

Cheap Talk

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FADE IN...SUPER: 2001

INT. CHEAP APARTMENT -- DAY

... Sophie's hands fashion an origami figurine. In the background CHILDREN play, making a racket. Sophie's hands pause.

SOPHIE (OS)

Well now, this man, Mrs. Jackson,
your common law husband...

FLORA (OS)

His name's Roger, honey, and he ain't no
common law or de facto or whatever you
want to call it, he's just my sugar-baby
and the daddy of all these here kids...

There are numerous black CHILDREN of all ages running throughout, and the place is an overly lived-in mess. That is not to say there is an air of depression - quite the opposite, everyone is happy...except for SOPHIE BAKER. She is uncomfortable. She sits at a table while the large mother of the tribe, FLORA JACKSON, changes a baby on the table.

FLORA

'Cept for that one. Oh yeah, and that
one. Roger the dodger I call him. Now
you see him now you don't. 'Hey there,
honey, just came round for a poke.'

She laughs loud. Sophie puts down the origami figurine, now complete.

SOPHIE

Well, yes, but...

FLORA

Think he's got hisself some booty
on the side though. Don't bother me
none, even though I guess it should. He
just being a man. But he a good man to
me.

SOPHIE

Well this is actually what I want to
talk to you about...

LITTLE GIRL

Would you like a chocolate crackle?

Sophie looks down. LITTLE GIRL is holding a tray of chocolate crackles. The display looks like a collection of dog turds.

SOPHIE

Oh, no, thank you...

FLORA

Hey you know she made 'em just for you.
I told her that TV lady was coming over
and she went out and bought the ingredients
right outa her pocket money. Joseph!
Put that chair down and give your
sister back her panties!

Sophie starts at the shouting. She looks at the child offering the chocolate crackles, grins, takes one, but hesitates with it near her mouth.

FLORA

Ain't poison, honey. She made it with
her own two hands.

Sophie puts it in her mouth and is trying unsuccessfully to chuckle with enjoyment.

Suddenly the baby on the table pees on Flora. She tries to dodge it but laughs when she can't, shielding herself with her hand.

FLORA

Oh, you a little devil! Oh, yes, you are!
Yes you are! You a little devil!

The baby smiles happily.

Sophie grins, her mouth bulging but not chewing. She reeeally doesn't want to be there.

EXT. SLUM STREET -- DAY

Sophie comes from a poor tenement building. A couple of TEENAGE BOYS sit on her car. They get up, annoyed. Sophie juggles files and her handbag as she gets out twenty dollars for them.

SOPHIE

Oh, here you go, boys, and thank you so much.

TEENAGE BOY 1

Hey, no way, lady. We want twenty apiece.

SOPHIE

What? No, no our agreement was twenty for
both of you...together.

TEENAGE BOY 1 (to Boy 2)
Teach the bitch a lesson, man.

TEENAGE BOY 2 brandishes a tire rod and moves round to her headlight. He makes to smash it.

SOPHIE
Hey, no, don't! Wait! Listen, this is not fair, you know! We had a deal!

TEENAGE BOY 1
Yeah, deal was we watch your car for half an hour, right? Ten dollars apiece!

SOPHIE
That's right!

TEENAGE BOY 1
Well you was inside forty-five minutes, and we had to stop two gangs trying to steal your tires, and them mothers tried to stick us. So, now, either we get us a fair price or we take it out on your skinny white-ass limo! Go ahead!

SOPHIE
(getting out more money)
Alright! Alright! I'm sorry, I was a bit long and I apologize, and I'm sorry if you had to protect my car from some guys...

TEENAGE BOY 1
Hey shove your apology, lady, just give us the damned money!

SOPHIE
(handing it over)
Well, you don't have to be so rude about it.

TEENAGE BOY 1
(leaving)
Yeah? Try living here without it.

The boys exchange a high five as they leave.

Sophie starts her car and pulls out. She almost hits an OLD MAN crossing the street. He slaps her hood and yells at her. Sophie is seriously stressed.

EXT. CITY STREETS/HIGHWAY - DAY.

Various of Sophie Driving. Suggest credits here.

INTERCUT:

TV TALK-SHOW EXTRACTS

Extreme examples of trashy talk-shows.

EXT. TV STUDIO CARPARK -- DAY

Sophie pulls up before the security boom gate. GEORGE, an elderly guard, appears from the booth as he raises the gate.

GEORGE (VO)

Hey, Sophie.

SOPHIE (VO)

George.

She parks her car. Juggling more files, etc., she gets out, loses a shoe, comes back, collects it with her foot, and with the shoe half-on limps toward the studio. (Suggest end credits here)

INT. STUDIO OFFICES. SOPHIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sophie limps past her secretary, JENNY.

JENNY

Oh, you got a heap of messages.
What's wrong with your foot?

BRAD, an executive, walks by. Sophie dumps her stuff on Jenny's desk and hurries after him. Moving...

SOPHIE

Oh, Brad! Brad!

Brad's not stopping.

BRAD

What's wrong with your foot?

SOPHIE

Look, I was wondering if you'd brought that matter up with Clarissa yet, you know, about researchers having minders?

BRAD

No, told you, she won't go for it.

SOPHIE

Well maybe not, but you know, like,
we won't know unless you ask her.

BRAD

You really think she's going to hand
over two hundred thousand a year to
make researchers feel less vulnerable?

She grabs his arm.

SOPHIE

Will you just hold it.

He stops. As she leans on him and fixes her shoe he notices
her cleavage.

SOPHIE

(noticing him notice her cleavage)
Look, maybe you should point out to her
that we all live in America and that
this is a very litigious society and
that maybe it might save a lot in
lawsuits if researchers are adequately
protected.

Brad sets off, Sophie trailing.

BRAD

Sounds like a threat. Is that a threat?

SOPHIE

No! I'm not talking about me, I'm talking
about anyone. If someone gets mugged
Clarissa could be sued.

BRAD

Look, Sophie...

SOPHIE

Yes?

BRAD

I like you, even though you won't come out
with me and I am management...

SOPHIE (immediately exasperated)
I told you why!

BRAD

Well I know I'm not that handsome, but...

SOPHIE

Brad, even if you changed your last name to Pitt and grew his face on your ass I wouldn't go out with you. What part of 'I am married' don't you understand?

BRAD

Fine. But, I am merely pointing out that in two years you haven't progressed. There is a reason.

He swings around a corner. Sophie is stunned. She chases.

SOPHIE

What are you saying?!

BRAD

I'm saying I like you, and I'm really trying to do you a solid.

SOPHIE

You...What? Go out with you or I don't get a minder?

BRAD

No, I did not say that. I'm giving advice about keeping your job. If I told Clarissa you requested a security guard accompany you into economically challenged districts - note my PC language - her reply would be to nod, request your name, and ask that your contract with us be terminated, not, I hasten to add, because of your request regarding security, but rather due to many complaints, going back many months, regarding your racist and bigoted attitude.

SOPHIE

Whoa...That is so unfair.

BRAD

Tell me about it. I'm the guy she gets to swing the axe.

He pulls up.

Look, just tell any niggers, spiiks or hillbilly trailer-trash that you'll put 'em on TV, and trust me, they will happily blow away anyone you nominate in a five mile radius. And we never had this conversation and I was absent from work this day.

Sophie watches with indignant dismay as he walks away.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Close on an origami figurine beside a dinner plate and a wine glass.

SOPHIE (OS)

And last week, there was this guy who actually slept with all three of his aunts and came on the show to confess that to his mother.

Sophie is at the dinner table with her husband, JASON, her mother, MERRILL, her father, GORDON, her brother-in-law, FREDERICK, married to Sophie's sister, JUSTINA, and Sophie's younger brother, THOMAS. (the character in Jason's chair is always revealed last.) Everyone is well dressed and it is a good spread in an upper-middle-class home. A black maid, ALICE, comes in occasionally, helping serve the meal and removing dishes.

Everyone laughs incredulously.

FREDERICK

You know, I just don't get that. Why would you go on national TV and confess something like that? I mean it's bad enough confessing it to your mother, but on national TV?

