Great party!!

FIONA
(shouting)
Where's he?!

THOMAS
(shouting)
Don't know!! Hangin' around!!

FIONA
(shouting)
Bring him to me!! Right now!!
Thomas winks to her.

THOMAS

(shouting)

No problemo!!

Thomas makes his way through the guests and steps outside. George is here, by himself.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

As Thomas steps out on the deck, George does not notice him, lost in his thoughts. Thomas puts his hand on George's shoulder, friendly.

THOMAS

You're okay?

GEORGE

I don't like parties, anniversaries, holidays or any kind of celebration.

THOMAS

The kid wants to see you.

GEORGE

Come on Thomas, I could be her father. She doesn't get it?

THOMAS

Precisely. She can't have you. That's what turn her on.

George's cell phone is BUZZING. As he answers, Thomas leaves him alone.

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Yeah?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

George. It's me.

George steps forward not to be disturbed by the music.
EXT. YACHT – NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Where are you?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE – NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
I'll be in New York tomorrow. You're having fun?

EXT. YACHT – NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Thomas dragged me in some boozy party. I don't know what I'm doing here.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE – NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
I wanted to thank you for every thing you did. I've been deeply touched.

EXT. YACHT – NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Don't mention it.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE – NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
I watch you every Sunday. You're doing pretty good.
EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
I can do better than this.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
George. Does Clotilda know?

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Know what?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
About our-- future plans. Because, if it's still okay with you, I think it'd be time to let her know.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
You're not playing with me? Are you?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE
(on the phone)
I've never been more serious. (a beat)
George. I'm glad with my decision.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Me too. See you tomorrow.
MADELINE
(altered, on the phone)
See you tomorrow. By the way, happy new year.

GEORGE
(on the phone)
Happy new year, Madeline.

She hangs up. George looks at his phone for a short while. He cannot believe it. Then, he shouts a massive and hysterical scream and steps inside the yacht.

INT. YACHT - NIGHT

Thomas catches up George.

THOMAS
(shouting)
You're leaving?

GEORGE
(shouting)
Betcha I stay! Let's party on!
Yahoo!!

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. AIRFIELD - HANGAR - DAY

George enters the hangar where Clotilda's Eagle II is. She is busy under one the wings. As Clotilda notices him, she smiles and comes to George who stays serious and avoids her kiss.

CLOTILDA
I'm glad you've finally decided to fly again with me.

George is still straight face.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
What's wrong?

GEORGE
Clotilda. I want you to know that I do care for you and this is not your fault.

She sits, worried.
CLOTILDA
What?!

GEORGE
(hesitating)
I-- I'm getting married.

The world stumbles around Clotilda. She looks at George, stunned, looking for words. Her eyes reddish and she starts to cry.

GEORGE (cont’d)
I need someone by my side who helps me in my job. Today, I'm no one, but with her, I'll be invincible, ready to break through.

Clotilda is gasping, her breath taken away, her hand clenched on the Eagle's wing. George is waiting for her to react, to say a word.

CLOTILDA
(sobbing)
Dear God.

Clotilda looks around her, grabs a wrench and throws it at George. She misses him and hits the wall.

GEORGE
Clotilda, please. You’re the one I would marry, but you’re not free. What could I do?

Anger now takes control of Clotilda.

CLOTILDA
Who is she, hijo de puta?!

George hesitates.

Clotilda (cont’d)
Who's that fucking bitch?!

GEORGE
(in a breath)
Madeline.

Clotilda is appalled. Her anger disappears.

CLOTILDA
I-- I knew it.
(She tries to smile)
CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Congratulations. You—— choose—— the right woman. I——

She stands wordless and steps into the plane. The engine ROARS and George stares at the Eagle speeding out the hangar. He has not made a single move to hold Clotilda back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING - NIGHT

George and Madeline are in Forrest's building entrance hall, in front of the elevator.

MADELINE
Now that we're going to get married, maybe we should regularize our situation.

GEORGE
What do you mean?

She comes closer, provocative.

MADELINE
Our private— situation.

GEORGE
(falsely surprised)
That wasn't in the contract.

As the elevator bell is RINGING, the doors slide open. Madeline walks back in and pulls George by his tie.

MADELINE
Let's make an extra clause.

They kiss as the elevator doors are closing on them.

FADE TO BLACK:

SEVERAL SHOTS SHOWING GEORGE IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES IN HIS JOB:

INT. PLANE - DAY

In a plane in first class, George is reading his notes.
INT. CAB – DAY

George is seated on the backseat of a taxi by the Washington Monument.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

George is working with Madeline on a computer. She is dictating questions.

INT. CBC STUDIOS – DAY

George is on his set, interviewing a POLITICIAN.

INT. CBC STUDIOS – DAY

END CREDITS OF GEORGE’S TV PROGRAM

George is leaving the set, self confident. He walks along the studio corridors and stays taken aback in front of a little poster.

It is a poster advertising his program. A picture shows him with his name. But his surname is hidden with a piece of paper showing instead: GEORGE FORREST.

With anger, George tears the paper out. He looks around him.

NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE NOTICED HIM

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT – NIGHT

George and Madeline enter a French Restaurant. The maitre D' steps towards them, smiling.

MAITRE D'
Good evening Madame Forrest.
Please, follow me. Your table is available.

Seeing George's dark look, Madeline smiles at him and shrugs, which means: "Don't worry." The couple are sitting at a table. Menus are given to them.
MADELINE
Yes. I used to come here with Charles. A very nice place.
(She takes a glimpse at the menu)
Do you like oysters?

GEORGE
(cynically)
Why? Did Forrest like them?

MADELINE
You're not funny.

GEORGE
I see his ghost everywhere.

MADELINE
I understand. Don’t worry. It'll soon be gone.

Good willing, She puts her hand on George's.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT
George keeps looking at Madeline.

MADELINE
What's wrong?

GEORGE
Tell me the truth. Did you ever cheat on Forrest?

Madeline looks at him, as astounded as shocked.

MADELINE
(low voice)
Why do you want to know?

GEORGE
I'm just curious.

MADELINE
(low voice)
How can I answer that kind of question?

