

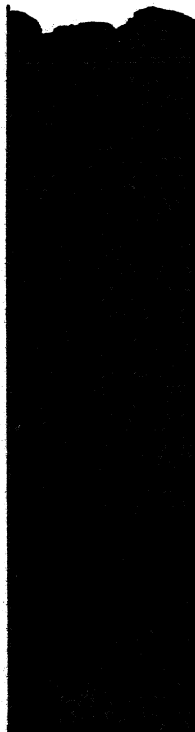
For the Screenplays Link
(after the Warhol Shooting Scripts)

INDEPENDENT FILM SCREENPLAYS

Secrets of the Citizens Correction Committee

Estrella Verde

"Secrets of



**THE
CITIZENS
CORRECTION
COMMITTEE "**
(SCREENPLAY)
RONALD TAVEL

CHARACTERS

MRS. FUGLEMAN
 KID
 YOUNG MAN and YOUNG WOMAN
 TICKET GIRL
 HIRED MAN
 Two YOUNG MEN
 MRS. JAMES
 PRIMITIVA
 GROCER
 QUEEN
 ELDERLY LADY
 Soldiers
 Teachers
 Kids
 Amusement Seekers

Note: Depending on the mood desired, claustrophobic or expansive, actors may double or triple in as many of the roles as possible.

Following the credits the screen becomes extremely grainy: flashes and spottiness as if the camera were struggling to clear its eye. Finally an image, MS, slowly comes into focus: it is Mrs. Fugleman writing diligently at her desk. She is a huge, stocky matron in meticulous business suit, glasses, severe hairstyle. The camera zooms leisurely, patiently toward her; we hear the exaggerated grinding sound of the reel and all sorts of surface noise and interference. Finally, CU. She carefully removes her glasses, her features concentrate, she leans forward slightly; she speaks in a paced monotone with foreign accent stranded somewhere between Akim Tamiroff and Bela Lugosi:

FUGLEMAN: Small . . . but perfectly formed . . .

Slow dissolve to:

Interior. A guidance counselor's office.

The office and the number and type of persons crowded into it is only vaguely, teasingly sketched in by the camera. The office appears to be extremely narrow giving a Kafkaesque long corridor feeling; but while its

width remains fairly consistent, its length stretches and telescopes with baffling irregularity. Sometimes there is a window at the end of this corridorlike office, sometimes just a blank wall. By the sounds we hear and the agitation of shadows and OF movements that afflict the frame the office appears to be crowded with persons, but for the moment no one is specifically visible with the exception of Mrs. Fugleman who dominates the window end of the office. She is comfortably adjusting herself before her desk, leaning her girdled rear against its edge. She is sickeningly surfeit of false smiles, forced relaxed gestures. She holds her glasses in her hands and makes much use of them in underlining a point, shifting her emphasis, etc.

FUGLEMAN, *her voice insufferably sweet:* Now, boys and girls, Orientation is the first and most fundamental and most important experience in your academic career. Orientation is the foundation of your studies for it is the point of view by which you will see and adjust to and evaluate everything you learn. Hence, boys and girls, we must orient ourselves, we must find a point of view, a guidepost, a sign, a correct starting line and that is just what I, Mrs. Fugleman, your counselor, am here to do for you. First of all, I want you to forget everything you ever learned in your earlier grades: I want you to unlearn whatever you've already learned. And that is because everything you ever learned before is all wrong. What, after all, do them uptown folks know about learning? This can be demonstrated by a quick glance at the very language which they use and which is uniformly incorrect: *par exemple*, they use the expression "drying out" to mean sobering up. Now this is clearly a monstrous inaccuracy, a verbal blunder of the most misleading implications. For what "drying out" actually means is getting drunk, becoming intoxicated, for, you see, when you imbibe inordinately the alcohol absorbs and dries out all the natural liquids in your little systems, all the o.j. and vitamin C, the spit in your mouths and so on and so froth. Conversely, getting wet is the process of sobering up, for when you sober up you use and consume a great deal of liquid, tomato juice, Worcestershire sauce, and

coffee. Furthermore, and by way of final proof, drying out is most accurately applied to getting drunk on beer for note how often you must repair to the privy to leak on such occasions. . . . Now, let us apply what we have learned from this orienting proposition to some specific instances: you have been taught to admire, nay, to worship, the good, the truthful, and the beautiful, the eternal triangle as it were, but as we shall soon see the savage triangle, the vicious triangle, is more appropriate a nomenclature for said trio. The reason being that education up to this point has been most inadequate; it has failed to prepare young people for the life experience, for existence out in the actual world as we contemporaneously know it. That accounts for the several facts relating to the fact that children fail to learn to read anymore though some unfortunately do manage to write, and that they can't get jobs and drop out and tune in and tune up and join rock 'n' roll combos and sing all over the place and make a lot of money and cause riots and hold up authorities in vice offices and barricade the streets and topple governments and do other amusing and enjoyable activities and engage in all sorts of these divertissements that end up getting them nowhere except from one fun-loving day to the next. Nevertheless anarchy leads to nonbenevolent dictatorship and in Orientation 1.1 we learn that this is a negative value. Hence, devotees of truth, beauty, goodness, and form are to be summarily mocked and reviled for they are spokesmen of a decadent and tired and worn-out empty shell known in History 1.1 as Western Civilizations. Embrace the Lie because it confounds the logical extension of the past, sensitize yourselves to the appeal of the ugly because it dynamites the monuments of the past which crowd up our cities and let the living no space to concentrate, advocate Evil in its most formless- and pointlessness because formed and pointed it becomes a Good which perpetuates the inutile tenor of our forebears. But most of all when you think back to your days in San Francisco, most of all, remember to practice and spew at will the corny joke—for true humor and genuine wit is the foremost value of the civilization out of which we must extri-

cate ourselves or surrender to its quicksand consumption as it itself goes ever down into oblivion. . . . Do I make myself clear, or do I hear in the rear some objection? No objections. Then let me conclude our initial orientation session by telling you all that you must feel free to come here any time for advice on which courses to take, part-time and after and during school employment, your personal, family, and marriage problems, what to do in the event of sudden death or dilapidation, amputation of your right arm if your left one knows not what it does, a balanced diet, appropriate dress, the care of the hair, and so on and so forth. Also, I shall call you in one at a time as my schedule permits and you may badmouth your other teachers or what have you at such time. Thank you and good night and good luck.

Quick cut to:

Interior. A school john door.

Mrs. Fugleman standing outside the john door, somewhat menacing and impatient. The door opens and out pops a kid zippering up. He is startled by the matron as he nearly rams into her in his haste apparently to get to a class. CU on Fugleman. Kid's POV.

FUGLEMAN, slow, threatening voice, accent between Tamiroff and Lugosi: Thank you for your patronage. . . .

Beat, slow dissolve to:

Interior. The cafeteria. Noontime.

A round cafeteria table, in tight, with the backs of heads, shoulders, blackened to a silhouette. An unbelievable blast of noise: lunchtime sounds congested together and raised to the maddening pitch of a fire-engine siren. Then, suddenly, the sound is cut off completely and the camera telescopes in sharply until we get an MCU of Mrs. Fugleman framed on both sides with the silhouette of the backs of two heads.

FUGLEMAN: I never commence a lesson or lecture with such a supposition in mind, myself, but I don't presume to judge others who do.

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Again, the deafening blast of lunchtime sounds while the two heads nod assent. Then, quick cutoff of the noise.

I don't care personally to frequent such iniquitous locales, but I wouldn't presume to pass judgment on such as are so inclined.

Again, the deafening blast of lunchtime sounds, renewed chaos of the soundtrack, while the two heads, apparently munching sandwiches, nod assent. Then, quick cutoff of the noise.

I refrain, even when inordinately provoked, from passing such remarks, but I have never, believe me, judged the likes of those who fail to follow suit.

Again, the deafening blast. Then quick cutoff of the sounds. The camera zooms TCU on Mrs. Fugleman whose head slowly bends in the almost religious silence to receive the cheese sandwich her thick fingers offer up in sacrifice. Her coarse lips widen, her root-wasted frontals slowly sink into the soft white bread. She munches without raising her head, eyes closed, we see only the occasional flicker of her arrowhead tongue.

Then switch to negative of this shot. Hold for several long moments. Dissolve to:

Exterior. A large ferris wheel. Day.

A still. LS of a medium-sized ferris wheel such as is found in any country fair. The wheel is set up quite close to the side of a large apartment house with innumerable windows; almost all the shades are drawn. The still is grainy, quaint, sentimentally old-fashioned. Dissolve to:

Exterior. A large ferris wheel. Day.

The still dissolves into the actual ferris wheel, the familiar and comforting filmic cliché. The camera, very clichéishly, slowly zooms in on the scene in the direction of the box office for this amusement, which is situated quite near the base of the wheel, where the riders get on. Business is very slow at this time of day: we hear few sounds and only one or two couples appear to be buying tickets and get-

ting on the ride. The Ticket Girl and the Hired Man who adjusts the riders in their cars both are rather sleepy, mechanical, bored. The weather is humid, lazy. Cut to:

Interior. The school john door.

We see the john door in the exact same shot as was previously shown. Absolute stillness: the shot is held for several very long moments. Then—a disarmingly loud gong sounds off. A Kid rushes to the john door, opens it with a hurried, aggressive pull, rushes inside, and slams the door closed. Very quick cut to:

Interior. The guidance counselor's office.

MS of Mrs. Fugleman dressed and looking much as before. She holds a huge open book in her open palms and this time she is standing with her back against the office window. The bright light of learning streams in through the window all about her. This places her face and front in somewhat indistinct shadow.

FUGLEMAN: We shall now open our books to page 1222B in "The Philosophy of Education" by Harry James. Harry was a great nineteenth-century American educator and the younger brother of Jesse and Frank. The family traced their ancestry back to James I of Merry England though some scholars are inclined to dispute the legitimacy of such claims, claiming that the line does not go further back than James II of Merry Christmas. But whatever the truth, Harry was born a Yankee and our entire deeducational system is predicated upon the theories he put down. Harry James was a pragmatist given to practicing the science of the possible and grafting the profits thereof as opposed to his brothers Jesse and Frank who were really dreamers at heart and spent the better part of their time in impossible and romantic larks such as the Great Train Robbery, the holdup of the Pocksville Mint, the theft of the Hopeless Diamond, Leonardo's Mona Freidman, Michelangelo's David Diaperless, and so on and so froth, all of which brought them to a sorry end and great wealth. For in the end Jesse

and Frank had nothing to comfort the cold of their old age except a couple of million all in Confederate bills and quite unexchangeable following the Civil Bore, whereas Harry, who wrote "The Philosophy of Education," had Boethius's consolations of philosophy with which to console himself in *his* dotage. Harry said and I quote:

"My mind to me a springboard is
Into the chlorine-colored pool.
If nothing else, I'm always cool.
Stone walls do not a classroom make
Nor iron bars a school:
What ruleroom can there be for me
Whose mind, like a bird, flies ever free?"

Unquote. Now, children, this is the true and authentic spirit of pragmatism and the natural forebear of Logical Positivism which flowered quite lucidly into the great contemporary movement known as Pragmatic Negativism and all our mortal woe. Which you all, of course, shall grow up to rectumfy, for Harry had great faith in the younger generation gap and, in pernt of fact, saw fit to actually dedicate his masterpiece to the younger degeneration and, by logical extension, all degeneration. And on page 1222B, column 2, last paragraph *à la ligne tirette*, you will find said dedication. Primitiva Coola, will you please read that dedication for us now?

A kid's voice with thick Spanish accent is heard reading O.S.

KID'S VOICE: To you, O young and truthful ones, we throw the flaming torch of light! *Snatch* it up and bear it brightly high for us who dash it down upon the ground for you! For we have quote dropped out of sight unquote as people oft are wont to do down a filthy manhole dark, only to be rediscovered some ten years thence, blowing a crocodile. . . .

Fade out and fade in:

Interior. The guidance counselor's office. The door.

Very dull MS of the closed door to the guidance counselor's office. On the door is

printed in conventional lettering: CITIZENS CORRECTION COMMITTEE. This conventional, tacky shot is held for several boring moments. Then the door is slowly opened from within: slight suggestion of the opening of a door in a horror film; considerable expectation; then, we see Mrs. Fugleman, composed, relaxed, dressed much as before.

FUGLEMAN: Won't you come in, Mrs. James? Bring little Harrison with you. I'm sorry we had to ask you to take the afternoon off from work but then this is quite important for the child as well as yourself.

The large nondescript back of Mrs. James comes into view of the camera and we follow that back, preceded by Mrs. Fugleman, into the office. We do not see the "child" referred to presumably because the camera angle is held too high. This slow zoom into the office and tailing of the two women is also tediously familiar and conventional camera work.

MRS. JAMES: I had the strangest dream last night.

FUGLEMAN: Won't you sit down? Now, what seems to be the problem? You may continue standing, Harrison.

The two women sit, Fugleman facing the camera, Mrs. James always with back to the camera.

MRS. JAMES: Strange faces always frighten him. Especially his own.

Very long pause; Mrs. Fugleman is considering the matter carefully, artfully manipulating her glasses to demonstrate full authority, final knowledge.

FUGLEMAN: Such matters are hereditary. . . . Heredity may be defined as that which precedes the jurisdiction of the Correction Committee. Son, what's your version of the problem?

HARRISON'S VOICE: Ma.

FUGLEMAN: Ma?

HARRISON'S VOICE: Yeah. My Ma's the kind of person who, when her guests leave, gives them the garbage to take down.

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MRS. JAMES, *defensively, shifting slightly in her chair*: Well, I like to get rid of all the garbage at once, you understand, Mrs. Fugleman.

FUGLEMAN: Now tell me just what's troubling you, son.

HARRISON'S VOICE: Well, when you live in a corner building you somehow just don't have a block.

FUGLEMAN: Do you live in a corner building?

HARRISON'S VOICE: No.

FUGLEMAN: Hmmmm. . . . Mrs. James, your child is troubled. . . .

"Meaningful" beat, fade out. Slow fade in:

Interior. The school john door.

We see the john door as previously, shot held in absolute stillness. Then—the incredibly loud gong sounds off. The door is yanked open with tremendous force from within and we see a kid with freckled face, wide, toothless grin.

KID: Wowee!!! It sure don't taste like tomato juice!!

Cut to:

Exterior. The ferris wheel. Day.

LS of the ferris wheel much the same as before: slow movements, apparently very hot weather. There are only two customers, a couple, being helped into a car by the Hired Man. Cut to:

Same. The ferris wheel. Same.

The ferris wheel rotating at its normal speed with only a single car occupied: the young, middle-class couple. The backdrop of the apartment house with drawn shades on all the windows is very apparent in this shot. The man is seated on the side of the car that is nearest the apartment house. Cut to:

Same. The car of the ferris wheel. Same.

MS of the car of the ferris wheel as it goes

flashing by the camera's view. There is something ridiculous about this. Then it flashes by again, perhaps somewhat more quickly than the normal speed of the wheel would allow. We glimpse the couple quite bored to tears, not necessarily with each other, just the ride. Then the car flashes by a third time: we glimpse that the girl is filing her nails. Next time around the car lurches to a halt directly before the unmoving camera. Heavy jolt of the couple. They wait in boredom for the wheel to begin spinning again; apparently new customers are being placed in a car below. The girl continues to file her nails. The young man gazes idly about, shifts uncomfortably, begins to gaze out at the apartment house. Slow pan in on the young man: he does a double take, is startled by something he sees. Then MS of the two of them, the man glancing cautiously at the girl as if to ascertain that she has not seen what he has seen. She is very busy with lipstick now, fails to notice anything unusual. The young man turns his attention again toward the apartment house, his wide open eyes nearly popping with amazement—then, leering delirium. But his concentration is cruelly aborted when the car suddenly lurches up and rotates away, the wheel having begun to operate once more. Cut to:

Interior. The guidance office. Afternoon.

LS of the guidance office packed with kids sitting on every available piece of furniture, many standing, leaning against the walls, etc. Mrs. Fugleman is seated at her desk filling out file cards, registration sheets, etc. Total silence prevails, no kid daring to speak out of turn in the presence of the counselor. MS of Fugleman.

FUGLEMAN, *apparently addressing one of the kids*: You can't just put in an order for a job—you have to grab whatever comes along and be happy that there's even that. You understand? You're low man on the totem pole.

KID'S VOICE: Yes, Mrs. Fugleman.

FUGLEMAN: And if you don't want it, there's twenty behind you who do.

KID'S VOICE: Yes, Mrs. Fugleman. Thank you, Mrs. Fugleman.

FUGLEMAN: Choosy no less, at their age. . . . Now, let's see, I have a request for a boy who wants to apprentice in leather work. Must be adept at arts and crafts, handy with his hands. That's part-time from 4 to 7 weekdays and 9 to 5 Saturdays. How does that sound?

KID'S VOICE: Fine, I guess. I'll—

At that moment Primitiva enters the office. MS of her standing with great hesitation in the doorway. She is extremely buxom, bosomy, wide-eyed. She cradles a weighty stack of textbooks, unconsciously employed to half-mask her amazing development. It is first apparent now that the other kids in the office are all boys. Her nervous glance quickly takes in the setup.

FUGLEMAN: Just a minute, son. Yes, Primitiva?

PRIMITIVA: Er, hello, Mrs. Fugleman.

FUGLEMAN: Yes, what is it?

PRIMITIVA: I—er—er . . .

FUGLEMAN: Please, what is it, Primitiva? We're very busy this afternoon.

PRIMITIVA, *glancing fearfully at the boys whose eyes are riveted to her*: Er, it's about that job you sent me out on, er, I—

FUGLEMAN: Yes, the job, that's right. Aren't you supposed to be there now? It's 3:30.

PRIMITIVA: I know. Er, but that's just it. You see . . .

FUGLEMAN: Well, what is it? I don't have all afternoon.

PRIMITIVA: Well, the boss, er, the boss . . .

FUGLEMAN: Yes, the boss—that's Mr. Handson, isn't it? We get a lot of requests through him.

PRIMITIVA, *the height of agitation*: Yes, him. He, er, he . . . Well, he . . . Well, yesterday he, er, er, he—

FUGLEMAN, *removing her glasses*: That'll be enough, Primitiva. I see. I'll have this reported immediately. Thank you for coming

in. Everything will be all right. Come back tomorrow and I'll send you out on something else.

PRIMITIVA, *turning to leave, all amazed eyes on her*: Thank you very much, Mrs. Fugleman.

MS on Fugleman shifting through file cards, trying to conceal her concern from the innocents crowded around her.

FUGLEMAN: Handson, Handson . . . where is his card? I never would— (*Pausing suddenly, reflecting.*) That's funny: why, just last week I sent two girls out to that very same office. And they never reported back here. . . .

Fade out, and fade into:

Interior. The school john door.

LS of the door as before and then the loud gong sounds off. A kid steps to the door and just as he is about to open it, he turns and says to the camera, as if excusing his activity—

KID: Oh, er, jist "drying out," thank you.

Cut to:

Interior. The teacher's lounge.

