

BUT SERIOUSLY FOLKS

By

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FADE IN

INT. WESTWOOD DISCO-1977-NIGHT

JEREMY JAMES, 23, handsome but klutzy, heads for the crowded dance floor. He spots a gorgeous BLONDE, with gigantic platform shoes and the all-too-often-seen FARRAH haircut. He fights his way through DISCO ZOMBIES and taps her on the shoulder.

JEREMY

Did you know if you stood next to that huge Ferris wheel down at the Santa Monica Pier with those shoes on, you'd beat it by a foot?

The pretty GIRL winks at him. Other DANCERS, both male and female, envy her looks.

BLONDE

I'd get sick from the Ferris wheel.

JEREMY

Not if you were with me.

BLONDE

Most men say hello first.

They both dance like robots.

JEREMY

I'm not just any man, as you'll soon find out.

Jeremy's eyes are fixed on her moves, the entire PACKAGE.

BLONDE

Even so, hello... and good bye.

She brushes off some dandruff from his shoulders. It's a reach.

JEREMY

The brush off and I haven't even said hello yet?

BLONDE

(flirting)

You're cute. But go.... now.

She looks around, waiting for her boyfriend to come back.

JEREMY

Not until you tell me how tall you
are without the robot shoes.

BLONDE

About five three and a half. My
boyfriend went to the head. For
all I know, he could be in there
with KC, fartin' around with the
rest of the Sunshine Band.

JEREMY

They all pee sitting down. At
least, that's what I've heard from
Rona Barrett.

BLONDE

Then that's the way they like it.
Rona who?

"That's The Way I Like It" begins and Jeremy shakes his head
in amazement.

JEREMY

Hey, they're playing our song.

BLONDE

Bitchin'!

Jeremy can't take his eyes off her.

JEREMY

Where've you been hiding?

The BOYFRIEND is back and cuts in. His dancing makes Debbie
and Jeremy look like they're on "Soul Train".

BLONDE

This is-

JEREMY

(observing the boyfriend)
-You have the reach of Ali, the
thunder of George Foreman, and the
blind ambition of Joe Frazier.

Debbie pulls Jeremy closer.

BLONDE

(whispering)
You gotta book. He'll kill you.

Jeremy holds firm on the dance floor.

JEREMY

(loud)

Can't. I just fell in love.

The blonde greets her boyfriend.

BLONDE

Hi handsome. What took you so long? Just sittin' around with the boys?

Jeremy smiles.

JEREMY

(quizzically)

But I didn't go anywhere. We were about to leave, remember?

CURTIS

She's talking to me!

The boyfriend isn't smiling. His eyes are on Jeremy. Jeremy tries to be friendly.

JEREMY

What's your name?

BOYFRIEND

Curtis.

Jeremy turns to Curtis.

JEREMY

Not you, silly boy, this one.

Debbie is swaying with the music. Her flimsy top shines under the disco ball. Curtis keeps an eye on her.

BLONDE

Debbie. Debbie Dinopopulous. Curtis here was my high school sweetheart. He was the star quarterback and the Homecoming King.

Curtis is as thick as a block of cement.

JEREMY

I'm Jeremy James. I told you that already didn't I? How old are you?

DEBBIE

I'm so psyched, my birthday was
last Tuesday. I just turned twenty-
two.

The MUSIC is overpowering. Jeremy pretends he hasn't heard
her correctly.

JEREMY

You're fifty-two? You certainly
don't show it.

When she smiles, her big, bright white Colgate teeth glisten
against the disco ball hanging in the center of the room.

DEBBIE

Twenty-two, you dummy.

JEREMY

The dummy is next to you.

Debbie's body has now shifted from dancing in front of Curtis
to dancing in front of Jeremy.

CURTIS

That's enough, pipsqueak. You
remind me of our locker room towel
boy.

Jeremy grabs a bar rag off a nearby table and wraps it around
his head like a turban.

JEREMY

I am Jeremiah, towel boy to the
Egyptians. My queen awaits,
waiting to be crowned queen of the
dance floor, oh queen of mine!

Curtis wraps it around Jeremy's head tighter, squeezing it
until Jeremy's eyes almost bulge out of his head.

DEBBIE

Honey, let him go. He's beginning
to look like Don Knotts.

Curtis eases up a little. Jeremy stares at his limited stack
of towels. Curtis snaps a few wet towels across Jeremy's
backside.

JEREMY

All this just 'cause I wouldn't say
hello to him? Hello. There, now,
will the ape stop?

Debbie gets very angry at Curtis very quickly.

DEBBIE

Curtis, you're a moron sometimes.
Do I have to chain you up?

Jeremy decides to go along with the flow.

JEREMY

Get outta here before I do
something you'll regret or I'll
regret. One of us will regret it,
I'm sure of that. (To the entire
disco) Regrets all around, on the
house.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE REST AREA-CONTINUOUS

They merry THREE walk to the rest area adjacent to the dance floor. Debbie winks at Jeremy as her disco shoes cause her to wobble a bit, throwing her right into his arms. Curtis blows his stack. The impending fight is stopped as Jeremy pulls back.

JEREMY

(kissing his fists)
That was close. I almost used
these babies. It could have been a
blood bath for you. I used to be a
professional fighter. You know, I
taught Bruce Lee everything he
knows.

DEBBIE

(sarcastically)
Yeah, like cooking, cleaning,
vacuuming.....

JEREMY

(quickly)
That's funny.

Curtis examines Jeremy's hands.

CURTIS

With those small fists?

JEREMY

My fighting category is skeletal-
weight. All my opponents have been
under sixty pounds.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Not only do I knock them out, but they have a story to tell at eighth grade graduation.

CUT TO:

INT. REST AREA-CONTINUOUS

DEBBIE

Curtis, that wasn't nice. What, I should dance with those morons over there?

She points to three dancing MEN in the corner of the room. Their outfits give them a SUPER-DISCO look. They're the DEANS OF DISCO.

CURTIS

Sorry, but everyone looks at you like you were Farrah. It hurts.

Debbie shakes her hair while men stare at the resemblance.

DEBBIE

Here's the skinny... I'm all yours. But if you act like an ape, I'll treat you like one. Banana, dear?

She pretends to peel the fruit. Jeremy watches from a few feet and laughs.

CURTIS

I'm not an ape. I'm your football star.

DEBBIE

Then show me a quarterback sneak.

He reaches for her breasts.

CURTIS

You're right. I shouldn't fight.

She snuggles up to her official boyfriend.

DEBBIE

Come on, let's have some fun. You're bitchin' when you wanna be.

She makes silly ape sounds and mimes a gorilla. Her sense of the absurd shows through.

CURTIS

I wanna be.

Debbie gives him a peck on the lips. He perks up. The music begins again. Debbie shakes herself toward the dance floor.

DEBBIE

Hey, Jeremy told me about this place not too far from here with comedians. Wanna go and hear some?

Curtis slumps his shoulders and yawns.

CURTIS

I'm tired, Deb. I've been hauling concrete all day.

Debbie pouts. She points over at Jeremy who points back. She laughs while Curtis fumes.

DEBBIE

I could go with that guy. I'll be safe.

Curtis tilts his head to the side.

CURTIS

Remember, he's only after one thing. You know that Deb, right?

She looks downward.

DEBBIE

My shoes?

CURTIS

Very funny. Just watch him so he doesn't get the goods.

DEBBIE

That's locked away and you have the only key. I wanna have fun, dear, and not sit home every night. That's why we came to Los Angeles, right? To try new things? Like acting or comedy?

She runs around Curtis a few times. He gets dizzy and kisses her.

CURTIS

You were going to try those things. I was going to get a real job. And since I'm supporting you.....

DEBBIE

I don't wanna fight. I wanna have fun.

CURTIS

You go. Have a great time.

DEBBIE

Bitchin'! Love ya, babe.

She grabs her huge purse and kisses Curtis.

CURTIS

What was that for?

DEBBIE

Seeing things my way.

CURTIS

Its' your way or the highway.

DEBBIE

Smart boy.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR AREA-CONTINUOUS

At the bar, Jeremy's eyes are still focused on Debbie. He won't give up. But neither will the DISCO DEANS, wanting Debbie more than anything.

FIRST DANCING DEAN

You there. I saw that babe with you. I'm Disco Duane, and these are my boys.

The two other DISCO DEANS nod. One bows at the waist and gets hit on the head by Duane.

JEREMY

What do you want from me? I just met her. Her boyfriend is over there.

Jeremy points to Curtis.

DUANE

He can't dance worth a shit. We can take him on the dance floor. She'll be mine by midnight.

Duane laughs as he nudges his two companions.

JEREMY

You're making a big mistake,
fellas. Her boyfriend was a
quarterback.

Duane strikes a pose.

DUANE

What do I look like? The field
goal kicker? What's her name?

JEREMY

Gertrude.

DUANE

Gertrude? Come on, my mother's
name is Gertrude.

JEREMY

Isn't it a small world? I'll bet
she taught you to dance. Did daddy
teach you to paint by numbers?

Duane places his hands on Jeremy's shoulders. He lifts him
off the ground.

DUANE

My father was a Marine, but he was
discharged for gassy discharge. It
runs in the family.

Jeremy waves his hand in front of his nose. The smell is
awful.

JEREMY

So that's why we lost Vietnam.
Your father gassed his own troops.

Debbie and Curtis walk over to Jeremy and run right into
Duane and the Disco Deans. An unusually pungent odor fills
the immediate area.

DUANE

I wanna dance with Gertrude.

DEBBIE

Well, my name's Debbie. Gertrude
is my mother.

CURTIS

What the hell stinks?

More obnoxious odor permeates the area.

DEBBIE
Who the hell cut the cheese?

Disco Duane and the Deans are ready for some action.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR AREA-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy has backed off a little and Curtis and Debbie walk on.

DUANE
Why didn't you introduce me to her?

JEREMY
(waving his hand in front
of his nose)
Why would I?

Curtis sees a fight almost breaking out and wants in.

CURTIS
(to Debbie)
I'm gonna help your moron friend
out of a jam. Something smells.

JEREMY
You can say that again.

DEBBIE
Don't let them bruise the
merchandise.

Her soft back hand glides over Curtis' smooth baby face.

CURTIS
That's the first nice thing you've
said to me tonight.

She moves him forward with a slight push. Curtis runs over
and puts up his fists. Jeremy is impressed.

JEREMY
Go get 'em, tiger!

CURTIS
(yelling to Debbie)
I'm the merchandise, right?

DEBBIE
Of course you are. Confused again?

CUT TO:

INT. BAR AREA-CONTINUOUS

Curtis approaches the DEANS and is ready to fight. Jeremy backs him up.... sort of.

CURTIS
Fuck you and the horse manure you
smuggled in here.

JEREMY
Witty. Absolutely witty.

Jeremy hides behind Curtis. Curtis takes a few punches.

DUANE
You're gonna get clobbered. Come
on Deans, let's get 'em.

The two other DEANS run out of the club. Duane is left alone. He puts on his brass knuckles.

JEREMY
Curtis, I'd book if I were you.

DUANE
I fought off three surfers with
these babies.

CURTIS
I don't surf. Get ready for the
emergency room.

Curtis doesn't see the brass knuckles and gets clobbered.

JEREMY
Curtis, I'll help Debbie escape.
We'll be outside getting some fresh
air.

CUT TO:

EXT. DISCO-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy and Debbie race out of the disco and into the busy street.

JEREMY
That was a close one.

Debbie is angry.

DEBBIE
Why didn't you help Curtis?

She swings her heavy purse at Jeremy's head. It hits its mark, and Jeremy almost falls down.

JEREMY

Ouch! Why'd you do that? Don't you know I'm afraid of violence? Seriously, a blow to the face produces red blotches, blood, then a huge hospital bill. I'm allergic to hospital bills.

Debbie hits him again with the purse.

DEBBIE

(angrily)

You coward! My boyfriend is getting beat up in there.

JEREMY

Yes, but it's nice and cool out here. Better out here with you than in there with Duane and his brass knuckles.

She hits him again with her purse.

DEBBIE

He had brass knuckles? Why, you pansy! You big, stupid pansy!

Jeremy sits on the sidewalk.

JEREMY

Yes, but I'm an *attractive* pansy. I'm housebroken and only require feeding once a day.

He does a pirouette around Debbie. She laughs.

DEBBIE

What am I going to do with you?

Jeremy bends down on one knee.

JEREMY

(as GROUCHO)

Marry me! I'll make you the richest woman in the world. Do you have any money? I'll fight the heads of Europe for your hand... then I'll fight them for the rest of you. Oh, move in with me. I once fought off six men with one hand tied behind my back.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

It was a pretty tie, with polka dots. I adore you. Come away with me and we'll make beautiful music together. We'll rent an orchestra. I love you. If another man said that, I'd cold cock him, assuming I had a cold.

DEBBIE

I knew you were weird when I first saw you.

She swings the purse once more, but this time she misses, and it swings around to hit her in the face.

JEREMY

Yes, weird but witty. WBW. That's what they called me in college. WBW. Weird but witty.

Debbie is walking away. Jeremy is walking backward to keep up with her.

DEBBIE

I'm trying to like you, but Curtis is back there getting pummeled.

JEREMY

Didn't he letter in pummeling?

Debbie slaps him hard on the back of his head.

DEBBIE

Why didn't you help my date?

Jeremy finally gets serious.

JEREMY

Have you looked in a mirror lately? Why would a red blooded male like me help the other guy? I should help myself. Have you seen yourself lately? Grrrrrr!

Jeremy walks backward faster, trying to keep up with Debbie.

DEBBIE

Curtis was my ride. He's my dude. I love him.

She cries a little, but not enough to convince any acting coach.

JEREMY

Was your dude. The cavalry is here.

DEBBIE

(angrily)

I hope your sword is long and steady.

JEREMY

My sword is ready for a challenge.

DEBBIE

Sorry, the only thing you'll need a sword for tonight is to fight off my purse.

On his knees, he opens his arms.

JEREMY

Sure, now you say that after I've amassed troops along your southern border. Oh, marry me! Think of the children we could have. You have the children, I'll just watch.

DEBBIE

God, we're never gonna get along. I just need a ride home.

Jeremy stops abruptly at his car.

JEREMY

This is me, here. If you don't want to walk, you better get in.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING LOT-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy takes her hand. His car, a yellow Mazda, needs a little help getting started. Jeremy reaches in through the cracked window for a device on the passenger seat. He opens the hood.

DEBBIE

You're starting this with a screwdriver? What are you, a grease monkey comedian?

JEREMY

My car needs help.

Debbie shakes out her hair again.

DEBBIE

My VW convertible doesn't use a screwdriver. It's a classic.

Jeremy tries shaking out *his* hair, but he gets dizzy and falls onto the trunk.

JEREMY

Your VW is a slut. I've seen it around my neighborhood, late at night, looking for a quick oil change with any car that has a big dipstick.

DEBBIE

Just start the damn thing.

JEREMY

I'm trying.

The car starts. Debbie takes the screwdriver from Jeremy. He gets in and unlocks the passenger side. Debbie looks around the car. The inside is small, with a few old PLAYBOY magazines in the back seat.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

Debbie picks up a loose centerfold.

DEBBIE

(reading)

"To Jeremy... Hef's got nothing on you. The way you use that screwdriver... oo-la-la!"

Jeremy is a little embarrassed, but proud of his humor.

JEREMY

I have a lot of free time on my hands.

Debbie begins laughing.

DEBBIE

Nuts. You're just plain nuts.

JEREMY

Hef's my buddy. He lets me use his pad anytime.

DEBBIE

You think I could be a centerfold?

