MISTER BIG APPLE

by

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

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FADE IN:

## OPENING CREDITS

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

EXT. STREET - DAY

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

EXT. STREET - DAY

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

INT. OXO'S DINER - NIGHT

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

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

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

INT. TAXIS DEPOT - DAY

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

INT. CAB - DAY

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

THE SNAPSHOTS ARE INCREASINGLY QUICKER, TO BE A SUCCESSION OF STILLS-LIKE TO FINALLY SUDDENLY STOP ON--

EXT. KENNEDY AIRPORT - DAY

George waiting in his taxi in front of Kennedy airport.

END OF OPENING CREDITS

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

CUSTOMER

(to George)

Manhattan, 72nd.

The cab moves off.

INT. CAB - DAY

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

GEORGE

(to the rear-view mirror)
Major Forrest?

FORREST

(emerging from his papers)
Beg your pardon?

GEORGE

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

FORREST

(stunned)

What the hell?

GEORGE

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

FORREST

Talk for yourself. You're as always badly shaved.

**GEORGE** 

You look exhausted, bud. Have to admit I used to know you more tanned.

FORREST

I had better days. Two weeks ago, my doctor found some odd stuff in my blood. I'm waiting for the results.

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

**GEORGE** 

Well. You perfectly know what I think about doctors?

GEORGE & FORREST

(in unison)

Keep your stuff for the towelheads, Doc! You could kill'em all by yourself!

They laugh.

GEORGE

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

FORREST

CBC.

GEORGE

CBC. No shit. You should pocket.

(a beat)

How long has it been since we sa

How long has it been since we saw each other?

FORREST

Ten years? And what about you?

GEORGE

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

FORREST

And you make it?

GEORGE

I'll have better days.

A beat.

FORREST

So, you haven't bought your Bonneville yet?

GEORGE

(showing the key-ring)
I still have the key ring. It's a beginning

A beat.

FORREST

At what time do you finish?

GEORGE

You're my last ride.

FORREST

I buy you a drink?

**GEORGE** 

You bet you do!

The cab speeds up on the highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - EVENING

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

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

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

GEORGE

(to Forrest)

Always dreamed of doing that.

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

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

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

Forrest and George sit at one of the tables with striking views of Central Park and a MAITRE D' comes to them.

MAITRE D'

(with a French accent)
Good evening Monsieur Forrest.

FORREST

Bonsoir François.

MAITRE D'

Your regular, Monsieur?

FORREST

(nodding)

With two glasses.

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

FORREST (cont'd)

(to George, after a long

beat)

I can't believe it. It's a small world.

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

GEORGE

You're the last person I ever thought meeting.

FORREST

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

**GEORGE** 

Nope. Never heard of them anymore.

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

George cannot avoid having an astounding smile.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(impressed)

Veuve Clicquot? Wow!

FORREST

Tell me about it. CBC's Amex. (confidentially)
When it's not on the house.

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

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

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

FORREST (cont'd)

To our reunion, Private LeRoy.

GEORGE

To us, Major Forrest.

The two glasses CLINK.

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

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

FORREST

(to George)

You're catching eyes.

(a beat)

Too bad for you She is a hooker.

George doesn't even notice.

FORREST (cont'd)

Talking about women George, are you married?

**GEORGE** 

(chuckling)

You're kidding? Me, married? With all those chicks running around?

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

FORREST

With a handsome mug like yours, you should be a success. Always been jealous of you. You had all the women you wanted.

**GEORGE** 

(bitterly)

Yep. But never the one I'd really like to.

FORREST

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

A beat.

GEORGE

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

Forrest can't help smiling.

FORREST

Who could ever thought that big mouth Private LeRoy was a dreamer?
(a beat)

But get down to us, would you? (serious)

Tell me. If I'm talking about Saddam Hussein or Noriega, you see who I'm talking about, don't you?

**GEORGE** 

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

FORREST

You already know as much as a reporter.

(a beat)

Listen. I'm looking for someone to give me a hand for a job at CBC Are you up to it?

**GEORGE** 

(shruqqinq)

Yeah. Why not?

FORREST

You know, being a reporter these days, is like being back in Iraq. You have to fight to find the facts, dodge the other reporters' bullets and set up your own flag as high as you can and fuck everybody. And as a cabbie, you're used to listen to people, talk to them. Give your point of view. Know what they really think.

**GEORGE** 

(nodding)

Yeah. I get what you mean.

FORREST

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

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

RACHEL

Good evening.

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

RACHEL (cont'd)

(to Forrest)

I don't know your friend yet, but if he wants to buy me a drink, that could very easily be done.

(to George)

No?

FORREST

(to George)

What do you think George?

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

RACHEL

(staring at George)

Yes. What does George think?

George just shakes his head.

FORREST

(to Rachel)

Sorry, pretty.

RACHEL

Pity, really. He is quite cute. I think he could make me do something silly, George.

(to George)

See you, I hope.

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

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

FORREST

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

**GEORGE** 

(cynically)

Where do you want me to go with that kind of girl?

FORREST

Stop it, would you? You will find your guardian angel one day.

(a beat)

Listen. Tomorrow night, my wife and I'll invite some people to dinner and--

GEORGE

(interrupting)

You're married?

FORREST

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

GEORGE

Alright, why not, but--

FORREST

But?

GEORGE

(embarrassed)

I've-- nothing proper to wear.

FORREST

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

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

FORREST (cont'd)

Take that. You'll give them back later. Buy yourself a suit. And be there tomorrow at eight. Here's my card. It's on Broadway.

(he hands him a card and gets up)

I go. Wanna stay for a while?

**GEORGE** 

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

FORREST

(laughing)

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

**GEORGE** 

(nodding)

Tomorrow night.

Forrest leaves and steps out of the bar.

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

RACHEL

Feel better now, George?
(She seats by him.
Confidentially)

My apartment is not very far you know.

**GEORGE** 

But -- I just have twenty bucks.

Rachel sizes him up with mischievous eyes.

RACHEL

(shrugging)

Never mind. Let's say, you'll be my dessert.

George drinks his flute glass of champagne up.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. USED CLOTHING STORE - DAY

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

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING - HALL - EVENING

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

DOORMAN

Sir? Can I help you?

**GEORGE** 

I am expected at Charles Forrest's.

**DOORMAN** 

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

George thanks him with a nod and enters the elevator.

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING - ELEVATOR - EVENING

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

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

Elevator doors slide open.

## INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - EVENING

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

MADELINE

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

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

Charles told me how you met yesterday. I'm glad he invited you.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

Apparently, George is the first arrived.

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

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

MADELINE

(confidentially)

I am sure that you will make your entrance in the world tonight.

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

**GEORGE** 

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

MADELINE

(interrupting)

I know.

MADELINE(cont'd)

That's Charles' Pygmalion side. I heard you like champagne too.

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

Would you excuse me.

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

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

FORREST

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

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

FORREST (cont'd)

Come with me.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING (LATER)

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

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

MADELINE

(to Clotilda)

Clotilda, may I introduce you to an old friend of Charles, George LeRoy.

(to George)

My closest friend, almost a sister, Clotilda Rayuela.

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

THEN, THEIR EYES MEET

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

**GEORGE** 

(to Clotilda)

Would you like some champagne?

CLOTILDA

Yes, please.

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

GEORGE

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

Clotilda bursts into laughter.

CLOTILDA

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

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

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

She is French and her name is VIRGINIE.

FORREST

(to George)

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

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

WALTER

(to George)

Charles told me many good things about you. I should admit we need young blood, men who'd been on the field, just like you.

FORREST

(to Walter)

George fought by my side and saved my life in Iraq. If you're looking for experience and the right word, George is your man.

(to George)

Isn't it, George?

GEORGE

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

WALTER

(to George)

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

FORREST

(to Walter)

Why not let George come tomorrow to the Studios to write something down?

WALTER

(to Forrest)

Very well.

(to George)

By the way, I want you to meet two of the strong pillars of my editorial staff.

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

WALTER (cont'd)

Norman Steiner, our sport reporter.

Sharp nod from Steiner to George.

WALTER (cont'd)

No need to introduce you Didi Hamon, our weekend anchor you should have seen a lot on TV.

This time, it is George's turn to sharply nod to Didi.

MADELINE

(interrupting)

Sorry to interfere gentlemen, but dinner is ready.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DINNER ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

WALTER (O.S.)

So, finally, George, tell us what brought us this Desert Storm?

George realizes that everybody is looking at him. For a few seconds, he looks confused and takes over as he gets Madeline's eyes.

GEORGE

Well, although huge deals with Kuwait and promises not held by our former President, we proved to the whole world we could be ready for prime time news.

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

WALTER

(laughing)

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

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

BACK TO:

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

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

STEINER

(obviously flirting)

If you need a helping hand, don't bother to call.