Madeline looks around her, embarrassed.
GEORGE
You're my wife now, aren't you? And He is dead. It won't do him any harm.

MADELINE
(low voice)
Dear Lord. Would you be jealous? You?

GEORGE
Not at all. I'm just asking.

MADELINE
(low voice)
You're stupid. Just because you think I cheated on him, I would cheat on you.

GEORGE
I don't know.

A beat.

MADELINE
(low voice)
You wanna know? Well. I didn't.

George does not answer, nodding his head as he looks down to his program.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Forrest's apartment main door opens and George enters. He has got his own keys now.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

When he steps in the living room, he finds Madeline finishing setting the dinner table for five.

GEORGE
Are we inviting people?

MADELINE
Since you've moved in, we haven't seen anyone. I hope it doesn't bother you?
GEORGE
Let's say I need distraction. Who's coming?

MADELINE
Mrs. Walter and her daughter Susan.
And Clotilda.

GEORGE
(surprised)
Well, well.
(he kisses her on the forehead)
Okay. I'm taking a shower.

He steps out of the living room.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

When George comes back, the guests have arrived. Madeline is talking with Virginie. George comes to greet her and shakes her hand.

GEORGE
(amazed)
Susan's not with you?

VIRGINIE
She'll come later. She had a-- clothing problem.

The doorbell is RINGING. Madeline disappears in the hallway and comes back with Susan. The young woman is wearing a very sexy dress, very provocative, and with too much make up to her mother’s taste. Virginie is seething deep inside as she sees her. Susan comes to kiss George on the cheek and turns to her mother, provocatively.

SUSAN
 stil looking at George)
Mum, I can't believe you'd never noticed how cute he was.

GEORGE
(play ing her game)
Take it easy, kiddo. My wife is quite jealous.

They laugh in front of Virginie's dark look. At this moment, George notices Clotilda alone on the terrace, smoking a cigarette. He steps out.
EXT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - NIGHT

Clotilda feels George's presence but does not move. George comes closer.

GEORGE
Good evening Clotilda.

She turns to him.

GEORGE (cont’d)
I'm glad you're here. Come in. You're gonna catch death.

Obedient, She follows him in.

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

George and the four women are around the dinner table. Clotilda is facing George and is trying to avoid his eyes.

VIRGINIE
It's a pity nobody came to your wedding.

MADELINE
We wanted things as simple as possible.

CLOTILDA
And you didn't have a honeymoon?

MADELINE
George couldn't make it. I even insisted to meet his parents.

GEORGE
They're just poor farmers. You'd have been bored to death with them. Anyway, who wants to spend honeymoon in Oklahoma?

MADELINE
They made you what you are now.

GEORGE
(bitterly)
Precisely. (to Susan) Did you parents find you a husband yet?
Susan turns to her mother, still provocative.

SUSAN
(self assured)
I'm old enough to pick one by myself.

GEORGE
You're right. Never let anyone telling you what to do. I know what I'm talking about.

He stops talking and keeps eating, embarrassed. He coughs, as to cover some embarrassment.

CLOTILDA'S BARE FOOT IS SLOWLY CARESSING GEORGE'S CROTCH

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

The three women are ready to leave in the apartment hallway.

MADELINE
(to Virginie)
Didn't you tell me you had nobody to take you out tomorrow night? I'm pretty sure George could manage for you.

GEORGE
For what?

VIRGINIE
(to George)
Oh yes, George. I should have been at a boxing night with my husband, but he won't come.

SUSAN
(cynically)
My mother loves to watch those naked, shining muscled bodies dancing around. Quite exciting.
(to Virginie)
Isn't it, mother?

VIRGINIE
(to George, embarrassed)
Don't listen to her.

MADELINE
(to George)
Come on George. Take Virginie out.
GEORGE
Seems to me a kinda plot. Guess I have to accept. I surrender. I've no choice.

Virginie shakes his hand.

VIRGINIE
I'll pick you up at the studios at six.

Virginie and Susan are leaving. Madeline turns to Clotilda and hugs her.

MADELINE
I'm glad you came.

CLOTILDA
Me too.

Clotilda turns to George and shakes his hand.

CLOSEUP ON CLOTILDA'S HAND SQUEEZING GEORGE'S HE CARESSES HER HAND WITH HIS THUMB

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

George and Madeline are now alone in the apartment. George is lighting a cigar.

MADELINE
You're smoking now?

GEORGE
Like the chameleon, I try to adapt myself to the ground where I live.

Madeline doesn't react and starts to clean the table out.

MADELINE
I can't believe She didn't stop to look at you.

GEORGE
Come on Maddy. You know perfectly Clotilda and I, it's over.
MADELINE
I'm talking about Virginie. Quite amazing.

GEORGE
(innocently)
Why amazing? I've got charm, do I? You always told me.

MADELINE
Because when one talk about virtue in New York City, one talk about her. No one is more loyal or faithful as She is.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

CLOSEUP ON OF A BOXER PUNCHED IN HIS SWEATING FACE

TWO BOXERS are fighting on the ring, surrounded by thousands of spectators. They look like swaying.

Among the unleashed crowd, we can see George and Virginie. She seems overexcited, reacting to each punch, sometime violently, sometime pitifully.

George stares at her discreetly with an amused surprise. He doesn't care for the fight, abstruse of the shouting crowd.

On the ring, more punches are given. George looks at Virginie and figures out they turn Virginie on. She gets up. Her hand now grabs George's shoulder and she shivers. George notices it. Virginie leans over his ear.

VIRGINIE
I'll be back.

She steps away.

George hesitates for a short while, then gets up, and follows her. Virginie walks with no turning back.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - LADIES' ROOM - NIGHT

Virginie is washing her hands when, in the reflection in front of her, She notices George's presence. She turns to him.
VIRGINIE
What are you doing here?

GEORGE
I have to talk to you.

VIRGINIE
You're crazy? Get out!

GEORGE
An incredible force led me here. I have to confess something to you. But I don't know if I can. You're so wise. So pure.

Virginie panics increasingly.

VIRGINIE
(in a breath)
Get out!!

George steps closer.

GEORGE
Since yesterday, I keep thinking of this instant. Being alone with you.