Jeremy takes a good, long look at her.

JEREMY

Yes, but we'll need to move the staples up six degrees longitude, and seven degrees latitude.

He makes a foolish grab at her breasts. She brushes his hand aside.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR-CONTINUOUS

The car seems ready to go and they're moving.

DEBBIE

What do you do?

JEREMY

I do stand up comedy over at the Westwood Comedy Store. I am the world's worst comedian. I'm also a waiter. I'm a better waiter than a comedian. If I could combine the two, I'd really have something. (Riffing) "Oh, waiter, please bring me some more one-liners, with a pratfall on the side. And take back the applause sign, it has applesauce on it."

Jeremy settles in, adjusting the seat, mirror, and stick-shift. Debbie's mood changes. She becomes sullen.

DEBBIE

I'm nothing. Just a hairdo in a pair of tight jeans.

JEREMY

That's better than a pair of jeans in a tight hairdo, right?

She lowers her head and makes an insincere comment on her looks.

DEBBIE

I mean, look at me. Do I look as pretty as those movie starlets?

JEREMY

I wouldn't kick you outta acting class. What's your middle name, Morose?

DEBBIE

I really wanna go there.

JEREMY

Where? Morose? There's no town called Morose. Oh, yeah, I forgot, there is, it's next to Van Nuys.

DEBBIE

The Comedy Store in Westwood.

JEREMY

I'd be happy to take you.

DEBBIE

I've thought about it, you know. The whole comedy thing. My mother-

JEREMY

-Gertrude?

Jeremy takes out a package of cigarettes.

DEBBIE

You're quick, I must say. Yeah, Gertrude told me I was funny.

Jeremy lights up a cigarette. Debbie takes a puff or two. She carefully brushes the ashes away from her skirt.

JEREMY

When? After you wet your pants when you were four? To do stand-up, you need....

DEBBIE

You just call it stand-up?

JEREMY

Unless you're sitting.

Debbie pretends to laugh.

DEBBIE

Let's go, I'm freezing.

Jeremy revs the engine. He speaks to his car.

JEREMY
Come on, Maz, let's go! Come on,
Maz.

DEBBIE
You speak to your car? Are you
nuts?

JEREMY
Doesn't everyone? It's late. Hope
they're not closed.

DEBBIE
Well, if they are, we can sit in
the car and neck.

He puts the car in gear and they drive away.

JEREMY
(praying)
Oh, God, please be closed.

Debbie laughs. She realizes what she has just said.

DEBBIE
You have a way of making me happy.
You cheer me up. For that, I will
give you the best reward any man
has ever received from me.

JEREMY
What's that?

She kisses him. Jeremy crosses his eyes.

DEBBIE
How was that?

Jeremy has to be nudged back into reality.

JEREMY
Well, my mom uses more tongue, but,
all in all, not bad.

She laughs and punches his arm again.

DEBBIE
Just drive, moron.

They kiss again, this time passionately.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WESTWOOD--TWENTY MINUTES LATER

The Comedy Store West is a tiny club, with a tiny bar and the smallest stage on earth. Jeremy and Debbie quickly find a table near the stage. Photographs of well known COMEDIANS hang on the walls. Debbie settles in her chair and takes in all the atmosphere around her.

DEBBIE

This is bitchin'! Just bitchin'!

JEREMY

Where are you from? Bitchin',
Kansas?

The COCKTAIL WAITRESS appears. Jeremy orders two Seven and Sevens.

DEBBIE

Seattle. I lived in Santa Cruz, on
the coast, for some time before I
arrived here. Ever hear of it?

He leans back in his chair.

JEREMY

Are you kidding me? I lived in
Capitola for three years. Tried to
do stand-up at the Cooperhouse.
What a failure. Santa Cruz and
stand-up do not mix.

DEBBIE

Where did you wait tables?

JEREMY

Crow's Nest. You?

Debbie's cleavage, what she has, seems to grow larger inside her tiny halter top as she gets more and more enthused.

DEBBIE

God, I cocktailed at the Dream Inn.

Jeremy is gazing into her eyes. She moves closer.

JEREMY

I cannot believe I never ran into
you.

DEBBIE

What a weird world.

JEREMY

Ever go to the Shadowbrook? What a romantic place. I brought all my ladies there... somehow, we'd begin dinner together but I would leave alone. Strange.

DEBBIE

Curtis and I almost broke up there.

Jeremy pretends to be interested in anything Curtis.

JEREMY

It's a famous place for break-ups. Martin and Lewis broke up there and it wasn't even built yet. Now that's break-up power!

DEBBIE

Don't make fun of me.

JEREMY

(sheepishly)

I'm not. It really is a famous break-up place. I think it's the waiters who all look like they stepped out of the surf minutes earlier. I could never compete.

Jeremy goes in for a kiss. She turns away.

DEBBIE

Who's the headliner?

Jeremy poses the question to the waitress when she returns with their drinks. As he hands her a five dollar bill, she answers his question.

JEREMY

Jay Leno is going to headline tonight. He's a mister know-it-all. Airlines, television, and household gadgets. He loves talking about those things.

DEBBIE

Who's that up there now?

Jeremy crinkles his neck to see. Now a kiss is proffered and accepted.

JEREMY

Looks like David Letterman. He's a funny guy.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Used to be a weatherman in Indiana, then moved out here with his dogs. He's got like three or four golden retrievers. He brought them in last week. They were almost funnier than he was.

DEBBIE

Wow, this is cool. All these people just to see someone bomb?

He kisses her again. Debbie is more interested in the club than their chemistry.

JEREMY

Well, Deb, they hope and pray they don't bomb, but usually they do. The material is new, so they have to break it in. We're the guinea pigs for them. It's all about being noticed for the TV scouts.

She looks around and sees someone she thinks she recognizes.

DEBBIE

Who's the black guy... over there?

Debbie spots RICHARD PRYOR drinking as though there was no tomorrow.

JEREMY

Oh, you spotted a whale. Richard Pryor. Some say he's the best there ever was and ever will be.

Jeremy's admiration hangs in the air. Even Jeremy is STARSTRUCK.

DEBBIE

He's cute. And drunk.

JEREMY

I hope you like these guys. It's a good line-up for a week night. I see Paul Rodriguez, Argus Hamilton, Ed Bluestone, Mike Preminger. That's Kelly Monteith at the bar, and that slug of a human being, Mike Bellar.

DEBBIE

Why is Bellar a slug?

JEREMY

Bellar steals material. Anyone's, anywhere, anytime. He's open twenty-four hours a day.

Debbie downs her drink fast and holds her empty glass up to no one in particular.

DEBBIE

Well, that sucks. If he did that to me, I'd kick him in the nuts.

JEREMY

Now, you're a comedian?

DEBBIE

I'm just sayin'.....

JEREMY

He's not.. bitchin'?

The MC for the evening, FRANKLYN AJAYE, is on stage, delivering the introduction for JAY LENO. Franklyn is smooth and professional.

FRANKLYN

Folks, put your hands together and say a prayer for... Jay Leno!

DEBBIE

(whispering to Jeremy)
I know him... he's from that movie... the car wash movie.... but the 'fro was bigger.

JEREMY

Good eye. He was the Fly.

Franklyn surprises the crowd with an impression from the film Debbie was referring to. They howl. Jay hops up to the stage. The incredibly bright light just ten feet in front of him will let him know exactly when five minutes is up.

JAY LENO

Didja ever wonder why chips require dip? I mean, is there a chip Bible somewhere? (the crowd now repeats his next line out loud, since they've all heard it so many times before.) And what's the deal with those airplane peanuts?

The audience laughs, but isn't very impressed. Debbie is beaming.

Jeremy looks over at Pryor, who is staring at Debbie. Given Pryor's reputation, Jeremy is a little afraid of the competition.

JEREMY
Debbie, watch and learn.

JAY LENO
But don't get me started on the snacks the airlines give you. Talk about small?

He squirms and twists his body like a bag of peanuts. The audience laughs. Debbie downs her drink.

DEBBIE
Let's get another round. This place is bitchin'. I cannot believe these guys.

JEREMY
Whatever you say, darling.

DEBBIE
It's Misses Duane, the Disco Dean to you.

Jeremy laughs. She squeezes it tightly. By the end of the set, Jeremy's hand is purple.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE DEBBIE'S APARTMENT-VERY LATE

Curtis is on the freshly mowed grass, fuming. He paces as Jeremy's car is idling. Jeremy and Debbie peek at him through the passenger window.

JEREMY
He looks hurt. Geez, I'm sorry he got beat up. Does he spaz out alot?

Curtis' face is red and swollen. His body is beat up. He's walking with a limp.

DEBBIE
All the time.

JEREMY
Why?

DEBBIE
 He thinks I look like Farrah
 Fawcett. (With false modesty) I
 don't think so.

Jeremy doesn't touch the comparison at all. He simply corrects her with a joke, and Debbie seems to catch on quickly.

JEREMY
 Who?

DEBBIE
 Come on, you know.....

She throws back her head and shakes the hair.

JEREMY
 Farrah Fawcett-Majors. She's
 hyphenated now. I'm told the
 operation only took a few minutes.

DEBBIE
 She is that. But she's gorgeous,
 too.

JEREMY
 Farrah Fawcett-Majors. (singing as
 GROUCHO) "I'm Farrah Fawcett-
 Majors, my hair is cut in layers,
 my legs could use some Nair,
 hooray, hooray, hooray".

Jeremy takes a bow.

DEBBIE
 Nobody's better than Groucho. I
 would have said, "I did this on a
 da-re."

JEREMY
 "I'm Farrah Fawcett-Majors, my hair
 is cut in layers, I did this on a
 dare, hooray, hooray, hooray."
 Yeah, that works. Curtis reminds
 me of Zeppo. I could never
 understand why he was there.

DEBBIE
 Every film they did had to have a
 song in the middle. But then,
 along came Allan Jones and Zep
 became as useless as a spare
 without a jack.

Jeremy is impressed with her film knowledge.

JEREMY

Allan Jones? You know that guy's name? He was in the opera one, the one with the zillion guys in the stateroom.

DEBBIE

My mom was such a fan. She knew every movie they did.

JEREMY

(as Groucho)

Oh, marry me! We can live together in holy matrimony. You can live in matrimony, I'll stay in Poughkeepsie.

Debbie's hair bounces up and down as she laughs.

DEBBIE

Groucho was the type of guy I would have loved to have had as an uncle.

Jeremy begins singing again.

JEREMY

"Hooray for Captain Spaulding...."

DEBBIE

"The African explorer. Did someone call me schnorrer?" Jeremy, this has been such a nice evening.....
Oh, God!

JEREMY

What?

The car is still idling. They sense a presence at the passenger window. Curtis is peering in, and Debbie gives him a little wave.

DEBBIE

I spaced out. I forgot about my boyfriend.

She places her right hand on the door handle to leave. Curtis walks away toward their apartment.

JEREMY

Come to the Comedy Store some Monday night. Leave Zeppo at home.

DEBBIE

Is that when you perform?

JEREMY

I babble. First, you babble, then you grunt, then space out, then you tell a joke.... then you perform.

DEBBIE

I think you're beyond the grunting stage.

Jeremy tries to get closer.

JEREMY

I love you. There, I said it.

DEBBIE

Like I said, you're different, I will give you that. And no, you don't love me. You just think you do. I love Curtis. I think.

JEREMY

Okay, I think I do. (with his eyes closed) I think I do, I think I do....

Jeremy opens the passenger door, leaning over, touching her hand and gently nudging Debbie's right breast.

DEBBIE

Watch out, tiger.

JEREMY

You should see me on stage. On second thought, forget it, never come see me on stage.

Jeremy's hand is now planted firmly on her left breast.

DEBBIE

Then where else can I see you?
Apart from in front of my boob?

She politely places his hand back in his lap.

JEREMY

Then you do wanna see me again?

He places it back up on her bosom. She allows it to stay for a moment, then exits the car. He holds the hand up high and kisses it.

DEBBIE

You are a strange one.

JEREMY

Yes, but I'm licensed in this county for Strangeosity Selectous, Latin for just plain weird. That's good to know. If you're strange without a license, you're arrested. Good night. And I'll say it again, I love you.

DEBBIE

No, you don't. But it's nice to hear.

JEREMY

(to himself)

I just met the mother of my children. I hope she knows that.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEREMY'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

Debbie exits the car. Jeremy revs the engine. She looks back and laughs. Curtis is still fuming.

DEBBIE

(through the open window)

That's a strong engine.

JEREMY

And I haven't even shown you my dipstick.

Curtis heads for Jeremy as Debbie kisses him.

CURTIS

(sarcastically)

Have a good time?

Debbie inspects Curtis' face.

DEBBIE

Oh, you're hurt. (kissing his face) Let me get my quarterback undressed and into bed.

CURTIS

Read me a story?

DEBBIE
 (romantically)
 Better. We'll be moving the chains
 down the field all night long. I
 better not have to settle for a
 field goal.

Curtis is already removing his clothes.

CURTIS
 And that guy Jeremy thought he had
 a chance?

Debbie smiles as she tickles his ribs.

DEBBIE
 (watching Jeremy drive
 off)
 Uh, yeah.....

CURTIS
 Deb? Come on, tell me, did he kiss
 you?

Debbie looks back at the car.

DEBBIE
 Forget it, honey. Let's go inside
 and make an extra point or two.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT KITCHEN-SAME NIGHT

Jeremy watches his roommate, GARY, a young man who writes
 science fiction, smoke dope through a toilet paper roll.
 He's offered a hit and takes a puff.

JEREMY
 Met a nice girl tonight.

GARY
 I saw STAR WARS for the sixth time.

JEREMY
 Why on earth would you spend your
 time and money to see that
 ridiculous movie again?

GARY
 I'm going for the record. One
 hundred times.

JEREMY

Have you figured out Darth Vader is Luke's father?

Gary flips out.

GARY

No way! No way! What did you do that was so very interesting? Go dancing again?

JEREMY

Disco City on Lincoln. Boy, is that place full of jerk-offs. I'm still trying to get the polyester out of my bloodstream.

Gary is trying to get the lid off the peanut butter jar. It seems to be stuck.

GARY

How many?

He cracks the jar top against the counter. It cracks the bottle.

JEREMY

How do I know how many?

Jeremy inhales another hit from the homemade marijuana pipe.

GARY

Did the girl?

Gary keeps trying to unscrew the lid on the cracked jar.

JEREMY

Did the girl what?

GARY

The girl you met. Did she jerk you off?

Jeremy has a hard time understanding his roommate.

JEREMY

No, I said I met a girl tonight. I also said that there were a lot of jerks tonight. How you get to "Did she jerk you off?" It's like talking to Norm Crosby, but without the hairpiece.

GARY
Who's Norm Crosby?

JEREMY
A comedian you resemble.

The lid finally comes off to reveal an old jar of peanut butter.

GARY
Is he coming over? Is he gonna
live with us?

JEREMY
No, he's not.

GARY
I'm just wondering if he could pick
up some more peanut butter.

The lid bounces to the floor and Gary licks the top off.

JEREMY
(looking to the sky)
I'm living with Bigfoot.

GARY
The place is small enough as it is.

Jeremy throws his hands up.

JEREMY
You really need to stop smoking
dope. It's gonna be the death of
you, man.

Gary dismisses the comment.

GARY
Rent's due on Friday.

JEREMY
I got my share. What about yours?

GARY
My what? Rent? Oh, yeah.....

Gary spreads some of the peanut butter on a cracker. The weight of the decades-old peanut butter cracks the jar. Glass shards fall on the cracker.