(he hands his card)

I've always been interested in new talents.

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

Madeline comes to George.

MADELINE

(whispering)

Do not neglect Virginie Walter.

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

**GEORGE** 

(to Steiner)

Excuse me.

George comes to Virginie. She is alone by one of the windows, smoking. She slightly gives a jump as he gets closer.

VIRGINIE

George.

**GEORGE** 

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

VIRGINIE

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

**GEORGE** 

(almost bowing) With a deep pleasure.

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

CLOTILDA

(low voice)

Help.

(confidentially)

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

She nods to Didi.

GEORGE

Do you want me to talk to her?

CLOTILDA

No. You're cute.

(with a smile)

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

(a beat)

We'll see again then.

She puts her hand on his arm.

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Bye George.

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

MADELINE

Cigar?

GEORGE

No, thanks. I don't smoke.

MADELINE

You don't smoke?

(nooding to George's

glass)

You've barely drank your brandy. Come on George, you should certainly have some kind of vice?

**GEORGE** 

(charming)

It's all depends what you mean by vice?

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

You're sure you're alright? Do you want--

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

MADELINE

(confidentially)

Charles doesn't like to inspire pity.

George simply nods and turns to Forrest.

**GEORGE** 

I gotta go.

They shake hands.

FORREST

Drop to my office by two.
(cordial)
Keep the shirt and the tie. Let's

say it'd be your welcome gift.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

From the neighborhood, we can hear SHOUTING AND CRYING.

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

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CBC BUILDING - DAY

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

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

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

**GEORGE** 

George LeRoy for Charles Forrest. I'm expected.

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

FORREST

Ready to enter the fray?

**GEORGE** 

(self-confident)

I'm already in.

FORREST

(winking)

Come with me.

INT. CBC STUDIOS - EDITING ROOM - DAY

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

FORREST

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

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

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

INT. CBC STUDIOS - NEWSROOM - DAY

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

GEORGE

Forrest. Could you --

FORREST

(sharply)

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

**GEORGE** 

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

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

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Closeup on of a finger ringing a bell.

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

MADELINE

George. I was expecting you sooner.

He is about to leave.

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

CUT TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

MADELINE

I'm gonna change. Give me five minutes.

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

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

MADELINE (V.O.) (cont'd)

Pour yourself a drink. I'm sorry I don't have any champagne.

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

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

Please, follow me.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - MADELINE OFFICE - DAY

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

MADELINE

This is my lair.

She sits down in front of a computer by a TV set and a VCR, gives George a seat by her, takes a remote control, and switches the TV and the VCR on.

MADELINE (cont'd)

I'm delighted to work with you.

She gives George her most beautiful smile.

TIME CUT :

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

The COMPUTER SCREEN is filled with a compact text.

GEORGE

(reading)

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

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

MADELINE

Good. Now, sign your name.

George is hesitating.

MADELINE (cont'd)

Go on. Sign.

With two fingers, George clumsily types

GEORGE LeRoy

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

Tell me, George. What do you think of Clotilda?

**GEORGE** 

She is very attractive.

(a beat)

But not as much as you.

George stares at her with persistence. Madeline lowers her head.

MADELINE

She is sweet, smart and funny. Well, such qualities her husband doesn't appreciate much.

**GEORGE** 

(stunned)

She is married?

MADELINE

He is a businessman always abroad. And when he is home, they always fight like cats and dogs.

(she crushes her

cigarette)

Call her one of these days.

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

I have to chase you away now. I'm expecting someone.

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

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - CORRIDOR - DAY

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

MADELINE

A very close friend of mine, Edward Worth.

(to Worth)

George LeRoy.

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

Door closes immediately.

INT. WALTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Walter's office is a large room with glass walls. On numerous TV screens are broadcast most of the U.S.

TV programs, sound down low. Walter is on the telephone when Forrest and George enter.

WALTER

(on the phone)

--I don't give a damn with the authorization. You hear me? Fuck the FBI. You manage as you usually do.

(a beat)

He wants a car? I'm gonna think about it.

(he hangs up.

To Forrest)

FBI guys are getting greedier.

(to George)

You're a man of one word. A good point. Let's see.

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

FORREST

I worked with him. You should like it.

Walter takes the Sheets and pages through.

WALTER

(to George)

It looks good. I'll let you know.

FORREST

(to Walter)

You remember? We talked about hiring him to replace Willing.

WALTER

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

George's hotel room has been cleaned up. No more clothes to lay around. George is seated comfortably on his bed, watching CBC News hosted by Didi Hamon on a brand new TV set.

DIDI

(on TV)

We're starting tonight a series of documentaries about Desert Storm. Commentaries are by George LeRoy.

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

CUT TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS FORREST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

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

FORREST

(on the phone)

So, how do you feel hearing your name on TV?

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Let's say, interesting.

INT. CBC STUDIOS FORREST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

FORREST

(on the phone)

Hey, George.

GEORGE (V.O.)

(on the phone)

What?

FORREST

(on the phone)

You're doing good.

Forrest hangs up.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

CONNIE, the hostess, raises her head to US.

CONNIE

Good morning, Mister LeRoy. I call Mister Forrest at once.

(she picks up her phone)

Charles? Mister LeRoy is here.

(she hangs up.

To George)

He is on his way.

Forrest is already here.

FORREST

Got the second one?

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

FORREST (cont'd)

Fine. Fine.

They start to walk along the CBC editorial newsroom.

**GEORGE** 

Do you think you could already provide me an advance?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

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

INT. TAXIS DEPOT - DAY

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

LUIS

Where have you been? Rizzo's gone berserk.

GEORGE

(very quiet)

Wanna have a little fun Luis? Follow me.

Luis follows him, with an amused smile. They did not walk for long when a Mediterranean fat guy in his fifties (RIZZO) stumbles down in the depot, frantic.

RIZZO

(yelling)

What's that fucking shit?! You disappeared a whole day with my cab! You had a journey to Vegas or what?! Peggy kept calling you, but no answer! You're a fucking pain in the ass, LeRoy!! Capish?! Do you know how many scums like you are waiting for your fucking job?! You've got nothing to answer, don't you?

**GEORGE** 

Oh, yes.

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

I quit. You hear me? You won't shit on me anymore Rizzo. I'm gonna work for CBC.

(to Luis)

I told you you'd have fun.

He steps out under Luis' laughing eye.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TAILOR'S STORE - DAY

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

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

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

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

FRANCOIS

Good evening Sir.

**GEORGE** 

Bonsoir Francois. A glass of champagne.

François glances at him, meaning: I know you but where from?

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

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

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

RACHEL

(happy)

How amazing how I kept thinking of you for two days.

CLOSEUP ON GEORGE'S AMAZED LOOK

RACHEL (cont'd)

Tonight, if you're free.

**GEORGE** 

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

Rachel stares at him skeptical and shrugs.

INT. RACHEL APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - OFFICES - DAY

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

FORREST

(sharply)

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

**GEORGE** 

Who?

FORREST

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

GEORGE

But-- My commentaries?

FORREST

Forget that shit! Move!

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

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

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

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

George steps to him.

**GEORGE** 

Thomas Gossip?

Thomas gets up, a backpack on his shoulder.

THOMAS

LeRoy? You're half of a hour late.

**GEORGE** 

Couldn't find a fucking taxi.

**THOMAS** 

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

**GEORGE** 

Who?

They step forward the elevator and enter.

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - ELEVATOR - DAY

GEORGE

Gossip is your real name?

THOMAS

You're a funny guy, aren't you? An alias, of course. The Stars chaser, the paparazzi of the interview. That's me.

(low voice)

Better than Smith anyway, isn't it?

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

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

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

THOMAS

The kid loves them.

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

THOMAS (cont'd) (to the bodyguard)

Hi Willy. What's up?

The bodyguard gently winks to him and looks at George

THOMAS (cont'd)

It's okay. He's with me.

They enter the suite.

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

An hotel suite flowed with flowers and teddy bears.

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

FIONA

Thomas honey!

Thomas gives her his teddy bear.

THOMAS

I bought it for you in Paris.

FIONA

It's huge.

(seeing George)

The other's not bad neither.

THOMAS

Tss, tss... You can't touch him. He's still brand new.

FIONA

Pity. Thomas, are you coming to my soiree?

THOMAS

You perfectly know I wouldn't miss it.

FIONA

Will you bring your- (staring mischievously at
 George)

"teddy" ?

THOMAS

Everything you wish, sweetheart.

FIONA

(to George)

See you on Saturday, then.

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

Thomas drags George back to the suite door.

CUT TO:

INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - ELEVATOR - DAY

**GEORGE** 

And the -- interview?