A smoke-filled, chaotic room. The smoke is so dense that we see the various people walking about as if in a peasoup fog. Everyone is chattering at once: the volume of noise is deafening. We hear only brief phrases, snatches of the conversation, and what we can make out seems to be complaints, griping, endless griping about everything imaginable. Suddenly, the overwhelming noise is sharply cut off: the camera zooms through the smoke to CU on Mrs. Fugleman sitting comfortably but conservatively on a lounge sofa. She is holding a coffee cup in one hand and heating it with an automatic insert electric iron. She keeps slowly immersing and withdrawing the iron from her cup although the normal procedure would be to let the iron remain immersed until the coffee is heated. This activity should not only be inexplicable but nerve-wracking.

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FUGLEMAN: I really never take in exhibitions of that sort myself, displays along that order are not to my liking, but I don't presume to judge those who do. I've always said: In matters of taste there is no disputing.

The camera withdraws and dollies about the room through the smoke. The loud roar of interminable griping resumes. We move through a congestion and tangle of figures unequaled except for New Year's parties. The camera seems to become confused amidst the crowd, and then quite frightened: it hurries back to the familiarity and security of Mrs. Fugleman's unchanging expression. Again, sharp abortion of the roar. Then, very very low sweet violins play an unobtrusive accompaniment to her monotone.

I seldom announce, denounce, or renounce with such definitiveness myself, but wouldn't be caught dead sermonizing over such as do. As a shatter of fact, I believe that extremism in speech serves to quicken the conscience of middle-of-the-roaders and consolidate their numbers about the appropriate norm.

The camera withdraws chillily from her speech and hops through the smog-veiled faces in search of something better to overhear. It meets, predictably, with no success, but this time because the sound track roar does not resume: we confront blabbing mouths but no sound. The kvetchy, twisted, and bit lips tell us more than we want to hear. So the camera, in shy despair, returns to Mrs. Fugleman: it has, after all, to finish off the scene.

FUGLEMAN: I abstain from unnatural liquids myself, except for caf-feign coffee of course, without which I would be at a dry riverbed loss, but don't think to imply thereby that aspersions should be hurled in the sails of those three shits to the wind or whoso hold their elbows in a bent plaster cast. (*Immersing the iron with some force and conviction.*) *Sauve qui peut* I always say! —Cameraman, that'll be enough for now.

Cut to (after surprised beat):

Exterior. The ferris wheel. Day.

MS of the Hired Man, etc., the bottom of

the wheel where the riders mount the car. We see the young couple about to get into the car. The girl is quite resistant, the fellow is actually pulling her along. The fellow carries a long, shiny, newly bought telescope. Cut to:

Same. The car of the ferris wheel.
Same.

We see the car flashing by as before (note that we do not see any other cars go by except for this one although the camera remains unmoving). The young lady is now furiously combing her hair, the young man peering intensely through the telescope at the backdrop of the apartment building. The car finally lurches to a stop and we get a CU of the young man with eye glued into the telescope: drool loosens from his lips and runs down his cheek. Two-shot: the drool splatters on the girl's dress. She holds out her open palm as if to see if it is raining. Music: a plonk-plonk scene end on the piano. Cut to:

Interior. A chair in the office. Night-time.

POV is from above looking down at the clasped hands in lap of a smallish person or child. Bare arms, dungarees. We do not see above the chestline as in documentaries where the identity of the informant is being concealed to protect etc. Grim atmosphere as if in a third degree chamber.

CHILD'S VOICE: And then that's what gave me the idea to make a Khrushchev cocktail. It's the same as a Molotov cocktail only different, and you make it just as easy but it's milder and less extreme and doesn't make as much noise or cause as much harm. It might make a hole in your shoe but if you don't use your shoe to bang on the table nobody'll be the wiser. So then I kept hearing about all these riots on the Early News so I called the cops and told them that there was a riot on my block and then I ran around the block to the police house while all the police ran around the block to my house and since it was all empty I threw the Khrushchev cocktail into the police house. Mighta shook up a few roaches but nobody seemed to notice other-

wise. Then there's this generation gap which explains why nobody understands or cares or even notices what I do things like that. Ant so then I seen all talk and everything about the schools on the Late News and how it was a crisis school year and nobody could get in and teach and nobody could get out and learn and I became distraught and thought the best thing would be to toss some more cocktails but this time into the schoolhouse because things was so bad in there and that would clear the air. Ant so then well it certainly cleared out the air and the schoolhouse too and everybody got so excited and started screaming and grabbing me and so I said stop it for a minute will ya so I can stand still and smile for the cameras and get some attention finally. Ant everybody thought that was a dumb thing to say and they said, "What a dumb thing to say! You sure are a dumbbell and you're gonna pay for that!" Ant so then I said back, "Ya ain't so smart yerself and anyway how could I be anything but dumb seeing as how nothing gets done in school because of the crisis this school year." (Sigh.) More? . . . So then I seen that everybody was striking on the TV set so I went around the corner and got on the strike line and it sure was fun but it was boring. A strike line is the same thing as a lunch line in the cafeteria only different. Then the vice principal kicked me off the line and some Rocks stomped on me and the cops picked me up again and called my mother offa work and she hada come down and they all asked me questions which were the same questions like before only different.

Suddenly we hear the O.S. sound of a door opening somewhere to the right O.S., a loud girlish scream, and a dress gets flung into frame, landing on the boy's lap. The sound of the door slamming closed. The folded hands brush the dress off his lap, it slips to the floor. Otherwise no stir in the boy's composure: he continues to drone on.

Then I devised the idea to tell the cops that it was my ma what did everything like blowing up the school and the police house because when I looked around in the station where they had us all that I could recognize

was my ma so that's how the idea came to me and it's a pretty clever idea. And so then the reason I found out it was pretty clever was that they all stopped talking in the station when I said that and stood around for a long time trying to figure it out which was a pretty clever ruse. (Sigh.) But so then in the end they finally believed me which was pretty great because I didn't have to think up any new things and they took my ma away and locked her so I went home and couldn't have any supper because she wasn't there to cook it for me which wasn't so smart after all. So I went up to bed anyhow and got under the covers and laughed myself sick it was all so funny how things came out, and boring. (Sigh.) The next day I watched a lot of shows about sex and violence so that I could get some new ideas about what to do to keep busy while everybody else was having a good time striking and I wasn't allowed to strike anymore. But why should they all be allowed to do things and have the fun and not me? So then I went—

We hear the O.S. sound of the door opening again, the girl's bloodcurdling scream, and a pair of stockings and girl's shoes get thrown onto the boy's lap. The door slams shut. Again, he maneuvers his hands slightly and brushes the articles off his lap onto the floor: the camera angle keeps the build of clothes within view at the boy's feet. He never stops droning on during these "rude interruptions."

—to the grocer's and bought a lot of candy and gum and ice cream and frog's legs and firecrackers and put them on my ma's charge account and it came to thirty-five dollars. Which I thought was a little high and maybe the grocer was gypping me and I decided to shop elsewhere in the future and I told the grocer words to that effect but it was all on my ma's charge account anyway and she was paying for it so what did I care? So then I called up the principal's wife and told her I couldn't identify myself but that I was her confidant and her friend and definitely on her side and that she shouldn't try to detect my identity because the true identity of Zorro can never be detected. And then I got around to the purpose of my call even though

she kept inter my ear, "Who was that her h sex and violen slaving over a h amusing fun b kept screaming could hear he couldn't hear connections ar was finally the true so I hung the polite thin only different.

The O.S. sou again, the girl panties and br boy stops speak His fingers mo dergarments, ti

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FUGLEMAN, slow Lugosi & Tam the adjoining r are attending. today. You ma port back here For further tre mother when y said you were p

KID'S VOICE: AN

Dissolve out an

Interior. Th office. Night

The door as CORRECTIO that this time shot is held wi ments, tense, & with back towa: door: two huge ging between th

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she kept interrupting me and screaming in my ear, "Who is this? Who is this?" which was that her husband was having all sorts of sex and violence at the school while she was slaving over a hot stove. And that was a lot of amusing fun but it was boring because she kept screaming into the phone even though I could hear her pretty good but maybe she couldn't hear me so good because telephone connections are sometimes that way, and it was finally the latter which I decided to be true so I hung up on her. Which maybe is not the polite thing to do but it's just the same only different.

The O.S. sound of the door thrown open again, the girl's prolonged shrieks, and her panties and bra tossed on the boy's lap. The boy stops speaking now. The door slams shut. His fingers move tentatively toward the undergarments, then stop. Pause.

Ya probably ain't even listening, huh?

No response. He snatches up the undergarments and shoves them in his back pocket. The camera pulls up and away from him and comes to a halt on a CU of Mrs. Fugleman's face.

FUGLEMAN, *slow, grim voice, accent between Lugosi & Tamiroff*: There is an ergency in the adjoining room to which the authorities are attending. We shan't need you anymore today. You may go now. But be sure to report back here tomorrow at the same time. For further treatments. You may tell your mother when you visit her on Sunday that we said you were progressing nicely. Good night.

KID'S VOICE: And good luck.

Dissolve out and in:

Interior. The door of the guidance office. Nighttime.

The door as before, reading CITIZENS CORRECTION COMMITTEE, except that this time it is, inexplicably, night. The shot is held with grainy look for long moments, tense, grim. Then three silhouettes with back toward the camera move up to the door: two huge burly masculine figures dragging between them a much smaller one, ap-

parently but never certainly, the Kid. Muffled whimpers and cries of protest, all indistinct, all uncertain. We pan with the silhouettes closer to the door with the kind of laborious but dogged rhythm used in old flicks as they go up death row. Cut to:

Same. The opening door. Nighttime.

MS of the door, slowly, sinisterly opening. We behold the darkened face and huge bosom of Mrs. Fugleman: the sight is frightening to say the least for she is not immediately recognizable, eerie shadows play all over her countenance giving her a threatening, monsterlike appearance. She not only seems larger and wider than previously, she seems the very incarnation of authoritative nightmare. Slung about her shoulders and dangling over her bosom are various indistinct instruments, they suggest torture apparatus but, again, nothing is clear. When she lifts her hands there appear to be more subtle and smaller instruments in her clutch. Her voice is devilish, unsparing.

FUGLEMAN: You are a con artist and a congenital dropout. We shall mend your ways.

KID'S VOICE: By making me a real artist and a genitals dropout.

FUGLEMAN: That is the idea. Drop your drawers. You have a quick wit: too bad it is put to mischief's service.

KID'S VOICE: But in the end that's nothing to worry about, is it? I mean, since you're equipped to mend my ways.

Mrs. Fugleman begins to apply the instruments of punishment: we see only the movement of her shoulders, sometimes her hands, her vicious grimaces, biting of her lips, excitement in her eyes.

FUGLEMAN: It is a matter of decentralization: all your energy and passion is concentrated in one place. The seat of your evil and spite. I shall lay on thick to that fleshy lump and decentralize its power. Its power lies in its unity of place and time. In unity there is strength. Together it sits, divided it's fallen. That is the

philosophy of the board, of the rod, the whip and the cat-o'-nine-tails. (*Slash, slash.*) And James' "Philosophy of Education"—he wrote: "An uneducated child is like a beast in the jungle, while an educated one is as good as an heiress?" (*Slash, slash.*) He also said: "Weed out the ill as you would skim off the cream of the crap." Remember, son, your teacher is in the classroom in order to do a job and you are there to let him do it and I am here to see that you let him do it. (*Slash, slash, slash, slash.*)

KID'S VOICE: I'll have plenty scars offa this, Fugleman, I'll have scars to prove whatcha done!

FUGLEMAN: You won't be able to pull yourself together long enough to show anyone anything! You'll be so decentralized by the time I get done with you your ass won't remember who your elbow is . . .

Fugleman redoubles her efforts, moves ferociously in on the camera until we see nothing but black, hear utter silence. Fade in:

Interior. The school john door. Nighttime.

The john door as previously but with night shadows. Several beats while the audience awaits the inevitable ringing of the loud bell. The bell finally rings and the john door opens and then closes without anyone actually going in. Quick cut to:

Interior. Inside the school john. Nighttime.

The camera dollies here and there in the semidarkness, barely caressing the urinals, washbasins, etc. It passes quickly by a mirror which reflects the moving camera and cameraman. The frame comes to rest on a stall wall completely covered with scribbling. The scribbling is tortured but continuous, compulsive, and the camera begins to read across and down, thus:

"My mother was a wicked woman off the wharfs, a fisherwife of Billingsgate whose language was all Billingsgate. A kind of poor

man's mermaid she was sitting on the wharfs with her hairy legs dangling in the early water and humming snatches of 'He used me, abused me, but never refused me so ugly he was,' to herself, when my father first ran over her with his Model T. In that tired state her price went down to two shillings. They never married and I was not the product of any reunion of theirs. I sprung up out of the ground in an aboreal thicket in the woods and was raised by wolves on the way to grandmother's house. One day I saw a girl in red lift up her dress in order to cross over a mud puddle in the forest. I wrote her a letter and told her how immodest she was. She took down my address and wrote back and said she was a slave looking for a master. I clutched her missile to my breast all night and dreamt passionately about weasels. During that period I lived in a hollow tree trunk which I had furnished *art moderne* albe a bit crowded but it suited the round walls. And I lived in a dell. When I was sick I played with little toy soldiers over my blanket and when I was well I sailed paper boats down the stream and they disappeared around the bend my huckleberry friend. The girl brought me an apple pie and I ate it out of her lap. Will any man with a bowler hat and umbrella continue my story for me? But start with the hollow tree in the dell and from——"

We hear the loud gong again: the camera seems jarred for a moment, then drops an inch or two and discovers written on the stall:

Fate played me a dirty caper—
Left me here without no paper!
There's the bell!
I cannot linger—
So here goes
With my middle finger!

And just below this the camera discovers the drawing of a long, tapering middle finger crowned with an exceedingly lengthy and very sharply pointed nail. A corona of lines sprout out from the nail's tip to indicate great sharpness (a corona of lines as in the cartoon convention). Beat, then cut to:

Exterior. The ferris wheel. Day.

LS of the ferris wheel. There is now an ex-

*tremely long line
the ride. The
stretches for as
Ticket Girl is
sticky hair, se
Hired Man is g
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that most of t
are men. Cut to*

Interior. A c
time.

*POV is the tot
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KID'S VOICE: An
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eel. Day.

e is now an ex-

tremely long line of people waiting to get on the ride. The line is four abreast and stretches for as far as the eye can see. The Ticket Girl is harassed, pulling back her sticky hair, selling tickets like mad. The Hired Man is getting customers into and out of the cars just as fast as he can. We notice that most of this huge crowd of customers are men. Cut to:

Interior. A chair in the office. Night-time.

POV is the total bird's-eye view: a third degree lamp is dangling from the ceiling above the chair with someone in it. This lamp and the light it casts obscures our view of who is in the chair. In fact, we just barely perceive that this is a return to the chair in office set. The lamp swings back and forth for a while as is its wont in third degree scenes.

KID'S VOICE: Ant so after that I got the time bomb idea it seemed a sure step and a little more exciting although boring. I decided to plant them in different tourist bureaus around town because I seen that on the Early Morning News. The idea is that you think there are too many people taking vacations out of the country and causing a dollar drain so you blow up the tourist agencies so no more people can go out of the country with their money whenever they just feel like it. (Sigh.) The idea is that that's easier than putting a tax on everybody traveling since that would only make the tourist agencies complain very much and all the time and send a lot of lobs to Washington to be a small but vocal minority. But if you blow up the tourist agencies then there ain't no one left to complain and it is all very quiet and boring and peaceful. (Sigh.) Ant so then when I looked them all up and saw how many tourist agencies there were I realized that this would be full-time work and that I would have to drop out of school in order to have time to do all of that. But so since then it's been pretty boring just going around and planting the time bombs but making them up is very intricate and involving and painstaking and it takes professional workmanship and it is boring a lot but also pretty detailed.

But taking the train from one agency to another can be (sigh) boring and then walking all those streets because the agencies are not located just outside of the subway stop you know. You have to walk to most of them. That's the ones you can find I mean. I had to stop and ask a cop a lot of times where the tourist agencies were. Some of them laughed at me and said what did I want to go to a place like that for because I don't have no money and they would throw me out. I told them I was patriotic and that made them more angry. (Sigh.) So then one of them asked me why I wasn't in school and I told him I was decentralized and that was pretty far away. Anyhow. (Sigh.) He probably thought I was a genital dropout and just fooling around. . . .

Intercut:

Exterior. The ferris wheel. Day.

LS of the ferris wheel. There is a veritable mob at the wheel now. The men are battling each other to get on. Confusion, shouting, curses, punching. The Hired Man is helpless to prevent the chaos. He becomes the focal point of the fighting and is beaten up. Cut back to:

Interior. The chair in the office. Nighttime.

POV is now the back of the inquisition seat, centering on the uncomfortable and shifting rump of the imposed-upon: the frame cuts him off at the back and calves. As he shifts about seeming unable to find a suitable position, we notice the girl's undergarments stuffed into his back pocket.

KID'S VOICE: So then I decided to go to Spaceland Amusement Park, spaceland being a contradiction in terms, and amuse myself. But at least I could be spaced out, elevated, and . . . uh. It's hard to kill a whole day walking around eating a hot dog and sitting in the movies cause I really can't understand most of the flicks they show and what they're always talking about . . .

Intercut:

A still black frame with large white lettering.

The lettering reads: "The Following Film Is Recommended for Mature Audiences Only."

We hear the Kid's voice O.S.

KID'S VOICE: Uh-oh! I guess I better leave.

Immediate cut back to:

Exterior. The ferris wheel. Day.

MS of the battle royal obtaining at the foot of the ferris wheel. The men are really having at each other with dead and vicious seriousness. The Kid is thrown into the midst of this scene and we are immediately barraged by the rapid fire of two dozen or so split-second shots indicating unbearable violence as the Kid's head and face is battered about like the proverbial tennis ball. This is, in fact, the first time the Kid's face is shot but we get only the vaguest impression of it (or that it is a kid at all) for we see the battered movement mostly of a punching bag with painted features on it all bloodied over. In the spaces intervaled in the medley we perceive that the waiting car is empty, that though all the men are struggling for priority, the object of their desire is left unattended. MS of the Kid's back: he notices the empty, waiting car and goes to it. MS of the back of the car with the Kid seated in it. CU of the back of the Kid's head with rear view projection of the apartment building's windows flashing by. Then, extreme agitation of his neck and head, etc., to indicate that he has seen something inordinately startling in one of the windows. Immediate cut to:

Exterior. A wide open reviewing field. Bright noon.