GORDON

Well they pay them obviously.

SOPHIE

Oh, many don't get paid at all.

JUSTINA

What? You're kidding?

SOPHIE

Don't think that guy got paid.

THOMAS

Oh, come on.

SOPHIE

No, well, I don't actually know for sure, right, but I've been told a lot of guests aren't paid. They just want their fifteen minutes of fame. A lot of them,

SOPHIE (Cont'd)
well most of them, write in.
That's how I find them.

THOMAS
But you authorize payments.

SOPHIE
Yeah, but only for those who are
reluctant. You know, like husbands we're
going to accuse of wife-beating, that
sort of thing.

GORDON
But God, think of the misery a confession
like that boy sleeping with his aunts
would confer on so many people. I always
thought they made up a lot of that stuff.

SOPHIE
What? Daddy, how could you make up stuff
like that? Besides, where would you get
unknown actors who could act that well
or writers who could write so true-to-
life?

JASON
Well they could just ad-lib a bit.

SOPHIE
What are you talking about? You know I
go out there in the slums and get them.
They're all genuine, authentic low-
lives.

Alice rolls her eyes to herself.

SOPHIE
You honestly have no idea of the
squalor these people live in and the
way they treat each other.

Alice closes her eyes in annoyance as she carries dishes to the
kitchen.

FREDERICK
Hey, you know one show I can't stand?
That Jerry Springer show. I mean what's
the point? What is the point? You can't
hear anything they're saying because
they bleep everything.

THOMAS

Yeah and they blot out the boobs.

FREDERICK

I mean the show is just one long goddamned bleep.

JUSTINA

Well, they're swearing.

FREDERICK

I know they're swearing but they never stop swearing long enough for you to understand what they're saying.

MERRILL

I tell you, those shows, all those shows, they make me so ashamed. Imagine that stuff airing overseas, what other countries must think of us.

GORDON

Here here to that, sweetheart.

SOPHIE (to Gordon)

What? I didn't know you felt like that.
(To Merrill) I didn't know you felt like that.
You think my job is shameful?

GORDON

Oh, we didn't mean you, pumpkin, we just meant the shows.

SOPHIE

But I work on one.

GORDON

Well, I think 'Clarissa' is a cut above the rest.

MERRILL

Oh, yes, she is, a cut above the rest.
I just meant all the other shows, pumpkin.

SOPHIE

Well...I wouldn't want you to think I'm planning on staying there forever, you know, I mean, I do have plans. I present ideas for new shows to the network all the time.

GORDON

S'that a fact? (To Merrill) Hear that, darling? She presents new shows to the network all the time.

FREDERICK

Bet they pay people on that Jerry Springer show. I mean they get on there and tear each other's clothes off and hit each other with the furniture. If it was real, why go on the show for that, they could do it from home.

JASON

Yeah, phone it in.

FREDERICK (laughing)

Yeah! Put it on hands free!

ALICE

(collecting more dishes)

I went on the Jerry Springer show once, never got paid.

FREDERICK

You went on the Jerry Springer show?!

SOPHIE

Alice, I didn't know you went on the Jerry Springer show. Why didn't you come on my show?

ALICE

'Cause you was in junior high at the time.

THOMAS

So why'd you go on the show?

ALICE

'Cause my man done left me for my best friend is why. Just wanted to shame that son-of-a-bitch.

THOMAS

Did it work?

ALICE

No, left me with four little kids. But I did find out they paid that sucker a coupla grand just to come on the show.

FREDERICK

Wow.

ALICE

(exiting to the kitchen)

Never saw him again after that day.
Probably went to Vegas, son-of-a-bitch.

She exits. There is a stunned silence.

FREDERICK (to Gordon)

So that's how you got into the slave trade.

Justina kicks him, Frederick grimaces and Gordon laughs.

GORDON

You're lucky you're married to my daughter.

JASON

Of course they'd have to pay the guys.
It's just one big hate males session.
Why else would men go on?

SOPHIE

No, it's not.

JASON

'Course it is. They just get on there and
boo and hiss the guys, and what for? All
they're doing is being guys.

FREDERICK/THOMAS

Yeah!

SOPHIE

Oh they are not, they're all bastards.

JASON

Like the guy who screwed his three aunts?

SOPHIE/JUSTINA

Yes!

JASON

Has it occurred to either of you that his
aunts were the older and supposedly more
responsible adults and that they screwed
him because he is a handsome but naïve
young man?

JUSTINA

He's a guy!

SOPHIE

Yeah!

JASON (To Gordon)

The defense rests, your honour.

GORDON (chuckling)

Well, less talk about screwing, please.
Gives my wife ideas.

MERRILL

Oh!

Everyone laughs.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Sophie and Justina wash up while Jason and Frederick dry dishes and Merrill puts them away. Alice puts away condiments etc., and gets ready to go home. It seems everyone is talking at the same time but we pick up on Jason and Frederick.

FREDERICK

...So it's this huge extraction, you know,
and I've like cut this guy's gums and I've
got like one knee on his chest and I'm
jerking on this wisdom tooth, and this
sucker won't budge, so then I start
swearing, you know, C'mon you son-of-a-
bitch! C'mon, you bastard! And while I'm
jerking my head around I catch sight of
someone standing behind me, see...
and it's the regional inspector.

Jason laughs.

FREDERICK

And he's on the ethics committee.

Jason laughs more, thumping a bench, and they continue telling each other stories as...

Sophie and Justina are at the sink.

SOPHIE

And he says, 'Fine, but in two years you
haven't progressed and there is a reason for
that'.

JUSTINA

Well what did he mean by that?

SOPHIE

Well what do you think, he meant I haven't progressed because I haven't slept with him.

JUSTINA

Jesus, men are such assholes aren't they.

SOPHIE

Well, you know, it's just so disheartening. I think I'm helping people and then I find the reason I'm not getting anywhere is because I, me, stupid me, have not figured out I'm supposed to screw the producer.

JUSTINA

Does Clarissa, you know...with her executives?

SOPHIE (not knowing)

No!...I don't think so.

JUSTINA

Well there you go.

ALICE

'Night everyone!

Alice is going out the back door, her overcoat on and her handbag over her arm.

EVERYONE (disregarding)

'Night, Alice.

Alice has gone.

SOPHIE

Hey isn't it amazing she went on Springer.

JUSTINA

Honestly, I just don't know how people abuse themselves like that. You know, marriage break up is private.

SOPHIE

Yeah!

JUSTINA

See, like you're my sister and you didn't even know Frederick and I are getting a divorce.

Sophie bursts out laughing.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, DEN -- NIGHT

Gordon plays Thomas at chess, the front door alcove in the background. Sophie enters, wearing an overcoat. As she kisses Gordon and Thomas goodbye Merrill and Justina are kissing Jason goodbye in the alcove.

GORDON

Oh, off so soon?

SOPHIE

Yeah, Jason's operating tomorrow, has to get a good night's sleep. 'Night, daddy.

Jason comes in to shake his hand.

GORDON

Anything complicated?

JASON

No, appendectomies, tonsillectomies. But I got six back to back, and it's been a long day. (To Merrill) Thanks for a wonderful dinner, mom. You do a much nicer roast than my mom. And we never had this conversation, and I was never here.

Sophie catches what he said - similar to Brad.

MERRILL

Oh, he's a sweet-talker this one. Probably tells his own mom the same thing.

JASON

Hey how do you think we get all the free meals?

They are out the door with everyone but Sophie laughing.

INT/EXT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, CAR -- NIGHT

Sophie and Jason are in their expensive car, while Gordon, Merrill, Thomas, Frederick and Justina wave goodbye.

SOPHIE

Bye! Thanks for dinner, mom! I'll
call you tomorrow! Love you both!
Bye!

They drive off, Sophie's window going up.

EXT. JASON'S CAR INT -- NIGHT.

Traveling: Sophie's window goes up.

SOPHIE

Oh, I never get sick of seeing them.
You know, I just feel so comfortable
that we both have such nice parents.