THOMAS

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

THOMAS (cont'd)

(winking)

Editing, it's magic.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - DAY

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

**GEORGE** 

(on the phone)

Madeline? It's George. I'm sure you can do me a little favor.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT CORRIDOR - DAY

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

PUERTO RICAN WOMAN

Si?

**GEORGE** 

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

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

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

I thought you forgot me.

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

EXT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - DAY

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

**GEORGE** 

Quite a view.

CLOTILDA

(ironically)

You came here to talk about my view?

**GEORGE** 

(charming)

I just wanted to know if Didi Hamon followed you?

CLOTILDA

(ironically)

It's nice to know you worry, but
I'm okay.

**GEORGE** 

(charming)

Not worry. Maybe quite jealous.

Clotilda slightly lows her glasses, quite provocative.

CLOTILDA

So, George, tell me everything about you.

**GEORGE** 

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

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

CLOTILDA

(to George)

Sit by me.

She makes him some room on the deck chair.

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

I think we're gonna be good friends.

**GEORGE** 

(charming)

Just friends?

CLOTILDA

(ironically)

Well. I don't know.

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

This is my daughter, Winnie.

Quite surprised, George smiles to Winnie.

GEORGE

Hi, Winnie.

CLOTILDA

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

**GEORGE** 

(to Winnie)

One day, I'm pretty sure we'll play together.

Winnie does not answer, sizing George up.

CLOTILDA

(puzzled)

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

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

**GEORGE** 

Well, I better leave you between ladies.

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

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOTILDA

I don't like having people here but sometimes I invite Madeline and Charles at the restaurant. But just the three of us is quite sad. Be ours on Saturday night. **GEORGE** 

(with assurance)

I'll be there.

They shake hands.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. "WINDOWS ON THE WORLD" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

CLOTILDA'S LAUGHTER

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

CLOTILDA

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

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

(confidentially)

I can't stand it anymore. I have to pee.

She hurries ahead the Ladies' room.

**GEORGE** 

(to Forrest)

What's wrong? If you could see your face.

Forrest forces himself to smile at him, sadly. A maitre D' comes to the table.

MAITRE D

(to Forrest)

Mister Forrest. Telephone.

Without a word, Forrest leaves the table.

MADELINE

(to George)

I worry about him. I expected this dinner would cheer him up.

(sigh)

Even when I manage to make him switch off his cell phone, someone always manages a way to call him.

She drinks a sip of champagne.

MADELINE (cont'd)

You're not coming to see me anymore.

**GEORGE** 

Can't you guess why?

MADELINE

(innocently)

No.

GEORGE

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

MADELINE

(calmly)

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

**GEORGE** 

(sighing)

As if I could control my feelings.

MADELINE

George, for me a man in love no longer exists. He's an fool, or rather a dangerous fool.

MADELINE (cont'd)

I usually stop having any close relationship with men who love me or claim to. First, because they bore me. And secondly, because they're like a mad dog that may suddenly have a fit. So, look at me. I'll never be your lover.

Never. Do you understand?

(with a smile)
It's quite preferable you prefer
Clotilda.

She drinks her champagne up.

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

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

CLOTILDA

Maybe I've drunk too much.

GEORGE

(to Clotilda)

Would you like me to take you home?

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

CLOTILDA

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

Forrest is already out. They follow him.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - INT. CAB - NIGHT

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

She sighs.

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

CLOTILDA

(whispering)

No, George. Por favor.

They kiss.

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

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

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Tomorrow. Two o'clock. My place.

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

INT. GEORGE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

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

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

**GEORGE** 

(surprised)

You don't smoke? Do you?

CLOTILDA

Always after making love.

(a beat)

Maria took Winnie to the park. That's why I could welcome you today. Then, it will be different.

(a beat)

I'll come to your place.

**GEORGE** 

No.

CLOTILDA

Why?

**GEORGE** 

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

CLOTILDA

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

**GEORGE** 

That bothers me.

CLOTILDA

Don't you ever want to see me again?

**GEORGE** 

(kindly)

You fool.

CLOTILDA

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

Closeup on a small plane propeller with a roaring engine.

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

E/I. PLANE - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

(nearly shouting)
Is that your first flight?

**GEORGE** 

(nearly shouting)

Yeah.

CLOTILDA (nearly shouting)

You're gonna love it!

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

The Eagle II darts and quickly climbs, and zooms.

E/I. PLANE - DAY

George's hand clenches and tries to grab something inside the plane. He turns livid.

In front of him, Clotilda is shouting and laughing.

CLOTILDA

(nearly shouting)

You're all right?

**GEORGE** 

Mmm mmm.

EXT. COUNTRY - DAY

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

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

By the runway, several persons are watching the plane figures.

MAN #1

Who's up there?

MAN #2

The upper crust goofy.

MAN #1

(chuckling)

Okay. I'm not asking.

E/I. PLANE - DAY

Inside the plane, George, face clutched, holds with his hands on each part of the fuselage. As a trapped animal, he doesn't know which way to turn. Clotilda is still overexcited.

CLOTILDA

(shouting)

You're okay?! Wanna go down?!

GEORGE

(shouting)

If you don't mind. Before we die!

CLOTILDA

(shouting)

Okay! We're going home!

EXT. AIRFIELD - DAY

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

EXT. AIRFIELD - HANGAR - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

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

George looks at her, exhausted.

GEORGE

(bitterly)

Next time, it'll be the flight simulator for me.

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

CLOTILDA

(whispering)

I want you. Now.

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - EDITOR ROOM - DAY

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

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

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Yeah?

(a beat)

Wait a second.

(he takes a pen)

Fifty-fourth and Third Avenue. Fifteenth floor. Door fifteen

twenty-six. At six? I'll be there.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUILDING - DAY

resumes.

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

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

What do you think?

**GEORGE** 

Nice place.

Without a word, Clotilda takes his hand and takes him to the bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

Soft, isn't it?

**GEORGE** 

(curious)

Where exactly are we?

CLOTILDA

(obviously)

But, in your apartment, George.

**GEORGE** 

What?!!

CLOTILDA

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

**GEORGE** 

But, I--

CLOTILDA

You don't like it?

GEORGE

(getting up)

I can't accept.

CLOTILDA

I know. But, I do insist. It's my way to tell how much I care for

(a beat)

Tell me you like it.

George sits back and starts to kiss her.

GEORGE

I LOVE it.

She escapes from his embrace.

CLOTILDA

My husband will be back home tonight.

(she arranges her hair)
Settle the place as you like. I've got my own key.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

George steps out the building, the apartment keys in his hand.

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

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

INT. OFFICE - DAY

George interviewing a politician.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

George is wildly making love to Clotilda in the apartment.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

By Clotilda, George is checking a note in a classy restaurant with his Amex.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Central Park in autumn.

INT. BANK - DAY

George is in a bank with a BANKER.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

George is making love to Clotilda.

INT. TAILOR - DAY

George is buying a haute couture suit.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

George is redecorating the apartment.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - ROCKFELLER CENTER - NIGHT

The Rockfeller Center Christmas tree with SKATING PEOPLE.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

George and Clotilda in a casino, playing dices.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George in front of an ATM: his maximum amount had been reached.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

CLOTILDA

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

GEORGE

(tired)

I'd rather spend the evening here.

CLOTILDA

But I want to go out.

GEORGE

So, go-- by yourself.

CLOTILDA

(bitterly)

Listen dearie. If I ask you to take me out, so you do.

CLOTILDA(cont'd)

If you act just like my husband, what the point, for me, having a lover?

**GEORGE** 

(upset)

Fuck your hubby.

CLOTILDA

Who do you think I am?!

She notices he does not move.

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Fine. Bye.

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

**GEORGE** 

Stop it.

CLOTILDA

You're hurting me.

He lets her go and sighs.

GEORGE

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

CLOTILDA

What reason?

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

You're lying!!

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Leave me!

GEORGE

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

Clotilda looks at him, astounded.

CLOTILDA

You're-- what?

**GEORGE** 

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

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

CLOTILDA

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

GEORGE

(improvising)

My mother-- A very serious operation-- and--

(nearly crying)

I even had to borrow some money.

CLOTILDA

I'll lend you some!

**GEORGE** 

No. I've enough debts.

He kneels to her. She embraces him.

CLOTILDA

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

They kiss with passion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

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

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

A \$100 DOLLAR BILL

George cannot believe it.

SEVERAL SHOTS OF THE BEDSIDE TABLE WITH MORE AND MORE BILLS EACH TIME

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

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

CUT TO :

INT. CBC STUDIOS - EVENING

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

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

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

FRANCOIS

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

**GEORGE** 

Bonsoir Francois.

CLOTILDA

(floored)

You knew this place?

**GEORGE** 

I used to come before-- sometimes.