GARY (CONT'D)
Checkmate, daddy-o. I gotta see a
guy who owes me money.

JEREMY

They all owe you money.

He thinks it over for a moment.

GARY

Yeah, the motherfuckers!

JEREMY

Hey, Gary?

GARY

Yeah?

JEREMY

You're a bitchin' dude. Good night.

GARY

Bitchin'? Wow, you're alright, Jeremy. You're aaalllll-rrriigghhtt!

Jeremy slaps him on the back. He lays a dollar on the counter.

JEREMY

Buy some new peanut butter tomorrow, okay?

GARY

Yeah... bitchin'!

JEREMY

(to himself)

What is it about that word? Every time I hear it now, I get such a hard on.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WEST-THE NEXT MONDAY NIGHT

Jeremy is waiting for the last few comics to finish their sets. It's almost one in the morning. JAY LENO, MIKE BELLAR, and DAVID LETTERMAN watch as DAVID BRENNER sneaks in and does fifteen minutes. His professional attitude runs circles around the rest of the waiting comics.

BRENNER

(leaning into the mic)

You ever notice how the airlines never give you enough peanuts for the entire flight?

Leno looks at Letterman and yawns. Brenner notices this and manages to flip Letterman off, so as only Letterman sees it. Jeremy watches as the other comics catch every nuance, every phrase. The perspiration just flies off his Brenner's face. The MC for this evening is MIKE PREMINGER. He jumps back up on stage as Brenner's applause is slowly winding down.

PREMINGER

Well, all right, give it up for David Brenner! What a surprise. How nice of him to drop by and fuck up everyone's night. Thank you, David. Now, let's get on with the rest of our open mike night fruitcakes. Here's a young man who should be on Carson by Tuesday. Tuesday, 1999. Let's hear it for Jeremy James.

Preminger rattles the stand up microphone. Jeremy stumbles to the stage, like a deer in the headlights.

JEREMY

Good evening everyone. It's great to be here tonight. Thanks to David Brenner for making an appearance and doing my act. It's nice to see Mike Bellar here tonight. Bellar, since you steal everything that's not held down by cement, I left a copy of my act on the table, with an invoice. Pay the cashier on the way out. And Jay, Spielberg called, he's doing Jaws 3, but instead of a shark, he wants your chin to gobble up Richard Dreyfuss.

Letterman laughs, but he's about the only one who does. Unbeknownst to Jeremy, Debbie is in the corner, sipping a cocktail, alone. And to her right, also alone, is RICHARD PRYOR, hidden under a baseball cap and sweatshirt. She doesn't recognize him.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I broke up with my girlfriend last week. Not only did she have Herpes one and two, but three through seventeen.

One lonely laugh. A glass breaks in the bar. It startles Jeremy, and it shouldn't.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

No, really, she was a great girl. She used to call out my name in bed. For the longest time, I thought my name was Serta Sleeper. She was a nice girl.... born and lost in the Bermuda Triangle. She went to the Charles Manson Finishing School. Came in third in a Phyllis Diller look-alike contest, out of two. She was a fast girl. She used to date truck drivers.... while the trucks were still moving.

Leno lights his pipe. Ajaye shakes his head.

FRANKLYN

(whispering)

Why do white comics always have to do shit about ugly women? We was doing that shit when we were ten.

Letterman laughs.

LETTERMAN

We didn't have any ugly girls in Indiana. Just two legged dogs with leashes.

Jeremy continues.

JEREMY

Seriously, Dave, Ace Hardware can fill in that gap between your teeth and it'll be a lot cheaper than going to my dentist, Doctor Vinnie Boom Botz.

All the COMICS come down hard on Jeremy for using RODNEY DANGERFIELD'S character, Botz. Boos are HEARD.

LENO

Ah, the good doctor Vinnie. Filled my first cavity with Superglue.

LETTERMAN

(yelling at Jeremy)

You wanna borrow one of my dogs? They'll do some tricks for you.

Jeremy continues. The sweat is pouring off his forehead.

JEREMY

So will your wife. Back to me. My ex-girlfriend enrolled in EST. Remember EST? After twenty-four hours sitting cross legged in a banquet room at the LAX Hilton, she wound up with a yeast infection and a bill for \$4,000. Now, when she pees, she has to use a Betty Crocker Easy-Bake Toilet.

The line is not logical, but gets a weird laugh. Jeremy's eyes are unaccustomed to the bright lights, so when both Debbie and Pryor laugh, he doesn't know who it is. Richard Pryor knows who Debbie is, though. She's the one he's hand picked for the night.

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Easy bake this, you putz!

JEREMY

Well, I see Bellar is back in his seat. Shopping for new material?

A solid laugh. Letterman throws a paper airplane up at the stage.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

David, Tennessee called... they want The Cumberland Gap back. But I wanna tell ya, I'm happy now.

Both Leno and Letterman break up at the way Jeremy has gone right into a RODNEY DANGERFIELD delivery.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I'm dating an older woman. Older's not the right word... she's senile. Before bed, she takes out her dentures and cleans them... with her mustache wax.

The light flashes from the back of the bar. But Jeremy's not done.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Recently, I've gotten into religion. You know, God's a great guy. You never have to worry about God getting drunk and putting on a lamp shade at parties... 'cause He is the lamp shade.

Spots of laughter end his set. He wraps it up.

LETTERMAN

Come on! I have to feed my dogs.

JEREMY

Well, I want to thank you all,
seriously, I wanna take you home.
A home for the insane.....

Courteous but genuine applause concludes Jeremy's time. He exits the stage and sits down at the bar. The MC announces the next act. There is little fanfare for Jeremy, other than the swat on the head he gets from Bellar. Letterman walks by and pats his head. Jay Leno shakes his hand and empties his pipe on the bar next to his drink.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy picks up his trusty tape recorder from a stool in the back of the room, used to record his act. RICHARD PRYOR gets up and confers with MC Preminger. Within two minutes, he is on stage at the Comedy Store West. He hops up to what appears to be his only real home, the stage.

RICHARD PRYOR

You ever notice how white people talk to a brother when they think they're being all liberal and shit?..... then they get up all in your face and wanna be your friend? White people are dangerous motherfuckers sober 'cause they be all friendly and shit. When they been drinking, that's when ya see the true sewage overflow into your lap.

He pauses and thinks for moment.

RICHARD PRYOR (CONT'D)

What the hell am I talking about,
white people or clogged pipes?
Well, they're about the same.....

He stops to take a drink that sits on a stool next to him. His movements, his professional approach to not only the subjects, but the craft itself, shows. The next fifteen minutes offer priceless gifts of humor to a small but rapt audience.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF WESTWOOD- 2:30 A.M.

Jeremy is on a comedy high after seeing one of his heroes. His body sways like GENE KELLY, swinging on each of the streetlight poles while walking through Westwood. He notices Richard and Debbie talking behind the club. She laughs, sways to his commands and whispers back and forth to him. Richard is Richard.

JEREMY
 (to himself)
 Shit! He's gonna put his hooks
 into that gal. I got no chance
 now.

He continues to dance through the neighborhood, passing his work place and a few more theatres. His good mood cannot be changed, not even watching his new love get into a car with Pryor.

CUT TO:

INT. HUNGRY TIGER RESTAURANT-A WEEK LATER

Jeremy is working the lunch shift. He's got a full station. Jeremy approaches a booth, expecting snobbish Westwood EXECUTIVES.

JEREMY
 Hello. May I start with out with a-

DEBBIE
 -Hello, may I start you with a
 martini? Long Island Iced Tea?

He's shocked to see Debbie and another WOMAN.

JEREMY
 Well, you know the routine, don't
 you?

DEBBIE
 Hello, babbler.

Debbie reaches up and kisses Jeremy on the cheek.

JEREMY
 That's mister Babbler to you.

Her friend nudges Debbie.

DEBBIE

This is Wanda. I met her through Richard.

Wanda's purse is even bigger than Debbie's.

WANDA

Hello. I hear you're funny.

JEREMY

Then I'd get your hearing checked.

DEBBIE

Wanda's in my acting class. She's a friend of a friend of mine. A special friend. My first black girlfriend.

The two women giggle.

JEREMY

Bitchin'! You're both actresses? You never told me that, Debbie. Lying to me already? We've only had one date.

Wanda deftly pockets the salt and pepper shakers.

DEBBIE

I just started a few days ago. Besides, we never had a date. Wanda, what did I tell you about this guy? You gotta watch him.

Sweat is trickling down Jeremy's face, and time for chit-chat is over. He's busy and has to go.

JEREMY

Here's the skinny about the menu. The sole sucks. Everything else is good. What'll you have?

Wanda takes more items off the table.

DEBBIE

(facetiously)

Sole. With a side of sole. And a sole frappe. Okay?

WANDA

Me, too. Oh, but I want a sole salad to start.

Jeremy notices Wanda's moves. She keeps taking whatever she can find that's not nailed down to the table. Two extra settings of silverware go straight into her purse. The flowers are too long to fit.

DEBBIE

Seriously, we'd like two seafood salads, dressing on the side, two regular iced teas and no bread.

Debbie looks wonderful today. Jeremy has not forgotten her beauty.

JEREMY

God, I love a couple of gals who know exactly what they want. I'll be back... I'm a little bit busy.

Jeremy dashes off.

DEBBIE

I think he's bitchin'. What do you think?

Wanda is focusing on the entire table of silver condiments.

WANDA

Think I can fit the sugar bowl in my purse?

She keeps managing to fill her purse. Leftover culinary items go into Debbie's.

DEBBIE

You and your need to stick it to the white establishment. I don't want Jeremy to think the only black girlfriend I have steals.

WANDA

I'm not sticking it to anyone. Do you have any idea how much these will go for at the flea market on Sunday?

DEBBIE

Well, then, I'll have to give you a hand.

Debbie grabs some silverware off the nearby deuce. They both giggle.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy listens to the pompous CHEF bark orders.

CHEF

Push the fucking sole. It'll be
DOA by four and then I can't sell
it for dinner. Sell it now. Get
rid of the sand dabs also. And try
to move the King crab.

Rushed busboys and busy kitchen personnel scatter throughout
the pantry. Jeremy prepares Debbie and Wanda's order.

JEREMY

(sweating and hurried)

Hey, chef, I saw a rat swimming in
the lobster tank a few minutes ago.

Other WAITERS stop what they are doing and look to Jeremy to
see if he's joking or not. The chef catches on.

CHEF

Was it big?

JEREMY

Big? When it swam, the tail looked
like my ex-wife's IUD.

The chef waves off Jeremy and heads off to chastise a BUSBOY.
Jeremy converses with another WAITER, JACK, a tall, very good
looking homosexual who thinks all men should be the same.

JACK

You coming over to my place
tonight?

He replaces his bread with a better loaf from Jack's tray.

JEREMY

For the millionth time, I'm not
gay. Let's make sure we all know
that.

Jeremy looks around to make sure he said the line loud
enough.

JACK

Jeremy, all the world will someday
be gay. Why fight it?

Jeremy kicks him in the leg.

JEREMY

Take that, you whore.

Jack encourages Jeremy to bring it on.

JACK

I liked it. More, more.

JEREMY

Faster pussycat, kill, kill!

Jack smooches Jeremy up and down his arm.

JACK

Another movie? Or are you just happy to see me?

JEREMY

One of Russ Meyer's best.

JACK

Don't you know that heterosexuality is passe? Gay is all the rage.

JEREMY

You'll never get me. I'm Heterosexual Man!

Jeremy poses like George Reeves' television's Superman, with hands at his side, defiant of Jack's wishes.

JACK

And I'm your kryptonite, baby.

JEREMY

Why, you...

Jeremy throws some oysters at Jack. Jack puts them down his pants.

JACK

Aahhh! Blue Points for my Red Hot!

Jeremy attaches a soft-shell crab claw to his nose and does a decent JIMMY DURANTE.

JEREMY

Ha-cha-cha-cha!

JACK

People eat this stuff?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM-MINUTES LATER

Jeremy arrives at Debbie's booth. He serves the salads with grace. The dressing is on the side, as requested.

JEREMY

There. You two beautiful starlets, enjoy. (to Debbie) See you after my shift?

DEBBIE

I dunno. Curtis is really lonely when I'm not around.

JEREMY

Lonely? The guy is nuts.

Jeremy sees one of his REGULARS, actor WAYNE ROGERS having lunch. He points him out to Debbie and Wanda.

DEBBIE

That guy's on MASH. You get other actors in here?

Jeremy looks around the room.

JEREMY

Yeah, there's George Sanford Brown, from the cop show. And there goes an Angel, Kate Jackson....

Both women crane their necks to see her.

WANDA

How do you know all of these people?

JEREMY

I grew up in the Midwest. Lots of afternoon television. When other kids were playing little league, I was at home, on the couch, watching the Merv Griffin show. Merv's favorite guest was London Lee.

DEBBIE

Who's London Lee?

She dabs on some salad dressing.

WANDA

Who's Merv Griffin?

Debbie laughs hard, almost too hard, at Wanda's lack of knowledge about white entertainers.

JEREMY

Questions, questions.

WANDA

Who's that over there?

Wanda points to a small group of fans trying to get the autograph of JAMES BROLIN.

JEREMY

Oh, that's James Brolin, from Marcus Welby. I just saw his latest movie on my lunch break, over at that beautiful theatre two blocks from here. It's about a big, black car with the devil driving. Oddly enough, it's called, "The Car".

WANDA

Was it scary?

JEREMY

(sarcastically)

It's about a fucking car, for Chrissakes. I see lots of awful movies in between my shifts. I saw "White Buffalo", with Charles Bronson, and "Exorcist Two", with Richard Burton. Oh, and "Orca, The Killer Whale". My God, what a piece of crap.

Jeremy looks around to make sure his station is satisfied.

WANDA

You sound like you're an expert.

JEREMY

I am. Someday, I'll collect an Oscar. You'll see. I'll collect it for the person who really won it. You know-

Debbie raises her eyebrows.

WANDA

-May we have a set of salt and pepper shakers, please?

Jeremy looks down at the table.

JEREMY

I coulda sworn they were here when we opened today.

WANDA

There's not even a sugar bowl here.

All three look around their table.

JEREMY

That's the weirdest thing. No salt or pepper or sugar bowl?

Both women gaze at the half-eaten salads in front of them.

DEBBIE

Wish us luck. These are huge.

Jeremy gets Debbie's attention.

JEREMY

Call me.... The number's on the placemat.

Debbie looks at the number scrawled at the bottom.

DEBBIE

Okay. If I can.

Jeremy smiles and looks over at Wanda.

JEREMY

And Wanda, I'll get a crane in here so we can lift the entire dessert cart into your purse before you leave, alright?

WANDA

(proudly)

I'm no thief. I'm a proud, young, black woman with talent, verve and substance. You can both blow me.

The statement takes both Jeremy and Debbie slightly aback.

JEREMY

They're all just silver plated you know. Not worth a nickel.

DEBBIE

That's what Curtis said about my boobs.

The two girls giggle as Wanda begins pulling out of her purse all the silverware and other trinkets.

CUT TO:

INT. UCLA LIBRARY-ONE HOUR LATER

Jeremy has snuck into the UCLA library, to study two great screenplays: YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN and BLAZING SADDLES. He reads for three hours. He returns them to their rightful shelves, and notices a young female CO-ED staring at him.

CUT TO:

INT. MOVIE LOBBY-WESTWOOD-NEXT DAY

Jeremy is again stuck with three hours between his lunch and dinner shift. The Hungry Tiger uniform identifies him as a Westwood work resident. He buys his ticket from the indoor cashier, and makes his way into the darkened auditorium.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WEST-THURSDAY NIGHT

This is Prime Time, and JIMMY WALKER is struggling with the crowd. Off stage are an array of COMICS. Jeremy strikes up a conversation with a very young man, JERRY SEINFELD, talking about the recent suicide of FREDDIE PRINZE.