JASON

You don't find it a little suffocating?

SOPHIE

No... 'Suffocating's' pretty strong.

JASON

Isn't that Alice?

Sophie looks. Alice sits alone in a bus shelter.

JASON

Must've missed her bus.

SOPHIE

Shouldn't we give her a lift?

JASON (patronizing)

Yeah, honey, going into a black
neighborhood at night. 'Specially with
this car.

SOPHIE

Oh, I think she lives in a white
neighborhood.

JASON (patronizing)

Yeah...Right.

EXT. BUS STOP -- NIGHT

Alice watches the car go by. She snorts over their meanness.

BACK TO:

SOPHIE

You don't think my job is shameful
do you?

JASON

No, why, 'cause of what your parents said?

SOPHIE

Well...

JASON

Oh, that was just a general
comment, sweetheart. They don't
mean anything.

SOPHIE

But I think I'm helping people, you
know, like you and daddy do. Like, I
mean, I'm not a doctor or a judge or
anything, but I am doing something
useful...don't you think?

JASON

Sure. And your wage is very helpful.

She stares at him, wanting to be convinced.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT.

From behind bushes, Jason and Sophie's car approaches the house. An automatic garage door opens. The car enters and the door shuts behind it. As this happens, camera, suggesting a stalker, moves cautiously out through the bushes and across the street to stop in front of the house. Presently a light comes on inside.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie and Jason are in bed. She is in a conservative nightdress and he is in pajamas. He reads a medical book. She kisses him. He kisses her and she begins to give him foreplay.

JASON

Honey...I got six operations tomorrow.

SOPHIE

Oh, sorry.

JASON

Oh, don't say sorry. It's...I'm just so tired and I need to brush up on this. Maybe in the morning, okay?

SOPHIE

Sure.

JASON

Thanks.

She rolls over toward us, revealing a troubled brow.

JASON

'Night, sweetheart.

SOPHIE

'Night.

Sophie turns out her bedside lamp. She lies awake, unhappy.

INT. STUDIO, SOPHIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

CLARISSA'S image is on a wall-mounted monitor. She is holding a microphone and reading a letter.

CLARISSA

Clarissa, I am now nineteen years of age and I've been slamming heroin since I was fourteen. My life is a mess and I've dropped thirty pounds in weight. Now I simply can't function anymore without at least a gram of heroin a day. Naturally this costs a lot and so I'm constantly stealing from my friends and my close relatives. I am so lost. Clarissa, can you help me?

Clarissa lowers the letter.

Concurrently Sophie moves around the office, sipping coffee, doing paperwork, only half-watching the monitor.

CLARISSA

Well it might alarm us all to find out that just under 3% of children in our schools have tried heroin by the eighth grade, either through smoking it or

CLARISSA (Cont'd)

injecting it. So right now we are going to meet the young lady who wrote me this letter and find out just how she got hooked on this hundred dollar a day habit. Come on in, Marianne.

As TV CAMERA swings onto a doorway to one side of the set, it is revealed for the first time that TWO FEMALE RELATIVES are already seated on set. As the AUDIENCE applauds, MARIANNE, a thin, pale girl, enters and crosses to the seat next to Clarissa. All the guests are lower-class white. As Marianne crosses the set, Sophie pulls the coffee from her mouth and gasps. Flash back to...

INT. POOR HOUSEHOLD, MARIANNE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

MARIANNE

There's no fucking way, lady.

Sophie is on a chair opposite Marianne, on the bed.

SOPHIE

Excuse me?

MARIANNE

The only way I'm going on your fucking show is if you pay me two large on the nose on the day. And I want it in my fucking hand before I walk on the fucking set.

BACK TO:

Sophie watches the monitor, mouth agape. Marianne is confessing, crying.

MARIANNE

I just want you to know that I'm so sorry for all the pain I've caused you, and I really want to get straight.

RELATIVE 1

(hugging her)

Oh, we do too, baby! We do too!

The audience 'Ahhhhhs' with sentimental satisfaction.

Sophie leaves her office urgently.

INT. STUDIO OFFICE -- DAY

Frowning, Sophie drops her coffee mug onto Jenny's desk as she hurries by. Jenny watches her go, curious-alarmed.

Sophie enters a door marked "Studio".

INT. STUDIO HALL -- DAY.

Sophie comes down a hall and enters a door with an illuminated sign above: "RECORDING".

INT. STUDIO SET, WINGS -- DAY

As the audience applauds, Sophie enters the wings and moves to a position where she can see the four women on set. Marianne notices her momentarily.

INT. STUDIO SET -- DAY

Applause dies away as Clarissa turns to studio camera.

CLARISSA

And when we come back, we'll be talking to a young man who said he prefers a life of prostitution to sustain his drug habit than returning to his parent's home. And we'll also be hearing what the parents have to say about that. Be right back.

Audience applauds.

INT. STUDIO SET -- WINGS

Escorted by a FLOOR MANAGER, Marianne and her two relatives cross from the set while Sophie waits. Marianne grows wary. Sophie smiles.

SOPHIE

Hi.

MARIANNE

What?

SOPHIE

Oh, you don't remember me?

MARIANNE

'Course I do. Nothing wrong with my brain!

SOPHIE

Would you mind...(to her relatives) Can I just borrow Marianne for a sec?

The women move on suspiciously.

SOPHIE (to Marianne)

Could I speak to you for a moment?

Sophie puts her hand on Marianne's arm to guide her away. Marianne looks at her hand, making her remove it, but allows herself to be moved to one side.

SOPHIE

Thanks, look, um...You know, I remember you were really adamant that you wouldn't come on the show without payment up front.

MARIANNE

So?

SOPHIE

Well I told my boss about that and he, well, I just wanted to make sure you got your money.

MARIANNE (suspicious)

Yeah?

SOPHIE

So he paid you alright? He paid you the full two thousand?

MARIANNE

No, only one. (indignant) Why, was I supposed to get two?

SOPHIE

Oh, no, just you said you wanted two, and I thought that was the price you two agreed.

MARIANNE

No, he said they'd only pay one.

SOPHIE

Well, that's Stewart. He's a hard dealer.

MARIANNE

He said his name was Brad.

SOPHIE

Oh...well, if it was Brad...Then you really were lucky to get the thousand. He's really tight. Well, I'm glad you came on the show. It'll do a lot for other kids out there on heroin.

Marianne gives her a look of mock disbelief as she moves away. Sophie looks down and nods to herself in disgust.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

BRAD

It's none of your business what clients on the show are paid! It is purely your job to go out there and procure them and in this case you failed!

SOPHIE

Brad, the girl is a nineteen year old heroin addict! She's been addicted since she was fourteen! What do you think she's going to do with a thousand bucks, open a Christmas Club account?!

BRAD

Hey, I'm not in charge of other people's morals!

SOPHIE

Yes you are! That's why this show exists! We're supposed to be helping people!

Brad makes an incredulous, amused sound. Shaking her head, Sophie begins to leave.

BRAD

She told you one thousand? Huh. Wow. I gave that little bitch two thousand cash...Huh...Jeez.

Realization comes to Sophie.

SOPHIE

You pocketed the other thousand.

BRAD (forced laughter)

What?...No...What?

SOPHIE
You just said that 'cause you think
I'm on my way to see Clarissa.

BRAD (forced laughter)
What?...No.

Clarissa enters, smoking a cigarette, wearing coke bottle
reading glasses and looking anything but glamorous.

CLARISSA
See Clarissa about what?

BRAD
Oh, ah, we were just having a
little money dispute.

CLARISSA
Fine. Long as it's not my money. Who's this?

SOPHIE (astonished)
Sophie.

Clarissa stares.

SOPHIE
Baker.

Clarissa stares.

SOPHIE
One of your researchers?

CLARISSA
You responsible for that miserable line up
I had today?

SOPHIE
No.

CLARISSA
Well just as well, or I'd sack your ass.
(To Brad) You, in my office, now!

She exits, Brad hurtles after her, glancing at Sophie as he
passes.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Close on Sophie. She sighs, shaking her head.