He puts his hands on her waist.

VIRGINIE
(weakly)
Stop it!

GEORGE
I've wanted you for so long. I didn't realize how much I did.

She tries desperately to avoid his lips.

VIRGINIE
I'll tell my husband to fire you.

GEORGE
Don't you understand that nothing else matters to me? I want you.

He tries again to kiss her. She pushes him back.

VIRGINIE
You're mad!!

GEORGE
No, simply in love with you.
Virginie (resigned)
I -- I can't.

Feeling she is about to give her up, George releases his embrace.

George
Alright. Henceforth, I'll be silent.

He steps out the Ladies' Room, leaving Virginie nearly crying.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT
Virginie comes back to her seat. George is already seated and doesn't notice she is back. She leans to him.

Virginie
I just can't.

George
(coldly)
Forget it.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - ENTRANCE - NIGHT
Among the crowd leaving the arena after the fight, we see George and Virginie. She keeps staring at him, afraid.

They find themselves face to face with Worth and another man, John Matthew. The passing crowd pushes them.

Virginie (to Worth)
Edward? How are you?

Worth
Surprised to see you here.

Virginie (showing George)
You know George LeRoy?

George
We've already met. We share the same -- passion.

Worth stares at him as a rival.
VIRGINIE
(to George)
I don't think you met John Matthew?

George shakes Matthew's hand.

GEORGE
(to Matthew)
Senator.

MATTHEW
(coldly)
Mister LeRoy never invited me to his show.

VIRGINIE
(to George)
John and my husband are playing golf together.
(to Matthew)
You're still coming on Friday?

GEORGE
(to Matthew)
Call my assistant tomorrow. We'll make an appointment.

WORTH
(to Virginie)
Do you want us to ride you home? That's on our way.

VIRGINIE
(to George)
Do you mind?

GEORGE
(looking at Worth)
My wife's waiting for me.

They are already gone. Virginie looks back a last time and waves to George.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - DAY

George and Clotilda are lying, naked, in the large bed. Clotilda is smoking.

CLOTILDA
I'm glad you kept our place.
GEORGE
We'll meet as before. Maybe not as much as we used to do, but I'll always be yours.

CLOTILDA
And what about Madeline?

GEORGE
Let's say, She is more a friend than a wife. The sister I never had.

CLOTILDA
A kinda incest so?

GEORGE
What do you mean?

CLOTILDA
She is like a sister to me too. Consequently, you're my brother.

George gently throws a pillow to her face.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CBC BUILDING STREET - DAY

George steps out the CBC building and hails a cab.

A limousine with tainted glass stops in front of him and the back door opens. Virginie is there, black glasses on the nose.

VIRGINIE
Get in.

George steps in.

EXT. STREETS - INT. LIMO - DAY

Virginie does not look at George.

VIRGINIE
I want to apologize for my behavior. As I said: "I can't". My position can't afford me to-- play with fire. Nevertheless, I want you to know that I forgive you.
GEORGE
But. Virginie. I--

VIRGINIE
(nodding to the chauffeur)
Chut.

GEORGE
We have to talk. I promise I'll be good. But I have to pour my heart out. I'll feel better after that.

Virginie hesitates.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Please. You owe me this.

VIRGINIE
Where do you want us to meet?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY
The apartment door opens wide and George and Virginie appear.

Virginie is hesitating.

VIRGINIE
Where are we?

GEORGE
The place I used to live before my wedding.

VIRGINIE
No! Not here!

GEORGE
We're here to talk. I won't touch you. We're adults, aren't we?

VIRGINIE
I have your word?

George just nods. Virginie steps in and George closes the door behind them. She is standing up in the middle of the living room. George nods to the sofa where she finally sits. George sits on the floor, at her knees. She looks at him, petrified.

GEORGE
I respect you, but this fire in me is so intense.
VIRGINIE

Please.

GEORGE
I have to say it.
(a beat)
Virginie. I love you.

She hesitates for a short while.

VIRGINIE
(in a breath)
So, do I.

Stunned, George cannot believe it.

VIRGINIE (cont’d)
However, I can't love you. Do you figure the scandal? My husband. My daughter.

GEORGE
Let me hold your hand.

She does not move.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Just holding your hand.

Hesitating, She reaches out to George. As soon as he grabs it, George pulls Virginie to him. She slips on the floor and George grabs her, kisses her, running his hands all over her body.

VIRGINIE
(panting)
Stop it! You promised! Arrêtez!

She struggles for a short while and, finally, returns to his kisses, to his caresses.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

George and Virginie are making love. She is totally out of control.

VIRGINIE
(shouting)
Oh, oui! George! Beat me up! Beat me up!

She takes George's hand and forces him to slap her.
VIRGINIE (cont’d)
Hit me!!

Once again, She forces to slap her. George slaps her.

VIRGINIE (cont’d)
Oui! Go on!

George slaps her once more.

AGAIN

AND AGAIN

Slaps seem to turn her on. George unwind—
until She reaches orgasm.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Virginie finishes to dress up. George is still in the bed.

VIRGINIE
I have a confession to make. That was the very first time I reached orgasm.

GEORGE
(impressed)
No?

VIRGINIE
Yes, mon chéri.
(she sits by him)
I'll be forever grateful for this. Oh, my dear friend.
(she runs her finger on his chest)
I'm gonna make you a present. But it must remain between us. Swear it.

GEORGE
Is it necessary?

VIRGINIE
Swear.

GEORGE
Alright. I swear.
VIRGINIE
Well. John Matthew and my husband are planning to make a deal, which should yield at $100 million each. A gloomy computer company near bankruptcy has created a revolutionary Internet navigator. But nobody knows it yet. This company is gonna be redeemed through an international trust. This small company, B.A. Net, had it stock down to five dollars last week. When they'll be down to one dollar, as it's planned, buy 10 000 stocks. A week later, after the deal, the share should be up to $100. You'll make one million of dollars profit.

GEORGE
(interested)
How do you know all this?

VIRGINIE
Roy has no secrets for me. John should sign the deal decision. The dealing will be made with figureheads. Do you want me to do it for you?

GEORGE
No risk with the SEC?

She puts her head on his chest.