JEREMY

I can't believe it. It's been about a month now. He had it all. Looookiiing goood. Not now you're not.

Jerry shakes his head.

JERRY

I only met Freddie once. He was a friend. Try not to do a horrid imitation of his catch phrase. It's sacrilegious.

Jerry brushes the lint off his beautiful burgundy sports jacket.

JEREMY

You're right. I hate guys that do that.

JERRY
You're excused.

They both watch other performers in the room, nodding to the ones they know and like.

JEREMY
Freddie was from New York, right?
I've never been.

He brushes his hair back with his hands.

JERRY
And I'll never leave. (looking
around for someone) I'm supposed
to go on after Leno. Have you seen
him? I hope he's not still hanging
out at the Magic Club in Hermosa
Beach.

JEREMY
You know, Leno's getting his own
show on NBC.

Jerry's ear perk up.

JERRY
Really?

JEREMY
It's about a private detective with
a huge chin. He and the chin solve
cases together. It's called, "The
Chin Wins".

Jerry laughs, and a thousand teeth come into view. Jeremy
leans his body against the bar.

JERRY
Are you a prop guy, word guy or a
story guy?

He opens a pack of JucyFruit and offers a stick to Jeremy.

JEREMY
I don't know. I'm just making this
shit up as I go along.

JERRY
Good luck. I saw you in here with
that gorgeous blonde the other
week. Wow!

JEREMY

Thanks. She's my mom. I take her everywhere I go.

JERRY

(laughing)

Is that right? Can you send her over to my hotel room, say midnight?

JEREMY

Mama don't allow no crap like that.

JERRY

My, how touchy we are.

There is a silence between the two.

JEREMY

I guess I'm a story guy with one liners.

JERRY

I'd like to do a show about nothing.

Jeremy rolls his eyes.

JEREMY

Hmmm, that'll work.

Jerry is searching the room, looking at the faces of every comic there.

JERRY

Where is Leno?

Both comics search the room to no avail.

JEREMY

Hiding out in Letterman's truck. He and David are buddies.

JERRY

Good for them.

JEREMY

Leno's the professor of comedians. If he likes you, he'll grade you on a curve.

JERRY

Be as natural on stage as you are with me and you're going to be a hit.

JEREMY

I don't know. I get sick to my stomach when I perform.

Jerry keeps his eyes open for Leno.

JERRY

It never goes away. But it's good to be a little nervous, right?

Jerry makes a motion like he's throwing up.

JEREMY

What do you think we should do about it?

Jerry's wide mouth opens to reveal his huge white teeth.

JERRY

I don't know. Maybe marry the heir to Pepto-Bismal?

Walker finishes to thunderous applause. The MC for the evening, FRANKLYN AJAYE, encourages more laughter.

FRANKLYN

JJ Jimmy Walker, ladies and gentlemen! Let's really hear it for him. Kid Dy-no-mite!

The applause dies down early. Walker walks off angry, slamming down his glass and walking out the side door.

WALKER

(screaming out the door)
Fuckin' crackers don't know shit about comedy.

Most of the AUDIENCE hear his rant and are in an uneasy mood for the next VICTIM.

FRANKLYN

Well, Jimmy Walker, ain't this a bitch? JJ, you need to chill, my brother.

Jeremy and Jerry burst out laughing. Walker has embarrassed himself in front of the crowd.

JERRY
That's not good.

JEREMY
(laughing)
Evidently Mister Walker has had a
bad night. Boohoo....

JERRY
J.J. needs some Bosco.

JEREMY
Or some dynamite.

The two laugh like school kids. Jeremy already knows this young man is ten levels higher than he is.

FRANKLYN
Our next act flew all the way in
here from New York city. He's an
up and comer, a young man with a
plan.... Jerry Seinfeld!

Jerry's shocked, but gets up on stage immediately. As he passes the Jerry, Ajaye quietly explains what happened. They pretend they're friends as they whisper to each other.

JERRY
What happened?

The two men shake hands.

FRANKLYN
Leno isn't here. You want this
slot?

Jerry is excited.

JERRY
Of course I do. It's prime time.

FRANKLYN
Then go. Get up there. Knock
their socks off. But, remember,
I'm the Fly.....

JERRY
The Fly? Frankly, Franklyn, it's
getting old.

Jerry takes the stage, full of energy. Ajaye leaves to applause. Seinfeld goes right into one of his sure-fire routines.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You ever notice how one sock seems
to escape from the dryer?

The audience laughs as if they know him. Leno finally arrives and Jerry gives Jay the finger in between jokes. Jay takes a seat and orders a drink. Jeremy tries to hobnob with the comic who's making a name fast, but too many others have the same idea.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE-TEN MINUTES LATER

Debbie has taken a seat at the bar as Jeremy waits for Seinfeld to get off stage. Jeremy sees a friend and heads in the other direction, walking right past Debbie without noticing.

DEBBIE

Hey, where you bookin' to?

Jeremy stops in his tracks and sits down next to her.

JEREMY

Farrah! Where's Lee? Out finding
a replacement part?

Debbie turns her stool to face Jeremy.

DEBBIE

He's at our sheep ranch in Ojai,
tending the flock.

JEREMY

Ewe! Get it?

DEBBIE

Huh?

Jeremy tries to educate his student.

JEREMY

An ewe is a female sheep. It's
also what you say when you step
into a vat of mushy sheep dung.

DEBBIE

What's dung is dung.

JEREMY

Pretty good. Let's round up the flock and build us a roaring fire inside your pants.

Debbie comes close.

DEBBIE

Alright, alright. I'm avoiding Curtis. He's looking for me all over the city. And I'm also avoiding someone else who's higher than a kite right now.

She looks over at Richard Pryor. He gives her a glassy-eye stare.

JEREMY

Bitchin'! Debbie is making the scene in Hollywood.

She nuzzles in close to his body. She's playing him.

DEBBIE

Take me someplace fun. You're so cute.

Jeremy snaps his fingers.

JEREMY

I've got it. Come on, we're gonna have a great time. But we have to leave now.

Debbie takes her twenty pound purse off the bar.

DEBBIE

Where we going?

CUT TO:

INT. BURBANK STUDIO-LATE

Jeremy and Debbie have arrived in Burbank to watch the taping of THE GONG SHOW. They sit in the top balcony of the small studio while the UNKNOWN COMIC is on stage, doing exactly what he's supposed to do, bomb.

DEBBIE

This is exciting. I've never been to a real live show before. It's so late. How do they do this?

JEREMY

They tape all night. I came here once and left at six a.m. They taped five shows.

DEBBIE

Who are these people?

They squint to see everyone from the balcony seats.

JEREMY

Look at that judge, Steve Martin. He's about ten minutes away from becoming the biggest comedian around. Why he's doing this show, I'll never know. I saw him at the Boarding House in San Francisco, when I was trying my stuff out at the Holy City Zoo. Ever hear of it?

Debbie and Jeremy keep moving to find the best seats together high up in the bleachers.

DEBBIE

No, I never went into the city. Does Oakland count? I went there to find out if there was any there there.

Jeremy wipes away a phony tear. Debbie relaxes and takes off her high platform shoes. Her foot odor causes a FAMILY of four to move down the bleachers til they reach the ocean.

JEREMY

No, Oakland doesn't count.

DEBBIE

I thought that one would have produced more laughter.

JEREMY

I'm a brutal judge. You could have seen me crying out in my car after my set. It was brutal up there at the Zoo. You had to enroll in a comedy school for two bucks in order to perform later that evening. It was silly, yet thrilling.

Debbie is too involved with the show to listen much to Jeremy.

DEBBIE
Who's the host again?

Jeremy gets excited when talking about the show.

JEREMY
Chuck Barris. He did the Newlywed
Show and the Dating Game. Remember
those shows?

Debbie looks around and watches the crew off-stage get the
next act ready from behind the curtain.

DEBBIE
I dumped Curtis.

She looks surprisingly happy.

JEREMY
Really? I'm sorry for your loss.

He places his arm around her. She encourages his tenderness.

DEBBIE
I had to. You were right, he was
nuts. I'm staying with Wanda now.
I need to find my own place. And
Richard... well, he's becoming a
problem. See, he's Wanda's cousin
and he's over there all the time.

JEREMY
Richard who?

Debbie looks at Jeremy and rolls her eyes.

DEBBIE
Duh? You know who. Richard Pryor.

JEREMY
Where did you break it off with
Curtis?

The show is about to begin. The audience settles down.

DEBBIE
Bob Burns. In Santa Monica. Know
it?

JEREMY
(whispering)
Oh, yeah, it's a great place to
dump someone.
(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

It's got ambience, great food, and is not as crowded as, say, Jack's on the Beach.

Debbie perks right up.

DEBBIE

I was thinking of doing it at Jack's On The Beach. Love their sand dabs.

JEREMY

God, when we talked about the Shadowbrook, I thought you were just kidding, but you break up with people at restaurants for real, don't you? How about game shows? Do you break up with men there, too?

DEBBIE

We're not dating yet.

Jeremy shakes his head in disgust.

JEREMY

Just promise me that you won't dump me at this game show. I'm liable to jump from this balcony and break my toosh.

Debbie drops a bombshell.

DEBBIE

Besides, Richard and I are screwing.

JEREMY

Take me to Bob Burns so I can cry in my sand dabs.

Jeremy pretends not to care.

DEBBIE

That's why I broke up with Curtis. It wasn't fair to him.

JEREMY

What about me?

DEBBIE

We're not dating. Are we?

JEREMY

Dump me in a laundromat.

JAYE P. MORGAN, one of the others judges, makes a wisecrack to Chuck.

JAYE

Barris, let me hump you silly.

Chuck says something which has to be bleeped. The audience moans. Morgan laughs until tears are flowing down her face.

DEBBIE

Richard is the man I'm fucking.
But my second boyfriend? He makes
me feel silly. Nuts. Warm and
cuddly.

JEREMY

Sounds like a pretty nice guy.
Hope he doesn't get screwed in the
end.

Jeremy adjusts his jeans.

DEBBIE

Nice guys finish-

JEREMY

-Their milk. Now, let's watch the
taping.

Debbie excitedly tells a story about her Pryor.

DEBBIE

The other night.... Jeremy, I'm
lost. This is a fast crowd and I'm
not ready for them. They all do
drugs. I mean, I've done 'em, but
not like these guys. Plus, I'm
white.

He stares at her.

JEREMY

Never noticed. When did that
happen?

DEBBIE

Come on, help me.

She tugs at his belt loop. STEVE MARTIN puts a fake arrow on his head while announcing what the score is for the previous PERFORMER. He leans into the microphone, bumping it with his nose, one of the staples of his act.

STEVE

I'll give this poor girl my home address just for sitting through this mess. Excussse mee!

Debbie laughs at Martin and snuggles close to Jeremy.

JEREMY

He's known for the arrow. Are you sure you've never seen him? He's done TV and a lot of clubs. About Pryor....

Debbie shakes her head.

DEBBIE

Is he one of your favorite comedians?

JEREMY

Richard?

DEBBIE

Steve. And yes, Richard.

JEREMY

Oh, yes. Pryor is right up there with Woody Allen, Robert Klein, Billy Crystal, George Carlin, and one of the best, Albert Brooks. And yes, I love Steve Martin. A genius named Robin Williams performed up at the Holy City Zoo. I had the luxury of going on right after him. What a treat.

DEBBIE

Are you as good as them?

Jeremy laughs out loud, so loud the technician in the booth has to stop taping again. There are several people looking up to the balcony to see what is going on.

JEREMY

Oh, God, no. Never. I will never come close to any of the guys I mentioned. Ever.

Debbie tugs at his arm.

DEBBIE

You should have more optimism.
I'll bet you will be twice as funny
as any one of these guys some day.

Jeremy feels as though he is now the professor of comedy.

JEREMY

Thanks. Perhaps in the year 2999.

DEBBIE

Where's this Albert Brooks
performing? Let's go see him.

JEREMY

Albert doesn't do stand-up anymore.
He only records albums and does
Saturday Night.

Debbie holds his hand.

DEBBIE

Tell me more about Brooks.

JEREMY

Albert Brooks has done more for
stand-up comedy in his handful of
TV appearances than any other comic
working today. There, that's the
last of my comedy lectures.

DEBBIE

This is a wonderful treat.

The show goes on. CHUCK BARRIS tips his hat from time to time and Martin's all-white suit seems too bright under the lights. Jaye P. Morgan's chicken-like laughter is way over the top. It's all too phony for Jeremy.

JEREMY

Tell me more about Richard Pryor.
He doesn't hit you, does he?

Jeremy is genuinely concerned for Debbie's welfare.

DEBBIE

No, he says he loves me. But the
drugs. The drugs wear me out.
Jeremy, I need to be held tonight.
Know anyone that might fit the
bill?

The taping concludes. Debbie and Jeremy cautiously make their way down the balcony steps to the main floor.

Her large heeled, multi-colored platform shoes are hard to navigate down the stairs. They exit, hand in hand.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S KITCHEN-NEXT MORNING

Debbie has spent the night with Jeremy.

JEREMY

Last night was awesome. I know it was a fluke.

Debbie is cooking some eggs for Jeremy. She has taken to his kitchen like a duck to water.

DEBBIE

Yes, it was. It can't happen again.

She looks at her watch.

JEREMY

Waiting for Richard to call you?

She dressed in her panties only. Her small breasts jiggle as she flips the eggs.

DEBBIE

Not necessarily. But.....

Jeremy leans over the table to kiss her. She pulls back, startled to see Gary standing in his boxers, oblivious to Debbie.

GARY

Where are my eggs?

JEREMY

Shit! Gary, Debbie. Debbie, this is my roommate, Gary.

He sits down, rubbing his eyes. Debbie stands over him, spatula in hand.

DEBBIE

Hi. I'm a woman. You know, two arms, two legs, two breasts and a vagina. Ever see one up close?

Gary finally notices her.

GARY

Sorry. I got really loaded last night. Can I stay? Pretend I'm wearing running shorts. That's all anyone wears anyway, right?

Jeremy pulls off his T-shirt and places it over Debbie's bosom.

DEBBIE

There are about five hundred men who would give their right nut to see these.

Gary shrugs.

JEREMY

Sorry about him. I tried to wean him off stupidity, but he keeps coming back for more.

Debbie's onto something new.

DEBBIE

I had an idea last night. I think we should... we should.... we're going to.....

Jeremy sips some coffee. Debbie is ready to announce her plans just as Jeremy's mouth is full. The DANNY THOMAS famous "spit-take" is right around the corner.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

.....work together as a team.

Bleweee! Jeremy spits his coffee out of his mouth, all over himself and Debbie. She spits hers out all over Jeremy and Gary.

JEREMY

Are you kidding? That idea is-

DEBBIE

-The best idea of the century. See? We already finish each other's sentences.

JEREMY

Work together as a team?

Debbie stops cooking and taps the spatula on Gary's head.

DEBBIE
James and Dinopopulous! Or
Dinopopulous and James. What's
better?

JEREMY
There's not a marquee in the world
that could fit that last name of
yours on it.

DEBBIE
Got a problem with Greek blondes?

JEREMY
Oh, no, not at all. They're so
common. It's just that.....

He wipes some of the coffee on his shirt with a dish rag.

DEBBIE
It's just that what?

JEREMY
I work alone.