A long line of Scottish-type soldiers at strict attention on the LS of a glaringly hot reviewing field. They are dressed in kilts, but the rest of their costumes are not realistic. They are so motionless that at first they appear to be toy soldiers (which is, in fact, what the LS is composed of). Then the camera

pans along the faces of these soldiers, one after the other, though there are actually only two of them whose faces are repeated and reshot in a continuum. Their features are unblinking, suffering, huge beads of sweat pour down their faces. They dare not move a muscle to alleviate the torture. Then, traditional shot of the glaring, dangerous sun itself with a background of danger-and-mystery music that usually accompanies such frames—to warn the audience that something ominous will result from this pitiless sun. CU of one of the soldiers: his eyes roll round in his head, a pool of sweat gathers on the ledge of his nether lip. Shot again of the fierce sun with renewed threat of the ominous music. Then flash back to CU of the soldier: his eyes roll up and completely disappear, his lids slowly shut fast and he faints out of frame. LS of the soldier lying crumpled on the steaming ground with the second soldier still at strict attention in the line, not daring even to turn his head toward the collapsed victim. The fainted soldier is lying with his head toward the camera, but the camera angle is somewhat above, enough to show that in his fall the kilt rose high up on his pelvis and that, therefore, there is more involved here than usually meets the eye in a reviewing line. CU of the standing soldier whose shifted glance indicates that he sees what has come to light but is unable, on pain of death, to move from his attention for even a second in order to cover up the matter. The sweat floods down the visage of his predicament. Cut to:

Exterior. The reviewing entourage on the field. Noon.

A blast of royal trumpets. MS of first blank open space; then it is filled with the smiling Queen and her aides as they prepare to march in review. The Queen nods cordially to the unseen crowd and imagined photographers, press, etc. LS of the entourage and the line of soldiers at strict attention with the one unfortunate crumpled up on the ground. The entourage moves regally toward the soldiers with the regal band music blasting away. Precipitous beat, then cut to:

Interior. T

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Exterior. T
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MS of first blank
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l music blasting
n cut to:

Interior. The clocking-in board.

MS of Mrs. Fugleman with shadowy co-work-
ers punching in at the time clock. The clock
reads a bit after 6:00, but no explanation of
this is given. We see, at best, only the hands
of others as they punch the clock and file
their cards on an adjacent board.

FUGLEMAN: I understand that many people in
our circle do as much to entertain them-
selves. I wouldn't think of carrying on in such
a fashion, but I don't presume to judge those
that must. (Punch, punch.) Oh, yes, I've seen
so many take steps in just such directions, av-
enues I wouldn't presume to approach my-
self, but I don't presume to judge those many
because of that. To each his lone I say.
(Punch, punch.) I don't have a taste for that
kind of food myself, I think it's tasteless and
in bad taste, but I don't pass judgment on it
or on those who have a taste for it. I say and
again I say: "Good taste blocks progress's
way!" (Punch, punch.)

Fugleman files her card and moves away
leaving the camera focusing on the clock and
board as it so often does in films which need
to conserve imagination. Cut to:

Exterior. The reviewing field. Bright
noon.

MS of the smiling and graciously nodding
Queen marching apace. CU of the sweating
soldier at strict attention. MS of the fainted
soldier with kilt drawn far up over his pelvis.
CU of the sweating soldier with expression
that reads, "I'd rather be dead than live
through the upcoming moment!" MS of the
Queen and aides, one of whom (apparently
spotting the disaster) attempts to get along-
side the Queen and block her view of the sol-
diers. She gives the aide an incredulously in-
dignant look which causes him to fall
hopelessly back in place. CU of the sweating
soldier: his tortured lips appear to be mutter-
ing a prayer. CU of the Queen passing in re-
view with approving smiles. Then she pauses
for the briefest, subtlest second and closes
her eyes. Her head jerks forward, she opens
her eyes, looks straight ahead and continues

on her route. The aides with eyes closed file
past behind her. The camera remains mo-
tionless now shooting the empty air as it so
often does in films conserving imagination.
Quick dissolve out and dissolve into:

Exterior. A clothesline. Day.

MS of an empty clothesline. The line moves,
jangles with unseen weight and then begins
to pulley out. Slowly the girl's undergarments
washed and wet appear clothespinned to the
line. They move on out and across the frame
until we are left looking at the empty unused
part of the clothesline again. Fade out, and
fade into:

Interior. A (classroom) desk.

A very huge classroom desk or lectern seem-
ingly suspended in the middle of nowhere.
Again, the Kafkaesque atmosphere. Mrs. Fu-
gleman is seated behind the desk looking un-
usually severe, half-lights are on her face so
that we do not see her distinctly; her shad-
owed features project an ominous, final judg-
ment impression, beyond which there is no
appeal. Through the use of lens tension,
aborted sounds and whispers, silhouette
movements, etc., we get the impression that
there is a line of kids slowly approaching her
desk, one at a time. She holds a stack of (ap-
parently) report cards in her hands, fanning
them out before her as if they were a poker
hand. As the first "impression" of a kid ap-
proaches the desk, Mrs. Fugleman stares
darkly at the uppermost card, then offers it
up toward the camera and says as if with a
well-worn rhythm:

FUGLEMAN: Take it again next term!

The card is silently received and the second
shadowy "impression" moves up toward the
desk. She repeats her dark stare at the new
card, then lifts it toward the camera.

D minus!

This card is silently received and the third
shadowy "impression" moves up toward the
desk. This procedure slowly continues with

Mrs. Fugleman making the following single-sentence statements:

Take it again next term!

D!

D minus!

Take it again next term!

Take it again next term!

Etc., etc., etc.

Slow fade out, beat, then rapid flash-shot opening:

Exterior. A car on the ferris wheel.
Day.

Two thinnish, lecherous-type studs squashed against each other in the car. One is peering through the telescope, he can't get enough, the other is trying to pry it away from him, can't wait for his turn.

FIRST GUY: Whadda ya see?! Whadda ya see?!

The other slowly, tauntingly refocuses the telescope in another direction. There is a wicked expression on his thin lips.

What's over there!!!? What's over there!!!?
What's—

SECOND GUY, *very slowly, very emphatically:*
There's a Buddhist nudist colony a few roofs down. . . .

Cut to:

Exterior. A small roof or balcony.
Day.

A small roof or balcony against a wall of windows with their shades drawn. At the right end of the balcony is a single window whose shade is not drawn. A rather huge elderly lady wearing an old sloppy housecoat is busily sweeping the balcony. Whisk! Whisk! Slowly her steps take her along the balcony past the drawn shades. Whisk! Whisk! She moves ever closer, unnoticingly, toward the window whose shade is not drawn.

Cut to:

Exterior. A car on the ferris wheel.
Day.

The Kid seated by himself in a car of the ferris wheel. The camera hops about him in various angles so that we never quite get a real impression of what his whole face is like. But we do perceive his great consternation and distress through split-second shots of his brow and eyes, bit lips, fingers gripping his collar. He is apparently looking out of the car toward the window in the apartment building which has attracted so much attention. Sweat pours down his face. He seems to want to scream or cry for help. There is the faint suggestion of a tear in the corner of his eye. Then he moves about within the car as if seeking to get out of it somehow. But we see his POV, bird's-eye, on the great drop to the ground below. Cut to:

Interior. A small grocery store. Day:
same lighting.

A counter with a few canned goods, etc., just barely enough to suggest that this is a grocery store. Again, the vague impression that the counter is really suspended in the middle of nowhere. A huge and portly middle-aged grocer in white apron and cap is looking down over the counter at the Kid, who appears in silhouette nearly O.S.

GROCER, *feigning patience:* Now just what kinda exotic goods didja have in mind, kid?

KID'S VOICE, *desperately:* Ya know, anything exotic—creamed muscles, dried seaweed, bean curd soup, stuffed grapeleaves, sashimi or sushi, or something! Anything! Anything!

GROCER: Now what would I want wid them kinda things, kid?

KID'S VOICE: Stock 'em! Couldja stock 'em!

GROCER: Who would buy 'em, kid, tell me that, huh?

KID'S VOICE: Anyone, everyone would buy 'em—if only ya stocked 'em. If you put 'em up on yer shells then people would see them and buy 'em cause they're different and new

and somethin
desperately.)
see.

GROCER, *sighin,*
I mean, stuff li
one customer
who?

KID'S VOICE, *qu*

GROCER, *point*
finger: You, ki

KID'S VOICE, *ne*
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GROCER, *throwi*
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Heaven! Why

Precipitous be

Exterior. Th
Day.

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Exterior. Th
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a car of the ferris wheel. About him in various quite get a real face is like. But sternation and shots of his brow wiping his collar. t of the car torment building such attention. e seems to want here is the faint corner of his eye. in the car as if how. But we see great drop to the

store. Day:

goods, etc., just this is a grocery session that the n the middle of middle-aged gro- is looking down who appears in

Now just what e in mind, kid?

know, anything dried seaweed, eleaves, sashimi hing! Anything!

want wid them

ja stock 'em!

m, kid, tell me

me would buy If you put 'em would see them ferent and new

and somethin' interesting for once! (*Very desperately.*) Please! Jist order 'em. You'll see.

GROCER, *sighing*: Listen, kid, if I stocked crap, I mean, stuff like that in here there'd be only one customer who'd buy them. Ya know who?

KID'S VOICE, *quickly*: Who?

GROCER, *pointing down with huge index finger*: You, kid, you. That's who. That's all.

KID'S VOICE, *near hysteria*: But if ya promoted them, if ya promoted them goods, then—

GROCER, *throwing up his arms in Yiddish-type despair*: But why should I? Tell me! God in Heaven! Why should I?!!

Precipitous beat, then cut to:

Exterior. The small roof or balcony. Day.

The elderly woman is still sweeping the roof. Whisk! Whisk! She finally reaches the window where the shade is not drawn. She continues to sweep up in front of it with her back turned toward it. Then, she turns to reach at the dirt behind her and her eyes fall on the open window. Her head lowers slightly and peers through: an almost natural, instinctual rather than nosy gesture. CU as she jerks her head back, turns briskly about and disappears along the balcony. The camera is left alone on the empty balcony. Cut to:

Exterior. The car in the ferris wheel. Day: same light.

The Kid in the car peering in the direction of the apartment building. He squirms with unrelieved despair now, his physicalness seems sapped, his will collapsed. His shoulders go shakingly down in defeat. The camera, cautious and gentle with him, moves very CU on him and the outlines of his turned-from-us cheek and ear, moves slowly beyond him in a zoom that seems to have no precise distance to cover. It moves toward the apartment

building with its windows and shades. Music of the low, fearful kind. Then the music graduates louder. Slow zoom into:

Exterior. The open window of the apartment house. Day.

The camera zooms patiently in on the building wall, going toward the single window with its shade not drawn. Finally, it arrives at the window and comes to rest on the sill, peering into the semidarkness within. Far within, we make out an indistinct scene: we only appear to see it, appear to imagine it or, more precisely, hallucinate it. There is a bed with two figures moving on it. They roll or rock from side to side. The movement appears more violent than amorous. The figure on top is huge, stocky, with matted hair half torn out of its severe pinning. We feel it to be, rather than actually see for certain, Mrs. Fugleman. Beneath her (?) a smallish and thin figure is struggling. We can not really make him out. We do not want to. It must be the Kid. Dissolve out. Long, dark beat, then dissolve into:

Interior. A corridor.

A long, frightening corridor shot on a strict and unmoving horizontal. The focus seems to be above the heads of a long line of persons whose shadows are cast up and along the wall. We do not see these people but imagine them to be that noisy crowd from previous scenes because we are besieged with that same loud roar as in the cafeteria and lounge. The roar gradually begins to take shape or make a sort of coherency, a music, musical tones gradually emerge and finally we have a full-fledged chorus blasting away at us. It is dissonant, unruly, harsh and hoarse.

CHORUS:

There's no meanness like kids' meanness:
They smile when you are down!
Even if ya flunk 'em just to see 'em squirm,
Let's go on with the term!

The music dissolves into a royal march as the scene follows by—dissolve into:

Interior. The Queen's chamber.

A couch or lounge suggesting luxury, again suspended in space as it were. The camera focuses on the lounge for several moments, then the Queen enters coming directly from the camera's POV, with her back to us. She is quite shaky, seemingly ill, and is accompanied by her aides who border the frame with shadowy indistinction. Still with her back to us she seizes an arm of the couch for support and draws the back of her free palm delicately across her brow. With a flick of the wrist she dismisses her aides. Then she turns slowly and reclines on the couch. She muses quietly to herself with knitted brow and long, long stare into the peering camera. The camera slowly departs, drawing away in a poetical zoom-out. Slow zoom-out dissolve into:

Interior. The teacher's lounge.

Brassy, impossible roar, smoke-filled interior as before. But this time apparently everybody is crowded about Mrs. Fugleman, all talking at once, all shaking her hand, etc. One or two persons appear to be sipping cocktails.

VARIOUS VOICES:

Oh, Mrs. Fugleman, I'm so happy for you! All of us are honored by your promotion—I mean, this reflects glory on all of us here! Your co-workers wish to most heartily congratulate you, Mrs. Fugleman! It shows where any of us can go with enough persistence!
And talent, of course.
Will you still come around and see us sometime, I mean, now that you're so important?
What prestige for the whole place!

Etc., etc., etc.

FUGLEMAN, *barely visible in the middle of the crush*: I feel that this is an exceptionally graphic lesson for all of you. It shows how persistent righteousness, conscientious persistence, uprightness and conviction, a clear conscience and solid bearing are ultimately rewarded. I understand that not everybody is

as ambitious as myself, nor could the world well function if we all were, but I don't presume to judge others who are not. I do offer myself though as an example of what the world has to offer. Though I wouldn't dare judge those who do not offer, are not offered, and don't care to be offered themselves. It is a question of moral stamina, of just how rich you want life to be and how in life you wish to be enriched. Not only you younger people just starting out, but those of you already somewhere along as myself, should take note of my comeuppance and take it to heart and let it hearten you, although I don't pass judgment on any not so inclined nor would I be caught on the couch doing so. . . .

Dissolve into:

Interior. A courtroom. Evening.

A very high structure resembling a judge's bench, but being some ten feet in height and with worm's-eye POV giving the impression of a skyscraper of sorts. Once again, this set is suspended in the middle of nowhere and dimly lit so as to appear to be in an eternal night. At the top of the "skyscraper" effect is Mrs. Fugleman, dressed in black robes and a white many-curved wig. As she speaks, the camera zooms very slowly in on her, going up the façade of the bench.

FUGLEMAN, *proclaiming solemnly in dead monotone*: That act is socially reprehensible, has always been so held, though I offer no personal conviction myself in passing sentence here. . . .

—Sixty years. Next!

A loud gasp is heard as from an astonished courtroom. Fugleman raps on her bench for silence. The silence floods solemnly in.

Not the deed so much as its spirit is what concerns us in your particular case. Precedent has been set on rare occasion for the excuse of such a deed because it does not preclude rehabilitation. But the spirit conjured up in this performance has never been dismissed by the law because it is innately and horrendously destructive, it breeds by deeds destruc-

tion, its progressive destructive value judgment

—Life, with 1

A louder gasp but this time traditional ga

It is my implicit in your case of itself without sight. Nathele such activity will look up, stand and inconsiderate teach you a the to judge. I just

—Seventy-six y

The camera h with great fe zooms into her scene as quietly. No sound anything. Zoom screen for ten l

Interior. The time.

The ten-beat b giving the impr has gone wrong the film is over. after the dead stamp so frequ in the Alto Rha immediately disco completely diff office: we see i desk and looking through the doo There is no light ing light from th on a German-ex era is behind M appears mammoth her desk and nov the frame. She loose, dirty, stain

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 tive destruction. Therefore, albe I have no
 value judgment to make in this matter—

—Life, with no possibility of parole. Next!

*A louder gasp of astonishment than before,
 but this time it silences itself without the
 traditional gavel.*

It is my implicit belief that the charged activ-
 ity in your case is wholly innocent and in and
 of itself without guilt aforethought or hind-
 sight. Natheless, the Spinozan extension of
 such activity with the matter per se, hey say,
 look up, stand tall, is wholly incriminating
 and inconsiderably submarine, ween, and I'll
 teach you a theen or two. I wouldn't presume
 to judge. I just sentence.

—Seventy-six years. Next!

*The camera has reached her ill-lit face and
 with great fear and respect it cautiously
 zooms into her so that it may black out the
 scene as quietly and unobtrusively as possi-
 ble. No sound of awe this time. No sound of
 anything. Zoom in to blackout, and black
 screen for ten beats, then fade in:*

Interior. The guidance office. Night-
 time.

*The ten-beat blackout is excruciatingly long,
 giving the impression that either something
 has gone wrong with the projection or that
 the film is over. But finally, the fade-in occurs
 after the dead pause, coming like the final
 stamp so frequent in music as, for example,
 in the Alto Rhapsody. The initial effect is im-
 mediately disconcerting because we have a
 completely different view of the familiar
 office: we see it this time from behind the
 desk and looking far beyond into the hallway
 through the door which is three-quarters ajar.
 There is no light in the office. The bald glar-
 ing light from the hallway falls into the office
 on a German-expressionistic slant. The cam-
 era is behind Mrs. Fugleman's back, she ap-
 pears mammoth, sloppy, half-slumped over
 her desk and now filling at least two-thirds of
 the frame. She is dressed in a housecoat,
 loose, dirty, stained, torn under the armpits.*

*She is sluggish, perhaps slightly drunk; wisps
 of hair are loose, some pasted to her fore-
 head. The desk top is clear, the only other
 piece of discernible furniture is a small chair
 situated between the desk and the open
 door. The Kid appears in the cruel light of
 the doorframe: he looks extremely small and
 skinny with bowed head, face completely
 shadowed, arms dangling nervously down to
 his clasped hands before him.*

FUGLEMAN, her voice straining to achieve
 "sweetness": Come in, Henry. I have been ex-
 pecting you.

*The Kid takes several timid, tentative steps
 into the office.*

Please sit down in the chair.

*He does, moving all the way back in the seat
 with his legs dangling uselessly together. His
 hands are still clasped. We can not see his
 face. Fugleman's mammoth back adjusts
 slightly.*

Now just relax and tell me everything. One
 thing at a time, one after the other, detail by
 detail, just like it happened. Start.

KID: It was hot and humid and sticky and I
 was tossing around in my bed all night. I
 couldn't sleep. There's really no cross-ventila-
 tion and nobody c'n figure out how to set up
 the fans so that they circulate the air as if
 there was some. There is a way of doing it, of
 course, but nobody has figured it out yet. In
 the room I could hear them talking, you al-
 ways hear them talking low and fairly rhyth-
 mic, sometimes with the radio playing low,
 even sounds, sounds of security, adults talk-
 ing who take care of everything. And they
 take care of you, feed you and put you to
 bed. I can fall asleep when big people are
 talking, assuring you that they're there, there
 there—

FUGLEMAN: Speed up a little here.

KID: My mother came over to the bed and
 said, "Aw, what's the matter, can't my baby
 sleep? Can't my little baby sleep?" She lifted
 the cheesecloth covering that lay over my
 sweaty, restless body and slid under it moving

me slightly toward the far half of the bed. Her trembling hand reached for my palpitating nipple. I did not resist her advances, I—

FUGLEMAN: Slow down here.

KID: Her trembling hand reached for my pal—

FUGLEMAN: Don't repeat.

KID: Her many froward advances broke down my resistance particularly because I didn't resist her advances. I offered no resistance to her palpitating hand and her lengthy tapering fingers which encircled my sex, gently massaging it after toying and plucking a while at my Christmas wrapping.