VIRGINIE
No, darling. Not if you deal through me. I'll even lend you the $10 000.

GEORGE
(shrugging))
As you will.

VIRGINIE
Oh, I'm so happy for you.

She kisses him.

CLOSEUP ON George's eyes showing only indifference.

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - DAY

Entering the living room, George finds Madeline on her stationary bike watching TV. Madeline seems surprised to see him.

MADELINE
You're home early.

GEORGE
Just checking if you were alone.

MADELINE
Stop it with those unpleasant jokes, would you? Do I ask you where you're going from?

GEORGE
Alright. Alright. We stop it.

Madeline is about to answer when the phone is RINGING. George answers, then turns to Madeline.

GEORGE (cont’d)
It's for you.

Worried, Madeline, steps out her stationary bike and takes up the phone.

MADELINE
(on the phone)
Hello?

Then, she turns pale. She hangs up and turns to George.

MADELINE (cont’d)
(dead-pan)
Worth-- died in a car crash.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A cemetery in the rain. Surrounding a hole, under black umbrellas, a tiny crowd is mourning in front of the coffin. As the mourners go past and each takes a turn shoveling a clod of dirt into an open grave. Among the crowd, there are George, Madeline, Walter, Virginie, Susan and Matthew.
George does not show any feeling. He raises his head and meets Virginie's eyes who fixes him intensely. The same indifference in George's look.

Then, his eyes meet Susan. She smiles shyly. Engaging, he smiles back.

Virginie notices that smile.

TIME CUT:

EXT. CEMETERY GATE - DAY

Under their umbrella, George and Madeline are stepping out the cemetery. A MAN accosts them.

THE MAN
(to Madeline)
Are you Madeline Sanders LeRoy?

George and Madeline stop, curious.

MADELINE
Yes, I am.

THE MAN
I have this letter to give you. The clause was I have to discreetly give it to you after Mister Worth’s death.

He hands Madeline an envelope.

MADELINE
What is it?

The man does not answer. Madeline opens it. She unfolds the paper and reads it. She gets pale.

THE MAN
Please, be at my office, tomorrow at two.

He hands his card and leaves the couple. George takes the card out of Madeline’s hand and reads it.

SAMUEL ROSENBLAUM

LAWYER

Then, he raises his eyes to Madeline, interrogative.
MADELINE
(pale)
Worth bequeaths his whole fortune--to me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – DAY

George is irate. He walks around the living room as a lion in a cage.

GEORGE
His whole fortune! Ten millions dollars!

Madeline is seated on a sofa, staring at him, nervously smoking a cigarette.

MADELINE
He had no relative. He was childless.

GEORGE
So, he was your lover.

MADELINE
What?!

GEORGE
Come on Maddy. You don’t legate your whole fortune to a woman without a good reason unless--

MADELINE
He was a good friend, that’s all.

GEORGE
(chuckling)
Of course. I have bad thoughts.
(cynically)
Bad George.
(serious)
I was right. You cheated on me as you did on that poor Forrest.

MADELINE
He wasn’t my lover!

GEORGE
Whatever. When the news spread over, everyone will think so.
MADELINE
So, I refuse the legacy.

George thinks for a while.

GEORGE
It’ll be more suspect.

MADELINE
What have got in mind?

GEORGE
You can leave me half the bequest by a donation inter vivos. We don’t need to advertise the clause of the legacy. We’ll say that Worth left his money to us in equal shares. That’s all. We’ll make a donation to some charity found and get people’s gratitude.

A long beat.

MADELINE
As you like, I’m willing.

George slaps his hands.

GEORGE
That’s a deal!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE’S OFFICE – DAY

In his office, George is watching a recording of his own program. Martha knocks on the door and enters. George stops the tape.

MARTHA
Someone brought this in for you.

She puts a little ribbon box on the desk and steps out. George takes the ribbon off and opens the box to find--

CHROMED HANDCUFFS

INT. GEORGE’S OFFICE – DAY

Another day. Another present.
This time, George is taking out a nailed leather necklace. He takes it delicately and watches it cautiously.

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

unwraps a present and finds a leather cover book: Marquis de Sade's Correspondences. He reads on the first page:

"TO GEORGE, IN MEMORY OF OUR UNFORGETTABLE AFTERNOONS.

V."

Furious, he closes the book and drops it in the wastebasket. Martha enters at this very moment.

MARTHA
You have an editorial meeting at two. Everybody will be there, except Grant.

GEORGE
(annoyed)
Why?!

MARTHA
He is stuck in Raleigh with his ex-wife.

GEORGE
Call him and tell him He is fired. From now, I won't tolerate any lateness or absenteeism!

MARTHA
(impressed)
Yes Sir. I'm off to lunch. Anything else?

George gets up.

GEORGE
You can go. I'm having a cheeseburger myself. Maybe I'll feel better then.

They both step out the office.

DISSOLVE TO:
INT. CBC STUDIOS HALLWAY - DAY

Clotilda steps in the CBC hall and is stopped by Connie.

CONNIE
Morning Madam. Coming to see Mister LeRoy?
(she takes her phone)
I'm calling for you.

CLOTILDA
(engaging)
No, please. Today I want to do him a surprise.

INT. CBC - GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Clotilda enters George's empty office, a bit upset not seeing him. She takes a look at the shelves where there are several pictures under frames where George is photographed with famous people. With her fingertips, she brushes the pictures and the damaged Cromwell helmet.

Then, she sees the book in the wastebasket. She picks it up and opens it. She turns livid and drops it back in the wastebasket. Nearly crying, she rushes out the office.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

George is slouched in an armchair, in front of the TV, watching football. He looks disabused. Madeline is in the back of the living room, reading a paper and smoking. She raises her head to George.

MADELINE
Bad day?

George does not answer.

MADELINE (cont’d)
Virginie Walter called today.

GEORGE
(cynically)
How is the old crone?
MADELINE
We're both invited this weekend to the party the Walters will give to show the Rodin they've just bought.

GEORGE
Don't count me in.

MADELINE
You have to go. I can't. I must go down to Key West to watch over the house repairs after the last hurricane.

GEORGE
(cynically)
You should have told me and I don't remember? That's it?