DEBBIE
You don't have to. Anyway, I've
got an answer for the name problem.

JEREMY
I don't think you have what it
takes to become a stand-up.

Debbie is defiant. She stands up straight and addresses
Jeremy.

DEBBIE
No? Come see me Monday night. I
already talked to Preminger. He
said he'd give me five minutes at
eleven thirty. Of course, he wants
me to go out with him afterward....

Jeremy nods his head.

JEREMY
Of course. I'm sure he just wants
to compare notes on the subject.

DEBBIE
Probably.

Debbie laughs and kisses Jeremy full on the lips.

JEREMY

Be careful. He's known as quite the cad.

DEBBIE

And I'm a female cad. I'm a cadet.

Gary's head is face down, resting on the empty plate.

GARY

Now that we've settled that, anymore eggs?

CUT TO:

INT. UCLA LIBRARY-LATER SAME DAY

Jeremy studies the scripts he has selected for that day, takes notes, and outlines the start of his screenplay. As he works, he glances up from time to time and sees the same pretty young CO-ED looking his way. After he's written over fifteen pages in longhand, he gets up, walks over and introduces himself.

JEREMY

Hello. My name is-

YOUNG CO-ED

-Jeremy James. I saw you last week at the Comedy Store, a few blocks away from here. My name is Mary. Mary Sunn. You're good.

JEREMY

Why, thanks. I'm glad to meet you.

Jeremy is blown away. Not only is this woman a pretty brunette about five four, with pearly white teeth and a cute overbite, but she's intelligent.

MARY

I was picking up my friend, she's a cocktail waitress.

Jeremy remembers the night.

JEREMY

Did you see Richard Pryor that night?

Mary smiles and lights up the room.

MARY

Wasn't he wonderful? He killed,
just killed. And hardly anyone was
there to appreciate it.

Jeremy gets close to his new friend.

JEREMY

We were. But you're right, hardly
a full room. But that's show biz.

MARY

You're so correct, my fine
feathered friend.

Jeremy realizes this woman has fallen from the sky, into his
lap.

JEREMY

What's your name?

MARY

Uh, I told you. Mary. Mary Sunn.
Who's the girl you were with?

Jeremy wants to crawl under a table.

JEREMY

(nervous)
Mary Sunn.

Mary laughs a little.

MARY

No, that's my name.

Jeremy kicks himself.

JEREMY

Her name is Debbie. She's
interested in comedy. That's why
she went out with me.

Mary laughs. She gathers her books and gets ready to leave.

MARY

What were you doing over there? I
saw you scribbling down stuff like
the book was going to disappear.
The library isn't leaving town.

JEREMY

Ah so, Watson.

MARY
I've got a class. Walk me?

JEREMY
I can think of no other activity
I'd rather do right now.

CUT TO:

EXT. UCLA CAMPUS-A FEW MINUTES LATER

MARY
You do realize, if you're going to
be a writer, you need to read a lot
of screenplays.

Jeremy carries her books. He walks as close to her as
humanly possible.

JEREMY
I am. Or will. I mean, I have
been.

Mary explains her film dissertation using her hands.

MARY
Read anything by William Goldman or
Buck Henry.

JEREMY
I love Buck Henry. I knew him
before he shortened it from
Buckaroo Henry.

MARY
Well, if you're going to write, be
specific. Don't plagiarize. Be
original, even if it means your
script will go nowhere, because it
probably will.

JEREMY
Stop talking.

MARY
I talk too much?

JEREMY
Oh, no.....

MARY
It's just that... I don't have time
to spend on losers.

A bus goes by with rambunctious kids on board.

JEREMY

Losers? I'm no loser, let me assure you.

MARY

I have no time-

JEREMY

-Time. Shit, I've got to get to work. I'm a waiter over at the Hungry Tiger. I'm late.

MARY

I'll buy you a Timex next time I see you. Which will be?

JEREMY

Stop by the Comedy Store West almost any night. I'll be there. Or the library, of course.

MARY

Okay. I'll try both places. But if you're not there, I swear....

She walks away quickly.

JEREMY

Mary? Wait, will you?

MARY

You're very cute. I like comedians, if they're not too vulgar. I never could understand why some comics have to make such an impercipient use of our beautiful English language.

Jeremy does not know what "impercipient" means and he's embarrassed.

JEREMY

Impercipient? Who are you, Norm Crosby?

MARY

I can't stand Norm Crosby. He's a doofus. I hope you're not a doofus.

JEREMY

I used to be, but now I'm a Democrat.

She shoos him away.

MARY

Go to work.

JEREMY

Just one thing. Didn't you mind the fact I was with another woman the other night? I have feelings for her.

MARY

I appreciate the honesty. But frankly, she's not for you.

Jeremy taps her on the right shoulder, and as she looks to her right, he kisses her left cheek.

JEREMY

I don't even think I'm for me.

MARY

You're for me. I can feel it. But now, if you don't get to work, you won't be for anyone, 'cause you'll be destitute, alone and penniless. Understand?

Jeremy's face turns red.

JEREMY

You forgot to say horny.

Jeremy kisses Mary softly and leaves for work.

CUT TO:

INT. WESTWOOD COMEDY STORE-FOLLOWING MONDAY NIGHT

Jeremy spots Debbie in the corner of the bar, sipping a cocktail.

JEREMY

Hey, gorgeous, what's happening?

Debbie gives him a peck on the cheek. He feels guilty for accepting the kiss and wanting more.

DEBBIE

I'm so nervous, it's ridiculous.
My pits feel like they're drenched.
I can't stop sweating.

Jeremy tries to cheer her up, but she's a mess.

JEREMY

Hey, it's just Monday night at the
Comedy Store West. No sweat. I
saw Brenner over in the comedian's
arena. And Letterman's here. Leno
of course. No need to fall off
your stool drunk or anything.

Debbie looks pale and has a bad case of stage fright.

DEBBIE

What am I gonna do?

She keeps curling her heavy purse as if she's in the gym
lifting weights.

JEREMY

Don't go on. Tell Preminger you're
not ready.

DEBBIE

I'm just scared.

He shakes her like a rag doll.

JEREMY

Then get up there and be prepared
to bomb. Be prepared to sweat
through your skin. Be prepared to
die.

Debbie doesn't like what she hears.

DEBBIE

What if I get lucky?

JEREMY

Then you get lucky. But don't
think you're going to do well just
on your good looks and hair. Your
hair could get applause, but your
jokes may not.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WEST- LATER

The club is crowded, noisy and smoke-filled. Debbie is OFF-STAGE, nervous and jittery. The MC, PAUL RODRIQUEZ, introduces her with an emphasis on her looks.

PAUL

Our next performer, as gorgeous as she is, can get on my good side, which is right below my belly button. Let's hear it for Debbie Deen.

Jeremy is shocked that Debbie has decided to use a stage name. He claps very loudly to show support. Debbie manages to get to the stage, wobbly legs and all.

DEBBIE

Good evening, ladies who rock and guys with small penises. Now that I've identified all of you, we can get down to business. What exactly is the plural of penis? Peni? And how many constitute peni? Three? Four? And how many peni complete a set of balls?

The BARTENDER interrupts over the public address system.

BARTENDER

Will the owner of a 1973 powder blue Chevy Imperial please come to the bar? It's an emergency. Thank you. Apologies to the performer.

Debbie's annoyed at the interruption. Too many seconds tick by.

DEBBIE

If you drive a 1967 Imperial, you do have an emergency. It's a piece of shit! I once dated a guy who drove that same car. He took me out to dinner. I'll tell ya how cheap the restaurant was. He paid with a Goodrich wrench, and he was still short ten bucks.

A good laugh from the audience.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

And he expected me to look under his hood, for free!

More solid laughter.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

He took me home and wanted sex. I wanted dessert. We settled for a chocolate covered lube nut.

Solid applause. Jeremy is impressed with her quick thinking. But then, at the drop of a hat.....

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Sure, I know what you're thinking... I look like Farrah Fawcett Majors, or FFM, as I call her. But that doesn't mean-

Glasses break. WAITRESSES argue over tables.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

That doesn't mean I'm just a pretty face. No, it takes hours to complete this kisser. And to boot, I've only got one mirror.

The DRUNKS begin to come alive.

HECKLER

-Hey, Farrah, where's Lee?

ANOTHER HECKLER

How's Charlie? Is he still living inside the speaker box?

Debbie fixes her sights on the CREEP.

DEBBIE

He's living up your ass, where do you think he's living? Let's start over. Good evening, my name is Debbie Deen....

Jeremy jumps up on stage. He takes several bows and claps his hands. He throws Debbie back in his arms and kisses her. Debbie doesn't know exactly how to react, but goes with the flow.

JEREMY

And I'm Jeremy James. We're James Deen. I was the one with the chocolate covered nuts.

Debbie smiles and tries her hand at complete improvisation.

DEBBIE

Jeremy, it's about time you showed up. Uh, what you been doing lately?

JEREMY

Well, judging from that kiss you just laid on me, I've been exploring the "final frontier where no man has gone before..."

The audience is with them.

DEBBIE

Oh, that's where I know you. You're that Klingon with the big Kling.

Debbie keeps up with the act. She keeps pumping the adrenaline, keeping up with Jeremy's every move. It's GEORGE BURNS and GRACIE ALLEN, but without most of the talent.

JEREMY

Well, Deb, what did yo do today?

DEBBIE

Actually, it's Deen and James. Deen James, if you please.

JEREMY

I beg to differ.

DEBBIE

You beg every night.

JEREMY

If I beg, it's only because you've got your tongue out.

The crowd laughs but not with great gusto.

DEBBIE

My tongue is in my mouth, not up your ass.

Richard Pryor is down front and he laughs and laughs and laughs.

JEREMY

It's not fun up here alone, is it?

Jeremy sort of pushes Debbie to continue.

DEBBIE

No. Where were you, out milking
the horses?

Jeremy has his hands in his pockets like Burns.

JEREMY

Debbie, you don't milk a horse.
Anyone knows, you milk a cow. You
ride a horse.

DEBBIE

Well, my aunt Edna always said, if
you milk a cow, and ride a horse,
what's left for the sheep to do?
Play Bridge?

JEREMY

Your aunt Edna was raised on a farm
was she?

DEBBIE

No, she just liked to play cards.

The light goes on and it's time to get off the stage.

JEREMY

Then how did she get anything done?

DEBBIE

The horses and cows did all the
work. They weren't very good at
cards, so when they lost, Edna made
them clean and cook.

JEREMY

What did the sheep do?

DEBBIE

Set up the Bridge table, silly.

JEREMY

Say good night Debbie.

DEBBIE

Good night, Debbie.

Richard Pryor is clapping and whistling at Debbie. She bows
at the waist, and all kinds of whistles and catcalls besiege
her. Jeremy just stands there with his hand out, as though
he wanted a tip.

JEREMY

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a special guest in our audience tonight, Richard Pryor. Hey, Richard, I'll make you feel at home.... put your hands up.

Debbie grimaces.

DEBBIE

Honey, he didn't mean it.

Jeremy reacts when he hears her affectionate name for Richard.

JEREMY

Honey? I thought that was my name.

DEBBIE

Make him feel at home Jeremy, serve him a restraining order.

JEREMY

On toast?

DEBBIE

No, on top of the other three he has from the last six months.

JEREMY

Please, Richie, don't shoot out my tires. They're still new.

DEBBIE

That goes for me, too. Oh, well, the light is flashing... and I mean the blue and red one. Good night!

JEREMY

Good night.

Richard Pryor's eyes are on Debbie and he greets her immediately after she gets off-stage. She walks past him.

Jeremy and Debbie exit the building, laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMEDY STORE—CONTINUOUS

Debbie kisses Jeremy. He kisses her back. Jeremy reads more into the kiss than there is to read.

DEBBIE

I can't thank you enough for
getting me out of there.

Jeremy feels like a father/protector.

JEREMY

It was pretty bad. I'm not gonna
say I was good. We both stunk.

They're both quiet for a few moments.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

How involved are you with Richard?

DEBBIE

I don't know myself.

Jeremy takes out a cigarette, offers one to Debbie and they
both lean against the wall, smoking in silence.

JEREMY

Now you know what it's like up
there. It's fucking hard. There's
no doubt about it. Material, and a
sense of timing, the ability to
just wait for the laugh, not to
rush it. That's what's really
hard. Not enough people understand
that.

Debbie starts to cry. She turns inward, into Jeremy's arms.

DEBBIE

I-I thought... I thought I'd be
better the first time. You helped
me. I'm much obliged.

JEREMY

Come on, let's go.

He grabs her hand and they walk toward his car.

DEBBIE

You know, with that old Burns and
Allen stuff, we weren't bad.

JEREMY

We were awful. Weren't you there?

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S CAR- CONTINUOUS

They strap in after Jeremy has once again started the car with the screwdriver.

JEREMY

I'll take you home. And we can write together. Or fuck. Which ever is-

DEBBIE

-Funkier. Sure, what the hell.

Jeremy drives off, barely missing Pryor getting into his car with a well-shaped BRUNETTE. Debbie waves at him, but he acts as though she's invisible.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Jeremy and Debbie are alone in the living room, and the TV has Johnny Carson delivering his monologue. As Debbie removes his clothes, he cannot take his eyes off the MASTER.

JEREMY

Ah, what a guy. They're in Burbank now, for good.

Debbie completely strips Jeremy while he keeps watching and laughing at Johnny.

DEBBIE

I though we were gonna write.

Jeremy finally gets the idea and begins stripping Debbie of her clothing. Now it's Debbie who's watching Johnny as Jeremy is trying to make time.

CUT TO:

JEREMY'S BED-FIVE MINUTES LATER

Both have stopped kissing and necking to watch Johnny, laying flat on the stomachs right in front of the television.

JEREMY

He's the prince of late night. I think it works well when I jump up on stage and join you. Kind of a surprise.

DEBBIE

I'm not sure. It's kind of leaving me exposed up there for enough time to kill the whole thing, you know? I mean, if I'm bombing, and then you come up, it may just drag both of us down when you come up. I think we better try it together from the outset.

Jeremy grabs a yellow pad and writes down some ideas. Debbie flops around, bored. Her mood swings to a low point, as if she wants to quit before they even start writing.

JEREMY

Where's your note pad? Come on, if we're gonna do this, we're gonna do this. Don't be lazy.

Debbie gets off her stomach and gets another legal pad off Jeremy's desk. She looks around for a pen, then takes out an eye liner pencil from her purse. Jeremy shakes his head. He takes her eye-liner pencil away and gives her a real writing tool.

DEBBIE

Bitchin'! These are new, right? What do we write first?

JEREMY

How about something funny?

DEBBIE

Good start, good start. Okay, what's funny?

Both of them lie on the bed, looking up at the ceiling. Soon, Jeremy's hand is on Debbie's breast. They're back to making out, until Johnny decides to portray ART FERN, and then it's back to the television, but Jeremy's hand is still on her bosom.

JEREMY

I thought we were writing. Why have you allowed my hand to touch your tit? Why would you do that? Why, Debbie, oh, why?

Debbie removes his hand. She places it at his side.

DEBBIE

No way, Jose.

Jeremy climbs on top of Debbie and has his mouth near her bosom. They both start acting silly.

JEREMY

Look, I can place my nose over your entire breast and suck it up into my cranium.

They both laugh. Debbie pushes her nose into his chest.

DEBBIE

Ugh, gross. Look at this.

She rubs her snotty nose on Jeremy's arm. His hand goes back to her breast. Johnny, as Art Fern, is knocking them dead, especially when the joke bombs.

JEREMY

You know, Deb, I met this girl.....