SOPHIE

It was horrible, just horrible.

Camera rotates to reveal she is not in the office, but lying in bed with Jason. She folds an origami figurine. Jason is on his back, reading a medical book, as Sophie faces camera.

JASON

Thought people did origami to relax.

SOPHIE

Yeah?

Jason glances at her, but goes back to reading.

SOPHIE

You know, I don't think even Clarissa cares about those people.

JASON (absently)

Well, that's show biz. The biz means 'business'.

SOPHIE

Well, you know, I really thought I was out there doing some good, you know. Like, showing the world just how hard up some people are, and....

She begins to cry. Jason finally realizes she needs some attention.

JASON

I know. I know. You're a kind person, princess. That's why I love you so much.

She rolls toward him.

SOPHIE

You mean that, that I'm a kind person?

JASON

Of course. And you only have to hold onto that little job a little longer so we can afford children.

SOPHIE
How much longer?

JASON
(shrugs)
Year or two.

SOPHIE
You know, you always talk about children
like we're saving to buy them.

JASON
Well in a sense we are. You want them to
have the best don't you?

SOPHIE
(nodding)
I guess.

JASON
(kissing her forehead)
Good.

Camera reveals that under the bed their conversation is
being recorded on a micro-recorder taped to the bed frame.

EXT. SLUM STREET -- DAY

Carrying a file and her handbag, Sophie, looking disenchanted,
gets out of her car. She looks up at a dilapidated apartment
building. She notices some YOUNG BLACK MEN watching her
malevolently. She crosses to the nearest and tosses him her keys.

SOPHIE
Here. Knock yourself out.

She goes into the building.

The youth comes forward and looks at Sophie's car in disbelief.

INT. POOR APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL -- DAY

Sophie enters a hall, where she locates a room number. She knocks.

HARMAN (OS through door)
Who is it?

SOPHIE
Harman, it's Sophie Baker from 'Clarissa'.
We spoke on the phone.

The door flies open.

HARMAN

What are you doing here, bitch?! I told you to keep your skinny white ass outa Dodge! You trying to provoke me?!

SOPHIE (unimpressed)

No. I'm trying to bribe you.

She enters, disregarding his threat and obvious danger. Before he shuts the door, HARMAN, a very big, middle-aged black man, is surprised by her audacity.

INT. HARMAN'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Sophie crosses to a table and sits, dropping her belongings and starting to dial a number on her cell phone.

SOPHIE

Have you got a coffee or a cigarette or an aspirin?

HARMAN

What? Which one?

SOPHIE

All of 'em.

Her phone is answered.

SOPHIE

Yeah, hi, this is Sophie Baker. I'd like a taxi for 44 Arlington Parade, Runsdale...Immediately. Tell the driver to blow the horn, I'll come down. Thanks.

Harman pours her a coffee and drops two aspirin beside it. He then shakes up a cigarette and offers it. Sophie pauses momentarily, looking at the cigarette, then takes it. Harman lights it.

SOPHIE

I seem to be doing something wrong in my life, Harman.

HARMAN

Yeah? What?

SOPHIE

Well, I haven't had sex for about four weeks.

HARMAN

So you thought you'd come 'round and see good old Harman, right?

SOPHIE

Yeah, well, see, that's interesting. Every man I meet hits on me, except the one I want to hit on me, my husband.

HARMAN

Well, you're a good looking woman.

SOPHIE

So are a lot of women, but why do men think they can hit on me, and why doesn't my husband want to?

HARMAN

Hell, I don't know. Maybe you're too 'nice'.

She catapults from her chair, poking the cigarette close to his face.

SOPHIE

You know! That's just what I was thinking! You're absolutely right!

She moves away, pacing, puffing the cigarette, coughing at its foul taste. Harman is not sure what to make of her.

SOPHIE

You know, I walk into a big black man's apartment and I demand coffee, cigarette and an aspirin and I get it. Now if I'd asked nicely I'm sure you would have just stabbed me.

HARMAN

Damned right.

SOPHIE

Really?

HARMAN

No, stupid, I'm humoring you.

Sophie stares, confused.

HARMAN

You should know I don't usually stab people 'til the second date. What are you, straight out of the funny farm? And anyone knows you can't get a cab down here.

SOPHIE

I can't?

HARMAN

They don't come lower than 42nd Street. They just take your details then ignore you.

Sophie stares, stunned.

HARMAN

Yeah. So doing your little assertiveness thing there is sort of interesting, you know, but if I was you I'd cut out the bad manners crap or you probably will get stabbed. And don't do that big black man shit, neither, like I was the boogie man or something. It's insulting. Has it occurred to you I let you in and gave you a cigarette, coffee and aspirin 'cause you said something about a bribe? Mind you, if there ain't no bribe, I'm going to kick your pretty white ass down the hall and all three flights of stairs.

SOPHIE

Oh my God.

HARMAN

What?

SOPHIE

I gave a kid downstairs my keys and now I can't get a cab!

Harman crosses to a window. Sophie dives for her cell phone.

SOPHIE

Maybe, maybe I can call someone at the station to come get me.

HARMAN

You driving a silver Honda?

SOPHIE

Yeah?

Harman jerks his thumb toward the window.

Astonished, Sophie rushes to the window and looks out. The car is still there and the youths are gone.

SOPHIE

Wow.

HARMAN

Yeah, wow, how could black folks be so honest? Now you want to tell me what the hell it is you want, lady? I done told you on the phone, I ain't interested in going on no talk show, 'cause all they are is a place for you women to beat up on a man.

Sophie sighs heavily and her manner becomes perfunctory.

SOPHIE

Yeah...You're right. That's why I'm empowered to offer you two thousand dollars appearance money.

HARMAN

Two thousand?

SOPHIE

And you get a free 'I Love Clarissa' T-Shirt.

HARMAN

Well, what do I have to do?

SOPHIE

You just go on there and we accuse you of sleeping around and not marrying your wife and generally being a prick. And it would help if you would show no signs of remorse and shout things like 'I got an MBA. Member of Bastards of America'.

HARMAN

And that's it?

SOPHIE

That's it.

HARMAN

You know, you seem too nice to say something like that straight out. Why you talking like that?

SOPHIE

'Cause I suddenly realized through my mind-numbing stupidity that if you said 'no' my boss would ring you up and explain what I just did. Only difference is he'd only offer you a thousand and pocket the other thousand himself.

HARMAN

Okay. So suppose I go on that show, what questions they asking?

SOPHIE

Um, do you have other women? How come you won't marry Flo after you've had five children with her? Stuff like that.

HARMAN

Well, see, I can't answer that.

Sophie's look asks the question.

HARMAN

What, you think I like living in a dump like this? Shit, I go home, I can't get social security for my kids. How's old Flo going to put food on the table for all our children and her two kids? Here I am living like some outlaw from my own family just 'cause nobody'll give me a job. And yeah, I got other women, but only 'cause I'm so damned bored here that it gives me something to do. I'd like to be home teaching my kids and protecting 'em. Instead all I see's is them ending up in some street gang somewhere, doped, dumb and dead b'age eighteen...I'll come on your damned show, lady, and you can throw insults at me, but only on one condition.

Sophie waits.

HARMAN

You give that money straight to Flo, for the kids.

Sophie looks at him compassionately. Her eyes grow teary.

EXT. SLUM STREET -- DAY

Sophie exits the apartment building. She is amazed to see her car keys dangling in the ignition. She is further surprised to see an envelope under her wiper. She picks it up as...

HILTON

You!!

Sophie starts as HILTON, a good looking but angry African American, storms toward her.

HILTON

I believe you handed a young man your car keys with the intent of inciting a crime!

SOPHIE

Oh, well...

HILTON

You are aware that contributing to the delinquency of a minor is a serious and jailable offence?!

SOPHIE

Oh, well...

HILTON

Can you give me a good reason why I shouldn't make a citizen's arrest and take you to the nearest police station?!

SOPHIE

Well...um...