FUGLEMAN: Slow, slow . . .

KID: Slow, slowly she raised the issue as she had done every night since my infancy, back longer than I can remember, young though I am and tender in age and having little in years upon this earth.

The Kid pauses for a moment and shifts in his chair until he is comfortable. Fugleman's shoulders move up and down slightly, and as the Kid resumes his monotone; her left arm atop the desk moves imperceptibly in his direction while her right hand searches under her housecoat, moving along her huge gartered thighs.

FUGLEMAN: Yes, yes . . .

KID: She proffered me her reddish nipple which I the redder made, we being poor by purse and the price of milk ever on the rise I raised her nipple higher yet and higher. Then she cast me down betwixt her limbo akimbo holding my head in place with her heavy hands and pulling at the roots of my dandruffed hair and shaking the loose dandruff all over my black on black collar. Ya never really get that collar grime out. I've tried everything. There is a way, of course, but nobody has figured it out yet.

FUGLEMAN, *her hand working away wildly beneath the housecoat*: Yes, yes! Go on!

KID: She drew me up over her with a sudden wrench of unexpected force, hooking her iron

grasp under my armpits and drawing me up along and over her body like a cheesecloth covering. Yet 'twas naught but to tease me in the matter for ere I could insert my pencil in the sharpener, she tossed me over and we rolled together in the like fashion from one side of the bed to tother.

FUGLEMAN, *gasping heavily, heaving beyond control*: Go on! Oh God! Go on!

KID: My mother doesn't want me getting into trouble with bad women ya might in this deprived neighborhood, culturally deprived and uncultured women, women without cultivation, and I am indeed of age when one would go about the streets in search of such so she figures she ought to take care of me herself. And there is a way of taking care of me, of course, but nobody oh well. So then I mounted up on her she thrusting the pillow beneath her bum to meet me halfway as it were which is sheer politesse, and we rode away over the Buddhist nudist colony over on Third, rocking-horse, rocking-horse into the night oh night of nights and ancient of days, sweating, sweating she was and filling my palms with juice that clenched both cheeks of her bum, the juice that ran down all over her bum while her legs flew wild in the wind swept night above my blasted ears. Finally, her feet caught hold of either side of my head like blinders on a horse and, holding tight, she used this leverage to jack up the wider weighted end of her watermelon torso, pull all muscle ends and tension taut and give vent to, give loud oh loud screaming vent to her congenital dropout—

Fugleman screams wildly and passes out, slumping across the desk top with one hand still reaching for the Kid, the other lost beneath her garment, her tortured, mountain-like back hunched over and pacified at last. The Kid shows no immediate sign of awareness of her alteration, he continues to drone on in his relentless monotone, although under lowered lids he fearfully glances over at her, fearfully, tentative . . .

Afterwards we rested back on the bespotted sheets and lit a cigarette which we passed tenderly back and forth between us. Gradually

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ck on the bespotted
which we passed ten-
between us. Gradually

our heavy breathing subsided and we stared at the ceiling which the breeze-swept curtains constantly pointed their fingers at. That is, the breeze came from beneath the sill and moved upwards toward the—on a direct angle toward the ceiling just above the bed. We let the breeze command and direct our attention, how sweet and restful it was to go with the will-o'-the-wisp. My mother mused, I've gotta get those curtains dry-cleaned. Can't remember when I had them really done last. Then that sadness, the certain kind of sadness—

The Kid finally grasps the fact that Fugleman is no longer in a receptive mood and he slowly and cautiously rises from his chair and walks, tiptoes to the door. He never breaks his monologue nor its tone during his retreat.

—that follows certainly at the close of intimacies crept over our deadened nerves and we turned quietly from each other, rolling softly over to opposite sides of the bed and silently dipped our dripping oars into the nimbus-shrouded sea of slumber where all-embracing Morpheus welcomed us with tranquil caress into his evenly-measured, evenly-beating kingdom of carelessness. . . .

Cut to:

Exterior. The schoolyard. Graying day.

We see the Kid wandering lonesome and morbid through the empty schoolyard. We realize that the "reviewing field" in previous scenes was actually this schoolyard through clever angles. The Kid makes his way slowly toward the sliding pond. He fingers the ladder affectionately and then slowly climbs up the rungs. He sits carefully on the top of the pond, hesitates a moment, then gives himself a push. The camera is at the base of the sliding pond, on the ground, and watches him slide down quickly toward its lens. He cascades off the pond and lands with his face flat on the pavement. He does not move. The final angle is of the Kid lying on the pavement with his head toward the camera, in exactly the same position as that of the collapsed guard. Then the camera pulls away, serpentine and rocking from left to right, and finally, rapidly withdraws in an upward angle.

End

ESTRELLA VERDE

a screenplay

ESTRELLA VERDE

a screenplay by
Ronald Tavel

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Agent:

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SYNOPSIS

ESTRELLA VERDE is a comedy-drama set in New York's Alphabet City. It takes place in the present, over a 24 hour period. The lead, Guy, is a naive but energetic, handsome young politico who, when not drawing up impossibly bizarre save-the-world schemes, operates a delivery van to thrift shops and boutiques along with his partner and best friend, Lawrence. Much of the action occurs in and near the delivery van, which affords Guy ample opportunity to exercise his imagined womanizing skills.

While they drive through the tenement neighborhood on business, Guy raps almost continuously to Lawrence about his plans, dreams, observations, theories, etc. But Lawrence for the most part seems preoccupied and distracted - although he never misses the chance to undercut Guy's commentary and ideas with sly or insightful deflations. This job is only a front for Lawrence who is really a runner and henchman for local real estate magnets with connections to the mayor's office. And his distraction - in point of fact, fear - on this day is caused by his having botched a crucial delivery related to a strip of desirable lots that are currently squatting grounds for a group of homeless weirdos. Recently, some of these homeless were found murdered.

Early this hot summer morning, Guy spots and instantly falls for Estrella Verde (Green Star), a Puerto Rican beauty who resembles Rita Hayworth and is a singer and dancer at a local Hispanic nightclub. Estrella was brought to New York some weeks earlier by an older woman who appears to be her aunt. This is Maria, a waitress who practices casting spells and other dark arts on the side, and who has good reason to believe her nefarious activities are under investigation. Nevertheless, today she is more concerned with her temperamental ward's unease and discontent - which she perceives as her need for a suitable beau. Maria runs into Guy several times during the day and decides that this "Glorious Apollo" might be just what the (witch) doctor ordered for the headstrong Estrella.

While Maria concocts love potions to snare Guy, Lawrence's unwise entanglements, run amok, also move in a direction to threaten the sanity and life of the bewildered young politico. These four, the realestate speculators, and an odd assortment of East Side denizens come together at Estrella's performance that night in a raucous and disasterous dénouement.

The general tone of the screenplay is comic, but its themes are fairly serious, concerning as they do the plight of the homeless, the "selling" of the city, and those most formidable of failings, commerce in trust and the betrayal of friendship.

"Verde que te quiero verde."
--Lorca

FADE IN

EXTERIOR. RUBBLE-STREWN STREETS ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE. DAY.

The camera pans along the rubble-strewn streets of New York's far Lower East Side from the POV of GUY, a young driver in a van. The streets are crowded with daytime traffic and the lots we pass are filled with garbage, broken furniture, sinks, refrigerators, etc., and dotted here and there with the torn, temporary tents of the HOMELESS. GUY cruises along carefully, turning up one street and down another. He is boyishly handsome, an all-American type with a ski sloped nose and shock of light brown hair that culminates in a wistful disco tail. His eyes are large and innocent, his lips full, and his arms muscular. GUY pays no particular attention to the misery he passes through: he is riveted, rather, on negotiating the congested side-streets, double-parked cars, and sudden jay-walkers. And, as his lips frequently move, he appears to be talking to himself. GUY passes a building which, we notice, has a name as so many do in this neighborhood. Over its large, double doors, ensconced in mermaid-theme bas reliefs, is sculpted, "The Venus Arms." As the van drives past this entranceway, the camera remains fixed there and moves in on the opening doors.

MOVE IN ON:

EXTERIOR. THE STOOP AND DOORWAY TO "THE VENUS ARMS". DAY.

MARIA, carrying several huge trash bags, emerges from the building. She is a voluptuous, middle-aged woman with a round, winsome face, bright blue eyes, cropped, ash-blonde hair and perfect translucent skin. Her arms are braceleted and her fingers bejeweled, suggesting an Hispanic practitioner of the Dark Arts. The bags are a considerable burden for her, and her perspiration shows this. She gazes about and up into the hot, white sky.

MARIA

Humid again. So damn humid...
And this late in the season.

MARIA hauls the bags over the stoop onto the tops of a row of trash cans. Her sidelong glance catches sight of GUY's van as it moves slowly up the street. Her eyes narrow. We see her carefully painted, long lashes.

MARIA

So. Glorious Apollo's here, too.

MARIA turns and as she begins to reenter the building, a half dozen ragged HOMELESS PERSONS descend upon the trash bags she has just discarded and begin to tear them open. They scatter the refuse within them all over the stoop, street, gutter and parked cars. They are like ravenous, wild dogs. MARIA shrieks and rushes back amongst them.

MARIA

Hey! Get the hell outa here! What're you doing? I just ---

The HOMELESS take what they want, or can, and flee before her wrath. MARIA does not know where to begin to clean up the horrendous mess. She begins to gather back some of the offal, then sits, defeated, on the stoop, almost in tears.

MARIA

Oh, God! Look at this...

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE MOVING VAN ON ANOTHER STREET. DAY.

GUY continues to drive through the busy, impoverished streets, apparently talking to himself as before. He passes a Barber-shop, notices it, and begins to look for a place to park. The camera leaves him and moves in on the Barbershop.

SLOW ZOOM THRU BARBERSHOP WINDOW:

INTERIOR. THE BARBERSHOP. DAY.

A 40ish BARBER, perhaps gay, is busy clipping the hair of a tall, lanky and nice-looking young man, LAWRENCE. The BARBER is just as busy bending LAWRENCE's ear, and we gather this from the glazed look in the latter's eyes. LAWRENCE has an almost cowboy quality to him, he is well over 6ft tall and his Levied, booted legs stretch out far beyond the barber chair. His face is pale, his jaw long and drooped, his lips thin, his moustache all but curled. He inhales silently as the BARBER jabbars on, and his right thumb inwardly rubs his palm.

BARBER

So the comparison I'm drawing is between New York City and the Amazon. I mean, if you care to see either, you'd better do so now, because I mean, like both of them don't have long to go. We're talkin' here, hey, the death of a city! 'N I don't wanna go into who's to blame for that, which is obvious who is, that element 'n all. So I feel my little shop is right out there on the Laugh Frontier -- (sniggering at his own "witticism")

(continued)

and I do mean laugh, baby, or we're
through cause there's no other way
to take i---

LAWRENCE

(curt)

Look, I'm payin' for the haircut,
not the philosophy.

The BARBER backs off, slightly startled.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE PARKED VAN.

DAY.

GUY, inside the van, is looking back over his shoulder and honking the horn. He is impatient, and we gather he is honking for LAWRENCE. Just then, an attractive YOUNG WOMAN struts down the street alongside the van. GUY alters his hammering on the horn so that now it sounds like little flirtative taps. He makes kissing noises through his puckered lips.

LAWRENCE emerges from the Barbershop in time to see the slightly put-off YOUNG WOMAN strut past the van without dignifying GUY's attentions with a response.

LAWRENCE reaches the van and pulls open the right door. He slides in and grabs an order-sheet lying atop the dashboard.

LAWRENCE

Keep you waitin' for one minute, Guy,
'n you start menacin' the local lovelies.

GUY

Do we look all trim 'n lovely ourselves?
-What's that cheap cologne I'm smellin'?

LAWRENCE

Every dog smells his own. We got three
deliveries to make before 10:00.

Before GUY can respond, a SECOND attractive YOUNG WOMAN appears, minding her own business as she walks past the van. GUY leans over LAWRENCE to coo through the van's right window.

GUY

Ooooooow! Need a lift?

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN

(peering into the front seat)
I don't see no room in there.

GUY

You could sit on my lap.

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN

Nah, I'd only have to bail out when I gained elevation.

GUY

Yeah, otherwise you'd be hittin' yer head up here!
(indicating the van's roof)

SECOND YOUNG WOMAN

(starting to walk off)
Don't give yerself credit for more'n you got, honky!

LAWRENCE bursts into derisive, appreciative laughter.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE STOOP IN FRONT OF "THE VENUS ARMS." DAY.

MARIA has risen from the stoop and is attempting to re-bag some of the trash. She is bent over, but it is too much for her, and she grasps the rim of a trash can for support. It is not nearly supportive enough, and she feels herself slowly slipping to her knees.

CLOSE SHOT of her exhausted, perspiring face. Suddenly, a soft shadow falls across her dejected features. She looks up, attempting to see who it is, but the FIGURE is fractured by the hot sun behind it. Gradually, her eyes clear:

A small, cherubic-like, Hispanic CHILD is standing over her, apparently wondering what she is doing. MARIA stares hard herself at the CHILD, inquisitive and disturbed. She parts her lips as if to speak, but finally doesn't. The CHILD does not move from his position, and MARIA moves back to the stoop where she rests. The CHILD moves only enough to keep his eyes fixed on her. Managing a half-smile, MARIA searches her pockets and comes up with a small handful of new balloons. She picks out a red one and offers it to the CHILD.

MARIA

No. No, not red.
(returning the red balloon to her pocket and finding a green one)
Here.
(he does not respond)
Niño... verde...

The CHILD breaks into soft, rippling laughter and gently accepts the gift. Then he stares at it in his hand, and looks back up at MARIA with a slightly furrowed brow. She suddenly relaxes, and smiles openly.

SHOT of the Sun in whose blinding center we see GUY.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE MOVING VAN.**DAY.**

GUY is steering through traffic with the same concentrated gaze as before: and, as before, his lips are busy moving. But now we can hear him speaking, and we realize that this is some continuation of his previous activity, only audible now. LAWRENCE, in the passenger's seat, is staring ahead and seemingly, though we can't be sure, listening to him. What is curious about this is that, though the situation closely resembles LAWRENCE's being jabbered-at by the goofy Barber, now he appears neither restive nor bored.

GUY

But of course, I want to avoid what you might call a Fatal Victory, you understand, a Winner-Take-Nothing situation. Because if everything goes according to plan with that plan, everybody could be fed, happy, and at peace, while I would end up with nada. Except, of course, the great satisfaction of having saved ---

LAWRENCE

(interrupting; flatly)
Saved the whole world and no one in it.
Slow down, that thrift shop there's the next stop.

GUY slams on the brakes, jolting LAWRENCE forward, and pulls into a vacant spot. They get out, go around to the back of the van, open its rear doors, and remove some cartons. They load almost too many cartons on top of each other for one trip, and head, staggering, to the door of the Thrift Shop. GUY kicks open the door with a football player's power, and shouts out jubilantly to those unseen within:-

GUY

Gifts of the Magi, only two though we be, you lucky fucks!

ANGLE ON the back of a WOMAN who, though she has a jacket thrown over her shoulders, appears to be wearing a Playboy Bunny outfit. She is scrutinizing GUY and LAWRENCE as they make their delivery.

DISSOLVE WITH STRONG AFTERIMAGE OF WOMAN:**EXTERIOR. THE MOVING VAN ON "THE VENUS ARMS" STREET. DAY.**

GUY is dealing with complex traffic now, but from the corner of his eye he is keeping a close watch on the CHILD standing on the sidewalk to his left, holding the inflated green balloon on a long string. GUY is calculating, trying to gauge, whether or not this CHILD, without warning or looking, will dart out suddenly into the street in front of the van.

ANGLE ON the CHILD's face: his smile is Mona Lisa-like now,

unreadable. Incongruously, his face appears against a background of bushes, trees, and flowers: a kind of Garden of Eden through whose spaces the sunlight blinks.

GUY watches the CHILD, his anxiety mounting. Apparently, he sees the CHILD against this Garden background. He blinks in disbelief, then rubs his eyes. In contrast, LAWRENCE's attention is fixed out the right window, realistically, on the bas relief reading, "The Venus Arms." He smirks.

Suddenly, the CHILD releases the balloon. It floats across the street and then sharply upward. GUY's eyes are fixed on the passage of the balloon. It rises along the face of "The Venus Arms" building, moving quickly up toward the top (6th) floor. GUY's POV when the balloon appears to be an arrow shot upward. Then it pulleys past an open window on the 6th floor which frames an indistinct FIGURE gazing out on the scene below.

QUICK SHOT of this FEMALE FIGURE suddenly shading her eyes against the blinding Sun. Then, from her POV:

SHOT of the Sun over which is superimposed GUY driving -- but in his hands are reins, not the wheel, and he is driving a chariot pulled by two white steeds, and not his van.

GUY slams on the brakes, again pitching LAWRENCE forward. Understandably, LAWRENCE is not only annoyed, but shook-up.

LAWRENCE

What the hell's the matter with you?!

GUY

(his gaze cemented upward, and nearly watery)

I just sprung a wooden, man!

LAWRENCE scowls at GUY, then follows his stare upward.

GUY

Eyes as large as Loretta Young's!

LAWRENCE

(dubious that "eyes" are in question)
Yeah, she does for haystacks what coals did for Newcastle.

GUY

Jane Russell did for haystacks what coals did for newcastle.

LAWRENCE

Sorry.

We see the WOMAN in the window at closer range now. It is the chesty ESTRELLA VERDE, a Puerto Rican that 19th Century observers would have said was "of the most prepossessing

appearance." Music from Gluck's Alceste whelms up, because ESTRELLA has seen the Apollonian chariot, and cannot understand what she has seen, or why. We hear MARIA's delighted giggle O.S. Cut music and

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. THE 6TH FLOOR FLAT.

DAY.

ESTRELLA, at the window, has a view of the junk-and-homeless cluttered lot across the street. She sighs deeply.

ESTRELLA

How Byzantine.

Now we see MARIA, ensconced in an armchair and corona of background furnishings suggesting all the exoticism of the West Indies, and then some. She is slicing large lemon wheels for a brew concocted with Midori (green melon liqueur). The elegant cut-glass bottle of green Midori is on the table in front of her, along with an odd, tall tumbler.

MARIA

What?

ESTRELLA

(deciding not to mention what she has just seen)
Um... that rubble, Maria, that no-end of rubble.

MARIA

Rubble, rubble everywhere, nor any crust to eat!

ESTRELLA

Yes. Rubble, rubble without a cause.

MARIA

And so? Here today, recycled tomorrow!

ESTRELLA

To think that I left the green and clean West Indian wood for this!

MARIA

Have patience, Estrella. You are only in this country a short distance.

ESTRELLA

Oh, why did you bring me here? Kicking and shrieking on the Red-Eye Special? I was happy enough in San Juan.

MARIA

Patience, Estrella. Your revenue down there was of dubious source.

ESTRELLA

Meaning?

MARIA

Proper young ladies don't develop such, uh, "athletic" calves.