CLOTILDA

Why did you never take me here?

**GEORGE** 

Never crossed my mind.

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

(to François)

My regular.

Francois walked back to the bar.

CLOTILDA

You used to come here by yourself?

GEORGE

This is the very first place where Forrest took me when we met.

(a beat)

By the way, how is he? I haven't seen him for a while at CBC. And I'm so busy and--

CLOTILDA

(interrupting)

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

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

You should pay him a visit before he leaves for Key West with Madeline.

(she stops, annoyed)
Do you know that girl at the bar?

**GEORGE** 

(innocently)

What girl?

CLOTILDA

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

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

GEORGE

Never seen her before.

(a beat)

I'll visit Forrest. When I think I could catch the same fucking--

Rachel who stands right behind him interrupts George.

RACHEL (O.S.)

Hi, George. Finally back in town?

George does not answer, not even turning back to her.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Turned blind and deaf?

Clotilda cannot believe it. George finally faces Rachel.

GEORGE

(to Rachel)

Listen, sweetie. Go back to work.

RACHEL

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

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

GEORGE

Clotilda! Wait!

CUT TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - NIGHT

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

GEORGE

(to himself)

Shit.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The DOORBELL RINGS at the Forrests.

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

MADELINE

(whispering)

George? What a good surprise. You're soaking. Come in.

George steps in.

**GEORGE** 

I've heard for Charles.

MADELINE

(whispering)

He is asleep. Doctors are very pessimistic. His days are now counted.

(she sighs)

Do you want a drink?

**GEORGE** 

Yes, please.

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

MADELINE

I thought you should have been seeing Clotilda tonight?

**GEORGE** 

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

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

FORREST (V.O.)

(weakly)

Maddy! Who is it?!

MADELINE

(to George)

Excuse me.

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

Then, Madeline comes back to George.

MADELINE (cont'd)

Charles is very sorry not seeing you. He says hello.

**GEORGE** 

Do the same for me.

She sits down by him.

MADELINE

George. May I talk to you straightfully?

**GEORGE** 

Of course. You always did.

MADELINE

Pay a visit to Mrs. Walter. She-appreciates you-- a lot. I'm sure you would gain much. Take my advice.

Their eyes meet. They keep staring.

**GEORGE** 

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

MADELINE

(thinking)

Guardian angel?

(nodding with a smile)

Done. I'm your guardian angel.

**GEORGE** 

Madeline. If you ever need--

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

MADELINE

(whispering)

I know.

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

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

INT. WALTERS MANOR - LOBBY - NIGHT

The door opens and Virginie appears, smiling.

VIRGINIE

George. I'm glad you here.

She takes him by the arm and takes him in.

VIRGINIE (cont'd)

You'll always be welcome here.

INT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

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

INT. WALTERS MANOR - DINNER ROOM - NIGHT

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

WALTER

George. May I introduce you Senator Edward Worth.

George approaches them. Worth shakes his hand.

**GEORGE** 

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

WORTH

(haughty)

Could be.

Walter takes them two apart.

WALTER

George. I want you to do me a favor. An interview with Edward on the Evening News.

GEORGE

But, I'm not a--

WALTER

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

**GEORGE** 

But--

(he realizes he can't
 refuse)
Thank you Sir.

WALTER

Call me Roy. By the way, you can also thank my wife who inspired me that good advice.

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

WALTER (cont'd)

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

WORTH

(haughty)

Absolutely.

George stares at Worth with amused eyes.

**GEORGE** 

Why not?

WALTER

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

Walter drags Worth along. George steps away to Virginie.

VIRGINIE

Any good news?

GEORGE

Thanks to you.

VIRGINIE

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

**GEORGE** 

How could I thank you one day?

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

SUSAN

Mum. Would you introduce me?

VIRGINIE

(slightly amazed)

George, Susan, my daughter.

(to Susan)

George LeRoy.

Susan shakes George's hand.

SUSAN

Nice to meet you.

She fixes him intensely.

VIRGINIE

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

SUSAN

Yeah, bank law.

**GEORGE** 

Sounds great.

SUSAN

(cynically)

Awesome.

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

SUSAN (cont'd)

Are you married Mister LeRoy?

**GEORGE** 

I'm not. Are you?

Susan laughs loudly.

SUSAN

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

**GEORGE** 

You're perfectly right.

SUSAN

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

(confidentially)

SUSAN(cont'd)

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

Clotilda's voice RESOUNDS behind George.

CLOTILDA (V.O.)

Senor LeRoy. Don't you forget your friends?

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

I see you prefer young girls. Of course. Younger is the fruit, bitter it is.

GEORGE

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

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

CLOTILDA

(confidentially)

I missed you, you fool.

**GEORGE** 

I missed you too. When do I see you?

CLOTILDA

I'll call you.

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

THOMAS

Not bad. Clotilda Rayuela is a good match.

**GEORGE** 

What do you mean?

THOMAS

George, I do deserve my nickname 'cos I see, I feel everything. But, don't worry. I know how to be discreet with my friends. By the way, what do you think of little Susan? In a few years, She'll worth a few million dollars. And with her father dreaming of politics--

THOMAS (cont'd)

(nodding to Worth)
Look at our dear baby-kisser,
protector of morale, ex-CIA. When I
think he fucks Forrest's wife.

GEORGE

What?!!

THOMAS

(surprised)

You're the only one to ignore it.

GEORGE

Does Charles know it?

THOMAS

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

**GEORGE** 

How come?

THOMAS

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

George is thinking.

**GEORGE** 

(as to himself)

Of course.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BIKE DEALER STORE - DAY

In a bike dealer store, George in front of an used motorbike.

A TRIUMPH 750 BONNEVILLE

DEALER

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

George details the bike with admiration.

**GEORGE** 

(admiring)

She is just perfect.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

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

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EVENING

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

**GEORGE** 

(on the phone)

Clotilda? You never called me back.

INT. CLOTILDA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

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

CLOTILDA

(on the phone)

Sorry, wrong number Sir. There's no John here. Just me and my husband--

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - EVENING

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Okay. I get it.

Upset, he hangs up and speeds away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OXO'S DINER - NIGHT

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

OXO

Hey George. It's been a while.

GEORGE

Yeah. Almost a year.

OXO

You finally remember your old friends?

GEORGE

Gimme a beer.

Oxo hands him a beer and notices the helmet.

OXO

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

**GEORGE** 

(jaded)

Yeah.

OXO

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

GEORGE

(with hatred)

He is not  $\underline{MY}$  senator.

He drinks his beer up and beckons for another.

OXO

Okay. Anyway, we had fun.

He hands George another beer.

GEORGE

(as to himself)

This motherfucker screws my best friend's wife.

OXO

So, what's the point? None of your fucking business. If he really is a your best friend, you would take the advantage to fix things up in front of all America.

**GEORGE** 

(aggressive)

That's why you're still a bartender and I'm on TV.

OXO

(upset)

Stop shitting on me.

**GEORGE** 

(disillusioned)

Yeah.

OXO

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

**GEORGE** 

(cynical)

Great. Breaking news.

OXO

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

GEORGE

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

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

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

It is pouring rain.

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

Suddenly, A cab looms from a street and surprises George. He breaks. The bike skids on its side, dropping George on the street.

But his sleeve gets stuck on the bike handlebar and drags him on the wet street where he slides for 150 feet. The bike gets crushed under a delivery truck emerging at the intersection.

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

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

THEN, SILENCE COMES BACK

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

FADE TO BLACK:

## GEORGE'S DREAM

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

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

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

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

You scared me to death when you called me.

**GEORGE** 

(reassuring)

If I called myself that it wasn't that bad.

CLOTILDA

I thought I'd lost you.

George sighs.

**GEORGE** 

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

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

Charles is dying. I have to go to Key West.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALTER OFFICE - DAY

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

GEORGE

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

WALTER

What do you mean, his job?

**GEORGE** 

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

Walter sighs.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Roy, I bet your ass I can do better than him. You wanna blow the score?

WALTER

Well. Are you sure you can make it?

GEORGE

(self-confident)

A pol can't be worse than the truck which nearly killed me.

(a beat)

Nobody scares me anymore.

Walter is still thinking.

GEORGE (cont'd)

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

WALTER

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PLANE - DAY

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

EXT. THE KEYS BRIDGE - EVENING

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

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

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

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

As the electrocardiogram's alarm SOUNDS, TWO NURSES are rushing into the room, followed by a DOCTOR. He feels Forrest's pulse and injects him something, but in vain.

The doctor switches the electrocardiogram off. Madeline bursts out crying in George's arms.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FORREST'S MANSION - TERRACE - DAY

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

**GEORGE** 

Are you tired?

MADELINE

Exhausted.