HILTON

It's just as well for you, lady, that you threw the keys to one of the young men in my crime prevention program. You self-centered, arrogant, spoilt brat. I don't know what irresponsible reason you have for perpetrating such a heinous act as to lead an innocent young man to long-term incarceration, but you need to be taught a lesson!

He is right in her face. Small pause.

SOPHIE

Don't I know you?

HILTON

Not unless you're a member of The Poverty
Prevention League and attend court every
Second day! Now get the hell out of my neighborhood!

SOPHIE

Yes, yes, sorry, I'm going.

She gets in her car and drives away hurriedly.

INTERCUT:

EXT. SOPHIE'S CAR INT -- DAY

As she leaves she looks in the rear view mirror, back at an angry
Hilton, hands on hips, glaring after her.

Sophie's car rounds a corner and the frown disappears from
Hilton's face. He breaks into a laugh, slapping his thigh.

Sophie is shaken. She notices the envelope uppermost on her files.
She pulls up at a set of lights, opens it and reads. She doesn't
understand the message.

SOPHIE (VO)

Go to the Sunshine Estoria Motel bar.
Be there by twelve sharp. Look for a
tall, dark stranger who will bring you
enlightenment.

She lowers the note, frowning. The car behind her honks. Sophie
waves 'sorry', and continues on, troubled.

INT. MOTEL BAR -- DAY

Sophie sits at the bar, an untouched drink beside her while she
makes an origami figurine. She glances around nervously for the
tall, dark stranger. She looks at a clock. It reads 12:10. Her
eyes come down as a TALL, DARK-HAIRED MAN enters the bar. She
tracks him and when it seems he is coming toward her, stands up.
He smiles however and shakes hands with a man sitting at a table
beyond her.

Sophie heads for the door and is halfway to it when she freezes.

Seen through the bar window, her husband, Jason, walks arm and
arm with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

Sophie crosses to the window, fearing what will happen.

Jason opens a motel door and allows the woman entry. He looks around, ensuring he is unobserved, before following her inside. Sophie slumps against the window, numb with shock.

Through the window pane her open mouth is distorted against the glass.

INT. STUDIO - OFFICES -- DAY

Brad approaches Jenny's desk, pleased she is not there, and cautiously peers into Sophie's office. Checking he is unobserved, he enters.

INT. SOPHIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Brad looks around. He notices an ornate origami figurine on her desk. He crosses to it and picks it up, examining it with wonder.

JENNY (OS)

Help you Brad?

Brad jumps in fright. He turns, hiding the figurine within his hand.

BRAD

Yeah. What time's Sophie back?

JENNY

Not sure. Want me to try her cell?

BRAD

(leaving)

No, it's okay. I'll get my PA on it.

He is gone. Jenny looks around, suspicious.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES -- DAY

Brad approaches his office but slows to a stop as he notices Clarissa come to her office doorway with Hilton. They shake hands, and with a strong suggestion of Clarissa's attraction to him, Hilton departs. Looking a little wanton, Clarissa watches him go. She looks round, notices Brad, snaps out of it, and puts her glasses on so she can see who is staring at her. She signals him into her office and goes inside. Brad looks suspiciously after Hilton.

INT. CLARISSA'S OFFICE -- DAY

Clarissa is behind her desk. Her walls are covered with photographs of celebrity guests she has had on her show. Brad enters, holding the origami figurine.

CLARISSA

What's that?

BRAD

Oh, origami. Who was that?

CLARISSA

Why?

BRAD

Oh, just thought I recognized him.

CLARISSA

Got a memo from accounting. Said I should trim the fat. They suggested one of the researchers.

BRAD

We need all the researchers.

CLARISSA

(reading from a list)

Get rid of Sophie Baker.

BRAD (alarmed)

What? Why Sophie?

CLARISSA

(shrugging and indicating the list) 'Cause Baker comes before Herschell, Lindsay and Richards.

BRAD

I think you should tell the head of accounting we'll drop a researcher if he'll drop an accountant.

CLARISSA

Hey, I like that.

BRAD

Besides, Baker is the last one I'd drop.

CLARISSA

Why?

BRAD

She believes she's doing good for people.

Clarissa's phone rings.

CLARISSA

What?! I don't want a nut case.

BRAD

Hey, we're selling sincerity, and in her case she doesn't fake it.

Clarissa answers the phone.

CLARISSA

Yeah?...Okay, put him through.

She waves Brad away and he leaves.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Brad places the figurine on his desk before him. He looks at it, devotion in his eyes.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOME, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie makes an origami figurine. She looks up as she hears Jason's car enter the garage. She quickly puts on some glasses, pretending to read a book. Jason enters.

JASON

Hi, princess.

SOPHIE

Hi.

He kisses her forehead, and proceeds to fix himself a drink.

SOPHIE

Would you mind not calling me that.

JASON

What? Princess?

SOPHIE

Pretty condescending don't you think.

JASON

Why? Your parents call you that.

SOPHIE

No, they call me pumpkin. And you know, I'd really like a kiss on the lips occasionally. I'm not a little girl.

Jason's eyes drop down to the origami figurine.

JASON

(getting a drink)

Well, who got out on the wrong side of her hormones this morning? Want a drink?

SOPHIE

You drink every night now, don't you.

JASON

No, not every night.

SOPHIE

Is it because of work pressure?

JASON

No, just like a drink. Helps me relax. You do origami. I drink.

Sophie chuckles. Jason grins.

JASON

What?

SOPHIE

(building laughter)

Oh, s'just silly.

JASON

(smiling)

No, what?

SOPHIE

(laughing)

Oh, you know, they say you have a stiff one and when you do you get all floppy. And when you get floppy you can't get stiff. Just funny, that's all.

JASON

(perplexed)

Not with you.

SOPHIE
No, you're not. (trying to open his fly)
Well, why don't we get out Mr. Floppy
and we'll see if we can't make him stiff,
that is before you have that stiff one
and get all floppy.

JASON
(pulling away)
What are you talking about?

SOPHIE
(leaving the room)
Oh, nothing, Jason. You go ahead. Have
a stiff one on me.

Unsettled, Jason stares after her.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES -- DAY

Sophie approaches her office. She slows. Brad is apparently stalking a pot plant. He suddenly pounces and catches something on one of the leaves. Holding it in his hand he freezes as he sees Sophie watching him.

SOPHIE
What have you got?

BRAD
Oh...a grasshopper.

SOPHIE
What are you going to do with it?

BRAD
Put it outside.

Sophie is surprised.

BRAD
What?

SOPHIE
That's very kind.

Brad grins and Sophie grins back. Brad gets bashful.

BRAD
I'll...I'll just...

He gestures outside, and Sophie nods. Brad departs awkwardly, stumbling. Sophie watches, re-considering him.

INT. SOPHIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sophie is behind her desk, lost to her thoughts, staring blankly. Jenny enters, carrying an envelope. She pauses and clears her throat. Sophie blinks and grins perfunctorily.

SOPHIE

Oh.

JENNY

And what galaxy were you in?

SOPHIE

What's that?

JENNY

Don't know, special delivery.

SOPHIE

Thanks.

JENNY

Hey, I'm just outside if you need to talk.

Sophie nods, then notices WORKMEN wheeling machines past in the outer office.

SOPHIE

What're those?

JENNY

Lie detectors.

SOPHIE

What for?

JENNY

Who knows. Some stupid idea of Brad's.

Sophie nods. Jenny leaves. Sophie opens the envelope and reads.

SOPHIE (VO)

You are to go to the "Players Niteclub", on Beuna Vista Drive. Ask for a girl called Becky and she will give you your uniform. Do whatever she tells you. Look

SOPHIE (VO) (Cont'd)
for a late middle-aged, grey haired man.
He will bring you enlightenment.

Sophie lowers the envelope, mystified.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Jason eats his dinner in front of the TV as Sophie comes through on her way to the garage. She is dressed to go out.

JASON
Where are you off to?

SOPHIE
Out.

She exits to the garage. Jason is astonished.

INT/EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE, GARAGE -- NIGHT

Sophie backs her car out. Jason appears at her window and knocks.