ESTRELLA

I jog, if you must know! But I don't see that I need dignify such a conclusion on your part with an explanation!

MARIA

Patience, Estrella, patience!

ESTRELLA

Patience! How can I have patience in a city with so brutal a climate! Never in P.R. did I experience a humidity so thus trebled by pollution! It is insupportable, this brown, ash-brash, cinder-sodden, Hades-horrid, defeat-heat humidity!

MARIA

(singing, operatically, to the melody of Gluck's aria, Divinité du Stix)
 "Humidité du Stix!
 Humidité du Stix!
 Ministre de la mort.
 Je n'invoueraï point
 Votre pitié cruelle..."

ESTRELLA turns in disgust back to the window and then first notices GUY, down in the van, gawking up at her.

ESTRELLA

Say! What the hell ---
 (throwing the window fully up and leaning out to shout down with Latin fury:)
 Mira! Que lo que pass aquí? Que est esta? El téatro? Los torros?

ANGLE ON GUY, his body flung across LAWRENCE and his head pushed completely out the van's right window, his eyes fairly popping with enchantment, startled to be discovered. He gulps deeply like Henry Aldrich, perennial 40s teenager.

GUY

Uh-oh.

LAWRENCE

Put your neck back in your pants, Casanova. And hit the peddle, will you -- your Woman in the Window's alerted the Latino front-stoop philosophers!

GUY
 (calling plaintively up to ESTRELLA)
 Siento, Señorita, lo siento ---

ESTRELLA
 (relentless)
 Pato! Puñetta! Tu madré está la mas ---

LAWRENCE
 (yanking GUY back into the driver's seat)
 Say bye-bye, brown eyes ---

A GROUP OF HISPANIC NEIGHBORS, angered by the blanco's cross-cultural temerity, rises from the stoops and moves en masse toward the van. In their wake we notice the WOMAN IN THE PLAYBOY OUTFIT silently witnessing the scene; and, at a safe distance from her, the CHILD, also, is looking on, his smile more ambivalent than ever. He shifts his weight uncertainly.

GUY
 Asta luenes que viené, Joan Bennett!

GUY punishes the accelerator and, as the CROWD begins to pound on the van, it takes off with a screech.

ANGLE ON ESTRELLA in the window with MARIA beside her.

ESTRELLA
 Can you beat that! What a nerve!

MARIA
 So the street is not entirely rubble without a pause, eh, Estrella?

ESTRELLA
 I don't know what you're palavering about!

MARIA
 Then get some glasses. Even from here, that chunk looked cuchifritos to me.

ESTRELLA
 Cause your mind is down there in the garbage gutter clutter with him.

MARIA
 Come, niece, I have prepared a green melon Midori for you. With a special addition of my own -- imported from the Ports of Call in the Antilles, and Anegada. It will cool you off.

ESTRELLA
 I don't need coolin' off!

MARIA
 You don't need, you don't need! What do

(continued)

people know about what they need?...

CLOSE SHOT of the table with the liqueur bottle, tumblers, and lemons. MARIA's bejeweled hands pour her concoction from one tumbler to another and back again. We hear the WOMEN's voices O.S. MARIA fingers a bright lemon wheel before fixing it upright on the intended tumbler's rim.

MARIA

Here. It keeps you young.

ESTRELLA

Indeed!

(her hand clasping the tumbler; then,
half-intrigued)

You wicked woman!

MARIA

What do you know from wicked.....

SUPERIMPOSE, THEN DISSOLVE INTO:

EXTERIOR. A CLOUDLESS SKY ABOVE THE LOWER EAST SIDE. DAY.

The green balloon floating off into the blue sky.

FADE TO:

EXTERIOR. THE MOVING VAN ON OTHER SIDE STREETS. DAY.

GUY is driving at a steadier speed now and talking away at LAWRENCE, but we do not hear what he is saying. Through the front and side windows we see the poverty-filled, blistering day, somewhat more crowded as the morning wears on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR. THE VAN PARKED ON 14TH STREET. DAY.

GUY and LAWRENCE are making a delivery to a bargain-basement clothing store on 14th that has one or two outdoor stands on the wide street in front of it. As GUY balances a huge carton and moves directly toward and then beyond us, we see, in the space that he has cleared, that the WOMAN IN THE PLAY-BOY OUTFIT is standing across the avenue and watching him.

ANGLE ON the carton that GUY is hauling, because that is evidently what the WOMAN is staring down with such interest. The carton has an elaborate logo of mythological themes -- Greek Gods oddly rendered with a Christian cast to them as, for instance, contemporary Greek kitsch might have.

WINDOWWIPE TO:

EXTERIOR. A RUBBLE-STREWN STREET NEAR AVENUE D. DAY.

THE WOMAN IN THE PLAYBOY OUTFIT is picking her way through a lot chaotic with refuse and the dumb, hunched forms of the long HOMELESS. We see the miserable, polluted, and claustrophobic jail-sentence that the city has become at closer range now. By and by, the WOMAN stumbles across a sleeping FIGURE in the rubble. It is an older MAN with thinning hair and a long grey beard. The sleeper does not appear uncomfortable: rather, he seems, or we can convince ourselves that he seems, to be in the midst of a dream that is engaging his unconscious full attention. The WOMAN stirs him and the SLEEPER awakes with a frightened start, his solemn, over-written face coming toward the camera, itself as if from an indecipherable dream.

WOMAN

Dick?

DICK

Arrêtes, merde! alors, quoi?!

WOMAN

Dick?... Dick Trotsky?

DICK

Who ---?

WOMAN

Listen, wake up. I have to tell you something. Something bad.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE OUTDOOR TABLES AT A SPANISH EATERY ON A. DAY.

It is lunch hour and the Eatery is busy and noisy. The sharp clatter of plates and silverware, the swell and plunge of wild laughter and talk are woven through the din of the sidewalk and traffic. GUY and LAWRENCE are at a table, deep in the earnestness of Lower East Side jawing. GUY leans forward on his elbows, as usual, more vibrant, rapid, and involved than LAWRENCE who slouches against his chair's backrest, one long, Levied leg unceremoniously stretched out into the aisle, unintentionally in everybody's way. GUY's over-enthusiasm and LAWRENCE's insouciance is common stance between these two: it is one of those unconscious languages, almost calcified modes of relating that long-time familiars share. For the camera, it becomes a code of continual humor, but not necessarily at the expense of either of them.

GUY

It's been around since the 70s, man, that kind of agit-prop. It's been around, it's stale, Lawrence, I've even seen it in San Franfiasco.

LAWRENCE

What kind of agit-prop?

GUY

That Simple Simon, tribalist-manqué,
does. What I'm talkin' about,
Lawrence, you're not listenin'?

LAWRENCE

I'm listenin', Guy, I'm hungry, that's
all. I said what kind of tragic-agit?

GUY

Where you re-write some ancient flick,
you dig, one you saw a century ago and
can't remember that well. And the way
that you really can't re-write it, or
remember it clearly, comes out funny.
And you just hope that no one recalls
the original.

LAWRENCE

What if someone does?

GUY

Then you claim it's recycled art. You
give it this name, "Recycled Art".

LAWRENCE

The phrase the untalented use for
plagarism.

GUY

Yeah. And keep your fingers crossed
that nobody gets up-tight. Like, for
instance, the guys that give out grants.

LAWRENCE

(chewing on a toothpick, agreeing)
That's bullshit, man.

GUY

I'm tellin' ya, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

And you say you've seen that tired
dreck in San Franfreaksco, too?

GUY

That's how old it is.

LAWRENCE

Ain't real old till it's in Vancouver,
Guy. Or Sidney. What time does the
waitress come on duty?

GUY

Aw, they're busy here, Lawrence, you
see that. Gives us time to talk.

LAWRENCE
 Don't know what you call what we do
 in the van all day.

GUY
 (taking umbrage)
 You're unrehabilitated -- you realize
 that?

LAWRENCE
 I dunno. Bet I'm more rehabilitated
 than Steacy Keach.

SUPERIMPOSE:

The balloon sailing over Avenue A. It twists about as if
 caught in an air-swirl. Then it dips, and re-climbs.

ANGLE ON GUY's face: suddenly, he seems disturbed, a subtle
 agitation only an intimate like LAWRENCE would pick up:

LAWRENCE
 Thinkin' about her?

GUY
 (eyes downcast, tapping a spoon)
 Jesus! how do ya even get an intro
 to an Hispanic girl?

LAWRENCE
 Mayhap, you'll spot a Vassar, Barnyard,
 or even Valley girl tomorrow. -Would
 eliminate stops at the drugstore, too.

GUY
 Don't joke. This is the real thing.

LAWRENCE
 Then what are you stressed out about, Guy?
 True horniness always finds a way.

GUY
 (outraged)
 God, you're trash!
 (shouting)
 TRASH! TRASH!!

MARIA
 (in a waitress' outfit, rushing over)
 Somebody placing an order?

The camera follows LAWRENCE glancing up to a **CLOSE SHOT** of
 MARIA, pen and ordering pad in hand. The Eatery being busy,
 MARIA is in a mood. Her make-up is more conservative now.

MARIA
 Cocktail?

LAWRENCE
You could call it that.

MARIA
Private joke?

GUY
(unbelievably earnest)
Never! You could never call it that!

LAWRENCE
Then keep yer jock-sock on.
(to MARIA)
Um, no, M'am: can't drink on the job.
What's the special?

MARIA
You don't want it.

LAWRENCE
(yanking a menu out of a wire-holder
on the table while shoving the pansy
in a small Perrier bottle under GUY's
nose for his indignation to sniff)
Then, how's about ---

MARIA
That neither.

LAWRENCE
Um, maybe you could suggest something?

MARIA
The restaurant across the street.

GUY
Well, this isn't getting us very far.

MARIA
(first noticing GUY; taken aback, a
radical adjustment)
Oh, say, don't I know jou?

GUY
I don't think so... First time we
came here.

MARIA
Hmmm... I think I have saw jou
before. But never so close up.

GUY
(perplexed, intimidated by her keen
scrutiny)
I --- Well, could be in the neigh-
borhood somewhere. We deliver garments
all over this neighborhood. First time

(continued)

we're tryin' the food here, though.

MARIA

And jou are sure jou ---?

GUY

Well, what do you mean am I sur---?

MARIA

(bending over close to GUY's face)
And so jou sure jou come here to eat?

GUY

But? What other eas---?

MARIA

(taking a folded flyer from her apron
and placing it in front of GUY)
Anybody jou know?

GUY

(unfolding the flyer)
My God!

CLOSE UP of FLYER: it is an ad for a performance at the "El Campy -Si? No!," featuring Estrella Verde, pictured dancing wildly in a white Flamenco gown. LAWRENCE checks it out.

LAWRENCE

This is tonight, huh? Well, we know
where someone's going to be tonight.

MARIA

I am certain we do!

GUY

(paranoid, scrutinizing MARIA)
Who are you?

MARIA

That is for me to know, and jou to
ferret out!

GUY

I shall apply all the resources at
my command.

MARIA

Then keep jour eye on the balloon.

GUY

The bal---?

LAWRENCE

Uh-hum: can we give you our order now?

MARIA
 (pointing above her to a sign
 reading, "P.C. Establishment)
 Don't you see this sign up here?
 This is a politically correct
 place of business. There are no
 orders here.

GUY
 (to LAWRENCE, leaning over the table)
 Who writes her lines?

LAWRENCE
 Then how do we get to eat?

MARIA
 By stating your "need requirements".

LAWRENCE
 Well, then, my need requirement at
 this point in lunchtime, is for a ---

MARIA
 You don't want that neither.

LAWRENCE
 I see... Then if it's not divulging
 some Bureau of Illegal Aliens privileged
 information, might I learn just what is
 my need requirement at the aforesaid
 point in masticating time?

MARIA
 Tripe!

GUY
 (disbelieving his ears)
 Huh?

MARIA
 Soup. Tripe soup.

GUY
 Fine! Make it two!

MARIA
 Gotcha.
 (turning to push her way through the
 crowd toward the kitchen)

GUY
 (shouting after MARIA)
 Oh, and, Waitress - uh - Waiting Woman,
 could you bring me mine in a cup?

MARIA
 (shouting back as she disappears)

(MARIA, continued)

No, I'll bring it in my hands!

GUY

What the hell is eating her?

LAWRENCE

Sure you don't know the broad, Guy?

GUY

I told you, I don't know any Spanish women. Had a real bad crush on Rita Hayworth when I was a kid, she was Spanish, but that's about the extent of it. -And that balloon business!

LAWRENCE

Dunno... Dunno, man... Something's rotten in the barrio of Denmark...

GUY

Hope it ain't the tripe.

GUY and LAWRENCE stare at each other: a look reflecting deep puzzlement, deep paranoia -- and youthful expectation.

DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR. THE MANAGEMENT OFFICE AT THE "EL CAMPY -SI? NO!" DAY.

A middle-aged Hispanic man, JOE, is seated at an impressive desk. He wears a suit, tie, etc., is clearly a man of some money and clout. He appears up-tight when the phone rings. He lets it ring only once, then scoops up the receiver.

JOE

The El Campy -Si? No! -- Joe talkin'.

VOICE

(a male voice, not identifiable, but obviously doing the NPR newscaster)
This is Sylvia Pajoli -- in Rome!

JOE

Not enough to have a code name, it gotta also be a gag! Listen, Sylvia, I sent word for you to call cause the instructions I'm sittin' here all morning 'n waitin' for ain't arrived.

VOICE

You're kiddin'!

JOE

A carton fulla shit from a P.R. confirmation, red ruffles 'n all, came in, but legal loopholes didn't, a-

(continued)

hole!

VOICE

They weren't in a ---?

JOE

I took apart every hem 'n garter, trust me, with a pair o' shears, a razor, thimble, 'n my own two nimble hands, I feel like a Taiwan tart -- or Hong Kong seamstress in Chinatown -- and they ain't here ---

VOICE

But you got the one labled, "Gustave Strubenmüller J.H.S."?

JOE

Exactly! And I told ya what to dig for, dummy, the art-fart on it is so distinctive:- Venus 'n Mars, only they look like Mary 'n ---

VOICE

You're kiddin'!

JOE

Don't "You're kiddin'" me! You gotta be good to sell the baker bread. And I knew you'd fuck it up. You know, if my patience with your boss is wearin' thin, my enchantment with you, personally, went bald ten years ago!

VOICE

But, Joe ---

JOE

Find it, Sylvia, by 6 tonight, which is to say I wanna find it by 6 tonight in my office, or ---

VOICE

I'll be sportin' cement pumps 'n floatin' down the East River without benefit o' Cleopatra's barge.

JOE

You got the pitcha, Pajoli!
(slamming down the receiver)

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. A STREET OFF AVENUE B.

DAY.

DICK TROTSKY and the WOMAN IN THE PLAYBOY OUTFIT are making

it up the street together. They both appear miserable, lost in unhappy thought, and we see now how ragged and worn is the costume the WOMAN wears. Evidently, she has saved it, or even been wearing it since the days when she worked the Playboy Clubs: and, since they all closed quite some years ago, this outfit is outrageously threadbare. Finally, covering a half-exposed breast with her soot-caked hand, she says:

WOMAN

I didn't have the money, man. I
couldn't go in. Ya got a buck, now?

DICK walks on for several yards in silence. Then, suddenly, and unexpectedly, up from some deep torment, he barks at her:

DICK

Lemme alone, will ya?

DICK walks off, leaving the WOMAN deserted and hurt.

CUTAWAY TO MARIA crossing the street. We see her waitress' uniform under her thin jacket. She spots the WOMAN and gasps:

MARIA

Drugs Bunny!

MARIA circumvents DRUGS BUNNY, she doesn't want the latter to see her, and in doing so notices DICK farther up the street. MARIA pauses for a moment, her brow deeply furrowed, and then decides, very cautiously and inconspicuously, to tail DICK.

LONG SHOT of MARIA tailing DICK up another street.

WINDOWWIPE TO:

EXTERIOR. THE OUTDOOR STAND HABERDASHERY ON 14TH ST. DAY.

From a safe distance across the street, MARIA watches DICK go up to the bargain-basement clothing store on 14th Street, and attempt to enter it. A HISPANIC VENDOR, in charge of the outdoor stands, watches him suspiciously, taking in his quite tattered clothes and overall unwashed, homeless appearance. When DICK actually makes for the entrance of the store, the VENDOR becomes outraged and moves in to drive him off:

VENDOR

Hey, jou bum, come on, get the
hell outa here! Come on, get!

DICK is defenseless against the VENDOR's rough manhandling, and, after a few futile protestations from **MARIA'S POV**, he is driven off. MARIA watches, puzzled and very disturbed.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. FIRST AVENUE.

DAY.

GUY, clutching the flyer like it was a \$100 bill, and LAWRENCE are on the busy afternoon avenue. As always when not distracted by a passing sweetie, GUY is deeply and somehow self-involved with his political preoccupations. LAWRENCE, per usual, lends an attentive ear while giving the impression that he is doing anything but:-

GUY

And that's how it is with a lot of activists, legit-stage people, too, for that matter. Didja ever notice?

LAWRENCE

How's that?

GUY

That like actors, OK, or actresses, they start just doin' themselves? Ever notice that? They don't do characters any more, like, say, mid-way in their careers, Gable 'n Crawford 'n all, they start doin' themselves, like that's why they think the public's comin' to see them. And hacks, too, once they're in the limelight, playwrights in particular, all of a sudden they become fancy-pantsy.

LAWRENCE

(looking away)
Oh, yeah?

GUY

It's like they switch from takin' their acts seriously to takin' them-
selves seriously. And I'm sayin'
the politicos we know ain't one bit different. Ever notice that?

A PANHANDLER approaches GUY who barely takes him in.

LAWRENCE

What?

GUY

Ever notice?

PANHANDLER

Could you spare a coupla quarters, sir?

LAWRENCE

What?

GUY

(passing the PANHANDLER by)
Notice it. Didja? ever?

PANHANDLER
 (with that mordancy bums have
 so perfected for the cliché:)
 Have a good day, sir!

GUY
 (quite off-handedly, without ever
 having "noticed" the PANHANDLER)
 No, thanks, I've got other plans.

An evil look remakes the PANHANDLER's completely healthy face;
 GUY and LAWRENCE stroll on by to the van, and go to unlock it.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. THE 6TH FLOOR FLAT.

DAY.

ESTRELLA is in the head, battling the difficult zippers to a
 form-fitting white dress. We see her in the head's large and
 bas relief-framed mirror. MARIA bolts the apartment door from
 within and crosses herself. She has vaulted the six flights.

MARIA
 Estrella! Estrella Verde!

ESTRELLA
 In here.

MARIA
 (her mirrored, breathless image
 appearing in the john doorframe)
 O Woman of the Casino! Thank Dios
 jou are safe!

ESTRELLA
 What's eatin' jou?

MARIA
 Has he been here, yet?

ESTRELLA
 Who? Do my zipper, huh, I'm stuck.
 -I'm not very good at zippers.

MARIA
 (pulling at the zipper, anxious)
 The Catatonic One?