Debbie sits up. Her attention span has increased tenfold.

DEBBIE

And?

JEREMY

Well, I'm beginning to think, what with your relationship with Richard, and mine with Mary...

Jeremy takes his hand off her breast.

DEBBIE

Mary? Who's Mary? When did this happen?

JEREMY

A week or so ago. She's a real comedy nut. Loves my act. But I think maybe we should just be.... friends. What do you think?

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM-ONE HOUR LATER

Debbie is talking a mile a minute, with all kinds of new ideas about the act. Since sex is off the table, their friendship has grown a little bit more professional.

DEBBIE

We could be the new Burns and Allen. Or Smothers Brothers.

JEREMY
Smothers Brothers?

DEBBIE
I don't know about Tommy.

JEREMY
You're warped.

Debbie dances around the room, drunk with ideas.

DEBBIE
Those ones you mentioned before?
Nichols and May?

JEREMY
Well, we're not them. We're not
any of those teams you mentioned.

DEBBIE
No, I just meant we're as good as
they are.

JEREMY
Okay, now you're just plain high.

Debbie is racing around the bed, talking to herself, coming up with insane comedy routines.

DEBBIE
This could be the best thing for
both of us. We memorize old acts.
We can kill with this shit. We use
them as an outline, then add our
own material. It's wonderful.

Debbie gives him a great big kiss.

JEREMY
There was a time when I really
would have been over the moon with
that kiss.

DEBBIE
Well, just fly under the sun for
now. We have work to do.

Both concentrate for a few moments.

JEREMY
What if we took the stage and just
stared back at the audience for
thirty seconds?

DEBBIE

Dude? Really? You're nuts.

JEREMY

It's like we're inspecting them.
We put our hand over our eyes, like
when the sun's in your eyes, and we
try and see each member clearly.
This would take more time than I
think either of us could actually
do. Standing up there, and saying
nothing, is extremely hard.

DEBBIE

But why are we doing it? Why are
we just staring at them?

He shrugs his shoulders.

JEREMY

Let's try it out now.

Jeremy gets off the bed, pretends he's on a stage while
Debbie is still on the bed. He just stares at Debbie for
thirty seconds. Debbie begins to laugh. But she's unsure of
the bit.

DEBBIE

How about punching you in the arm?
Hard?

JEREMY

If you think so.....

She punches him.

DEBBIE

Okay, maybe... maybe that'll work.
Let's go on.....

Jeremy rubs his arm.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM-TWO HOURS LATER

Both Jeremy and Debbie are exhausted and have fallen asleep
in each other's arms, clothes on. The television
broadcasting day is ending and AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL is
playing.

At one point, Gary pokes his head into the room, looks at both of them, then leaves, shutting the door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S BEDROOM-EARLY NEXT DAY

Jeremy has awakened to find Debbie gone, with a note which he reads aloud.

JEREMY

"Jeremy, I woke up, saw your hard-on and thought I'd better leave before we both did something we'd be sorry for... laugh. Besides, I have to meet Richard for breakfast, which, in his case, is a late lunch. Love, Deb."

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WEST-SUNDAY NIGHT-ELEVEN P.M.

Jeremy finds Debbie right away. She's had more than just two drinks.

JEREMY

What the fuck? Debbie, if you get drunk, I swear...

Jeremy orders a beer from the BARTENDER.

DEBBIE

Take a chill pill, white-bread, I'm not drunk. I just think better when I've had a few. My thinking has increased tenfold. (Laughing) I folded a ten and got two fives.

She slips and almost falls down.

JEREMY

Who's up there?

She peers toward the stage. Her vision is slightly off.

DEBBIE

Kelly Monteith. He's just finishing up.

Jeremy surveys the room.

JEREMY

It's Sunday. We should get on around midnight. I think they close early on Sundays. Why don't you shake your booty at whomever is scheduling the acts tonight and find out what's going on?

DEBBIE

Okay. Are you scared?

JEREMY

A little. You have it all memorized?

DEBBIE

Yeah, but I wanna improv a little, okay?

JEREMY

Improv? You can't even spell improv!

DEBBIE

I-M-P-R-O-F-F-E.

Jeremy rolls his eyes.

JEREMY

Elaine May, Mike Nichols. Mike Nichols, Elaine May. Nice to meet you. Lay off the booze, okay?

Debbie confers with the BARTENDER, a comic himself, and returns to Jeremy after a few minutes.

DEBBIE

He says we're on after Leno. Leno's up next.

Debbie takes another long pull at her cocktail. Jeremy takes away her glass before she can finish it.

JEREMY

I'm so fucking nervous. Quick, jack me off, quickly! Jack me off!

She backs away. Her head is swaying.

DEBBIE

I'm not jacking you off. Are you crazy?

Jeremy makes an unusual, sexual groaning sound, as though he was having sex with Debbie. She slaps him down hard.

JEREMY

Okay, okay. I just wanted to see how improvisational you were.

DEBBIE

And how drunk I was?

CUT TO:

INT. BAR AREA-CONTINUOUS

Jeremy spots Mary at a table. He waves, comes over and sits down.

MARY

Hi, stranger.

Mary is sitting alone. She pulls out a chair for Jeremy. Jeremy gives her a kiss.

JEREMY

Hey, how are you? Good to see you.

Mary looks over at Debbie. Their eyes meet. Mary has her books with her, and looks like the least likely comedy fan in the entire world. Debbie glances her way and bats her eyelashes, as though Jeremy was hers.

MARY

I know her. She was with you before. You've dated.

Jeremy enjoys being the one chased for a change.

JEREMY

That's my comedy partner. Her name is Debbie. We're on in like five minutes. She's in love with Richard Pryor.

Her face glows. She settles in for a night of laughter.

MARY

Are you guys nervous?

Jeremy sips Mary's drink. He nuzzles her neck.

JEREMY

I'm better now that you're here, that's for sure. Stay and watch?

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Better yet, don't watch, just stay.
Cover your eyes and ears. Just sit
with your hands under your butt.

MARY

If you want.

Jeremy walks to the rest room, all the while staring back at Mary.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE MEN'S ROOM-CONTINUOUS

Richard Pryor is inside smoking a joint. Pryor hands it to Jeremy. They are the only two people inside the men's room.

PRYOR

Dig it, man, take a hit. It's not
gonna bite you.

Jeremy takes a drag.

JEREMY

Ouch! It bit me. The joint bit
me.

Richard starts laughing.

PRYOR

You're not too bad for a white
dude. "It bit me"? Jesus, what
the fuck?

Jeremy drops the joint, then picks it up immediately.

JEREMY

Sorry, man. I'm a klutz. Remember
me? I was on with Deb last week.

Richard gives him the complete up and down once over.

PRYOR

A what? Klutz? Who's Deb? I know
a shitload of Debs.

Jeremy tries to light the joint. Each match fails to light.

JEREMY

Anyway, I really appreciated the
laughs from you last week. It got
the whole audience to laugh.

The joint falls to the wet, grungy floor of the bathroom.

PRYOR

What the fuck is a klutz? Never mind, I've got another joint. Move, white bread.

Richard opens his wallet, and amid the many hundred dollar bills, reaches in and finds another joint. He lights it.

JEREMY

This is so cool. Smoking dope with Richard Pryor.

PRYOR

Who the fuck is smoking dope with Richard Pryor? You ain't done nothin' yet, motherfucker. Don't be a klutz again.

Jeremy takes a drag of the new joint. His whole body goes numb.

JEREMY

This is amazing.

PRYOR

Yeah, I bought it just for you, white boy. You up next?

Pryor looks out the men's room door after another COMIC has stumbled in.

JEREMY

After Leno. Whoa, this is fine shit!

Richard begins laughing hard. Even in his state of numbness, he knows that Jeremy has made a big mistake.

PRYOR

Jay's off already, man. What the fuck? Didn't you see him leave? What the fuck, man? Are you some kind of idiot?

JEREMY

What?

Jeremy peeks out the door and sees an empty stage.

PRYOR

Yeah, he's off, man. You better get your skinny white ass up on outta here. What's your name?

JEREMY

Jeremy. Jeremy James. I'm going on with-

Jeremy is ripped after just a few hits from Richard's joint.

PRYOR

-I know who you're going up with. You better get up on outta here, or you won't be on at all. You got to book.

Jeremy freezes for a second. This is one memory he wants to keep. He takes another hit, slaps Richard's hand like a silly WHITE MAN, and leaves the men's room.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE-CONTINUOUS

The CROWD is stomping their feet. The M.C. has announced them three times. Jeremy is still stoned. He sees Mary sitting on her hands and laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE MEN'S ROOM-CONTINUOUS

Richard is talking to himself.

PRYOR

Don't be droppin' my shit no more, Jeremy James, or whatever the fuck your name is....

Richard laughs hard and doesn't notice the incoming comic, ED BLUESTONE, come into the bathroom.

ED

Hey, Richard, how's it going? Ed. Ed Bluestone.

Richard looks at him. Ed offers his hand to shake.

PRYOR

Yawl a bunch of crazy white people up in here.

(MORE)

PRYOR (CONT'D)

I'm going to Sunset, man. This Westwood vibe is fuckin' with my head. I had a Baretta in my waistband when I walked in here.

Ed offers him his hand. Richard looks for his gun.

ED

It's Ed, Mister Pryor. Ed Bluestone. A pleasure, as always.

Richard picks up his gun on the counter and leaves. Ed shakes a make believe hand.

ED (CONT'D)

(shaking his empty hand)
A pleasure, Richard. Always a pleasure.

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE STAGE—CONTINUOUS

Richard takes a seat next to the stage.

PRYOR

(yelling from crowd)
You owe me a joint, boy. Pay up!

The crowd turns to see who is yelling. They applaud wildly. This throws both performers a little. Out of the crowd, joints come flying up to the stage, hitting Jeremy and Debbie in their faces.

DEBBIE

Hey, Richard, I'll make you feel at home. You're under arrest.

The audience laughs. People spend more time looking for Pryor than paying attention to Debbie and Jeremy. More joints hit the stage.

JEREMY

Pam Grier is here, so that woman you're with, get rid of her now. She'll beat the crap out of her. I know, I've seen Pam Grier in action. She can kick!

Pryor isn't laughing anymore. He's looking for GRIER.

DEBBIE

Now, where were we James?

Debbie hopes that Jeremy can follow her line of thought.

JEREMY

Making love. Man, I was great.

DEBBIE

You were adequate. I was great.

JEREMY

We both were great. Just not at the same time.

The more Pryor laughs, the more the audience does.

DEBBIE

Oy, the Jews are here tonight.

JEREMY

(feigning shock)

You said that, not me!

DEBBIE

What? I love the Jewish people. I just wish they didn't have to eat fish on Fridays.

Jeremy pretends to have a cigar to rub between his fingers, much like GEORGE BURNS.

JEREMY

Why is that, Gracie?

DEBBIE

I usually start my period on a Friday.

GROANS are HEARD from the audience.

RICHARD PRYOR

(from his chair)

Damn kikes. Assholes control this whole town.

Jeremy sweats and Debbie frowns down at Richard.

JEREMY

Richard, we'd like to thank you for your anti-Semitic thoughts and thus, ruining any chances we may ever have in this business.

RICHARD PRYOR

Hey, sorry man, just trying to keep it real.

JEREMY

Well, this Goy is getting off the stage now before Jackie Mason gives me the Ed Sullivan five-finger salute.

Jeremy picks up a few joints off the stage.

DEBBIE

And I'll join you, Jeremy, even though I thought Jews didn't like to fly kites.

They exit the stage to mediocre applause.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMEDY STORE-TEN MINUTES LATER

A very confused and inebriated Richard Pryor comes toward the duo. Debbie runs over and hugs Pryor. Jeremy finds Mary and they kiss for what seems to be hours. A few COMICS congratulate both Jeremy and Debbie for their sheer gall if nothing else.

CUT TO:

EXT. COMEDY STORE-ONE HOUR LATER

Debbie sits at an outdoor table, alone. Pryor comes over and congratulates her.

RICHARD PRYOR

Hey, man, you guys were fun-nee! I mean, for white cats, you were straight-on.

JEREMY

Remind me not to invite you to my next Hanukkah celebration.

DEBBIE

(emphatically)

Richard, I want to thank you. You saved our asses.

JEREMY

(sarcastically)

Yeah, why would I care if half the booking agents left the room?

She kisses Pryor.

RICHARD PRYOR
Is she for real?

JEREMY
Afraid so.

RICHARD PRYOR
I'm going for coffee to sober up.
Wanna get up on outta here with me
and see how the night progresses?

Debbie looks at Jeremy and he nods.

JEREMY
I'm cool. I'm with Mary.

Pryor looks at him.

RICHARD PRYOR
(laughing)
Klutz. Yeah, klutz. See you,
klutzy.

Mary approaches Jeremy. Richard gives Mary the once over.
Jeremy won't let him get away without a question being
answered.

JEREMY
Hey, Richard, I'm interested in
writing for the movies. What was
it like working on "Blazing
Saddles"?

Pryor swings around, looking like he's about to punch Jeremy.

RICHARD PRYOR
You think I didn't write anything?

JEREMY
Of course not. But after your
little tirade tonight against the
Jewish culture, I'm just wondering
how you got along with Mel Brooks?

Richard calms down for a moment and reflects.

RICHARD PRYOR
He had every white codger, toupee
wearin', motherfuckin', Jew comic
from the last century in a room,
man, and they were spittin' out
some of the oldest and nastiest
shit I ever heard. Racist shit,
mean shit, dirty shit.

(MORE)

RICHARD PRYOR (CONT'D)

You think they cared about using the word all you white folks are so afraid of? But Mel was cool, you know? I didn't care, I was gettin' five grand a week, cash. Most of my shit was left out. I had some really funny shit in there. I was supposed to play the sheriff, you know. But my man Cleavon Little got the part. That's cool.

Jeremy lights a cigarette.

JEREMY

Thanks for tonight. We weren't very funny. You made people remember us.

Richard grabs Debbie and they head out.

RICHARD PRYOR

Yeah, well, get funny then, alright? We gotta go. Come on, Debbie. I have an ex-wife named Debbie.

He almost drags her to his car. Mary arrives and places her hand in Jeremy's.

DEBBIE

Ain't I lucky. Do I win a prize?

Debbie turns around to see Jeremy and Mary acting like two normal lovers as Richard stops to do some blow.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT-LATER SAME NIGHT

Jeremy and Mary neck as they watch Johnny Carson's monologue.

JEREMY

God, he's brilliant. See how he just leans back on his heels and waits for the laugh. It's the waiting that makes him a genius. He's just fucking brilliant.

The couch is small and they cuddle.

MARY

He has the patience to wait for the laugh.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

When he bombs, his stare is the key. The audience knows when to laugh. Then they look at Ed. It's priceless! It must have taken years and years to perfect that simple three of four minutes....

Jeremy is impressed with his smart girlfriend. They kiss and hug. Jeremy has all but forgotten Debbie.

JEREMY

You're right. You have no idea how many people don't catch that.

She nuzzles his neck.

MARY

You'll find your own voice someday. I know you will.

Mary kisses Jeremy hard, as if she's got something on her mind.

JEREMY

I don't know. It's awfully hard. I don't know if I even want it that much.

MARY

Well, you certainly love to write. How many hours did you spend this week in the library?

JEREMY

I like writing. It's not so unnerving. When I watch the comics on stage, I can feel what they're going through. It's not just a guy writing things down who's never done it.

They sit facing each other.

MARY

Are you learning anything about screenplay writing?

He turns to make a point with his hands.