**GEORGE** 

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

MADELINE

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

GEORGE

(reassuring)

If you ever need me. Your guardian angel will always be there.

She gently smiles and lights a cigarette.

MADELINE

(in a breath)

I know that.

**GEORGE** 

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

Madeline fixes the ocean.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(sighing)

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

Madeline keeps smoking.

GEORGE (cont'd)

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

MADELINE

(amazed)

You knew about Charles?

**GEORGE** 

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

Madeline crushes her cigarette and turns to him.

MADELINE

I want to think about it.

(she sighs, gets up, and

faces the ocean)

One more thing. Don't tell anybody.

No one needs to know.

(a beat)

You better leave today. I'd like to be alone for a few days.

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

George smells her hair and closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CBC STUDIOS - OFFICE - DAY

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

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

The secretary stays at the doorstep and slightly COUGHS.

The armchair turns to her and George appears. He looks like a kid caught in the act.

SECRETARY

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

GEORGE

Oh, yes. My secretary.

SECRETARY

Do not hesitate if you need something.

GEORGE

(firmly)

Very well, Martha. First of all, I want a complete check of my team, Forrest's address book and I take my coffee black and no sugar.

She is about to step away.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Martha.

(with a charming smile)

Call me George.

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

My secretary.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. YACHT - NIGHT

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

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

FIONA

(shouting)

Everything's okay?!

THOMAS

(shouting)

Great party!!

FIONA

(shouting)

Where's he?!

THOMAS

(shouting)

Don't know!! Hangin' around!!

FIONA

(shouting)

Bring him to me!! Right now!!

Thomas winks to her.

THOMAS

(shouting)

No problemo!!

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

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

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

THOMAS

You're okay?

**GEORGE** 

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

THOMAS

The kid wants to see you.

**GEORGE** 

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

THOMAS

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

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

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Yeah?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

George. It's me.

George steps forward not to be disturbed by the music.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Where are you?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

I'll be in New York tomorrow.

You're having fun?

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Thomas dragged me in some boozy party. I don't know what I'm doing here.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

I wanted to thank you for every thing you did. I've been deeply touched.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Don't mention it.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

I watch you every Sunday. You're doing pretty good.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

I can do better than this.

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

George. Does Clotilda know?

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Know what?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

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

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

You're not playing with me? Are you?

EXT. FORREST MANSION TERRACE - NIGHT

MADELINE

(on the phone)

I've never been more serious.

(a beat)

George. I'm glad with my decision.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

GEORGE

(on the phone)

Me too. See you tomorrow.

MADELINE

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

**GEORGE** 

(on the phone)

Happy new year, Madeline.

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

INT. YACHT - NIGHT

Thomas catches up George.

THOMAS

(shouting)

You're leaving?

**GEORGE** 

(shouting)

Betcha I stay! Let's party on! Yahoo!!

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. AIRFIELD - HANGAR - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

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

George is still straight face.

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

What's wrong?

GEORGE

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

She sits, worried.

CLOTILDA

What?!

**GEORGE** 

(hesitating)

I-- I'm getting married.

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

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

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

CLOTILDA

(sobbing)

Dear God.

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

GEORGE

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

Anger now takes control of Clotilda.

CLOTILDA

Who is she, hijo de puta?!

George hesitates.

Clotilda (cont'd)

Who's that fucking bitch?!

GEORGE

(in a breath)

Madeline.

Clotilda is appalled. Her anger disappears.

CLOTILDA

I-- I knew it.

(She tries to smile)

CLOTILDA(cont'd)

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S BUILDING - NIGHT

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

MADELINE

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

**GEORGE** 

What do you mean?

She comes closer, provocative.

MADELINE

Our private -- situation.

**GEORGE** 

(falsely surprised)

That wasn't in the contract.

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

MADELINE

Let's make an extra clause.

They kiss as the elevator doors are closing on them.

FADE TO BLACK:

SEVERAL SHOTS SHOWING GEORGE IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES IN HIS JOB:

INT. PLANE - DAY

In a plane in first class, George is reading his notes.

INT. CAB - DAY

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

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

George is on his set, interviewing a POLITICIAN.

INT. CBC STUDIOS - DAY

END CREDITS OF GEORGE'S TV PROGRAM

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

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

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

NOBODY SEEMS TO HAVE NOTICED HIM

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

MAITRE D'

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

Seeing George's dark look, Madeline smiles at him and shrugs, which means: "Don't worry." The couple are sitting at a table. Menus are given to them.

MADELINE

Yes. I used to come here with Charles. A very nice place.
(She takes a glimpse at

the menu)

Do you like oysters?

GEORGE

(cynically)

Why? Did Forrest like them?

MADELINE

You're not funny.

**GEORGE** 

I see his ghost everywhere.

MADELINE

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

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

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

George keeps looking at Madeline.

MADELINE

What's wrong?

GEORGE

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

Madeline looks at him, as astounded as shocked.

MADELINE

(low voice)

Why do you want to know?

GEORGE

I'm just curious.

MADELINE

(low voice)

How can I answer that kind of question?

Madeline looks around her, embarrassed.

GEORGE

You're my wife now, aren't you? And He is dead. It won't do him any harm.

MADELINE

(low voice)

Dear Lord. Would you be jealous? You?

**GEORGE** 

Not at all. I'm just asking.

MADELINE

(low voice)

You're stupid. Just because you think I cheated on him, I would cheat on you.

**GEORGE** 

I don't know.

A beat.

MADELINE

(low voice)

You wanna know? Well. I didn't.

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - EVENING

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

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

GEORGE

Are we inviting people?

MADELINE

Since you've moved in, we haven't seen anyone. I hope it doesn't bother you?

**GEORGE** 

Let's say I need distraction. Who's coming?

MADELINE

Mrs. Walter and her daughter Susan. And Clotilda.

**GEORGE** 

(surprised)

Well, well.

(he kisses her on the forehead)

Okay. I'm taking a shower.

He steps out of the living room.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

**GEORGE** 

(amazed)

Susan's not with you?

VIRGINIE

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

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

SUSAN

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

**GEORGE** 

(playing her game)
Take it easy, kiddo. My wife is quite jealous.

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

EXT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - NIGHT

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

**GEORGE** 

Good evening Clotilda.

She turns to him.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I'm glad you're here. Come in. You're gonna catch death.

Obedient, She follows him in.

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

VIRGINIE

It's a pity nobody came to your wedding.

MADELINE

We wanted things as simple as possible.

CLOTILDA

And you didn't have a honeymoon?

MADELINE

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

GEORGE

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

MADELINE

They made you what you are now.

**GEORGE** 

(bitterly)

Precisely.

(to Susan)

Did you parents find you a husband yet?

Susan turns to her mother, still provocative.

SUSAN

(self assured)

I'm old enough to pick one by myself.

**GEORGE** 

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

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

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

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

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

MADELINE

(to Virginie)

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

**GEORGE** 

For what?

VIRGINIE

(to George)

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

SUSAN

(cynically)

My mother loves to watch those naked, shining muscled bodies dancing around. Quite exciting.

(to Virginie)

Isn't it, mother?

VIRGINIE

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

MADELINE

(to George)

Come on George. Take Virginie out.

GEORGE

Seems to me a kinda plot. Guess I have to accept. I surrender. I've no choice.

Virginie shakes his hand.

VIRGINIE

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

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

MADELINE

I'm glad you came.

CLOTILDA

Me too.

Clotilda turns to George and shakes his hand.

CLOSEUP ON CLOTILDA'S HAND SQUEEZING GEORGE'S

HE CARESSES HER HAND WITH HIS THUMB

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

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

MADELINE

You're smoking now?

GEORGE

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

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

MADELINE

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

**GEORGE** 

Come on Maddy. You know perfectly Clotilda and I, it's over.

MADELINE

I'm talking about Virginie. Quite amazing.

GEORGE

(innocently)

Why amazing? I've got charm, do I? You always told me.

MADELINE

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

CLOSEUP ON OF A BOXER PUNCHED IN HIS SWEATING FACE

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

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

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

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

VIRGINIE

I'll be back.

She steps away.

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

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - LADIES' ROOM - NIGHT

Virginie is washing her hands when, in the reflection in front of her, She notices George's presence. She turns to him.

What are you doing here?

GEORGE

I have to talk to you.

VIRGINIE

You're crazy? Get out!

GEORGE

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

Virginie panics increasingly.

VIRGINIE

(in a breath)

Get out!!

George steps closer.

GEORGE

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

He puts his hands on her waist.

VIRGINIE

(weakly)

Stop it!

**GEORGE** 

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

She tries desperately to avoid his lips.

VIRGINIE

I'll tell my husband to fire you.

**GEORGE** 

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

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

VIRGINIE

You're mad!!

**GEORGE** 

No, simply in love with you.