ESTRELLA
 (flat; glassy-eyed with the mild
 hots one feels when being groomed)
 Name?

MARIA
 Dick Trotsky!!

ESTRELLA
 Never heard of him. Comic strips

(continued)

ain't my strong pernt.

MARIA

Then he will be! Will be here!

ESTRELLA

Or political history, for that matter. Specially, Russian.

MARIA

(successful with the zippers;
her hands free to cross herself)
He don't has nothing to do with
comic strips!

ESTRELLA swoops up a tall tumbler of green melon Midori, sweeps on over to an overstuffed, and flounces into it. She removes a green balloon ornament (i.e., instead of an umbrella one) from the drink, pointedly sucking the tip of its stick.)

ESTRELLA

Now, come sit down here, and tell me all about this Dick Trotsky...
-In two minutes flat, cause I'm outa here after that. Gotta see Joe.

MARIA

(in her Voodoo chair, the camera "composing" her for an Oscar-bit)
Once a Russian lookalike and body-in for Trotsky, Dick was shit outa gigs when Trotsky fled to Mejico. So Dick came here, becoming, in short order, a howsomever celebrated, semi-shady gumshoe... He's haunted Amphetamine Gulch 'n other Alphabet City byways and highways for decades, the terror of evil-doers the barrio over, and even them as only appear to do wrong, as who are innocent in their hearts and actual intentions... Truly, truly innocent...

MARIA stuffs three sticks of gum in her mouth. ESTRELLA casts the balloon-ornament on the table, jumps up impatiently, and begins pacing while using a remote to switch channels on the TV while MARIA gabs. We see the rear of TV, not what is on it.

MARIA

Dick Trotsky worked on the famous Erika Monkey Murder Case. That was an awesome case because, although thousands knew of this notorious Green-wich Village murderer's mass

(continued)

slayings, no one would ever do a thing to stop her. And the fiend specialized in offing the very most talented artists, usually men, but not exclusively, in lower Manhattan.

ESTRELLA

You say she was called Erika Monkey?

MARIA

Yes. Comatosed witnesses claimed she donned a monkey suit and imitated the gibber of simians when "writing off," so to speak, her victims.

ESTRELLA

What are all these pastel movies on your TV? -But, tell me, what has this Dick Trotsky to do with us?

MARIA

In the old days, Dick pursued me relentlessly for my Voodoo practice. Like all blancos, he equated Voodoo with the Devil and death, zombie-like though he, himself, appeared. Of course, such notions -- that Voodoo is the Devil's work -- are themselves the Devil's work.

ESTRELLA

And what have the old days to do with us now?

MARIA

Dick's in the barrio, I saw him, and he may have seen me: if so, he'll show.

ESTRELLA

(something on the TV grabs her)
That's it, Maria! look at that! Gilda!
Oh, jes, just what I need for my act!

MARIA

Estrella, you've not heeded a word I ---

ESTRELLA

So he'll pursue us! So what? Men pursue me, pursue me constantly: add Trotsky to that long megilla and it's little skin off my perfect nose! Boy, what a largely unworked mind will find to fill it up! I'm outa here.

ESTRELLA plants the miniature balloon squarely in MARIA's clasped, praying hands, and splits in a huff. MARIA's eyes,

moving to the side of her unturning head, follow ESTRELLA's unseen exit. The door slams shut. Then MARIA's eyes narrow and fix a "Wammie" on the green balloon-on-a-stick in her clasp. She removes the thick wad of gum from her chomping mouth and places it in an ornate candy dish.

CLOSE-UP of the wad of gum which, to a soundtrack of eerie Caribbean drums, and like the transformations of the Wolf Man, shimmers through some overlays and emerges as a small, grey, chewing gum figure of a man with a tiny hairpiece culminating in a wistful "tail," the size of a pin, quickly identifiable as GUY's very hairdo.

MARIA picks up the figure and secures its gum arms and legs to the stick of the balloon. Then, with her power-imbued hand, MARIA spins the balloon about like a top.

CUTAWAY TO the green balloon sailing above the tenements. It spins madly about with GUY hanging desperately onto its string.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. THE MANAGEMENT OFFICE AT "EL CAMPY". DAY.

JOE and ESTRELLA are across the desk from each other in the Management Office. Clearly, their's is a stormy relationship. JOE is twice as old as ESTRELLA, but his hair is the exact same shade as hers, and, at moments, his facial expressions closely resemble ESTRELLA's as well. He is fuming with frustration, and a minority brand of projected self-contempt. She is wearing her white dress over her carefully crossed legs. She carries a beaded clutch-purse under her camera-arm, and sports a smoking cigarette in a long, too-showy holder.

ESTRELLA

And I wanna add a Gilda bit to my act, it'll go nice at the ---

JOE

I don't see how. For a headliner, yer already pushin' it. One eye's bigger'n the other, plus, you've a too-low Spanish brow to ---

ESTRELLA

Those, Joe, are doctorially-alterable details. So I think fifty ---

JOE

No, no, babe, thirty bucks a stint's my final offer. You do only two sets.

ESTRELLA

And two dozen geeses and near assaults between and after them! I call that a full night's work and I get a full fi---

JOE
You statin' you don't accept my
offer?

ESTRELLA
It's not a offer, it's a insult!

JOE
And like you don't get two dozen
of them a night!

ESTRELLA
I don't!

JOE
Oughta perform more often.

The desk phone rings: JOE picks up, growling into the receiver:

JOE
Got a problem?

CUTAWAY TO GUY in a sidewalk telephone booth. He is altogether wild-looking, "possessed," and out of control. Sweat pours down his face, he trembles violently, and shrieks in the phone:

GUY
Estrella Verde?! Please, let me
speak to her! Right n---

JOE
Her contract don't include takin'
calls at this office!
(slamming the phone down)

ESTRELLA
Who ---?

JOE
I'd say, one of your admirers.
And, by his come-on, prob'ly
pretty typical of their ilk!

ESTRELLA
Now wait a ---

JOE
You wait! Johnny O. January head-
lined my last three seasons here,
and he never got more'n twenty-five.

ESTRELLA
Is that so? Well, Johnny O. Janu-
ary eats his salad by the roots now!

JOE
Looked awfully sweet in 'is box,

(continued)

though. But I wouldn't speculate on the real reasons for that boy's hushed-up passin' for all the beans in Boston...

ESTRELLA

Or farts that thereunto accrue!
Now, you pay me fifty a night,
Joe, or I take my floor show to
Access Cable Channel 6 -- uh, 49!

JOE

Look, you creep, you're talkin'
megadoughnuts!

ESTRELLA

Yeah, and my gowns ain't featured
at May's, neither! But I dunno
why-for I'm sittin' here, watchin'
you flap yer tightwad tongue:-
Hell, my time's worth more'n that!
(stomping to the door)
-And ain't one of your eyes
bigger'n the other, too!

JOE

(startled; pause)
Awright, awright, fifty it is...

ESTRELLA

(returning to the desk)
Fifty-five, buster:-
(shaking her clutchbag in his puss)
-and that's for stalling!!

JOE

(slumping in his leather armchair)
Fifty-five! The hooker, uh, hooper
fancies herself Violette Verde!

ESTRELLA

Just Rita Hayworth! -And, next
time, I'll take my calls at this
office, if that don't wipe your
rear too coarsely!!

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE PARKED VAN.

DAY.

GUY is seated at the wheel in a cold sweat. He looks like a near-hospital case. LAWRENCE, next to him, is quite worried.

LAWRENCE

Guy, what's come over you?

GUY

I -- I don't know, man. I feel so... so strange.

LAWRENCE

This Guy's got lead in his pencil, all right. Worst case I've ev---

GUY

(pulling out on the accelerator)
I told you before not to refer so vulgarly to the flight of my reason for this beauty! But guess that's asking too much from a low-life study like you -- a beast to whom all members of the oppos--, I mean, opposite sex are merely ---

LAWRENCE

(the van nearly sideswipes DICK, standing in a trance before it)
Keep your eye on some members of the same sex for now, will you, Guy, even if they are a bit bent forward with time: you nearly sent that gizzer back to his Unmaker. Or didn't you notice?

GUY

I don't think you understand, Lawrence! She's the Linda Darnell of the Lower East Side!

LAWRENCE

But I do: Linda Darnell, a generous amount of American woman...

GUY

And the only in the country you could make believeable as The Holy Mother! Remember, Lawrence, huh?, in "Song of Bernadette"?

LAWRENCE

Aren't you mixing your bloodlines, Guy? Darnell was Native American: the tomb you're smitten with is Hispanic, no? So Rita Hayworth, maybe ---

GUY

Yeah, Rita Hayworth... Listen, low-life, you were named after T.E. Lawrence, right?

LAWRENCE

(indulging GUY's nervous chatter)
Quite.

GUY

So tell me then, why was every man's Christian handle in his day reduced to ambivalent initials? -W.H. Auden, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot ---?

LAWRENCE

And Lawrence of Arabia, T.E. Lawrence? Well, the ambivalence is that his name was Theresa Ellen Lawren---

GUY

(really losing it now)
Wiseass! Wiseass!

LAWRENCE

Witty. -And you? Your mom had hots for Guy Madison, no? and so ---

GUY

What of it? Who had more charm in flicks, bobby sox-charisma, or plain ol' male appeal ---?

LAWRENCE

-- and absolutely no idea of what an intonation is?

GUY

(exhausted; stopping the van; pause)
What of it? Intonation ain't everything. Looking good in bathing trunks sells as many tickets.

LAWRENCE

So it does. Hook a left at the green go there, will you, Mr. Guy Madison?

GUY

What's to the left?

LAWRENCE

The casino your lady-love does the floor show at tonight. Wanna secure your admission now, don't you, and not be left out in the heat? Or hots?

GUY needs no further incentive: he swirves sharply to the left, slamming LAWRENCE against the van door. LAWRENCE groans.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE TICKET WINDOW AT THE "EL CAMPY". DAY.

GUY has just exchanged some bills for two tickets. He looks

at the tickets and inhales philosophically, shaking his head:

GUY

The money goes like it's money.

Without turning around to look at LAWRENCE, GUY hands him one ticket over his shoulder. Then they start down the street. The FEMALE TICKET SELLER leans forward to scrutinize GUY's departing rear. Then she sighs philosophically:

TICKET SELLER

Añe, que boola.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE OUTDOOR STAND HABERDASHERY ON 14TH ST. DAY.

ESTRELLA is rummaging through a pile of second-hand furs at the outdoor stand. She knows exactly what she's looking for, and is quite dissatisfied with every piece she's so far seen. She tosses aside one fur after another, digging deeper and deeper into the heaping box. The less-than-relaxed VENDOR watches ESTRELLA go through the merchandise, catching the items that she tosses over her head in displeasure.

VENDOR

Señorita, can I help jou?

ESTRELLA

Honey, I know exactly the item I'm looking for!

VENDOR

But jou are messing up the whol---

ESTRELLA

I don't need your rummaging instructions! Do jou know what I am looking for? Huh?

VENDOR

No, of course not, Señorita, but if jou tell me, then ---

GUY can be seen strutting up the street, very determinedly on his way somewhere; and for this reason he does not notice ESTRELLA, love of his life. Her eye, however, catches him because his smart pace is cut into by DICK TROTSKY, who clearly is attempting to panhandle him.

CUTAWAY TO GUY who barely glances at DICK, and does not stop.

GUY

God will give you.

DICK

(not a little surprised)
That so?

CUT BACK TO ESTRELLA'S POV of GUY continuing on up 14th St. And, because this is ESTRELLA's smitten vision of him, GUY is shot to particular advantage here, looking good enough to eat. His strut, which outshines Richard Gere and Marilyn Monroe put together, we already know from the Ticket-Window scene works all in his favor particularly when viewed from behind. But right now, ESTRELLA is especially taken with his "tail", which reaches to just above GUY's shoulder blades. Its length causes her to smile for there is something boyish and innocent about it, and something she finds "vulnerable" -- a quality Spanish ladies loudly proclaim irresistible in a man. With one hand frozen before her with a helpless fur in its grip, ESTRELLA picks up on an afterthought to the VENDOR, but as if thinking aloud to herself:-

ESTRELLA

But do I really know what I
am looking for?...

As GUY disappears into the crowd (and there is something disturbingly telegraphed in this disappearance), ESTRELLA returns her attention to the chaotic box of furs. Suddenly, she spots the piece she must have had in mind: a sharply shoulder-padded jacket of long white fur with a full black lining. As she whips it out of the box, we **ZOOM** past her to DICK who, at a safe distance, is staring down her discovery with hawk-eyes.

ESTRELLA

(forking over a bill to the
stressed-out VENDOR)
Jou get ten pesos for this,
poker-puss, not a penny more.
And don't wrap this wrap: my
Bloomy's bag does me just fine.

ESTRELLA dumps the jacket into her Bloomingdale Shopping Bag; then turns, speaking unexpectedly directly into the camera:

ESTRELLA

I shop everywhere, but I buy
on 14th.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. "THE VENUS ARMS" BUILDING.

DAY.

DICK is standing zombie-like before the huge doors to The Venus Arms building. Inexplicably, the name of the building now reads, "The Venus-in-Arms". DICK rings a buzzer on the outside intercom with a long, bony, sharp-nailed finger.

INTERCUT TO THE 6TH FLOOR FLAT where ESTRELLA is modeling her new jacket in a figure-length mirror. She hears the buzzer.

ESTRELLA

Now who the hell... A girl
can't have a second to herself

(continued)

to try out a ...
 (the buzzer again, persistent)
 Damn life's unending interruptions!
 (at her intercom, pressing "Talk")
 Jess?

CUTAWAY TO DICK downstairs, in a **LONG SHOT** that reveals, unseen by him, **MARIA** at the street's corner. She is concealing herself from **DICK**'s view, but watching him with narrowed eyes. **DICK** speaks into the intercom, his voice eery, seer-like:-

DICK
 Susannah?

ESTRELLA
 Who's this?

DICK
 Susannah??

ESTRELLA
 Ain't no Susannah lives here.
 Who are jou?

DICK
 Is Susannah of Jóakim's there?

ESTRELLA
 Huh? I said, Who are jou?

DICK
 Dick Trotsky.

ESTRELLA
 (jarred; then, angry)
 I don't know jou, queen!

ESTRELLA leaves the intercom and returns to her mirror where she stands eyeing but not seeing herself, tentative, nervous.

QUICK TIME DISSOLVE:

INTERIOR. THE 6TH FLOOR FLAT.

DAY.

MARIA, in a near panic, is grilling **ESTRELLA** who, for the first time, appears unsure of herself. The jacket is in her hands.

MARIA
 But that was him, Trotsky,
 Dick Trotsky downstairs!

ESTRELLA
 He announced that much himself.
 But he wanted a Susannah. Only
 Susannah I know was Johnny O.
 January's girl...

MARIA

But there is one in The Bible
-- or Apocrypha.

ESTRELLA

And what's that supposed to
mean -- more Voodoo?

MARIA

Now, don't start ---

ESTRELLA

The Apocrypha? Hummm: he called
her Susannah of Jóakim. That
mean anything to you?

MARIA

I dunno... yet... But if he
thinks The Apocrypha has somethin'
to do with my Voodoo, and has in
his head to pin some weirdo rap...

CLOSE SHOT FROM MARIA'S POV of the jacket or "wrap" shaking in
ESTRELLA's hands. MARIA gasps, and ESTRELLA drops the jacket.

MARIA

"Wrap!"... connected with that
on me...

ESTRELLA

Maria! you're scarin' the shit ---

MARIA

You're scarin' me! I don't know,
but that... that... -Did you
acquire that outspoken accessory
to impress him?

ESTRELLA

"Outspoken acc---"?

MARIA

I asked you something!

ESTRELLA

Who? Impress who? Maria, I've
not an inkling of ---

MARIA

I'll bet you don't. The Don Juan
of the Van!

ESTRELLA

Oh, him.

MARIA

He showed at my restaurant.

ESTRELLA

So?

MARIA

He'll be back. Y si tú quieres este niño, I don't want to be serving him a salmonella melon.

ESTRELLA sits: under the pressure, her attitude switching to angry impatience. MARIA stares at the jacket, thinking hard.

ESTRELLA

Stock those a lot? God, how you can bullshit.

MARIA

Weekends sometimes, when there's more tourists than nebs. But they've nothing to do with our melon Midori.

ESTRELLA

Are you going to tell me what's freaked you about my wrap or not?

MARIA

Are you going to tell me if you've seen this lindo inside the Sun, or not?

ESTRELLA

(taken aback; staring; long pause)
I can't stand him! He's so full of himself!

MARIA

(bursting into mocking laughter)
A good-looking young man should be full of himself. And when he is not, someone else should be!

ESTRELLA stands and strays to the mirror. She searches her reflection uncomfortably, her self-assurance permanently lost.

ESTRELLA

(quietly)
What horseshit. Let's just say, I go for his disco tail.....

CIRCLE OUT TO:

EXTERIOR. A NEWSPAPER AND CIGARETTE KIOSK. DAY.

GUY is buying a pack of cigarettes from an HISPANIC FEMALE VENDOR. He grips the pack in rebellious consternation:

GUY

Two fifty-five?! Did you say,

(continued)

"Two fifty-five"???

FEMALE VENDOR

And jou lucky: I didn't went up
yet.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. A HOMELESS AND RUBBLE-STREWN STREET. DAY.

The CHILD is standing, almost posed, before the camera, and against a background of heaped junk interspersed with the energyless forms of the HOMELESS. He stares us down for a moment, then slowly gives way to his mystic half-smile. Then his face jerks sideward, for he sees DICK TROTSKY and DRUGS BUNNY coming directly toward him. The CHILD skips away. DICK and BUNNY get to the spot where he was standing and bend over the form of a HOMELESS DRAG QUEEN lying in the rubble.

BUNNY

That's Anna Purna, no? She
asleep?

DICK slowly and sadly shakes his head "No". Then he tenderly half turns the recumbent QUEEN toward BUNNY and us: her face is hideously twisted and darkly closed in death.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. ANOTHER RUBBLE-STREWN STREET. DAY.

GUY and LAWRENCE, carrying cartons, are making their way toward a thrift shop. But after establishing this, the camera goes on to hold only GUY in its FRAME. And now, as we listen to his rap, we are sensitive to all the uninflected, but absolutely acceptable, charm that his namesake, Guy Madison, brought to the screen in the 40s:

GUY

I'm tellin' ya, it's the same
establishment crap everywhere.
The less they pay you, the more
they slave you. And, conversely,
the more the pay, like for corpo-
rate heads, the less the work.
And that Honcha I had in San
Franfiasco, the toit who paid me
pennies, was as fat and phony as
Kate Smith! And I'd have belted
her one the day she cut my pid-
dling pay, if I wasn't afraid
she'd have belted out, "God Save
Amer---"

A PANHANDLER interrupts GUY with outstretched palm:

PANHANDLER
Please, sir, I'm short.

GUY
(seeming not to notice the BEGGAR)
I'm tall. And I think it was my
tallness that so threatened Kate.
Not just fat, but short, she was
short, ya understand? so that.....
(etc.)