JEREMY

Who wouldn't with all those classic scripts in there? But I don't think I'm ready to write just yet.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I'm still stuck in the middle with you. (Singing) "Stuck in the middle with you." Good title for a song, eh?

She kisses him again.

MARY

You're funny. And handsome.

JEREMY

Don't forget loyal, handsome, funny, handsome, original, handsome, non-repeating, handsome...

MARY

You won't let me forget. How about we stop talking and start planning our future together?

JEREMY

What do you mean?

Mary rises and straightens her skirt.

MARY

I want you to meet my mother.

Jeremy gets up off the couch and heads for the door.

JEREMY

Well, it was nice knowing you. Don't forget to write. Call me sometime. No, seriously, let me know how you're doing, from time to time.

She stops him from leaving.

MARY

Come on, be serious. She wants to meet you. I have no brothers or sisters and my dad died some time ago. Please, Jeremy... it's been a long time since I knew anyone I wanted to introduce to her.

He cautiously sits back down.

JEREMY

(stammering)

Okay. Sure. Why not? When?

MARY

Next week. But I have you prep you first.

JEREMY

Is she a chicken I need to truss?

Mary hits him on the arm.

MARY

I need to prepare you about our family history.

Jeremy gives her some old time vaudevillian moves.

JEREMY

I've heard stories from family members that we helped with the underground railroad. We collected the tickets.

MARY

Stop doing material.

She hits him on the arm again.

JEREMY

Okay. I'll try.

MARY

Our family goes way, way back.

JEREMY

So does ours. We came over on the Mayflower. We hid in the rum barrels. By the time we got to the new world, boy, were we drunk!

Mary kisses him and holds him close.

MARY

Tell me you'll meet my family. Of course, I'll want to meet yours, too, and then, perhaps, in a few months, we can-

He heads for the door.

JEREMY

-Get a cat? Frankly, I haven't seen mom or dad for quite a while.

MARY

I'm sure I'll find them
fascinating.

JEREMY

First you have to find them.
Visiting days up at San Quentin are
Mondays and Thursdays and I work
those days. They're usually in the
hole, they like the solitude. Or
they're out in the yard, pumping
iron with the guys. You know, my
mother can lift one hundred pounds
above her head.

She crosses her arms, tapping her foot.

MARY

I'm waiting.....

JEREMY

It's British money.

MARY

Good thing I love you. That's
awful.

JEREMY

Yes, but the laugh crosses the
International Dateline. You can
hear it on Tuesday in new York at
six P.M. and groan about it in
London on Wednesday morning a nine
sharp.

CUT TO:

INT. NBC STUDIOS-SIX MONTHS LATER-DAY

SCOUTS for THE TONIGHT SHOW STARRING JOHNNY CARSON sit in a
tiny, dark room, going over tape after tape in hopes of
finding new talent.

SCOUT ONE

Have you seen this guy? Maher?
Bill Maher? His delivery is
exactly like Johnny's. It's eerie.

He puts the tape down. He throws it on the pile.

SCOUT TWO

I don't think the boss would
appreciate that. But he's funny.

SCOUT ONE picks up a new tape, marked COMEDY AND MAGIC CLUB-HERMOSA BEACH.

SCOUT ONE
What about Leno?

SCOUT TWO
He just debuted. What's the matter with you? The boss doesn't repeat a comic for at least nine months. You should know that by now.

Scout One throws a new tape at the SCOUT TWO.

SCOUT ONE
This Jerry Seinfeld is good. He's so young! He can't be over twenty-four.

SCOUT TWO
Seinfeld. Jerry Sein-feld. He's good, but his material is too immature.

SCOUT ONE
What about Mike Bellar?

Scout Two throws the video tape back and hits his partner.

SCOUT TWO
Christ, no, the boss hates his guts. He hates thieves, ever since they gave him shit for stealing Aunt Blabbie from Johnny Winters. And Bellar is a thief with a capital T.

Scout One picks up one marked BLUESTONE-ICE HOUSE.

SCOUT ONE
This guy Bluestone?

He throws the tape into the machine.

SCOUT TWO
He's good, but Johnny doesn't like him. He told me after his first booking. He's spooky.

SCOUT ONE
The black guy, Ajaye? How do you pronounce it? Johnny's had him on twice now.

Scout Two looks at his name on the cassette.

SCOUT TWO
He's booked for next month. He's
really good and current.

Scout One raises a tape with a picture on it. It's DAVID
LETTERMAN.

SCOUT ONE
How 'bout him? Letterman?

SCOUT TWO
Maybe. The boss loves this guy.

SCOUT ONE
Okay, so should we look at Andy
Kaufman again? I know Johnny
thinks he's too strange for his
audience, but....

SCOUT TWO
Yeah, but he's beginning to open
big all over the place. You can't
see him on Saturday Night and not
here. The boss has got to get him
on soon.

SCOUT ONE
Agreed.

Scout One places the Kaufman tape to the side. Scout Two
holds up what he thinks is the winning cassette. He holds it
up like he's won an Emmy.

SCOUT TWO
I'm going with Gabe Kaplan for my
pick this week. Gabe's got solid
material.

SCOUT ONE
Him? He sucks! You know the boss
doesn't think much of his act,
right? He compares him to Rich
Little, without the impressions.

Scout Two scratches his crotch.

SCOUT TWO
His act is fine.

SCOUT ONE

Johnny knows stand-up! You know it, I know it, and the fucking guy who sweeps up in here knows it.

SCOUT TWO

But he's hot. "Kotter" is in the top ten every fucking week.

SCOUT ONE

So is Captain Kangaroo, but Johnny doesn't feel he's ready yet.

SCOUT TWO

You're a laugh a minute. It's Kaplan for my pick. You pick who you want.

The two men are silent as they watch a new man, ROBIN WILLIAMS, tear down the house at the IMPROV.

SCOUT ONE

The boss mentioned last meeting he wanted Pryor on again. Standards and Practices are gonna kill us.

SCOUT TWO

Pryor's manager's been sniffing around....

Scout One laughs.

SCOUT ONE

The words sniffing and Pryor in the same sentence? That's a good one.

Scout Two laughs a little.

SCOUT TWO

His manager's been asking when we could go again.

Scout One leans back in the chair.

SCOUT ONE

Richard's too unpredictable. My pick is David Brenner. Solid, dependable and he'll park your car if you tip him.

SCOUT TWO

Neither of us take chances. That's why we're here instead of producing the show.

Scout One waves off his co-worker.

SCOUT ONE
Any word on Albert? Will he do
the spot next week?

SCOUT TWO
He says yes. Imagine... being born
Albert Einstein. You better be
funny with that name.

SCOUT ONE
Know what he's gonna do?

SCOUT TWO
You know Albert. He makes it up on
the way down to the studio.

Scout One shakes his head. He watches Albert doing the "Dave and Danny" routine on tape from the Sullivan show.

SCOUT ONE
Jesus. What a mind.

Both search the pile of tapes until they hit upon a new one.

SCOUT TWO
What about those two kids Richard
Pryor raved about? James and Deen?

SCOUT ONE
I saw them last week, they're not
ready. But I think the boss would
love them. She's a doll.

Scout One aims a paper clip arrow at his co-worker, and delivers it at point blank range via a large rubber band.

SCOUT TWO
She's a looker and the guy is
alright. He's a stand-up guy,
that's for sure.

SCOUT ONE
Let's get some video on them this
weekend. I think they're at the
Ice House in Pasadena.

Scout Two stands and stretches his legs.

SCOUT TWO
Where we going for lunch?

SCOUT ONE

Excuse me?

SCOUT TWO

Yeah, where we going for lunch?

SCOUT ONE

Lunch? I've got thirty more tapes to watch by five. I'm eating my ex-wife's tuna fish. I found it in her undies. It's a little fishy, but so was our divorce.

Scout Two shakes his head. Scout One throws a ten dollar bill on the table.

SCOUT TWO

I hope my tape gets chosen.

SCOUT ONE

Okay, go get us a couple of sandwiches next door at the Smokehouse.

Scout Two looks up at a photo of Johnny on the wall.

SCOUT TWO

What kind of mood is he in today?

SCOUT ONE

Pretty good. He went out and played drums last night at the Baked Potato. He was hot. He's beaming today.

Scout One does a couple of drum rolls with his fingers on the table.

SCOUT TWO

The boss loves that place.

CUT TO:

INT. ICE HOUSE-PASADENA-FOLLOWING FRIDAY NIGHT

The SCOUTS from THE TONIGHT SHOW are seated. So is Richard Pryor, since Debbie and Richard are still together. The duo are in the middle of their act. It is not going as well as they would like.

JEREMY

Tell me, Debbie, why do men pull on their crotch so much?

DEBBIE
Because it feels good?

JEREMY
(with a game show HOST
VOICE)
Ding, ding, ding, we have a winner!

He pulls at his crotch. His eyes roll to the back of his head. Laughter erupts.

DEBBIE
Feel better?

JEREMY
Yeah, but if you pulled on it, it
would be heaven.

Jeremy breaks out into the MAURICE CHEVALIER song, "THANK HEAVEN FOR LITTLE GIRLS". PEOPLE in the audience cough, adjust their seats... ONE sneezes and farts at the same time.

DEBBIE
The doctor says I'm not supposed to
do any heavy lifting.

JEREMY
I understand.

DEBBIE
So, this won't be a problem.

She goes for his crotch. Jeremy realizes this is going down hill fast.

JEREMY
You must think I'm an animal.

DEBBIE
Well how can I not when you're on
all fours most of the night?

Everyone stares at Richard Pryor, who is enjoying himself quite a bit.

JEREMY
I was raised by a poor dirt farmer.
All we had was dirt. We ate dirt,
we bathed in dirt and we added
water to the dirt, making it mud.
That was a real treat. My mother
made me a mud pie for my birthday.

DEBBIE
How did that taste?

JEREMY
About the same as a dirt pie, only
soggier.

Debbie goes for his crotch again.

DEBBIE
Speaking of wet....

Jeremy changes the subject which is going absolutely nowhere.

JEREMY
I see we have Richard Pryor in the
place tonight.

The audience gets up and applauds wildly. Richard stands, wobbles a bit, turns and gives a 360 view of his middle finger. It produces the longest laugh line of the night.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMBURGER HAMLET-WESTWOOD-A MONTH LATER

Jeremy is waiting for Debbie, along with his agent, STAN. Both men have little to talk about. They sit in a booth. Jeremy doesn't see the WAITER who drops by. It's Jack.

STAN
Uh, we've ordered already.

JACK
I know, hotshot. I'm here for him.

Jeremy looks up. He smiles.

JEREMY
Jack, you sonovabitch!

JACK
Why, why, it's my little precious
friend, Jeremy. What's happening,
mon cheri?

Jeremy gets up and hugs his friend. It's been seven or so months since Jeremy has seen Jack.

JEREMY
How long you been here?

They shake hands.

JACK

Oh, about twenty seconds. You?

Jeremy laughs and sits back down in the booth. Stan reads Variety.

JEREMY

Come on, how long have you been working here? What happened to the Tiger?

JACK

They closed after you quit. They lost all their customers. Go figure.

JEREMY

Seriously, what's going on?

Jack bends over a little, so as not to let Stan overhear his comments. Jack has changed a little from the last time Jeremy saw him. His attitude toward his sexuality is a lot more refined. He is a lot prouder of who he is.

JACK

Good stuff and bad stuff. I'm still a raging queen, but my hormones are going through a transformation. I'm going to be known as Jackie very soon.

JEREMY

Huh? Jackie?

JACK

That's right, cutie pie, I'm making the switch. I've been waiting for it for a long time. It's time for a change, and Jackie's the girl who can do it.

Jack is proud of his commitment.

JEREMY

Catch my act yet? We're headed for Vegas. Gonna open for the Captain and his pet Tennille!

JACK

You guys are going places. 'Course, I always knew that.

JEREMY

I got a big meeting here tonight.

JACK
Should I wrap your burger in gold
foil?

Stan looks up for a moment, then returns to reading.

JEREMY
Knock it off.

JACK
Well, don't let me interrupt you.
I just stopped by to say hi.

JEREMY
Good to see you. Call me when you
become Jackie.

Jeremy gives him his phone number.

JACK
Will do. Say, tell me something.

JEREMY
Yeah?

JACK
Do you date gals who are new to the
team?

JEREMY
Get outta here. Go get me a
hamlet. What is a hamlet? You
know I'm signed, sealed and
delivered. Remember, I'm Hetero
Man.

JACK
Yeah, yeah, Mister Heterosexual
Man.

Stan spots Debbie.

STAN
Here she comes. Let's get up like
we're real gentlemen.

JEREMY
Speak for yourself.

They rise to greet Debbie. Stan smiles like the used car
salesman that he used to be. Jack leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMLET-TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Intense negotiations have occurred over burgers and fries.

DEBBIE

So let me get this straight...
Jeremy and I have to split the
money?

STAN

That's the deal. It's a good one.

Papers are all over the booth. Debbie has a pen in her hand.
Jeremy has already signed.

DEBBIE

Jeremy? What do you think?

JEREMY

I think we ought to thank our lucky
stars. We're not exactly Rowan and
Martin, kiddo. And the money is
great.

Debbie isn't impressed.

DEBBIE

Richard said we'll get whatever we
demand.

JEREMY

Huh? Richard who? Richard Burton?
Richard Nixon? Richard Brautigan?

Stan throws down the Variety and puts his silver pen back in
his shirt pocket.

STAN

Mister Pryor's nuts. The drugs
have eaten his brain. You want to
join him?

JEREMY

Come on, Debbie, wake up!

DEBBIE

(strongly)

This guy has just made three movies
in a row, two coming out this year,
one in the can for '78. Richard
has a better agent, Jeremy. That's
all this is. Money. It's not
talent.

STAN

You got that right.

JEREMY

Deb, you're being unreasonable.

STAN

It is all about money. The
"talent" isn't here at this table.

Stan gets up. As he moves away from the table, Jeremy is afraid Debbie has blown the deal.

DEBBIE

Where you going?

STAN

To take a piss. You and Jeremy talk it over. You're passing up fucking shitloads of money to do twenty minutes, six nights a week, for two weeks. Think about it. Twenty minutes a night, the crowd is half crocked and you walk out with a great resume under your belt, all because your boyfriend for the next fifteen minutes wanted you to get some fast cash. That's the last time I do anyone any favors.

Jeremy is confused.

JEREMY

Richard? You handle Richard's work, too?

STAN

No, Universal does. I work for Universal. He's got a four movie deal there and they want him to be happy. It's all about him, deary. Not you.

Stan goes to the men's room. Jeremy buries his head in his hands.

JEREMY

The money is something I cannot pass up. I'm getting out. I want to write. I need money for that.

DEBBIE

We can get more cash. I know we can. Richard would laugh at us for taking this.

Jeremy talks very slowly, in a soothing baritone. He speaks as though he is walking someone through the defusing of a bomb, with every word precise and meticulous.

JEREMY

Listen, Miss Dinopopulous, I'm not giving up that kind of money.

DEBBIE

He says he loves me.

JEREMY

Oh, Jesus. Come on.

DEBBIE

I know. It's just that... this is happening so fast. Jeremy, help me.

She cries a bit, but keeps her composure.

JEREMY

Listen to Stan. We just need to sign the deal. Let's grab it. Fast. Learn some more old shit from the pros and just adjust it for us.

Debbie's mind is still on Richard.

DEBBIE

They have to keep him happy? So I'm part of keeping him happy?

JEREMY

Sure. What he asks for, they give, until one of his movies sucks, then they'll cut him loose so fast, his nose will crack the coke mirror in seconds.

Stan returns.