(resigned)

I -- I can't.

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

**GEORGE** 

Alright. Henceforth, I'll be silent.

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

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Virginie comes back to her seat. George is already seated and doesn't notice She is back. She leans to him.

VIRGINIE

I just can't.

**GEORGE** 

(coldly)

Forget it.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Among the crowd leaving the arena after the fight, WE SEE George and Virginie. She keeps staring at him, afraid.

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

VIRGINIE

(to Worth)

Edward? How are you?

WORTH

Surprised to see you here.

VIRGINIE

(showing George)

You know George LeRoy?

GEORGE

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

Worth stares at him as a rival.

(to George)

I don't think you met John Matthew?

George shakes Matthew's hand.

**GEORGE** 

(to Matthew)

Senator.

MATTHEW

(coldly)

Mister LeRoy never invited me to his show.

VIRGINIE

(to George)

John and my husband are playing golf together.

(to Matthew)

You're still coming on Friday?

**GEORGE** 

(to Matthew)

Call my assistant tomorrow. We'll make an appointment.

WORTH

(to Virginie)

Do you want us to ride you home? That's on our way.

VIRGINIE

(to George)

Do you mind?

**GEORGE** 

(looking at Worth)

My wife's waiting for me.

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

CLOTILDA

I'm glad you kept our place.

**GEORGE** 

We'll meet as before. Maybe not as much as we used to do, but I'll always be yours.

CLOTILDA

And what about Madeline?

**GEORGE** 

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

CLOTILDA

A kinda incest so?

GEORGE

What do you mean?

CLOTILDA

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

George gently throws a pillow to her face.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. CBC BUILDING STREET - DAY

George steps out the CBC building and hails a cab.

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

VIRGINIE

Get in.

George steps in.

EXT. STREETS - INT. LIMO - DAY

Virginie does not look at George.

VIRGINIE

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

GEORGE

But. Virginie. I--

VIRGINIE

(nodding to the chauffeur)

Chut.

**GEORGE** 

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

Virginie hesitates.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Please. You owe me this.

VIRGINIE

Where do you want us to meet?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment door opens wide and George and Virginie appear.

Virginie is hesitating.

VIRGINIE

Where are we?

GEORGE

The place I used to live before my wedding.

VIRGINIE

No! Not here!

GEORGE

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

VIRGINIE

I have your word?

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

**GEORGE** 

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

Please.

**GEORGE** 

I have to say it.

(a beat)

Virginie. I love you.

She hesitates for a short while.

VIRGINIE

(in a breath)

So, do I.

Stunned, George cannot believe it.

VIRGINIE (cont'd)

However, I can't love you. Do you figure the scandal? My husband. My daughter.

**GEORGE** 

Let me hold your hand.

She does not move.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Just holding your hand.

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

VIRGINIE

(panting)

Stop it! You promised! Arrêtez!

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

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

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

VIRGINIE

(shouting)

Oh, oui! George! Beat me up! Beat me up!

She takes George's hand and forces him to slap her.

VIRGINIE (cont'd)

Hit me!!

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

VIRGINIE (cont'd)

Oui! Go on!

George slaps her once more.

AGAIN

AND AGAIN

Slaps seem to turn her on. George unwind--

until She reaches orgasm.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

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

VIRGINIE

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

GEORGE

(impressed)

No?

VIRGINIE

Yes, mon chéri.

(she sits by him)

I'll be forever grateful for this.

Oh, my dear friend.

(she runs her finger on

his chest)

I'm gonna make you a present. But it must remain between us. Swear it.

**GEORGE** 

Is it necessary?

VIRGINIE

Swear.

**GEORGE** 

Alright. I swear.

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

**GEORGE** 

(interested)

How do you know all this?

VIRGINIE

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

GEORGE

No risk with the SEC?

She puts her head on his chest.

VIRGINIE

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

**GEORGE** 

(shrugging))

As you will.

VIRGINIE

Oh, I'm so happy for you.

She kisses him.

CLOSEUP ON George's eyes showing only indifference.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

MADELINE

You're home early.

GEORGE

Just checking if you were alone.

MADELINE

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

GEORGE

Alright. Alright. We stop it.

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

GEORGE (cont'd)

It's for you.

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

MADELINE

(on the phone)

Hello?

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

MADELINE (cont'd)

(dead-pan)

Worth-- died in a car crash.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A cemetery in the rain. Surrounding a hole, under black umbrellas, a tiny crowd is mourning in front of the coffin. As the mourners go past and each takes a turn shoveling a clod of dirt into an open grave. Among the crowd, there are George, Madeline, Walter, Virginie, Susan and Matthew.

George does not show any feeling. He raises his head and meets Virginie's eyes who fixes him intensely. The same indifference in George's look.

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

Virginie notices that smile.

TIME CUT:

EXT. CEMETERY GATE - DAY

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

THE MAN

(to Madeline)

Are you Madeline Sanders LeRoy?

George and Madeline stop, curious.

MADELINE

Yes, I am.

THE MAN

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

He hands Madeline an envelope.

MADELINE

What is it?

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

THE MAN

Please, be at my office, tomorrow at two.

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

SAMUEL ROSENBLAUM

LAWYER

Then, he raises his eyes to Madeline, interrogative.

MADELINE

(pale)

Worth bequeaths his whole fortune-to me.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

GEORGE

His whole fortune! Ten millions dollars!

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

MADELINE

He had no relative. He was childless.

**GEORGE** 

So, he was your lover.

MADELINE

What?!

**GEORGE** 

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

MADELINE

He was a good friend, that's all.

GEORGE

(chuckling)

Of course. I have bad thoughts.

(cynically)

Bad George.

(serious)

I was right. You cheated on me as you did on that poor Forrest.

MADELINE

He wasn't my lover!

**GEORGE** 

Whatever. When the news spread over, everyone will think so.

MADELINE

So, I refuse the legacy.

George thinks for a while.

GEORGE

It'll be more suspect.

MADELINE

What have got in mind?

**GEORGE** 

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

A long beat.

MADELINE

As you like, I'm willing.

George slaps his hands.

GEORGE

That's a deal!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

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

MARTHA

Someone brought this in for you.

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

CHROMED HANDCUFFS

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Another day. Another present.

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

INT. GEORGE'S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

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

"TO GEORGE, IN MEMORY OF OUR UNFORGETTABLE AFTERNOONS.

V."

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

MARTHA

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

**GEORGE** 

(annoyed)

Why?!

MARTHA

He is stuck in Raleigh with his exwife.

GEORGE

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

MARTHA

(impressed)

Yes Sir. I'm off to lunch. Anything else?

George gets up.

**GEORGE** 

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

They both step out the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CBC STUDIOS HALLWAY - DAY

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

CONNIE

Morning Madam. Coming to see Mister LeRoy?

(she takes her phone) I'm calling for you.

CLOTILDA

(engaging)

No, please. Today I want to do him a surprise.

INT. CBC - GEORGE'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

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

MADELINE

Bad day?

George does not answer.

MADELINE (cont'd)

Virginie Walter called today.

GEORGE

(cynically)

How is the old crone?

MADELINE

We're both invited this weekend to the party the Walters will give to show the Rodin they've just bought.

GEORGE

Don't count me in.

MADELINE

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

**GEORGE** 

(cynically)

You should have told me and I don't remember? That's it?

Madeline does not point out.

MADELINE

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

A mischief spark lights George's eyes.

GEORGE

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

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. FORREST'S BUILDING - NIGHT

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

INT. CAB - NIGHT

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

TAXI DRIVER

Fuck! Can't be true. George! I didn't recognize you dressed like this!

George recognizes Luis, his ex-colleague.

GEORGE

Luis. I'm glad to see you.

LUIS

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

GEORGE

That motherfucker gave it to you at last.

LUIS

What could he do? I had the money.

GEORGE

I'm really happy for you.

LUIS

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

**GEORGE** 

I'm okay.

LUIS

We used to watch you with Matilda.

**GEORGE** 

Bored you stiff?

LUIS

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

**GEORGE** 

That tough?

LUIS

Could be worse.

GEORGE

How much did you borrow?

LUIS

George, please.

GEORGE

Luis. We used to be buddies. Tell me

LUIS

Five grand.

**GEORGE** 

How long do you have to pay back?

LUIS

Ten years. Maybe less if I'm doing bueno.

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

**GEORGE** 

Take that.

LUIS

Cut out your crap.

**GEORGE** 

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

LUIS

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

George does not give up.

**GEORGE** 

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

LUIS

So, I have nothing to lose?

**GEORGE** 

Exactly.

LUIS

Okay. It's a bet.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - NIGHT

Luis's cab speeds up at a crossing with a green traffic light.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - INT. CAB - NIGHT

Luis bursts into laughter and joy.