JASON
Hey, you don't just go out like that.

SOPHIE
Why?

JASON
Well at least tell me where you're going.

SOPHIE
I'm going to work in a strip club, Jason,
but don't worry, I'm looking for enlightenment.

She backs the car quickly into the street. Jason watches, astonished.

EXT. PLAYERS NITE CLUB -- NIGHT

Establishing. Sophie crosses the street to the building.

EXT. PLAYERS RECEPTION DESK -- NIGHT

Sophie approaches the RECEPTION HOSTESS, who is dressed in a classy but low cut dress. Numerous BUSINESSMEN enter the club.

SOPHIE
Hi. I was told to ask for Becky?

RECEPTION HOSTESS
Third floor. And in future use the Parking
Lot entrance.

SOPHIE
O-kay.

INT. LIFT -- NIGHT

Sophie, looking intimidated, is in an elevator along with
MALE PATRONS.

INT. CLOAK ROOM OPPOSITE LIFTS -- NIGHT

Sophie comes from the lift and spots the cloak room. The
corridor is busy with both MALE and FEMALE clients of varying
ages. Sophie approaches a near topless HAT CHECK GIRL.

SOPHIE
Hi, I'm supposed to see Becky?

The Hat Check Girl lifts part of the counter.

HATCHECK GIRL
Step through.

Sophie does so.

HATCHECK GIRL
Down there.

Following. Sophie moves through rows of neatly hung clothing,
then into a passageway. She comes across dressing rooms with
numerous STRIPPERS, DANCERS, and WAITRESSES, all getting ready.
Sophie wanders past room after room. Finally she sees a woman
who looks like a seamstress helping a DANCER with her costume.

SOPHIE
Becky?

BECKY
Taking 'em off, shakin' 'em out, or
bringing 'em out?

SOPHIE
I'm Sophie Baker. I'm supposed to...

BECKY

Oh yeah, just wait a sec. (To the Dancer)
Breathe in, sugar.

The Dancer sucks in a lungful of air and Becky wrenches the zipper up. Her job done, Becky immediately pushes past Sophie.

Perplexed, Sophie follows.

Becky reaches into a rack of G-strings and bras on clip hangers. She hands one to Sophie.

SOPHIE

What's this?

BECKY

Your uniform.

SOPHIE

I can't get into this.

BECKY

One size fits all, trust me.

SOPHIE

What am I supposed to do?

BECKY

Christ, don't they tell you girls anything. It's S & M night. You just go out there and you assist the couples to do whatever they like. You don't have to handle genitals but you do have to be prepared to spank bottoms and be spanked. But if someone hits you too hard then complain to the bouncer.

SOPHIE

Look, I don't know what this is,
I can't do this.

BECKY

Here, wear this.

She hands her an eye mask.

BECKY

Slaves are supposed to wear masks anyway.
You'll be working in the S & M room,
that's third door on the left. Don't
whatever you do go in the first door to
the right.

SOPHIE

Why, what's there?

BECKY

You don't want to know.

Becky departs. Sophie pokes her finger through a nipple hole in
the bra. She looks doubtful.

INT. PASSAGEWAY TO CLUB -- NIGHT

Sophie comes down the hall. She has tissues stuffed into the
holes in her bra and still has her pantyhose on despite wearing
the G-string. She wears the eye mask. She stops before three
doors, two on the right, one on the left. The first is not
labeled, while the second is labeled 'Strippers' and the third is
labeled 'S & M'. She comes back to the first door, and considers
looking inside. She checks the passageway. No one is coming. She
places her hand on the door knob. Suddenly some topless
WAITRESSES appear, causing Sophie to quickly abandon the door and
enter the S & M room.

INT. S & M ROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie plunges into a world totally foreign to her. Aside from
loud music and low lighting there seems to be dozens of people
parading around. Most wear variations on chains, dog collars and
leathers. There is a wide age range from young to old. There are
numerous older women leading young men round with chains to penis
sheaths. There are also topless dancers on elevated platforms
throughout the room.

Sophie is stunned. She wanders open-mouth into the room. An
ELDERLY GENTLEMAN appears beside her.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

(handing her a paddle)

Oh, would you mind, slave.

He bends over a table.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

I've been very naughty at work today.

SOPHIE

Um, are you the one supposed to give me enlightenment?

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

(pointing to his backside)
Just there, please. Don't spare me.

SOPHIE

Oh, um, well (pointing to the spot) Just there?

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

Yes, yes, be brutal.

Sophie collects herself and decides she has to do it. After much hesitation she belts him one.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

Ow!...God!!!

SOPHIE

Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

No no, that was quiet good. Ahhhh, but do you think this time you could hit me on the cheek and miss my tail bone?

SOPHIE

Oh, yes, yes, sorry, I'm just new.

ELDERLY GENTLEMAN

That's okay, we all have to learn.

He bends over the table again.

SOPHIE (resigned)

We sure do.

Gritting her teeth she hits him rapidly several times as the Elderly Gentleman screams.

INT. S & M ROOM -- NIGHT

Later. Sophie is wandering through the room, tapping her hand with the paddle, looking for customers. There are various debaucheries going on around her but she is no longer fazed by them.

She stops as she notices another elderly gentleman over a table being paddled by two slaves. When she sees him his head is down, but as the slaves stop his punishment his head comes up in satisfaction.

Sophie freezes.

It is her father.

The paddle falls from her hand.

INT. PASSAGEWAY TO S & M ROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie exits the S & M door, crying, her mask already off. Not thinking, she crosses to the 'unlabelled' door and runs inside.

INT. FIRST ROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie has gone two paces into the room when she realizes she is almost in blackness.

FX: Suddenly a red light comes on and she sees a huge rhinoceros in front of her, facing her. She gasps, but is not sure if it is real. She squints, takes a pace closer, really looking it over.

It snorts.

Sophie screams and runs out of the room.

INT. CLOAK ROOM OPPOSITE LIFTS -- NIGHT

Hysterical, Sophie hurtles through the cloak room, across the passageway and into an open lift. She desperately hits buttons.

EXT. PLAYER'S NITE CLUB -- NIGHT

Sophie comes into the street, sobbing. Not thinking, she pulls a tissue from her bra to wipe her tears, then screams, realizing she has exposed a nipple. She slaps her hand over it and hails a cab. One pulls over and she gets in.

As the cab draws away, Hilton is found standing on the sidewalk, watching. He grins and chuckles to himself.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Trying to keep her dignity, and covering one breast with her hand, Sophie marches up her front path. Jason, on the porch, a

newspaper in his hand, watches. He is aghast as she comes toward him.

JASON

What is this?!

SOPHIE

Shut up and pay the driver, you bastard!

She marches into the house and slams the door. Jason looks round in amazement at the CAB DRIVER, leaning against his cab and grinning.

CAB DRIVER

Twenty-four fifty. Forget the tip. Was my pleasure.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL, SOPHIE'S BEDROOM DOOR -- NIGHT

Jason appears beside the door and tries to open it. He finds it locked. He knocks.

JASON

Sophie. Sophie, open this door.

SOPHIE (OS through door)

Go away!

Jason shrugs and appears to give in easily. He leaves frame.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie lies on the bed, facing camera. Jason appears in the background, having entered through the ensuite. He leans against the ensuite door.

JASON

You want to tell me what's going on?

Sophie does a mental 'D'oh!' She gets up, grabs her dressing gown, a blanket and a pillow, and begins to leave.

JASON

I am entitled to know what my wife is doing when she says she's going to work in a strip club and comes home half naked.

SOPHIE

I am trying to get some sleep, because unlike some people I actually work during the day!

JASON

And what's that supposed to mean?

SOPHIE

You figure it out!

She leaves, slamming the door.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE, SITTING ROOM -- DAY

Close on a TV. An obese white woman, BEVERLY, sits, dabbing at her eyes with a tissue. Next to her is a chubby young man, JOHN. He has a young boy's face and a look of innocence, even though in appearance he is around 30 years old. As he speaks he seems somewhat slow. Clarissa appears beside the woman and looks across at John.