DEBBIE

Okay, Stan, we're in.

Jeremy breathes a sigh of relief. Debbie removes her lipstick from her purse and a glass pipe falls out.

JEREMY
What the fuck is that?

DEBBIE
A test tube? A Hollywood tampon
case?

Stan shakes his head.

JEREMY
Free basing?

DEBBIE
(sheepishly)
I've only done it three times.

Jeremy cannot believe his ears. Debbie breaks down.

STAN
I'm gone. Sign the papers and be
in Vegas on the right date without
the test tube. Got it?

Stan gets up and to leave.

DEBBIE
I'm so fucking confused....

JEREMY
You're staying with Mary and me
until the gig.

STAN
I don't care about the drugs. But
if you disrupt the flow at the
casino, you'll wind up in a hole in
the desert. You know who runs
these places? The guys with the
broken noses. The manager is a guy
named Lefty. He used to train
lions in the circus. He'd put the
lion's head in his mouth! Shape
her up, Jeremy, or this will not go
well.

Stan throws some bills on the table and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT-FOURTEEN DAYS LATER

Mary and Jeremy try their best to get Debbie off the drugs cold turkey. She throws up almost every hour on the hour. Slowly, she begins to recover.

JEREMY

Here's some more chicken soup.
Sobering up is hard.

MARY

God, it took you three full days
just to remember your own name.

JEREMY

It used to take you five. And then
you called yourself Cully McCall.

DEBBIE

My old baby sitter's name. She was
fun. She used to knit our dinner.
Crochet of salmon.

Debbie kicks Jeremy in the shin.

JEREMY

Looks like she's coming back to us.

MARY

Crochet of salmon? You sure?

CUT TO:

EXT. STARDUST CASINO- 23 DAYS LATER-MORNING

Jeremy, Mary and Debbie get out of the car on the side of the parking lot. Debbie looks reborn. They look up at the marquee. It says:

THE CAPTAIN AND TENNILLE!

Underneath, in even bigger letters, it says:

STEAK & LOBSTER \$2.99

Jeremy looks on both sides of the sign. It's the same.

JEREMY

Am I steak, or are you lobster?

DEBBIE

Three ninety-nine? I'm in.
Where's our names?

MARY

Apparently, they forgot. I'll have a word with them.

DEBBIE

Is it too late to become a nun?

MARY

Should I really complain?

All three just stare at the huge sign.

JEREMY

And find your boyfriend's body buried in the desert?

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM-FIFTEEN MINUTES PRIOR TO SHOW

Both Jeremy and Debbie are sweating profusely. Welcoming telegrams from big stars, none of them known to either performer, are tacked on Debbie's brightly lit make-up table. A huge fake joint sent over from CHEECH and CHONG, performing downtown, is sitting on Jeremy's make-up table. Mary is helping Debbie change.

JEREMY

Jesus, Deb, can you believe this?

Jeremy finds an old photo of DEAN MARTIN, signed and dated, 1961, behind the radiator. The carpet is pee-stained. The wood paneling is plastic. A mouse runs past Debbie's leg.

DEBBIE

This place is old. I heard Richard might be here. He hasn't spoken to me since we signed that night at the Hamlet. Jesus, I had to stop smoking that fucking crap.

She gets up out of her chair and hugs Jeremy.

JEREMY

He's the world's best comic and a great actor, but as a human being, he can be a putz. But we're done with him, right?

DEBBIE

Yes, dad. Can I have the car tonight?

JEREMY

Remember I'm Dean, as in Dean
Martin and you're Jerry, as in...

DEBBIE

Jerry Lewis? Duh?

JEREMY

No stepping outside the material.
No ad-libbing, no ad-lipping, no
farting on stage or off and no
singing the National Anthem.

DEBBIE

(sincerely)

Whatever happens out there tonight,
I want to thank you for bringing me
to my senses. I almost lost myself
with Richard. I still love him.
Can you understand that?

Debbie gives Jeremy a kiss. Mary smiles at Jeremy.

JEREMY

It's a long way from the disco
inferno, eh?

DEBBIE

(softly)

It's a long way from everywhere.

Debbie sits and then stands, sits and stands. Nerves are
getting to both performers. Jeremy eats Mary's dinner she
cooked yesterday in Los Angeles.

JEREMY

Good. What is it?

MARY

It's lasagna. I kept it warm by
letting it sit next to your
material.

JEREMY

Rimshot!

DEBBIE

The girl is funny. Bitchin'!

The two women smile at each other. They've become buddies.

MARY

Are you nervous? I'd be shaking in
my boots.

Mary kisses Jeremy, slowly and with great gusto.

DEBBIE

Okay, okay you love birds. I've only changed my bra three times since six.

She throws off her blouse with no concern.

JEREMY

I thought it was six times since three.

MARY

I hope the material out there is better than in here.

JEREMY

Critics everywhere. I wonder why the Captain and his pet Tennille haven't stopped by. What is a Tennille, anyway?

MARY

Maybe they're out looking for a new hat for the Captain, or something.

A loud VOICE yells out their names.

JEREMY

We better get ready. Mary, can we have the room?

Mary exits after kissing Jeremy one more time. Debbie and Mary hug each other tightly.

DEBBIE

This is it, kiddo. Good luck!

JEREMY

I love you, Deb. Thanks.

DEBBIE

And I will always love you, Jeremy. Thanks for everything.

CUT TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE STARDUST THEATRE-CONTINUOUS

The huge showroom is packed. Jeremy and Debbie stand behind the curtain, ready to pounce as the ANNOUNCER speaks from behind the stage. The music begins, friendly applause is given and they wait to hear the introduction.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, the Stardust Hotel and Casino is proud to welcome the hottest new comedians to the Las Vegas strip! Please welcome our opening act for the evening... James and Deen!

Jeremy and Debbie glance at each other and roll their eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. DRESSING ROOM- EXACTLY TWENTY ONE MINUTES LATER

Two dejected HUMAN BEINGS have returned, utterly drained of the life force within them. Neither one speaks for at least three or four minutes. Each one is crying... Jeremy silently, and Debbie as if the Hoover Dam broke. The bombing of Pearl Harbor, NIXON'S resignation and the night Debbie lost her virginity to a RODEO CLOWN all pale in comparison to the embarrassing indignation and humiliation of the last twenty-one minutes.

JEREMY

Holy Mother of God! I've never seen so many open mouths! Did you hear any laughs? Any at all?

Debbie drags herself around the room, as if she has a broken leg.

DEBBIE

What happened? I started telling a joke, then it went dark. I didn't know where I was. I was speechless. The fucking idiot announcer called us James and Deen? What a spaz. And my lines? I went up, so far up I hit the moon.

Jeremy is having a hard time breathing. He lowers his head and inhales long and slow.

JEREMY

When you went up, I followed.
There we were, on stage, with
nothing but air between us and the
audience. Holy fuck!

Debbie is still pacing the room.

DEBBIE

We didn't say one funny thing! Not
one!

Jeremy tries to light the fake joint from Cheech and Chong.
He downs a Coors faster than a speeding train.

JEREMY

It was surreal. Like a Hunter S.
Thompson article for ROLLING STONE.

There is a laugh from Debbie.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Why are you laughing?

DEBBIE

I have no idea who Hunter S.
Thompson is.

Jeremy begins laughing, laughing very hard. He can't control
his laughter. Debbie looks at him and joins in. She is
laughing harder than she's ever laughed before. She sips
some champagne, and it comes up through her nose. Both of
them are convulsing with laughter.

JEREMY

I told you I was the worst.

DEBBIE

It was kinda funny to hear those
old codgers snoring out there. I
did hear a safety pin drop out of
an adult diaper.

JEREMY

That was the grenade Lefty rolled
up there midway through.

DEBBIE

(sobbing and laughing)
I wish I were twenty one minutes
younger.

JEREMY

I wonder if they want their money
back?

She stops laughing. Horror comes over her face.

DEBBIE

Shit, we're toast, Jeremy. We'd
better pack.

There is a KNOCK at the dressing room door.

JEREMY

(yelling)

Lefty, it was all my mother's
fault. She taught me all my jokes!

TONI TENNILLE is belting out a song as the door opens.
JOHNNY CARSON enters. Both Debbie and Jeremy almost fall
over. Johnny stands in front of them, hitting an imaginary
mark on the floor, as if he's performing his nightly
monologue. His hands are behind him, and he touches the
right side of his nose from time to time with his right index
finger as he leans back on his heels.

JOHNNY

I, uh, I think you both know me. I
saw the act. It was the worst
twenty-one minutes I've ever seen.
I, uh, I don't know where to begin.
I actually saw the lives of my ex-
wives flash in front of me.

Jeremy is now laughing as hard as he can. This is the most
absurd moment in his life.

JEREMY

Johnny Carson is in my dressing
room? Excuse, me, Johnny, but this
a moment I will never forget.
You're the greatest comedian on the
planet.

Debbie walks over to Carson and puts her arms around him.

DEBBIE

I know I'll never have another
chance at this, so here it goes.

She kisses him, long and slow. As she leaves his embrace,
she trips over a trash bucket, falls, and her legs get stuck
in the bucket.

JOHNNY

Now, that's funny. Why, uh, why didn't you use that on stage?

She gets up, removing herself from the bucket.

JEREMY

What on earth are you doing here?

JOHNNY

I was uh, here for the NBC affiliate luncheon. I had a little too much wine and fell asleep back stage. One of the stagehands woke me up. He said I just had to see this.

Johnny shakes his head.

DEBBIE

How bad was it?

JOHNNY

You're... you're actually gonna go with that?

JEREMY

Deb! You can't-

JOHNNY

-How bad was it? It was so bad, I saw Lefty shoot out the tires of a wheelchair. With Howard Hughes still sitting in it!

Johnny heads for the door.

JEREMY

Think the mob is angry with us?

JOHNNY

Let me put it to you this way: I hope you don't have a grassy knoll next to your home.

Both performers grimace.

JEREMY

I always wanted to meet you. I thought it may have been on your show, after my set, on the couch.

The two men shake hands.

JOHNNY

(doing CARL SAGAN)

You two will need billions and billions more hours practicing your act before you even audition for my show.

Johnny blows a kiss to Debbie. Jeremy blows one back at Johnny, who just rolls his eyes.

DEBBIE

I'm so ashamed. My mom and dad are going to see this. I wish I was dead.

Johnny's kindness begins to show through.

JOHNNY

I've got the NBC plane here and you're both coming back to Burbank with me. By the way, I've provided parachutes in case you want to jump midway. The boys with the broken noses won't uh, won't touch you if I'm with you.

DEBBIE

Thanks Johnny. You are the best.

JEREMY

Can my girlfriend hitch a ride, too?

JOHNNY

Sure. I hope she's funnier than both of you combined.

Carson walks out of the dressing room as Mary walks in. She does a double take.

MARY

Is that? Him? J-J-Johnny? Oh, my God!

Mary is looking behind her at the man who just left the dressing room. Jeremy grabs her and they kiss.

JEREMY

Johnny's taking us back to Burbank in his private plane.

MARY

What do we do with the car?

DEBBIE
Give it to Lefty. He loves to
bench press foreign cars.

The three of them look around the dressing room one last time
and head for the Las Vegas airport.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI-MOMENTS LATER

JEREMY
Okay, Mary, was it that bad?

DEBBIE
Give it up, Mary. How bad was it?

Mary's answers are clipped, tight responses.

MARY
You two were there, weren't you?

DEBBIE
We were there, but not *there*.

JEREMY
I think we performed in Area 51,
not the Stardust. Great band,
though.

MARY
I honestly thought there were
technical problems.

JEREMY
We were the technical problems.

Debbie smiles at Jeremy and seems to relax for the first time
since the performance.

DEBBIE
I'm going back up to Seattle for a
while. Hollywood sucks. I need
some space.

JEREMY
(to Mary)
Johnny is taking us back on the NBC
plane. Can you believe that?

Debbie takes one of Mary's scarves and wraps it around her
head, and puts on a huge pair of sunglasses.

She's going for the MARILYN MONROE look. Mary looks her over through the rear view mirror.

MARY
Bitchin'!

Debbie kicks Mary's seat with her foot.

JEREMY
And Mary? You and I have just become pre-engaged. Deb, I don't want you jumping off the Space Needle over me.

Mary's face lights up. She leans over and kisses Jeremy.

DEBBIE
I'll be fine. Curtis called last week.

JEREMY
Gonna give him another shot?

DEBBIE
(sighing)
I'm giving him whatever he wants. He always did love me.

JEREMY
Good for you. We wish you the best.

Debbie applies lipstick and mascara, similar to what Marilyn would have worn. She covers her hair with the scarf.

DEBBIE
And to you two. Invite me to the wedding.

JEREMY
(laughing)
We're hiring the Captain and Tennille for the wedding and get married on a ship. A real-

MARY
-Muskrat love-boat?

JEREMY
Groans on the House!

CUT TO:

LEGEND ON THE SCREEN: ONE YEAR LATER

CUT TO:

INT. COMEDY STORE WESTWOOD-EVENING

Jeremy has ventured into the club. He takes a seat at the bar. The BARTENDER approaches him.

JEREMY
Jim Beam rocks.

BARTENDER
Sure. Are you a comic?

He places the drink in front of Jeremy.

JEREMY
I was. For a while. But then, the
proverbial shit hit the fan.

An up-and-coming COMIC recognizes Jeremy and walks over.

COMIC
I cannot believe you have the nerve
to walk into this place. I thought
they got to you in the desert.

JEREMY
Have you seen Debbie Deen around?

COMIC
Oh, yeah, she's doing well. She's
got a boyfriend named Curtis who
watches over her like a bodyguard.
She hired some expensive writers
and they wrote a pretty good act
for her. She's up at the Sunset
store. Shit, she's too big for
this tiny place.

Jeremy takes a sip of his drink.

JEREMY
Good for her. *Good for her.*

COMIC
What about you?

JEREMY
I got married, and moved out of
this crazy town. I'm writing now.

COMIC

You want me to add your name to the performer's list?

Jeremy leans back and taps his fingers on the bar.

JEREMY

No, I don't think so. I think I'll just sit at the bar and watch the carnage.

COMIC

Suit yourself. You know, there's a legend about that night in Vegas. It's kind of like the Kennedy assassination... everyone tells a different story. Some say you guys met Carson that night. Some say you had to leave town 'cause the mob was after you. Some say Lee Harvey fired a round of jokes from the grassy knoll. Some say the F.B.I. wanted that guy Lefty and set you guys up to be whacked by him. Some think Johnny smuggled you out on his private jet. There's not a comedian on the planet that doesn't have a story about you two that night.

JEREMY

Cool. We made history.

More COMICS gather around Jeremy.

ANOTHER COMIC

Is it true Ed McMahon took a shot at Debbie through the curtain?

JEREMY

Who knows? The story goes on and on. I think Jimmy Hoffa's body found midway through our act.

COMIC

Wait for the movie to come out, right?

JEREMY

Something like that.

COMIC

Well, I'll be the first one to see it.

(MORE)

COMIC (CONT'D)
I'm working over at the Hungry
Tiger, and my afternoons are free.
I'll see the matinee.

JEREMY
(rolling his eyes)
Then I know it's gonna be a hit.

As Jeremy turns, he sees photographs of famous comics on the wall. In between GEORGE CARLIN and ROBERT KLEIN is an 8 X 10 of Debbie, with the inscription:

"TO ALL MY FRIENDS IN WESTWOOD:

YOU'RE BITCHIN'!

LOVE, DEBBIE DEEN"

Jeremy orders another drink. A new COMEDIAN hits the stage.

FADE OUT

THE END