LUIS

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

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

**GEORGE** 

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

LUIS

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

GEORGE

Well. I've forgot my cabby journeys.

George can't help to smile.

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - NIGHT

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

LUIS

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

**GEORGE** 

Oh yes.

LUIS

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WALTERS MANOR - HALLWAY - NIGHT

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

SUSAN

(shouting)

Mister Big Apple!

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

**GEORGE** 

Hi, little one.

SUSAN

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

**GEORGE** 

Release me. People gonna talk.

SUSAN

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

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

INT. WALTERS MANOR - RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

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

Susan leans over George's ear.

SUSAN

Welcome to zombie land, George.

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

SUSAN (cont'd)

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

GEORGE

With your parent's fortune now, I give you six months to marry a papa's boy. After that, you won't even look at me.

SUSAN

But I don't want to get married.

GEORGE

Wanna bet? Six months.

They bet and burst into laughter again.

GEORGE (cont'd)

We're making a pact. As soon as someone'll propose you. Let me know. I'll give you a true friend's advice. Okay?

SUSAN

Okay.

(a beat)

Take me to the buffet. Tonite, I wanna get drunk.

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

WALTER

Do you know the Vice-President should drop by?

**GEORGE** 

Susan just told me.

WALTER

(very proud)

Let me introduce you Mary Kovaks, the State Department Spokeswoman.

**GEORGE** 

(to Mary Kovaks)

Madam.

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

THOMAS

Hi, Mister Big Apple.

George looks at him, puzzled.

THOMAS (cont'd)

The little Walter calls you so when she talks about you. Anyway, that resumes you pretty well.

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

A hired-waiter hands George a glass of champagne.

THOMAS (cont'd)

The complete smart set is here. Walter wanted to have <u>the</u> year happening. I don't get why Matthew, his old accomplice, is missing it.

Virginie interrupts him.

VIRGINIE

(to George)

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

**GEORGE** 

(spiteful)

I'm talking with Mister Gossip.

THOMAS

(diplomat)

I think I just saw someone I know.

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

VIRGINIE

(to George)

Please, come. I want to show you the masterpiece we bought in Paris.

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

INT. WALTERS MANOR - HIGH CEILING ROOM - NIGHT

Virginie and George arrive in a high ceiling room where is exhibited a black marble Rodin beautiful sculpture.

I tried as I could leaving you messages or offering you presents, but you never called me back.

**GEORGE** 

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

VIRGINIE

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

**GEORGE** 

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

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

VIRGINIE

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

George unfolds the piece of paper

A \$1 000 000 CHECK

VIRGINIE (cont'd)

As you can see, I kept my word.

GEORGE

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

VIRGINIE

That's all?

**GEORGE** 

(with dignity)

Madame. I'm a married man. You are married too. Do not compromise our couples by a passing passion.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT

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

A voice RESOUNDS in George's back.

CLOTILDA (O.S.)

Buena noche George.

George turns back and faces Clotilda. Susan steps away.

GEORGE

Hi Clotilda.

CLOTILDA

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

**GEORGE** 

What?

CLOTILDA

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

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

CLOTILDA (cont'd)

Let's stay friends anyway.

George does not shake her hand.

**GEORGE** 

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

CLOTILDA

And why the hell?

GEORGE

For one simple reason. Love tied us together. Friendship between a man and a woman is just a crap created by hypocrites and badly screwed women.

CLOTILDA

(disabused)

Still your golden words.

GEORGE

(very gently)

You fool.

A VOICE calls for George.

THOMAS

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

George turns to Clotilda who smiles tenderly to him.

**GEORGE** 

Sorry, Tom. I have to take Madam home.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FUN FAIR - DAY

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

SEVERAL SHOTS SHOW THEM IN DIFFERENT STANDS

SUSAN CAN'T STOP LAUGHING AS GEORGE LOOKS REALLY RELAXED

EXT. CENTRAL PARK LAKE - DAY

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

SUSAN

I had a wonderful day. Thank you. Hope there will be more.

GEORGE

I don't know. It all depends on you.

SUSAN

What do you mean?

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

SUSAN (cont'd)

What?

GEORGE

You don't tell me everything. You try to hide things to me.

SUSAN

Do I?

**GEORGE** 

Yes. I know young McKenna proposed you.

SUSAN

(falsely ingénue)

I didn't mentioned it?

GEORGE

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

SUSAN

I didn't make up my mind-- yet.

GEORGE

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

Susan does not answer, eyes lost.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Furthermore, he's as fat as Jabba the Hut.

SUSAN

He's got charm.

**GEORGE** 

(cynically)

Yes. For some anthropologist. You can't marry-- that.

George starts to row with some kind of rage. Susan notices it.

SUSAN

What's wrong with you?

George stops rowing and forces Susan to stare at him.

**GEORGE** 

Because -- I'm -- jealous.

SUSAN

You?! How come?

**GEORGE** 

(sharply)

Because I'm in love with you and you know it.

Susan blushes.

SUSAN

Are you insane?

GEORGE

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

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

SUSAN

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

George drops the rows and takes Susan's hand.

GEORGE

And if I wasn't married?

SUSAN

If you weren't--

(staring at him)

Without doubt, I would marry you. Told you before. I really live only when you're with me.

George looks very moved.

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

SUSAN

George. I swear to wait for you.

George is leaning over her and kisses her.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - CORRIDOR - DAY

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

HOTEL MANAGER

(embarrassed)

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

GEORGE

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

HOTEL MANAGER

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

GEORGE

(to the man with large
 glasses)

Are you sure this is the right room?

The man with large glasses simply nods.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(to the hotel manager)

You have your passkey?

HOTEL MANAGER

Yes Sir.

Alright. Gentlemen, let the show begin.

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

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - ROOM - DAY

George and the TWO MEN enter the bedroom.

THEN A FLASHLIGHT

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

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

MADELINE

George?

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

A second flashlight blinds the couple.

George turns to the hotel manager, then to Madeline.

**GEORGE** 

I have two witnesses with me to confirm I found you in adultery.

(he nods to the man with large glasses)

This P.I. followed you for three weeks now and got me your detailed schedule. Those two witnesses and the photos will surely make a great impression to the magistrate during the divorce. And concerning your-- lover, I wouldn't want to be in his shoes.

MADELINE

You're a real bastard George.

GEORGE

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

MADELINE

And you think you've scored?

I hold all the aces. I could lay my cards or--

MADELINE

Or what?

GEORGE

We could make a-- private arrangement.

Madeline turns to Matthew.

MADELINE

What about him?

GEORGE

I'm gonna take time to think about him.

MADELINE

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

**GEORGE** 

I wanna go faster.

MADELINE

(sighing)

I know that.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

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

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

WALTER

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

**GEORGE** 

Your retirement celebration.

WALTER

(stunned)

I beg your pardon?

**GEORGE** 

I think it's time for you to stump.

Walter do not get it and stays alarmed.

WALTER

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

GEORGE

 $\ensuremath{\text{I'm}}$  not close of it. And  $\ensuremath{\text{I}}$  assume it.

WALTER

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

GEORGE

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

Walter bursts into laughter.

WALTER

You're trying to have me been had?

But George is keeping a straight face.

WALTER (cont'd)

Okay, George. That's enough now! What is it?

**GEORGE** 

Just told you.

Anger takes Walter's control.

WALTER

Alright. You're fired!

GEORGE

No.

Walter does not get it.

WALTER

With the reputation I'm gonna make of you, you will go back to the shithouse where I took you from.

George quietly shows him the file he hands.

**GEORGE** 

I've got here enough to take you with me in this shithouse.

WALTER

Bullshit. I have nothing to fear from anybody.

**GEORGE** 

You maybe. But what about Senator Matthew? And if he falls, you'll fall too, as dominoes. I can assure you. Do you want me to talk to the SEC about the B.A. Net one hundred millions dollars you won with him?

Walter takes the file from George's hand and reads it. There are the Regency Hotel photos and the PI report.

Walter is appalled.

WALTER

What's this shit?

**GEORGE** 

My future. And yours.

Walter drops his club, dumbfounded.

WALTER

Very well. What do you want?! How much?!

**GEORGE** 

That's very simple. I put this stuff in a safe and we forget about it. In the meanwhile, you start your political career, discreetly supported by the CBC I'll lead.

WALTER

Never! CBC's always been owned by the Walters. It won't change now!

Think about it Roy. You're about to lose it all.

Walter gets furious.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Or-- I have another solution for you. I marry Susan and you give her the lead of CBC. That way it'll stay in one of the Walters' hands.

WALTER

You want my daughter too? You're a real motherfucker.

GEORGE

Maybe you're not afraid of anybody, but if that story is shown, other journalists will search in some trashcan you forgot somewhere.