Madeline does not point out.

MADELINE
I've told Virginie you'll be there. Think about your future. With the fortune he gathers and his political plans, follow Roy's footsteps.

A mischief spark lights George's eyes.

GEORGE
You're right. It'll do some good after all. I'll have fun.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FORREST'S BUILDING - NIGHT

As George is stepping out his building, wearing an elegant tuxedo, a cab is waiting for him. He steps in it.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

The cab is speeding in the New York streets. George is thinking, watching outside the car. Suddenly, the taxi driver talks to him.

TAXI DRIVER
Fuck! Can't be true. George! I didn't recognize you dressed like this!
George recognizes Luis, his ex-colleague.

GEORGE
Luis. I'm glad to see you.

LUIS
I've made it! I've got my cab license.

GEORGE
That motherfucker gave it to you at last.

LUIS
What could he do? I had the money.

GEORGE
I'm really happy for you.

LUIS
Well, now, it's hard to settle with my second kid, but, I'll do it. By the way, I've heard you're doing well on TV?

GEORGE
I'm okay.

LUIS
We used to watch you with Matilda.

GEORGE
Bored you stiff?

LUIS
At all. Our TV broke down and we couldn't afford to repair it.

GEORGE
That tough?

LUIS
Could be worse.

GEORGE
How much did you borrow?

LUIS
George, please.

GEORGE
Luis. We used to be buddies. Tell me.
LUIS
Five grand.

GEORGE
How long do you have to pay back?

LUIS
Ten years. Maybe less if I’m doing bueno.

George take his checkbook out, fills a check and hands it to Luis.

GEORGE
Take that.

LUIS
Cut out your crap.

GEORGE
You take that fucking check or I make you swallow it.

LUIS
What's the difference to me to owe you or someone else?

George does not give up.

GEORGE
All right. We're gonna do a bet. I know you'll like it. If the next traffic light is green, you win the fucking money. If not, you'll have twenty years to pay me back.

LUIS
So, I have nothing to lose?

GEORGE
Exactly.

LUIS
Okay. It’s a bet.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

Luis's cab speeds up at a crossing with a green traffic light.
EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - INT. CAB - NIGHT

Luis bursts into laughter and joy.

LUIS
Hijo de putana! I won, George! I won!

On the backseat, George is almost happier than Luis is.

GEORGE
Alright, kiddo. You always have to wish upon your star.

LUIS
Tell me. I know this crossing. The light is rarely red at this time of the night.

GEORGE
Well. I've forgot my cabby journeys.

George can't help to smile.

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

Luis’ cab drives in sight of the Walters manor. The mansion is illuminated and cheeky marble cherubs bathe in the soaring jets and bubbling pools of a large rococo fountain has been built in front of the entrance.

LUIS
Fuck, hombre. What a mansion! Who lives there? Yoko Ono? You’re sure this the right address?

GEORGE
Oh yes.

LUIS
Good. I have less scruples for the five grand I stole from you.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALTERS MANOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the hallway, a BUTLER welcomes George solemnly. Suddenly, someone rushes to George, shouting happily: Susan.
SUSAN

(shouting)
Mister Big Apple!

She grabs him to his neck and surrounds him with her legs.

GEORGE
Hi, little one.

SUSAN
Did you notice all this show off? My folks can’t stand it. Even the Veep should drop by too.

GEORGE
Release me. People gonna talk.

SUSAN
But I don’t give a damn, now. With my folks’ dough, I can do anything now. I’m sure we’re gonna have fun together tonite.

She releases him, takes his arm, and drags him to the reception room open on the garden.

INT. WALTERS MANOR – RECEPTION ROOM – NIGHT

An incredible crowd presses here. The whole New York crème de la crème.

Susan leans over George's ear.

SUSAN
Welcome to zombie land, George.

They both burst into laughter. Virginie turns back to them and turns livid to see them having fun together.

SUSAN (cont’d)
How strange I'm feeling so good with you. I can have fun. Boys of my age have only two things in mind: studies or to fuck me.

GEORGE
With your parent's fortune now, I give you six months to marry a papa's boy. After that, you won't even look at me.
SUSAN
But I don't want to get married.

GEORGE
Wanna bet? Six months.

They bet and burst into laughter again.

GEORGE (cont’d)
We’re making a pact. As soon as someone’ll propose you. Let me know. I’ll give you a true friend’s advice. Okay?

SUSAN
Okay.
(a beat)
Take me to the buffet. Tonite, I wanna get drunk.

She takes him by the arm through the guests to a huge buffet with about twenty hired-waiters. Walter is there, overexcited. As soon as he sees George, he comes to him with a WOMAN in her forties, dressed with a strict tailor-made costume.

WALTER
Do you know the Vice-President should drop by?

GEORGE
Susan just told me.

WALTER
(very proud)
Let me introduce you Mary Kovaks, the State Department Spokeswoman.

GEORGE
(to Mary Kovaks)
Madam.

They shake hands and exchange a long glance. Walter does not give Mary Kovaks the chance to say a single word to George as he takes her away in the crowd. She gives him a last desperate look. George turns back. Susan has disappeared. Someone takes him by the arm: Thomas Gossip.

THOMAS
Hi, Mister Big Apple.

George looks at him, puzzled.
THOMAS (cont’d)
The little Walter calls you so when she talks about you. Anyway, that resumes you pretty well.

(nodding to the crowd)
Oh, yes. They drink. They eat. They congratulate. They even fuck somewhere. We call that a successful soiree. And, for once, caviar and champagne are excellent.

A hired-waiter hands George a glass of champagne.

THOMAS (cont’d)
The complete smart set is here. Walter wanted to have the year happening. I don't get why Matthew, his old accomplice, is missing it.

Virginie interrupts him.

VIRGINIE
(to George)
George. You're here? I'd like to talk to you.

GEORGE
(spiteful)
I'm talking with Mister Gossip.

THOMAS
(diplomat)
I think I just saw someone I know.

He makes his way through the crowd, to George's great displeasure.

VIRGINIE
(to George)
Please, come. I want to show you the masterpiece we bought in Paris.

Not waiting for George's answer, she takes him through the guests.