CLARISSA (falsely compassionate)
John, you look scared. Are you scared?

John is so scared he can only nod.

CLARISSA

What are you scared about, John?

JOHN

(glancing at Beverly)

I'm scared you're going to tell me something horrible and it's going to spoil everything.

SUPER on TV screen: "Beverly is going to admit to John she is a prostitute."

Sophie, in her dressing gown, watches the TV. Her eyes are puffy as she clasps tissues and she eats from a tub of ice cream. She is mesmerized.

CLARISSA

How do you mean spoil everything, John?

John is now so scared he starts to cry.

JOHN

Well, I don't care what she's done, I still love her and, and, and...I don't want to know what she's done.

CLARISSA

But why would it spoil everything, John?

JOHN
Because I want to marry her.

Audience 'awwws' sadly.

CLARISSA
Well now, Beverly, I believe you
have something to say to John.

Beverly nods.

BEVERLY
John...I've been cheating on you. I've
been sleeping with men.

Audience gasps.

BEVERLY
For money.

Audience gasps more.

JOHN
Oh, God...Oh, God...Oh, God.

BEVERLY
I'm sorry, John...I'm really sorry.

JOHN
Are you going to stop it?

BEVERLY
No.

Audience grumbles.

JOHN
But why? I'll look after you. I got a job.

BEVERLY
Because...well...because I like it.

JOHN
Well, will you only do it while I'm at work?

Beverly doesn't answer. Clarissa leans in toward her.

CLARISSA
Beverly, don't you think you should tell
John the whole truth.

Beverly nods.

BEVERLY

John, I don't want to go with you any more.

John is heartbroken.

The TV suddenly goes off.

Sophie, remote control in hand, studies the screen, sullen.

EXT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- DAY

A phone rings. Merrill picks up.

MERRILL

Hello?

INTERCUT:

EXT. JASON'S SURGERY -- OFFICE DAY

JASON

Oh, hi, Merrill, it's Jason.

MERRILL

Oh, hello Jason. And how are you, dear?

JASON

Fine. Listen, not much time, I'm between patients. I just rang to ask if you know what's wrong with Sophie?

MERRILL

Sophie? Well, I'm not aware anything's wrong. Why?

JASON

Oh, she's been acting strange lately. I just tried to call her at work but they said she rang in sick. Do you think you could have a chat to her, maybe find out what's going on?

MERRILL

Well, sure, yes, okay, I guess.

JASON

Thanks. Look, I've got to run. I'll call you later, okay?

MERRILL

Sure, okay. Bye bye Jason.

She hangs up, puzzled.

INT. STUDIO

Clarissa does a straight-to-camera end-of-show monologue which she reads off an auto-prompter.

CLARISSA

As all of us move through life it's important to know what is of value to hold onto and what we should let go of.

Intercut with monitor images showing Clarissa doing the monologue and the audience seats now completely empty. SUPERED on a fancy banner at the bottom of the monitor screen is "Clarissa's Final Word."

CLARISSA

We should let go of hate and embrace the positive. I want you to do something for me. Every morning when you get out of bed I want you to say a positive affirmation. I want your first words of the day to be: 'Today, I am going to be the best, most positive person I can possibly be.'

Back to Clarissa doing it to CAMERA.

CLARISSA

I do this every morning without fail and believe me it works. It can work for you too. Look after yourself, and look after each other. I am Clarissa.

As canned applause plays she waves, gets up, and walks from frame. They suddenly kill the applause and the camera light goes off.

FLOOR MANAGER

We're out.

CLARISSA

God, who writes this shit?!

BRAD

Ah, one of the researchers. Want me to give it to someone else?

CLARISSA (leaving)
No, it's perfect...Just makes me want to throw up!

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sophie sits on her porch swing, still in her dressing gown, as Merrill, coming from her car, approaches.

MERRILL
Hello, darling.

SOPHIE
Hi, momma.

MERRILL
Why, you're still in your dressing gown.
What's wrong, pumpkin. You sick?

SOPHIE
No. Anyway you must've spoken to Jason or
you wouldn't know I'm home.

MERRILL
Yeah, he called, he said you were upset
about something but he didn't know what. He
thought I might tease it out of you.

SOPHIE
Oh, it's personal. I've had a lot
of...well, disenchantment lately.

MERRILL
Oh, dear, that's not good.

SOPHIE
Well, maybe it's for the best. I guess
I've been walking 'round with my eyes
closed.

MERRILL
Oh, I'm all in favor of that.

Sophie laughs and takes her hand affectionately.

SOPHIE
But I don't think I'm your little
pumpkin anymore.

She dissolves slowly into tears and hugs her mother.

MERRILL

Oh, there there, there there. It's
alright, pumpkin. Momma's here now.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL -- NIGHT

Shot in black and white, Sophie comes from her bedroom quietly, dressed head to toe in black. She moves down the hall, comes to an open bedroom door, and peeks in.

Jason is asleep. Sophie leaves, tip-toeing down the stairs.

EXT. WET PARISIAN STREET -- NIGHT

Sophie appears on a misty street. Aside from her basic blacks she now wears a trench coat and a black beret. The noise of her stilettos is loud on the cobblestones as she hurries forward, a dark figure darting furtively between oases of streetlights. There is a ship's distant foghorn.

EXT. WET PARISIAN STREET -- NIGHT

Sophie runs into CU. She has a large beauty spot on her cheek. Her eyes widen, half in fear, half in anticipation.

There is a man ahead, just beyond the next light, tall and mysterious in the night.

Wearing a trench coat and Stetson, he steps forward, the weak light splashing across his features.

Sophie gasps in recognition and relief. She dashes forward.

EXT. WET PARISIAN STREET -- NIGHT

Sophie rushes to his arms and kisses him desperately. As they part, the mystery man is revealed as Brad. Subtitled:

SOPHIE (in French)

Oh my god, my darling, I have missed you so!

BRAD (in French)

And I you, my little cabbage. But why are you
talking in French? Oh my God, so am I!

They kiss passionately and separate.

BRAD (in French)

Let's never speak in English again!

SOPHIE (in French)
No, my buttercup, it is a clumsy,
oafish language.

JASON (OS in French)
Bastard!

Sophie whirls, suddenly very frightened.

Jason steps from the shadows, pointing a gun at them.

JASON (in French)
You will die now you treacherous bastard!
You will die a very painful death!

SOPHIE (in French)
(shielding Brad)
No, please, don't shoot him! It is me
you want! Take me!

JASON (in French)
I meant you, you idiot!

SOPHIE
Eerh?!

Jason fires.

INT. SOPHIE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Sophie wakes with a start. She is confused by the dream.

She swings her legs out, about to get up, then remembers something she must do. She begins reciting quietly:

SOPHIE
Today, I am going to be the best,
most positive person I can possibly
be.

She gets up.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES - BOARDROOM -- DAY

Sophie is at the long boardroom table with several other show RESEARCHERS, waiting. The other girls chat noisily while Sophie just taps her pen on her pad. She looks around and sees the three lie detectors, seen earlier, placed against the wall. The word "Polygraph" is printed on one of them. Sophie looks at the researcher, ALISON, opposite, and catches her eye.

SOPHIE

Has Brad ever asked you out?

ALISON

What? You mean, like, on a date?

Sophie nods. Alison laughs.

ALISON

No. Christ, he'd run a mile.

Brad suddenly enters and takes the chair at the head of the table.

BRAD

Okay, crew! Now the news is not good, but before I get to that here's what good news there is. Clarissa is happy with certain aspects of last week's shows. Cindy, she said thanks for the obesity convention idea, she knows what you must've gone through to get those sad fat fucks trucked in here, her words not mine. Alison, she also commends you for the women who reject anal sex angle but said she felt it was just a little too juicy for lower middle America, no pun intended. And Sophie, she said she liked your epithet for Clarissa's Final Word, please write some more, and that's an order not a request. Now for the bad news. Ratings are falling, and it's the third week in a row. Not good. Bad. Bad. Very bad. Now we have to ask ourselves why ratings are falling...