Walter looks like thundering up inside.

WALTER

I-- I'm gonna think about it.

GEORGE

Take your time. But, take the right decision.

(nodding to the file)
You may keep it. That's your own
copy.

George quietly walks back to his light car and speeds up under Walter's hatred look.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FORREST'S APARTMENT - DAY

George is packing up in boxes. Smoking, Madeline looks at him sadly.

MADELINE

(sweetly)

It's sad to end this way. Well, that's what you wanted.

Don't get mad at me, Maddy. You're the one who wanted to get married. And you weren't happy with me anyway.

MADELINE

I loved you more that I did with Charles. You're more ambitious. That's what I liked with you. And that's why I lose you. Who are you aiming at today?

**GEORGE** 

Please. I don't want to leave you with these kinds of thoughts.

MADELINE

Well. I think I'll read it in People Magazine.

George hugs her.

MADELINE (cont'd)

I'm gonna give you my last present. Let's consider it as a break up present. May it help you. Follow the trail of an obscure man named Osama Bin Laden. Worth thought he could be a threat for Occident. He is as smart as he is dangerous.

**GEORGE** 

You'll always be my guardian angel.

Madeline closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RITZ-CARLTON CENTRAL PARK HOTEL - DAY

A brand new Triumph 750 Bonneville stops in front of the Ritz-Carlton Central Park Hotel. George steps out and hands his keys to the young valet parking.

**GEORGE** 

(with a smile)

Easy, does it, kid. She is broken in.

He steps into the hotel.

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

George is seated at a table, having some champagne. He never looked more self-confident. He sips his champagne when Walter steps in. He joins George. They talk in low voice.

**GEORGE** 

So, Roy, what did you decide?

WALTER

You didn't leave me much choice. However, I must admit you boosted my career up.

George nods to François who pours Walter a glass of champagne and steps away.

WALTER (cont'd)

I'd rather prefer the click would come by itself.

**GEORGE** 

I give you my word I'll support you.

(with a cynical smile)
I owe you all.

Walter stares at him with a dark look. Then, he puts an envelope on the table.

WALTER

Papers are ready to be signed.

George opens the envelope up and takes some documents out. He reads them rapidly.

GEORGE

Anyway, a problem remains. You never mention Susan's name.

WALTER

You'll lead the Studios, but leave my daughter out of the deal.

GEORGE

I'm the one who decides.

WALTER

You maybe had me, but you won't have Susan too.

Did you ask her?

WALTER

An eighteen year-old girl never had her word to say in our family.

**GEORGE** 

I figure it out.

WALTER

Anyway, that's not my decision.
(he does not take a sip of
his champagne)
You'll lead the Studios in three
months. In the meantime, I don't

want to hear about you.

GEORGE

Tell me more.

Walter does not answer and steps out of the bar. Alone at the table, George drinks his champagne up and light himself a cigar.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

He gets up with a jump.

George, wearing a sweatshirt, is jogging in Central Park. Panting, he stops at the foot of a tree and reclines against it to take his breathe.

A VOICE makes him turns his head.

SUSAN (O.S.)

(ironically)

Impressive for a man in his forties.

George smiles and turns to her.

GEORGE

(panting)

Hi, little one.

SUSAN

What have you done to my mother?

(panting)
I don't get it.

SUSAN

My father and she had a serious spaz about you last night. Never saw her this way. She was kinda hysterical.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - SUSAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUSAN (V.O.)

I woke up around two in the morning.

Susan is in her bed and wakes up as if she was disturbed by some kind of noise. Wearing a silk nightshirt, she steps out of her bedroom.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - SECOND STORY - NIGHT

Cautiously, Susan steps out of her bedroom. Barefoot, she slowly walks on the floor carpet.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Downstairs, in the lounge, my folks were yelling.

FLASHBACK - WALTERS MANOR - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Susan slowly steps down the large staircase and sees Walter and Virginie talking loudly. Virginie looks like a maniac.

SUSAN (V.O.)

Several times, I've heard your name. My mother was like paranoid, pulling her hair out. I understood then that you proposed me to my father, but mum didn't want it. She was screaming that she would never let me become your wife.

Virginie's madness increases in front of Walter's puzzled look.

SUSAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

She wanted to kill you. Pull your eyes out.

Susan is still looking at the argument from the staircase.

SUSAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

Then, Pa told her it was all her fault. That she kept hovering around you, inviting you for dinner. That she was like all those chicks around you, mad about you. Then, when mother's hysteria reached a climax, yelling that you'll never get me, Pa left the room and mum fell on her knees, starting to pray.

Susan stands back, not believing what she has just seen.

END OF THE FLASHBACK:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

George turns to Susan and stares at her right in the eyes.

**GEORGE** 

Susan. Do you really want to be my wife?

SUSAN

There's nothing in the world I'd like more.

GEORGE

I have a few days off. Wanna come with me?

SUSAN

What do you mean?

GEORGE

One week in Maui. Just you and I.

SUSAN

But I have to go back to Switzerland.

**GEORGE** 

So what? You really want to stay mummy's girl?

Susan is thinking.

GEORGE (cont'd)

But, really think about it. You won't go back.

GEORGE(cont'd)

It'll be the only way to force your parents to accept our wedding.

SUSAN

(approving)

I'm eighteen. It's time for me to do things by myself.

**GEORGE** 

So, come to my apartment on Saturday morning. No luggage. Just come as you are.

Susan is happy now.

SUSAN

Oh George. Are you going to abduct me? You're so cute. That's so romantic.

She leans to him and kisses him.

EXT. NEWARK AIRPORT - DAY

A Boeing is taking off, roaring, from Newark Airport.

EXT. MAUI BEACH - DAY

George and Susan are lying, side by side, on an Hawaiian beach.

GEORGE

We'll leave tomorrow.

SUSAN

That soon?

GEORGE

I've got an e-mail from your father this morning. Everything's settled.

Happy, she hugs him.

SUSAN

I'm gonna be you wife? Ain't I?

GEORGE

(nodding)

And as a wedding gift, he offers the Studios to us.

SUSAN

That's huge! I'm so happy!

They kiss with passion.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT

George and Susan are kissing with passion.

Susan wears a beautiful white wedding dress and George a elegant tuxedo. They tower above the garden in a large gazebo built in the Walters manor. CBC cameramen are taping those magnificent moments.

The newly married couple is surrounded by an incredible crowd, mainly the people invited at the time of the Walter soiree. They are seated at several tables. On the hardfloor, some guests are dancing.

Surrounding the tables, we can see Thomas, Didi Hamon and another woman, Matthew, Mary Kovaks, the State Department Spokeswoman, Clotilda, came here along with her husband and the little Winnie, Steiner and even Luis with his wife.

Besides George and Susan, Walter, slightly drunk, seems to have forgotten his troubles. By his side, Virginie is unrecognizable. The lost stare, she looks like she had taken ten years at once. Her hair had almost turned white.

Walter gets up and demands to be heard, clunking his glass on the microphone. The band stops. The dancers follow.

WALTER

(on the microphone)

Please! Please!

(everybody hushes)

During a wedding, we usually inquire the newly married about their feelings but never their parents.

(laughs)

For those who want to know, I would say: I'd just have lost twenty years. I hardly recognized my little girl in her wedding dress. I've just seen a beautiful woman and a stranger who's going to steal her from me forever.

(he turns to Susan)
Susan, if this gentleman--

WALTER(cont'd)

(showing George)

--ever rile you, come back to daddy.

(to George)

And you, George, who steals at the same time my little girl and my job, I have only one thing to say-- (a beat)

Good luck.

LAUGHS AND APPLAUDS

The band plays again. George and Walter exchange an eloquent look. Then, George turns slowly to Mary Kovaks, sure to meet her eyes.

They exchange an understood nod;

FADE OUT:

EXT. WALTERS MANOR - GARDEN - NIGHT (LATER)

Everyone is now staying in line to congratulate the maid and the groom. Thomas is nearly standing to attention.

THOMAS

(to George, with a little smile)

Boss.

George cannot help smiling friendly and they hug. Then, it is Madeline's turn.

MADELINE

My best wishes, Mister Big Apple.

She kisses him on the cheek and turns to Susan with a smile. Susan is kissing her too. After other guest's greetings, it is Clotilda's turn to face George and Susan, her husband and Winnie by her side.

CLOTILDA

Felicitacion, George.

**GEORGE** 

Thank you for coming.

They shake hands.

CLOSEUP ON their handshake.

They can hardly separate their hands.

## CLOTILDA CARESSES GEORGE'S BACK OF THE HAND WITH HER THUMB

CLOTILDA (O.S.)

See you soon, George.

GEORGE (O.S.)

See you soon, Madam.

FADE OUT:

THE END