INT. WALTERS MANOR - HIGH CEILING ROOM - NIGHT

Virginie and George arrive in a high ceiling room where is exhibited a black marble Rodin beautiful sculpture.
VIRGINIE
I tried as I could leaving you messages or offering you presents, but you never called me back.

GEORGE
Please Madam. We had a wild moment. Leave it at that, would you?

VIRGINIE
But all I do is think of you. You told me that you loved me.

GEORGE
But, dearie, love never lasts. Sometimes, it dies just before it begins.

She takes a piece of paper out her dress and hands it to George.

VIRGINIE
This is for you. Just to prove that I'm not mad at you.

George unfolds the piece of paper

A $1 000 000 CHECK

VIRGINIE (cont'd)
As you can see, I kept my word.

GEORGE
So, I will. I owe you ten grand. (he pockets the check) Thank you.

VIRGINIE
That's all?

GEORGE
(with dignity)
Madame. I'm a married man. You are married too. Do not compromise our couples by a passing passion.

He steps out the exhibit room, leaving Virginie nearly crying.

CUT TO:
EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT

George steps out in the garden, his glass of champagne in hand. A lot of guests are getting fresh air or smoking. Susan is here, chatting with a boy her age. George sizes her up, "estimating" her.

A voice RESOUNDS in George's back.

CLOTILDA (O.S.)
Buena noche George.

George turns back and faces Clotilda. Susan steps away.

GEORGE
Hi Clotilda.

CLOTILDA
So, right after the mother, you’re flirting with the daughter?

GEORGE
What?

CLOTILDA
I saw the present Virginie made to you in the office wastebasket. Well, somehow, I can figure all that out. Almost natural.

George is about to answer, but she smiles at him and raises her hand up to him.

CLOTILDA (cont’d)
Let's stay friends anyway.

George does not shake her hand.

GEORGE
You know perfectly well that it can't be that way.

CLOTILDA
And why the hell?

GEORGE
For one simple reason. Love tied us together. Friendship between a man and a woman is just a crap created by hypocrites and badly screwed women.
CLOTILDA  
(disabused)  
Still your golden words.

GEORGE  
(very gently)  
You fool.

A VOICE calls for George.

THOMAS  
George! I was looking for you. I'm hitting the road. Pissed off. Are you coming?

George turns to Clotilda who smiles tenderly to him.

GEORGE  
Sorry, Tom. I have to take Madam home.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY

On Ellis Island, George and a MAN WITH LARGE GLASSES are seated on a bench amongst the tourists, in front of The American Immigrant Wall of Honor. Together, they are pulling to pieces some papers.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FUN FAIR - DAY

Among a fun fair happy crowd on the seaside, George and Susan have fun.

SEVERAL SHOTS SHOW THEM IN DIFFERENT STANDS

SUSAN CAN'T STOP LAUGHING AS GEORGE LOOKS REALLY RELAXED

EXT. CENTRAL PARK LAKE - DAY

In the middle of one of the Central Park lakes, sailing in a tiny bark. George is rowing as the sun begins to decline.

SUSAN  
I had a wonderful day. Thank you.  
Hope there will be more.
GEORGE
I don't know. It all depends on you.

SUSAN
What do you mean?

George stops rowing. Susan looks at him intensely right in the eyes.

SUSAN (cont’d)
What?

GEORGE
You don’t tell me everything. You try to hide things to me.

SUSAN
Do I?

GEORGE
Yes. I know young McKenna proposed you.

SUSAN
(falsely ingénue)
I didn’t mentioned it?

GEORGE
Don’t play that game with me, Susan. We had a pact.

SUSAN
I didn’t make up my mind-- yet.

GEORGE
Good. Because his parents are at the verge of bankruptcy and his wedding would save his fucking family.

Susan does not answer, eyes lost.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Furthermore, he’s as fat as Jabba the Hut.

SUSAN
He’s got charm.

GEORGE
(cynically)
Yes. For some anthropologist. You can’t marry-- that.
George starts to row with some kind of rage. Susan notices it.

SUSAN
What’s wrong with you?

George stops rowing and forces Susan to stare at him.

GEORGE
Because-- I’m-- jealous.

SUSAN
You?! How come?

GEORGE
(sharply)
Because I’m in love with you and you know it.

Susan blushes.

SUSAN
Are you insane?

GEORGE
Listen to me. I know I could be your father. But when I realize you could marry any pimpled virgin, it makes me mad.

Susan does not know what to answer at first. Then, she stares at him with different eyes.

SUSAN
I know. But what could I do?
(she shrugs)
You’re married.

George drops the rows and takes Susan’s hand.

GEORGE
And if I wasn’t married?

SUSAN
If you weren’t--
(staring at him)
Without doubt, I would marry you. Told you before. I really live only when you’re with me.

George looks very moved.
GEORGE
So, swear to me to say no to those little shits who just run after your parent’s fortune. If I fell in love with you Susan, that because I know who you are, what you worth.

SUSAN
George. I swear to wait for you.

George is leaning over her and kisses her.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

George is standing with two men in one of the corridors of the Regency Hotel. We can recognize then the man with large glasses who were talking with George on Ellis Island. He has a camera with a flashlight around his neck. The second man is the HOTEL MANAGER.

HOTEL MANAGER
(embarrassed)
Believe me Mister LeRoy, I didn't know what's going on here. My hotel is more than respectable.

GEORGE
You have my man's word, I won't sue you.

HOTEL MANAGER
Thanks. This is the very first time I do this kind of thing.

GEORGE
(to the man with large glasses)
Are you sure this is the right room?

The man with large glasses simply nods.

GEORGE (cont’d)
(to the hotel manager)
You have your passkey?

HOTEL MANAGER
Yes Sir.
GEORGE
Alright. Gentlemen, let the show begin.

The hotel manager slips his passkey and opens the bedroom door.

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - ROOM - DAY
George and the TWO MEN enter the bedroom.

THEN A FLASHLIGHT
The man with large glasses just took a picture of a sleeping couple in a bed.

The woman wakes up with the start. We recognize Madeline, naked, in Matthew's arms.

MADELINE
George?