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. THE MANAGEMENT OFFICE AT "EL CAMPY". DAY.

JOE is writing out checks with barely-concealed displeasure when the phone rings. He picks up, continuing to write while he talks. He opens with an imperative:-

JOE
Rap!
(listening for a moment)
It's 10 past 6, O Moribund One!

CUTAWAY TO AN IN-TIGHT of the CALLER, so that all we see is a handkerchief over the mouthpiece, a few fingers holding the mouthpiece, and at best a section of the MALE CALLER's chin and lower lip. We recognize the voice as the earlier CALLER.

CALLER
Can't get them yet, man...

JOE
Sylvia, a torpedo's on his way ---

CALLER
I can't blow my cover, Joe. No
point in haggling over that:-
you'll lose as much as me!

JOE
How close are you, dead man?

CALLER
Not too. Something unex---

JOE
Whadda ya mean, "Not too"? I
mean to have that real estate, and
I need the loopholes now to ---

CALLER
And I mean to be Mayor of New York
-- but I don't get to be, tonight.

JOE
Your ass is grass, grifter, an' it

(continued)

gets to be the green grass of
Flushing Meadows in one hour
flat if I ---

CALLER

You kiss my covered wagon! I
am a kind of mouthpiece for
bullies like you who buy the
city, same as the Mayor is just
a mouthpiece for the powertrash
who sell it! And without me --
and you won't find my body-in
in the next rent-strike block
you redline on ---

JOE

Less lip, I got a show to op---

CALLER

You're the one gassin' on my
quarter!

JOE

So how close are you, Sylvia?

CALLER

Well, with workin' over selected
freaks who took to squattin' on
that strip, just to start things
off, like with scarin' them off
sans benefit of the loopholes,
not very, like I told ya cause ---

JOE

Cause of WHAT?!

CALLER

Wanna hear me out, or wanna jist
bust a coupla more blood vessels?

JOE

(fuming with frustration)
I said, I'm listenin'!

CALLER

You're gonna find this hard to
believe cause I'm not sure that I
believe it yet, ---

JOE

Today, I'll believe anything: "T"
'n "A" dancers that think they're
ballet stars ---

CALLER

(continuing his thought)

(continued)

-but my roughin' up tactics there today were impeded by some one, or thing -- or animal, man, actual animal, Joe, or person or thing of indiscernible gender in a monkey suit ---

JOE
(losing it)
You yo-yoin' my saggin' set, Sylvia??

CALLER
(continuing; steadily)
-that appeared to be stiffin' all the homeless on this stretch of real estate that you so crave.
(pause)
Or, so it appeared to me.....

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR. "THE VENUS ARMS" BUILDING.

DAY.

DICK, watching and waiting, has taken up a position several yards from the doors to The Venus Arms building. Now, its name reads, "The Venus-With-Arms". Suddenly, the doors fling open and ESTRELLA, wearing the white fur jacket, rushes down the steps. DICK moves haltingly forward with his arm outstretched as if to stop or detain her. But ESTRELLA passes him by, not seeing him, and hops into a waiting cab for which she evidently had called. As the cab pulls away, DICK stands left in its wake: frustrated, forelorn, somewhat lost.

DICK
The hand that rocks the cradle ruins
the world.

Then we see LAWRENCE coming down the street toward DICK. DICK turns slightly and watches him with narrowing eyes. LAWRENCE comes closer, a small hint of a smile gathering at the corner of his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE HOMELESS AND RUBBLE-STREWN STREET.

DAY.

MARIA has found the lot that Dick and Bunny recently investigated. She discovers ANNA PURNA'S CORPSE and very quickly evaluates the crime without stooping or touching the BODY. Instead, trying hard not to attract any attention, she looks about at THREE other recumbent HOMELESS PERSONS nearby. She moves cautiously and silently through their huddle. Then she pauses while the camera studies her weary face.

MARIA
Murdered. All of them.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE VAN DOUBLE-PARKED ON A BUSY STREET. DAY.

LAWRENCE is seated in the parked van. GUY, in a huff, is crossing the street to reach it. He sticks his head inside, waking, or, at least, rousing LAWRENCE who is sleepy-eyed.

GUY

So here you are! Where the harlot were you?

LAWRENCE

Whadda ya mean, here I am? Where the tart did you expect me to be?

GUY

Here. Right here!

LAWRENCE

So, Einstein?

GUY

But I been searchin' all over the Lower Beast Side for you!

LAWRENCE

If I'm supposed to be here, what the who-er are you searchin' the whole Lower Beast ---

GUY

But you just slipped away...

LAWRENCE

Didn't think you noticed, man. Actually, I was only looking out for your own good ---

GUY

And how's that? It's gettin' dark 'n I killed a whole half-hour ---

LAWRENCE

Guy, I'm serious. If I stuck to your elbow like a band-aid, sooner or later I'd run the risk of interruptin' your soliloquies. 'N you might suffer a post-adolescent stroke that way.

GUY

(angry, getting into the van: but the mere mention of soliloquies causes him to resume his last:)
Which wouldn't be nearly as massive

(continued)

as the one I'm likely to when
I'm left danglin' mid-notion by
a butthole who dropped down a
manhole! Cause the notion I'm
workin' on, is a brush fire in
Thompkins Square Park ---

LAWRENCE

Figure to fix a coupla dozen
shitass pigeons as Thompkins
Square Squab?

GUY

-when the Parks Commissioner,
corrupted crud-politico, makes
his big speech there next
Sunday. That oughta ---

A HOMELESS MESS sticks his head in the van, right in GUY's face:

HOMELESS MESS

Hey, you got the time?

GUY

Watches cost a buck fifty!
(pulling out with a screech)
-that oughta heat him up to
what's really going down down
here!

LAWRENCE

You telling me you're getting
into pyromaniacal anarchy?

GUY

And why the hooker not?

LAWRENCE

Takes some background in pro-
fessional radicalism for that.

GUY

You saying I am not a profes-
sional radical?

LAWRENCE

Does a drag queen stay home
Halloween?

GUY

I can't see how you can say I'm
not a professional! I write on
walls!

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. THE SIDEWALK, OUTSIDE A LIQUOR STORE. DAY.

GUY is all but pacing with impatience on the sidewalk outside a liquor store. He is smoking, and finding the taste of the cigarette disagreeable. Finally, LAWRENCE emerges from the store, carrying a large paper bag. GUY glares at him.

LAWRENCE

Sorry: I just had a real bad hankering for this.

GUY

What?

LAWRENCE

(pulling a large Midori Melon bottle half out of the bag)
This, and some mixer.

GUY

I can't believe you're wasting our time now, buying liqueurs. -I didn't even know you liked liqueurs.

LAWRENCE

Just this one. The melon taste. Green melon. It's Spanish.

GUY

(suddenly upset, not knowing why)
Green mel---?

LAWRENCE

Something wrong? Hey, man, you're sweating like before! You gonna go nuts on me, again?

GUY

No, I -- I -- hell! I've never felt this strange -- way be---

As if out of nowhere, an incredibly beat-up looking ELDERLY MAN appears, even more down-and-out, wretched, and emaciated than the Homeless Person in the previous scene. Although LAWRENCE is obviously holding a purchase from the liquor store, the ELDERLY MAN narrows in directly, and only, on GUY. GUY, completely immobilized, stares at him as at an apparition.

ELDERLY MAN

Apollo, please, can you lend me two dollars? I got to get to ---

GUY

No.

(pause; hypnotically focused on the MAN; then, with a gravity we do not recognize as his)
Where you're going, you won't need any money.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR. ANOTHER STREET.EARLY EVENING.

MARIA is making her way along the street. She has a very determined look, knows exactly where she is going and why. The van rounds the corner and moves down the street in the same direction that MARIA is walking. GUY is bleary-eyed.

LAWRENCE

Feel better?

GUY

Little bit.

LAWRENCE

(noticing MARIA; off-handedly:)
Know that broad?

GUY

(glancing at MARIA, his vision
blurred; squinting)
No, should I?

LAWRENCE

Our waitress -- this afternoon
-- for lunch.

GUY

For Chrissake, so she is.

LAWRENCE

Not very observant, are you?

GUY

I didn't recognize her out of
uniform. That a tragedy?

LAWRENCE

But I did recognize her.

GUY

So you're observant. So what?

LAWRENCE

Had to be, most of my life.
Didn't have dough from Daddy to
see me through more'n half my hard
times like some people we know.

GUY

Wonder whom ya might be makin' a
inpolite reference to?

LAWRENCE

Some people who are only half con-
scious half the time. But I guess

(continued)

when some people are Apollo,
they don't have to be more'n
that. -Yet, I can't say that
really bothers hard-boiled me
-- anymore.

GUY

I wish you'd stop referrin' to
me as "some people".

LAWRENCE

Or Apollo? Drop me at my place,
will you, I wanna change for
tonight.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. ESTRELLA'S DRESSING ROOM AT THE "EL CAMPY". NIGHT.

ESTRELLA, wearing a dressing robe over her gown for the evening, is locked in dead-earnest conversation with MARIA:

ESTRELLA

But you don't mean you think Dick
is doing all of these murders?

MARIA

Why not? In his day, Trotsky had
a rep as the toughest prick in the
precinct. Oh, yeah, girl! And
when he couldn't pin the rap on
the actual guilty, he executed
them himself, instead. Or so the
word went in Alphabet City.

ESTRELLA

And I suppose the word of Alphabet
City is money in the bank! Is that
why everyone there is so filthy
rich?

MARIA

Be surprised how many millionaires
live, under cover, by the Park.

ESTRELLA

But then, why didn't you go public
back when ---?

MARIA

Because Dick knew so thoroughly and
evidentially about my powerful
preparations, not exactly legal
themselves. In fact, quite the
opposite, given the honky legisla-
tion in this third-world state.

ESTRELLA

Then you are a criminal yourself,
and had the nerve to drag me out
of San Juan, and ---

MARIA

He even wormed the recipe for
that Midori Melon you love so
much out of a customer of mine
who went bananas when I substi-
tuted a banana for the plantain
in the one I made for ---

ESTRELLA

I'm getting a headache. I have
two sets to do tonight, and I'm
breaking in new material, and
here you are, upsetting me wi---

MARIA

You are not to perform tonight.
You are in danger!

ESTRELLA

You are in danger if you try to
stop me! Men paid good money to
see me dance at The El Campy -Si?
No! tonight and see me dance at
The El Campy -Si? No! tonight
they will!

MARIA

Then see you dance tonight they
will for the last time, dummy!

ESTRELLA

(grabbing MARIA by the shoulders)
How do you know that?! How do ---

MARIA

Stop shaking me, will you, I just
ate. Mystics know! And disaster
dogs your dancing steps this ---

ESTRELLA

Disaster dogs the studs you make
castrati, and virgins pock-faced
pootas, that's all! Tonight will
be my last dance -- because tomor-
row I fly to P.R.! Now, get the
hell out of this dressing room or
tomorrow they'll find you with
the rest of Dick's dead dreck!!

ESTRELLA opens the door to her dressing room and throws MARIA
out. Then she slams the door shut and stands her back against
it, breathing hard. A second or two later, there is a gentle

tapping on the door. ESTRELLA opens it in a fury, expecting to find MARIA.

MEDIUM SHOT of ESTRELLA only. Her look softens. Evidently, her VISITOR is not MARIA. She recoups a semblance of her self-possession, clears her throat, and all but purrs:

ESTRELLA

Jess?

We see a MAN'S SUITED HAND holding an elegant, cut-crystal glass of green liquid enter the **FRAME**: offering her the drink.

ESTRELLA

Midori! My drink!

VISITOR

(O.S.)

With bitters and aromatics,
culled from The Antilles. And
Anegada.

ESTRELLA

Oh. How did jou know?

VISITOR

(O.S.)

Heard you tell Joe as much,
this evening.

ESTRELLA

And how did jou know that's
exactly what I needed, I mean,
wanted, right now?

VISITOR

(O.S., with great charm)
Gentleman's intuition.

ESTRELLA

(taking the drink)
Do I know jou?

VISITOR

(O.S.)

Don't think so.

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. THE MAIN NIGHTCLUB ROOM AT THE "EL CAMPY". NIGHT.

The large Nightclub Room with crowded tables around a spacious dance floor. Hispanic background music. After a quick, clear **ESTABLISHMENT PAN** of the place, we **CUT TO TWO** chatty SPANISH LADIES, enjoying themselves at a table full of drinks.

SPANISH LADY

No, no, sweetheart, get yourself

(continued)

someone young! After all,
you're only as old as the
dick you suck.

The TWO SPANISH LADIES burst into loud, semi-drunk laughter.

CUTAWAY TO the bar that lines one side of the dance floor. There, TWO ELDERLY LECHEROUS GENTLEMEN are tanking up while awaiting the show. The FIRST ELDERLY LECHER is played by the same actor who plays the ELDERLY MAN (page 40). The SECOND ELDERLY LECHER is played by the same actor who plays DICK. But now, although we easily recognize these two actors, they are well-dressed in expensive suits, and seem quite relaxed:

FIRST LECHER

You mean the bitchy one?

SECOND LECHER

Yeah, she's mistaken her cunt
for her mouth, just cause it's
got teeth in it.

The FIRST LECHER responds with a gentlemanly chuckle to his companion's "wit". The BARTENDER refills their glasses.

CUTAWAY TO a table with THREE DRAG QUEENS, not quite as elegant as they imagine themselves to be. These DRAG QUEENS are not drinking, but they are smoking like a tenement on fire:

FIRST DRAG QUEEN

(to the THIRD QUEEN, across the
table and opposite of her:)
And then she claimed that I was
turning 40. But, as you well
know, I'm 22 years old, and see
no reason to get any older!

SECOND DRAG QUEEN

(to the THIRD QUEEN; agreeing)
Plus, she hasn't the talent in a
nail paring of my left pinkie!

THIRD DRAG QUEEN

Oh, I don't know why you two fruits
put on airs: so far as I can see all
your friends are cleaning ladies!

FIRST DRAG QUEEN

Ah, go sleep on a unmade Murphy bed!

CUTAWAY TO the entrance to the Nightclub Room where we see MARIA in an evening dress, holding a large bouquet of green mint and sweet-basil. GUY and LAWRENCE are at the point of entering the Room. They are both dressed in fine suits, but have that delightfully jarring look about them that young men with long hair, beards, earrings, etc., have when wearing

suits. Suddenly, MARIA steps out into their way, and begins an incantation. GUY and LAWRENCE are startled, half-frozen:

MARIA

Verde que te quiero verde,
verde viento, verdes ramas.
Los dos compadres subieron.
El largo viento dejaba
en la boca un raro gusto
de hiel, de menta y de albahaca.

MARIA hands GUY the bouquet which he, mesmerized, accepts. Then, he appears to snap out of it and, with that awkward embarrassment people display when unexpectedly confronted by the insane, he remarks to LAWRENCE, recognizing the verses:

GUY

Well, I guess if it's worth
reading, it's worth memorizing.

GUY and LAWRENCE step up into the club, but MARIA continues to incant after them. They try to pretend they don't know her.

CUTAWAY TO a slightly raised green balustrade at one far end of the dance floor, where we see ESTRELLA standing and looking out over the scene beneath her. She appears to be waiting, her face noticeably colorless, her long hair strangely black. The camera fixes on her while we hear MARIA O.S.:-

MARIA

"¡Compadre! ¿Dónde está, dime,
dónde está tu niña amarga?
¡Cuántas veces te esperó!
¡Cuántas veces te esperara,
cara fresca, negro pelo,
en esta verde baranda!"

CUTAWAY TO GUY and LAWRENCE arriving at their reserved table, which is situated next to the one where the TWO SPANISH LADIES are chatting. As GUY pulls out a chair to seat himself, an old GYPSY PATRON knocks into him, causing him to drop the green bouquet to the floor. He looks down at it, all but dismayed. Then he looks at the GYPSY, who now suddenly appears young and beautiful. She laughs wildly, mockingly. GUY blinks in disbelief. Then he bends over to retrieve the bouquet and, as he does so, his rear end comes right in line with the FIRST SPANISH LADY's face. Her eyes pop, and she turns to her FRIEND:

SPANISH LADY

Now, that's what I call butt
for the grace of God!

For some reason, the bouquet appears to be stuck to the floor, and GUY cannot dislodge it. He gives up with a shrug, everything this evening, and indeed this afternoon as well, seems to be crazy: including the vulgarity of the LADIES at the adjoining table. He sits, and tries to make light of matters,

starting, at this point, to imagine he's having a breakdown:

GUY

That, uh, waitress... Who'd believe a bonzo like that could hold down a busy lunchtime gig?

LAWRENCE does not respond: his eyes are turned away toward ESTRELLA on the balustrade. Uncomfortably, GUY follows his gaze: only to discover that ESTRELLA, shadowed at her waist, and seemingly dreaming, now has green hair, green flesh, and pupils of cold silver.

CLOSE SHOT of GUY. He rubs one eye like a little boy. When his hand comes away, a tear gathers on the lid and runs down his cheek. He makes no attempt to dry it.

CUTAWAY TO the TWO LECHERS who are also looking at ESTRELLA.

FIRST LECHER

They say it was "a snatch," if you'll excuse my choice of phrase. She didn't come to New York willingly.

SECOND LECHER

That right?

CUT BACK TO GUY doing his best, unsuccessfully, to sound normal.

GUY

A club chuck fulla multi-culties 'n p.c. fascists! Boy, had I half the arsenal of a Sartre or de Sade, what I could do with a scene like this!

LAWRENCE

And had we half the years of a Methusalah, we could try getting through it. Speaking of which, you light up another nail tonight 'n you'll have half the years of a Byron or Rudolph Valentino.

GUY

And you'll live to see a hundred 'n seven, be legally blind, totally deaf, not able to get to the john san(s) crappin' yer jeans ---

A COCKTAIL WAITRESS looking like Louise Fletcher in "Cuckoo's Nest," serves LAWRENCE a Perrier and GUY a Martini.

GUY

-be nursed by Louise Fletcher constantly rippin' you off, not be

(continued)

able to eat more'n a jar of
Bettle-Nut or recognize yer own
kids, experience too frequent
urination and infrequent defe-
cation, not be able to scare
up your bridges or tupé, under-
stand TV movies, the news, or ---

LAWRENCE

And all because I don't smoke.

GUY

I never noticed it before, but
you don't drink, neither, Mr.
Midori Liqueur-buyer.

CUTAWAY TO a commotion at the Nightclub's door. ATTENDANTS
are trying to block DICK, looking disheveled and filthy, from
gaining entrance. Taking command, MARIA pulls the ATTENDANTS
apart. More certain of herself than we have ever seen her
before, she now shows no hesistancy or fear in front of DICK.

MARIA

All right, boys, I know him,
I'll take care of this...
Good to see you, Dick.

DICK

(staring hard at her; quietly)
Maria... I need...

MARIA

(leading DICK away from the en-
trance to the garden outside)
You have something to tell me.
Let's talk by that fig tree...

CUTAWAY TO the dance floor and JOE in tux, with a mike.