Matthew looks rather dizzy and says nothing. On the bedside table, by him, a saucer with some cocaine.

A second flashlight blinds the couple.

George turns to the hotel manager, then to Madeline.

GEORGE
I have two witnesses with me to confirm I found you in adultery.
(he nods to the man with large glasses)
This P.I. followed you for three weeks now and got me your detailed schedule. Those two witnesses and the photos will surely make a great impression to the magistrate during the divorce. And concerning your-- lover, I wouldn't want to be in his shoes.

MADELINE
You're a real bastard George.

GEORGE
No hard feelings, Maddy. This is the rule of the city game.

MADELINE
And you think you've scored?
GEORGE
I hold all the aces. I could lay my cards or--

MADELINE
Or what?

GEORGE
We could make a--- private arrangement.

Madeline turns to Matthew.

MADELINE
What about him?

GEORGE
I'm gonna take time to think about him.

MADELINE
Do not shove him too much. He could be useful. I even could help you later for your future political career.

GEORGE
I wanna go faster.

MADELINE
(sighing)
I know that.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

A sunny golf course. Driving a light car, sunglasses on his nose, George rides on the fairway, self-confident, smoking a cigar. He drives in by a GOLFER with his caddie: Walter.

George stops by him and steps out of the light car, a file in hand. Walter looks surprised to see him.

WALTER
George! How nice to see you. What's brings you here?

GEORGE
Your retirement celebration.
WALTER
(stunned)
I beg your pardon?

GEORGE
I think it's time for you to stump.

Walter do not get it and stays alarmed.

WALTER
I don't like the fresh turn of this conversation. You're close to insolence.

GEORGE
I'm not close of it. And I assume it.

WALTER
I like you a lot George, but I'm not going to stand this kind of rudeness a lot. What do you want?

GEORGE
What do I want? To be at the head of the Studios.

Walter bursts into laughter.

WALTER
You're trying to have me been had?

But George is keeping a straight face.

WALTER (cont’d)
Okay, George. That's enough now! What is it?

GEORGE
Just told you.

Anger takes Walter's control.

WALTER
Alright. You're fired!

GEORGE
No.

Walter does not get it.
WALTER
With the reputation I'm gonna make of you, you will go back to the shithouse where I took you from.

George quietly shows him the file he hands.

GEORGE
I've got here enough to take you with me in this shithouse.

WALTER
Bullshit. I have nothing to fear from anybody.

GEORGE
You maybe. But what about Senator Matthew? And if he falls, you'll fall too, as dominoes. I can assure you. Do you want me to talk to the SEC about the B.A. Net one hundred millions dollars you won with him?

Walter takes the file from George's hand and reads it. There are the Regency Hotel photos and the PI report.

Walter is appalled.

WALTER
What's this shit?

GEORGE
My future. And yours.

Walter drops his club, dumbfounded.

WALTER
Very well. What do you want?! How much?!

GEORGE
That's very simple. I put this stuff in a safe and we forget about it. In the meanwhile, you start your political career, discreetly supported by the CBC I'll lead.

WALTER
Never! CBC's always been owned by the Walters. It won't change now!
GEORGE
Think about it Roy. You're about to lose it all.

Walter gets furious.

GEORGE (cont’d)
Or-- I have another solution for you. I marry Susan and you give her the lead of CBC. That way it'll stay in one of the Walters' hands.

WALTER
You want my daughter too? You're a real motherfucker.

GEORGE
Maybe you're not afraid of anybody, but if that story is shown, other journalists will search in some trashcan you forgot somewhere.

Walter looks like thundering up inside.

WALTER
I-- I'm gonna think about it.

GEORGE
Take your time. But, take the right decision.
   (nodding to the file)
   You may keep it. That's your own copy.

George quietly walks back to his light car and speeds up under Walter's hatred look.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST’S APARTMENT - DAY

George is packing up in boxes. Smoking, Madeline looks at him sadly.

MADELINE
   (sweetly)
It's sad to end this way. Well, that's what you wanted.
GEORGE
Don't get mad at me, Maddy. You're the one who wanted to get married. And you weren't happy with me anyway.

MADELINE
I loved you more that I did with Charles. You're more ambitious. That's what I liked with you. And that's why I lose you. Who are you aiming at today?

GEORGE
Please. I don't want to leave you with these kinds of thoughts.

MADELINE
Well. I think I'll read it in People Magazine.

George hugs her.

MADELINE (cont’d)
I’m gonna give you my last present. Let’s consider it as a break up present. May it help you. Follow the trail of an obscure man named Osama Bin Laden. Worth thought he could be a threat for Occident. He is as smart as he is dangerous.

GEORGE
You'll always be my guardian angel.

Madeline closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - DAY

A brand new Triumph 750 Bonneville stops in front of the Ritz-Carlton Central Park Hotel. George steps out and hands his keys to the young valet parking.

GEORGE
(with a smile)
Easy, does it, kid. She is broken in.

He steps into the hotel.
INT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - CLUB LOUNGE – DAY

George is seated at a table, having some champagne. He never looked more self-confident. He sips his champagne when Walter steps in. He joins George. They talk in low voice.

GEORGE
So, Roy, what did you decide?

WALTER
You didn't leave me much choice. However, I must admit you boosted my career up.

George nods to François who pours Walter a glass of champagne and steps away.

WALTER (cont’d)
I'd rather prefer the click would come by itself.

GEORGE
I give you my word I'll support you.
(with a cynical smile)
I owe you all.

Walter stares at him with a dark look. Then, he puts an envelope on the table.

WALTER
Papers are ready to be signed.

George opens the envelope up and takes some documents out. He reads them rapidly.

GEORGE
Anyway, a problem remains. You never mention Susan's name.

WALTER
You’ll lead the Studios, but leave my daughter out of the deal.

GEORGE
I'm the one who decides.

WALTER
You maybe had me, but you won't have Susan too.
GEORGE
Did you ask her?

WALTER
An eighteen year-old girl never had her word to say in our family.

GEORGE
I figure it out.

WALTER
Anyway, that's not my decision. (he does not take a sip of his champagne) You'll lead the Studios in three months. In the meantime, I don't want to hear about you.

He gets up with a jump.

GEORGE
Tell me more.

Walter does not answer and steps out of the bar. Alone at the table, George drinks his champagne up and light himself a cigar.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK – DAY

George, wearing a sweatshirt, is jogging in Central Park. Panting, he stops at the foot of a tree and reclines against it to take his breathe.

A VOICE makes him turns his head.

SUSAN (O.S.)
(ironically)
Impressive for a man in his forties.

George smiles and turns to her.

GEORGE
(panting)
Hi, little one.

SUSAN
What have you done to my mother?
GEORGE
(panting)
I don't get it.

SUSAN
My father and she had a serious
spaz about you last night. Never
saw her this way. She was kinda
hysterical.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - SUSAN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUSAN (V.O.)
I woke up around two in the morning.

Susan is in her bed and wakes up as if she was disturbed by some
kind of noise. Wearing a silk nightshirt, she steps out of her
bedroom.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - SECOND STORY - NIGHT

Cautiously, Susan steps out of her bedroom. Barefoot, she
slowly walks on the floor carpet.

SUSAN (V.O.)
Downstairs, in the lounge, my folks
were yelling.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Susan slowly steps down the large staircase and sees Walter and
Virginie talking loudly. Virginie looks like a maniac.

SUSAN (V.O.)
Several times, I’ve heard your name.
My mother was like paranoid, pulling
her hair out. I understood then that
you proposed me to my father, but mum
didn’t want it. She was screaming that
she would never let me become your
wife.

Virginie’s madness increases in front of Walter’s puzzled
look.

SUSAN (V.O.) (cont’d)
She wanted to kill you. Pull your eyes
out.

Susan is still looking at the argument from the staircase.
SUSAN (V.O.) (cont’d)
Then, Pa told her it was all her fault. That she kept hovering around you, inviting you for dinner. That she was like all those chicks around you, mad about you. Then, when mother’s hysteria reached a climax, yelling that you’ll never get me, Pa left the room and mum fell on her knees, starting to pray.

Susan stands back, not believing what she has just seen.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK – DAY

George turns to Susan and stares at her right in the eyes.

GEORGE
Susan. Do you really want to be my wife?

SUSAN
There's nothing in the world I'd like more.

GEORGE
I have a few days off. Wanna come with me?

SUSAN
What do you mean?

GEORGE
One week in Maui. Just you and I.

SUSAN
But I have to go back to Switzerland.

GEORGE
So what? You really want to stay mummy's girl?

Susan is thinking.

GEORGE (cont’d)
But, really think about it. You won't go back.
GEORGE (cont'd)
It'll be the only way to force your parents to accept our wedding.

SUSAN
(approving)
I'm eighteen. It's time for me to do things by myself.

GEORGE
So, come to my apartment on Saturday morning. No luggage. Just come as you are.

Susan is happy now.

SUSAN
Oh George. Are you going to abduct me? You're so cute. That's so romantic.

She leans to him and kisses him.

EXT. NEWARK AIRPORT - DAY
A Boeing is taking off, roaring, from Newark Airport.

EXT. MAUI BEACH - DAY
George and Susan are lying, side by side, on an Hawaiian beach.

GEORGE
We'll leave tomorrow.

SUSAN
That soon?

GEORGE
I've got an e-mail from your father this morning. Everything's settled.

Happy, she hugs him.

SUSAN
I'm gonna be you wife? Ain't I?

GEORGE
(nodding)
And as a wedding gift, he offers the Studios to us.
SUSAN
That's huge! I'm so happy!

They kiss with passion.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT

George and Susan are kissing with passion.

Susan wears a beautiful white wedding dress and George a
elegant tuxedo. They tower above the garden in a large gazebo
built in the Walters manor. CBC cameramen are taping those
magnificent moments.

The newly married couple is surrounded by an incredible
crowd, mainly the people invited at the time of the Walter
soiree. They are seated at several tables. On the hardfloor,
some guests are dancing.

Surrounding the tables, we can see Thomas, Didi Hamon and
another woman, Matthew, Mary Kovaks, the State Department
Spokeswoman, Clotilda, came here along with her husband and
the little Winnie, Steiner and even Luis with his wife.

Besides George and Susan, Walter, slightly drunk, seems to
have forgotten his troubles. By his side, Virginie is
unrecognizable. The lost stare, she looks like she had taken
ten years at once. Her hair had almost turned white.

Walter gets up and demands to be heard, clunking his glass on
the microphone. The band stops. The dancers follow.

WALTER
(on the microphone)
Please! Please!
(everybody hushes)
During a wedding, we usually
inquire the newly married about
their feelings but never their
parents.
(laughs)
For those who want to know, I would
say: I'd just have lost twenty
years. I hardly recognized my
little girl in her wedding dress.
I've just seen a beautiful woman
and a stranger who's going to steal
her from me forever.
(he turns to Susan)
Susan, if this gentleman--
WALTER (cont'd)
(showing George)
--ever rile you, come back to
daddy.
(to George)
And you, George, who steals at the
same time my little girl and my
job, I have only one thing to say--
(a beat)
Good luck.

LAUGHS AND APPLAUDS

The band plays again. George and Walter exchange an eloquent
look. Then, George turns slowly to Mary Kovaks, sure to meet
her eyes.

They exchange an understood nod;

FADE OUT:

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone is now staying in line to congratulate the maid and
the groom. Thomas is nearly standing to attention.

THOMAS
(to George, with a little
smile)
Boss.

George cannot help smiling friendly and they hug. Then, it is
Madeline's turn.

MADELINE
My best wishes, Mister Big Apple.

She kisses him on the cheek and turns to Susan with a smile.
Susan is kissing her too. After other guest's greetings, it
is Clotilda's turn to face George and Susan, her husband and
Winnie by her side.

CLOTILDA
Felicitacion, George.

GEORGE
Thank you for coming.

They shake hands.

CLOSEUP ON their handshake.

They can hardly separate their hands.
CLOTILDA CARESSES GEORGE’S BACK OF THE HAND WITH HER THUMB

CLOTILDA (O.S.)
See you soon, George.

GEORGE (O.S.)
See you soon, Madam.

FADE OUT:

THE END