JOE

Señoras, Señoritas, y Señori:-
Wild and wicked Estrella Verde
-- in a number choreographed
for her by Umgowah Champion!

From within the cluster of tables, ESTRELLA voluptuously and
energetically strikes out toward the dance floor. She wears
the form-fitting, black satin gown sported by Rita Hayworth
in the "Put the Blame on Mame" routine in Gilda. With a
cigarette in her right hand, she drags the white fur jacket
in her left; and, exactly as Rita did on her passage to the
spotlight, disguards the jacket in a swirl

On the floor directly beside LAWRENCE.

THE BAND blasts out a hot beat of bumps 'n grind. GUY's poor

heart all but stops as he follows ESTRELLA's progress to the center of the Club where, tossing her hair about à la Rita, she waits for her cue-note.

CUT BACK TO the garden. MARIA is shaking DICK by the shoulder.

MARIA

The blond one? Looks like a cowboy -- and blond as Sonja Nazi Henie?

DICK

Yes. And then I told him about your brews, the green one especially, that bittered liqueur ---

MARIA

Oh, no. Oh, Dick, I'm not sure the blond can be... should have been made a confidant.

DICK

And how was I to know that?

MARIA

Good God! Oh, my! What else did you let him in on?

CUT BACK TO ESTRELLA launching into her act with the hot spot and all eyes fixed on her. The TWO LECHERS are quietly panting, the THREE DRAG QUEENS studying her critically, and the SPANISH LADIES cheering her on. JOE watches from the side.

ESTRELLA

(singing)
 He was a tatoed hunky --
 But a yuppie:- not a punkie!
 A well-healed 'n hung spunky
 With a tatoo of a monkey
 On his heart-shaped dunkie
 That could interlink well,
 That would stretch 'n shrink well:
 Till he dipped that chunky
 Fulla milk gone funky
 In the Comp'ny inkwell!

CUT TO LAWRENCE. Inconspicuously, he lifts the jacket from the floor and pulls it under the tablecloth and onto his lap.

CUT BACK TO MARIA and DICK standing under the fig tree.

MARIA

All by herself?

DICK

No. I'm certain Julius No-dick is with her. He helps her out,

(continued)

like years ago.

MARIA

I can't believe she's still
alive. Dammit!

DICK

Surprised me, too. Depressed
me.

MARIA

But who are these ~~three~~ bas-
tards working for?

DICK

Someone who's cutting quite a
Citygate with someone I'm afraid
you know a long time, Maria.

CUT BACK TO ESTRELLA gyrating with seductive heat. She peels
off an arm-length black glove and throws it to the table of
DRAG QUEENS. **GUY** is now stressed-out by her raunchiness.

ESTRELLA

(singing and dancing)

O my chummy, yummy honey
Was so loaded down with money
'N so hung it wasn't funny:
But he dipped his chunky trunkie
In the Comp'ny inkwell!
How that swell-headed swell
Did contract 'n shrink well!

CUT BACK TO MARIA and **DICK**, both lost in depressing thoughts.

DICK

No way, I didn't know till a
coupla hours ago. Drugs Bunny
put me on to it all. And she
got it from a kid.

MARIA

Kid?

INSERT ON the **CHILD**, a **CLOSE SHOT** of his enigmatic, almost
laughing face. Then he steps off the curb into traffic, with
the green balloon on a string: that seems to lead and pull him,
rather than the reverse. We hear **DICK VOICE-OVER**:

DICK

Yeah, you've seen him? Looks
like a baby Ganymede. Had a
big green balloon this morning.

MARIA

Tell me!

CUT BACK TO ESTRELLA teasing the ringside tables. Again, she "works" her hair, sweeping it up back, over her head.

ESTRELLA
(singing and dancing)
Then that monkey on his dunkie
Ran one up upon a junkie ---
(etc.)

FIRST DRAG QUEEN
I believe I sore this bitch sing
in the Sour-Cream Pyrenees.

THIRD DRAG QUEEN
(sardonic)
Plays to Midwesterners, does she?

SECOND DRAG QUEEN
(straight; too dumb to get it)
Oh, really! Barbara Mandrell
she ain't!

CUT TO MARIA, as if out of nowhere, standing behind the vacant chair between GUY and LAWRENCE. She can see that LAWRENCE has placed the bouquet over the fur jacket on his lap: to hide it.

MARIA
This chair taken?

LAWRENCE
Why, no, it's still here.

MARIA
(ignoring the crack; sitting)
You pregnant?

LAWRENCE
(referring to ESTRELLA:)
No, I'm just happy to see her.

MARIA
I'll bet. But seein' as how
raunchy this rattrap is, whadda
ya got to hide your happiness
for?

LAWRENCE
Don't have to be vulgar: when in
Rome do better than the Romans did.

MARIA
Be a first for you!

LAWRENCE
(steadily; tapping a finger)
Maybe.

GUY
 (vexed; his lashes watery)
 Could you two shut up? Show
 a little respect!

MARIA
 (lowering her voice)
 And how'd you get that bouquet
 up off the floor?

LAWRENCE
 There some problem with that?
 Used my ass-wipe hand.

MARIA
 You ain't hidin' no hard-on ---!

LAWRENCE
 We should be quiet 'n watch the
 lady's number.

MARIA
 Cut the crap, cowboy! I must
 put my hand right now on some-
thing that's been over the lady's
 heart in the last few minutes!

LAWRENCE
 Try Guy here: he's been hovering
 as close to over her heart all
day long as any thing's likely
 to have.

MARIA
 (urgently; losing control)
 Something that's still warm from
 being over her heart, you crud!

LAWRENCE
 Now, hold on here ---

GUY
 What is the problem?!

MARIA
 Please, you must help me get th---

CUT TO ESTRELLA who is winding up a frenetic dance-interlude:

ESTRELLA
 (singing)
 How that monkey on his dunkie
 Goin' in so fulla spunkie,
 Fulla macho
 'N gaspacho,
 Then withdrew --
 And this is true!:-

(continued)

A blue-black shrunkie
With his tail between his rumpie!

CUT TO MARIA struggling with LAWRENCE. The bouquet falls off his lap, revealing the jacket beneath it. GUY is nonplussed.

MARIA

Give me that jacket! -Apollo! --
Help me! That's Estrella's wrap!
This crook ---

CUT TO ESTRELLA who suddenly goes berserk. She peels off her remaining arm-length glove and, with a wild expression, tosses it to THE FIRST LECHER. The AUDIENCE applauds.

SECOND LECHER

More! More!!

ESTRELLA rips off her gold necklace and diamond bracelets and flings them to the AUDIENCE, now acting boisterous and indecent. JOE, drop-jawed, is incredulous; and immobilized.

ESTRELLA

I'm not very good at zippers.
But maybe if I had some help!

BOTH LECHERS

(scrambling onto the dance floor)
Me! Hey, I'll help! Hey, honey!
(etc.)

GUY

(gripping MARIA's arm)
Quick, tell me, what is this?

MARIA

(frantic)
My sorcery gone awry! Cause your
friend here dropped an alchemous
lint in Estrella's Midori! And
she'll go completely mad, unless
I -- unless I can rub that wrap ---

GUY

What wrap, Señora? Talk, hurry ---

The LECHERS have reached ESTRELLA who is transported, ecstatic, and insane: like Susannah hedged-in by the Elders, as they, taking full advantage of her, begin unzipping her gown. JOE finally gets hold of himself and moves toward the huddle.

MARIA

She is spellbound, Guy! She'll
be ruined, but -- and your buddy's
ripped off her jacket I need to ---

GUY and MARIA turn, simultaneously, to face LAWRENCE. But:

GUY and MARIA

Gone!

GUY spins about and heads for the dance floor. MARIA starts out after him. The BAND, enjoying the fracas, plays louder.

MATCH CUT OF ESTRELLA as the Apocryphal Susannah in her bath, being stripped of her sheer bathing gown by the Elders, played by the TWO LECHERS. A kind of unholy, demented, and entirely painful Descent from The Cross. The MUSIC is now from Gluck's Alceste. **HOLD UNTIL:** The Descent becomes The Violation.

MATCH CUT OF the actual ESTRELLA and BOTH LECHERS in their torturous positions of The Violation. Then JOE jumps into the scene, yanking off the FIRST LECHER, who is closest in reach.

JOE

All right, you pigs've had
your fun!

GUY arrives now, in time to punch out the remaining and more obstinate SECOND LECHER. He goes sprawling across the dance floor. MARIA gets there, and she and JOE carry off ESTRELLA, who is quite crazed and persists in lunging whorishly at the rowdy MEN blocking their exit. For the hell of it, SEVERAL DRUNK MEN decide to jump the already-embattled GUY.

JOE and MARIA pull ESTRELLA onto the green balustrade.

ESTRELLA

(to MARIA)
Now they all know what I am!
Exactly what you always accuse
me of being! Me, your own
niece, is a goddamn ---

MARIA

(smacking ESTRELLA's face)
Not my niece! Not my niece!
My daughter!!

JOE

Your ---
(grabbing MARIA by both arms)
Maria!

MARIA

(shocked; staring into his face)
Joseph!

JOE

(long pause; wounded)
Estrella is your daughter?...

As ESTRELLA backs off, MARIA, exhausted, finds a seat by the

railing. She looks for a moment at the wall. Then at the floor. She stares at her empty hands.

MARIA

And yours.

CUTAWAY TO GUY, who has vanquished his ATTACKERS, looking about bewildered. Where have ESTRELLA and MARIA disappeared to? He rushes through the entrance into the garden, searching for them.

GUY

Estrella, where are you?...
Estrella!

The green balloon bobs in a breeze and circles low in the night sky. Then it slips down through the branches of the fig tree under which GUY is forlornly standing. It comes to settle at his feet. He stares at it.

When he looks up, ESTRELLA is stumbling by, close to him. Her gown is torn, her face wasted. She mumbles, as in a trance.

ESTRELLA

But I was never, never what she thought. She had no reason to bring me here... to pillory me. And make me a clown for drunks.

GUY stands transfixed as ESTRELLA ambles past him. Then he makes a feeble, but futile, effort to step after her: he stops because he would step on the balloon.

THE CAMERA RIDES DOWN GUY'S LEGS TO the balloon. It is deflated. It turns from green to red.

CROSSFADE TO:

INTERIOR. THE MANAGEMENT OFFICE AT THE "EL CAMPY". DAY.

JOE and LAWRENCE are seated in the office, with Estrella's fur jacket spread out on the desk between them. JOE is grim-faced, his eyes blank. LAWRENCE watches him intently, nervously.

JOE

You see -- me, the father...
Responsible for doing in my
own daughter... They'll be
putting her away, now. Yeah.
Some place upstate.

LAWRENCE

But, Joe, there was no way
for me to know that.

JOE

I could say the same! Yet I
should have. Should have

(continued)

kept up with Maria: would've,
then. Oh, dear God...

LAWRENCE

Remorse never put lettuce in
a refrigerator. Swiss, or
otherwise.

JOE

(staring hard at LAWRENCE)
We're talkin' blood! -And
maybe yours, Sylvia. As well!

LAWRENCE

(pause; a shade more anxious)
But look what's here. And
you'll come to appreciate it
more with time...

CLOSE-UP OF LAWRENCE's hand razoring open the stitching under
the jacket's collar. His fingers feel about inside the collar,
and then remove a small, red fold.

LAWRENCE

(O.S.)
It's reusable, so to speak.
Make up a bit for the price
you've paid.

LAWRENCE opens the fold: it is about the size of half a page,
and hands it to JOE.

LAWRENCE

The legal loopholes, so large
and so legal you'll have every
panhandler and homeless spook
off that real estate by to-
morrow:- with most of them
still breathin'.

JOE

What's left of them, you mean.
(pause; his look piercing)
Bastards like you really throw
me.

LAWRENCE

Now, wait a ---

JOE

What do you make of it, cowboy?

LAWRENCE

(pause; smiling, peculiarly)
The real estate business, man?
You're in it, Joe... And when

(continued)

Johnny O. January found out
how deep, didn't bother you
one bit, then, icin' him.

JOE

His girl tell you that?

LAWRENCE

Susannah? Might have...
Doesn't matter. She's nuts,
anyway, you know.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR. THE EAST SIDE OF BROADWAY BET. 8TH & 9TH. DAY.

MARIA and DICK are making their way slowly toward Broadway and 8th. The sidewalk is busy and we hear the loud street sounds, but oddly intercut with mellow, almost inaudible strains of Gluck. They reach the northeast subway entrance, and pause.

DICK

And I'm all but inactive now.

MARIA

(carefully)
Are you in a depression?

DICK

Don't even mention the word.
The word's almost enough...
to induce one.

MARIA

Sorry.

MARIA turns and starts down the steps. DICK calls her back up:

DICK

Hey, what makes you say that?

MARIA

(returning to him; tenderly)
Because we're at the age when
you realize it hasn't been all
we had thought it would. And
that there isn't much left to
go... So we can slow down.

She holds his hand. They stand silently together for a moment, and smile at each other.

DICK

Yeah. Bye.

MARIA lifts her fingers in a slight "See you" gesture. Then

she turns from him and goes down the stairs into the subway.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXTERIOR. A LUXURIOUS GARDEN IN ALPHABET CITY. DAY.

In a complete change of mood as startling as the one climaxing Portrait of Jennie and, like it, **SHOT THROUGH A GREEN FILTER**, we move with a **SLOW TRACKING SHOT** that follows SUSANNAH into a tangle of trees, vines, shrubs and blooms that might be some garden in a lush Levantine valley. Actually, it is a hastily-fabricated "meditation area," one of several, that are constructed on empty lots in Alphabet City. SUSANNAH is played by the same actress who plays ESTRELLA, and she is wearing the same sheer bathing gown that we saw in the earlier Match Cut. SUSANNAH is accompanied by her TWO MAIDS, in Biblical robes: they are played by the same actresses who play the TWO SPANISH LADIES. All seem relaxed, joking amongst themselves; but the Sun is hot today, and they are perspiring.

SUSANNAH

Go lock the garden doors, and
bring me soaps and olive-oil,
so that I may bathe.

The TWO MAIDS leave SUSANNAH who gazes at her reflection in a small fountain.

CUT TO TWO ELDERS, in Biblical dress, spying on SUSANNAH with lustful eyes. The **FIRST ELDER** is played by the actor who plays the **ELDERLY MAN** and **FIRST LECHER**; the **SECOND ELDER** is portrayed by the one playing **DICK** and the **SECOND LECHER**. They rush out from their hiding place in the trees and surround SUSANNAH.

FIRST ELDER

Look! The garden doors are
shut now, and no one can see
us! Hence, listen, Susannah:

SECOND LECHER

We are burning with desire
for you ---

FIRST LECHER

-so consent and yield to us!

SECOND LECHER

If you refuse, we shall give
evidence against you, and
say that there was a...

FIRST LECHER

-a young man with you, and
that was why you sent your
maids away!

SUSANNAH

What young man?
 (Looking directly at the Sun)
 There is no way out for me!
 If I yield to these Elders,
 the penalty is death. And if
 I do not, they shall have me
 at their mercy!

BOTH ELDERS

Choose! Susannah!

SUSANNAH looks away toward a tabernacle situated behind them. Through its rose-trellissed entrance we can see a statue-like FIGURE of the Holy Mother, played by the actress who plays MARIA. The CHILD, in a short tunic, and looking like those chubby putti that often clasp the legs of a classical statue, is embracing her ankles. He wears, as always, his ambivalent smile. SUSANNAH closes her eyes.

SUSANNAH

I have chosen: I will not do
 it! For it is better to be
 at your mercy, than to sin
 against God.

LONG SHOT OF the tabernacle. Through its entrance we see MARIA as the Holy Mother, cruxified upon a Cross. The CHILD is staring off to the side.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTERIOR. THE STOOP OUTSIDE A RUN-DOWN BUILDING. DAY.

GUY and LAWRENCE are seated opposite each other on the stoop of a tenement standing alone amidst empty lots. GUY is lighting a cigarette and staring at LAWRENCE who returns a non-committal gaze. GUY starts to speak several times, but finds himself at a loss for words. Finally:

GUY

Guess we never know.

LAWRENCE

Guess we don't.

GUY

Even about the people we feel
 we are closest to.

LAWRENCE

(becoming uncomfortable)
 What do you want me to say?

GUY

You know, I used to be indif-
 ferent concerning the homeless.

(continued)

Felt I had it as bad as them,
but that I put a little effort
into doing something about
that. But now, I truly wish
you were one of them.

LAWRENCE
You finished?

GUY
With you, Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
Man, you'll find another sweetie
to lose your hard-on over...
That's your game.

GUY
Guess losing is what life is
really about. -That all you
got to say?

LAWRENCE
Yeah. Except that life has also
always been about some young
politico tryin' to draw up deep
plans -- while drilling and ham-
mering go on for years in the
lot across the street.

GUY stands and flicks his cigarette over the walk and into the gutter. He brushes the seat of his pants, then strolls toward the van, parked some hundred yards down the block.

As GUY nears the van, a PANHANDLER steps in his way.

PANHANDLER
Please, sir, I'm hungry.

GUY
So what do I look like, I got
a hamburger on my head?

GUY gets in the van, starts up the motor, pulls into traffic and drives off. Though the day is hot, he rolls up the window.

EXTREME LONG SHOT watching the van disappear. The CHILD, seen on the opposite walk from which we first discovered him, steps off the curb and crosses the street. LAWRENCE sits motionless.

CUT TO:

EXTERIOR. A RUBBLE-STREWN STREET.

NIGHT.

SLOW ZOOM IN ON a huddle of THE HOMELESS, lying together in absolute silence. Amongst them is the BODY of DRUGS BUNNY,

obviously murdered. A short distance away, we see a FIGURE, completely covered in a monkey suit, picking its way with simian gestures and gait, through OTHER HOMELESS FORMS. Thrown over the MONKEY FIGURE's shoulders is Estrella's white, fur jacket.

FADE OUT.

Characters:

GUY
MARIA
HOMELESS PERSONS
A BARBER
LAWRENCE
YOUNG WOMAN
YOUNG BLACK WOMAN
CHILD
DRUGS BUNNY
ESTRELLA VERDE/SUSANNAH
HISPANIC NEIGHBORS
JOE
HABERDASHERY VENDOR
DICK/SECOND LECHER/SECOND ELDER
PANHANDLERS
WOMAN TICKET SELLER
FEMALE CIGARETTE VENDOR
ANNA PURNA
ELDERLY MAN/FIRST LECHER/FIRST ELDER
SPANISH LADY/SUSANNAH's MAID
SECOND SPANISH LADY/SUSANNAH's MAID
FIRST DRAG QUEEN
SECOND DRAG QUEEN
THIRD DRAG QUEEN
CLUB ATTENDANTS
CLUB PATRONS
GYPSY WOMAN
COCKTAIL WAITRESS



Guy Madison, 1945. Photo: John Miehle, for United Artists (Selznick).



Rita Hayworth, 1946. Photo: Robert Coburn, for Columbia. Costume by Jean Louis. Publicity shot for *Gilda*.