Clarissa enters. Brad freezes.

CLARISSA

Don't mind me.

She sits at the other end of the table near Sophie.

CLARISSA

Go on.

Sophie squirms a little, viewing her from the corner of her eye.

BRAD (beginning cautiously)

Okay...As I was saying, we have to ask ourselves why ratings are falling. I have analyzed this problem at length and to me the answer is obvious. It's

BRAD (Cont'd)

because we are losing focus on what our market niche is.

Sophie notices Clarissa light a cigarette.

BRAD

Now our marketing department has spent a lot of money, a lot of money, identifying this niche, and it's important we stick to it. Remember our acronym, MORON - Make Oprah and Ricky for the Other Numbnuts. Our marketing sector is IDIOTS, Identify Dummies In Opposition to Springer. We are looking for the economic and intellectually challenged, people morally higher than a snake's duodenum but only room temperature IQ. We don't want violence, we want civility, so we're culture with a k, sometimes even a capital K, and that way we get a more than middling slice of bottom-end pie. Now! What does all this mean? It means we have to identify ideas, i-d-e-n-t-i-f-y.

ALISON

And what's that stand for?

BRAD

That stands for identify.

Alison nods, trying to appear intelligent.

As Brad continues, Sophie notices Clarissa looking for an ashtray, and when she can't find one she decides to use her own hand.

BRAD

Last week, Fatties On Parade worked, 'specially that negligee thing, but, you got to remember that has limited impact long-term 'cause on any given day half our guests and in fact our audience look as bad as those people. Anal sex, well, people switched off I think because, well, it's all about poo poo and bad aim I guess, and we want civility. So anal retentive not expressive. The druggies thing, well, yeah, sort of, but ratings took a nose dive. Everyone knows about drugs and really don't give a shit, so the human interest thing sort of works, but you know. (shrugs) So, what I'm saying here, folks, is how about some fresh ideas.

His rapid speech has stopped so abruptly that an eerie silence fills the room. With Clarissa observing, her cigarette puffing now the only sound in the room, the researchers are strongly inhibited. Eventually...

SOPHIE

Well...Sex always works.

She doesn't go on.

CLARISSA

That's it?

SOPHIE

How about we expose people coming out of kinky sex party nite clubs, see who we can catch.

CLARISSA

And your angle?

SOPHIE

Well, maybe we could catch some high profile people, you know, like, judges, lawyers, that kind of thing. I think our audience would get a kick out of seeing that the supposedly respectable people in our community are actually sexually aberrant.

BRAD

No, no.

SOPHIE

Why?

BRAD

Well, in our society judges and lawyers seem to have an edge when it comes to suing people.

SOPHIE

Why would they sue us?

BRAD

Because we'd be making accusations we have no proof of.

SOPHIE

I could get proof. I could go inside and pose as a waitress and take photos...

BRAD

(mindful Clarissa is watching)
No, Sophie, it's a bad idea so please...

SOPHIE (To Clarissa)

What do you think?

Clarissa stubs the cigarette out slowly into her palm and closes her fist.

CLARISSA

I think you should fight your own battles, kid.

Sophie looks at Clarissa's hard, almost evil face, then at her fist, with the smoke from the cigarette still oozing from her clenched fingers. Sophie, barely disguising astonishment, looks back at Brad.

BRAD

Good, well now maybe we can come up with some sensible ideas...

SOPHIE

You mean that wasn't sensible?

Beat.

BRAD

Anybody?

SOPHIE

Fine, then I've got a real good one for you, Brad. How about we take these lie detectors and we grab five couples from the audience and we send them to two separate rooms to write five questions they want their husband or lover to answer. Then both have to take the lie detector test.

BRAD (cautious)

Yeeees. But you couldn't allow sexual questions or people just wouldn't do it.

SOPHIE

Why not?

BRAD
Because most people cheat.

SOPHIE
You mean most men cheat, Brad.

BRAD
Well who are they cheating with, Sophie?

SOPHIE
Fine. We'll leave out sex. Tell you what, I'll give you a demonstration. I'll write five questions to ask you and you write five questions to ask me, then we both sit the test.

BRAD (nervous)
Um...

SOPHIE
Hey, this is above Springer, and it's culture with a k.

BRAD
I don't think so.

CLARISSA
Why not?

Brad is momentarily dumbstruck.

BRAD
W'Well, ah, for a start I don't think we could get ten people in the audience to do it.

SOPHIE
Yeah, right, not even for two hundred bucks apiece.

BRAD
Why two hundred?

SOPHIE
Do the math, Brad, ten times two hundred is two thousand, and two thousand is what we pay for each reluctant guest. So logically, as this would take up a whole show then we get all our guests for only two thousand, total.

BRAD
Well, we're not...

CLARISSA (to Alison)
You. Hand me that phone.

Alison leans back and grabs a phone off a sideboard. Clarissa lifts the receiver and pushes a button.

CLARISSA
Yeah, it's me, get me that company, "Clueless".
(Beat. She waits. To Sophie) Get me an ashtray.
(Her line is connected) Yeah hi, Barry
Southgate, tell him it's Clarissa. (To Sophie)
Ashtray? (Her line is connected) Yeah, Barry,
get that expert of yours, you know the
polygraph guy, I want him at the studio within
the hour. Good.

She hangs up. She looks at Sophie.

CLARISSA
I said ashtray!

Sophie hands her an origami ashtray made from her notepaper.
As Clarissa dusts the ash from her hand into it...

CLARISSA
Huh. You got all the answers, don't you,
kid. Well let's see how well you answer his
five questions.

Brad looks astonished and worried. Sophie looks at Brad and by her expression relates she didn't really mean for that to happen.

INT. STUDIO - BOARDROOM -- DAY

The other researchers are gone. Sophie is wired to take the polygraph test. Aside from the POLYGRAPH EXPERT, only Clarissa and Brad are present. Brad has a clipboard in his hand.

P/EXPERT
Reading true. (To Brad) Go ahead.

Brad is highly reluctant.

BRAD
(referring to his clipboard)
Sophie...

SOPHIE
Yes?

BRAD

No, I...

P/EXPERT

Just ask the question.

BRAD

Um...Have you ever stolen money from this company or defrauded it in any way?

SOPHIE

No.

Clarissa and the Expert check the answers. The polygraph needle is barely registering disturbance. Brad knows he's on a flogging to nothing.

BRAD

Have you ever had intimate contact with any one of the guests on our show or anyone in this company?

SOPHIE

I thought we weren't going to have sexual questions?

BRAD

Only about your partner.

CLARISSA

Oh, that's bullshit.

SOPHIE

It's alright, I'll answer...No.

No registration.

BRAD

Ever taken time off work when you weren't really sick?

SOPHIE (to Clarissa)

Does grief count as illness?

Clarissa oscillates her hand, but nods.

SOPHIE (To Brad)

No.

No registration.

BRAD (hopeful)
Do you have a secret attraction
for anyone here at work?

SOPHIE (nervous)
(looking at him)
I...I don't think so.

Slight registration.

BRAD (astonished)
You are attracted to someone.

He notices everyone is looking at him oddly.

BRAD
And are you now, and have you ever
voted Republican?

CLARISSA
Oh, what does that prove?

BRAD
Well, I think it shows disloyalty
to the arts.

SOPHIE
No.

CLARISSA
Hey, I vote Republican, honey.

There is weak yelp from Brad.

SOPHIE
I don't vote.

Clarissa is satisfied with that answer. She looks sternly at
Brad and jerks her thumb.

CLARISSA
In the chair, buster.

As Sophie gets up and Brad is wired up.

BRAD
Sure, sure, fine, I don't have a problem with
this, I'm fine with it, fine, fine. In fact I
think it's fun, and actually I think it might
even work with the audience. Mind you, mind
you, I think we might have to bring in, ah,
some, some, strict parameters that would

BRAD (Cont'd)
prevent obviously embarrassing information
should, should it get out...

P/EXPERT
Is your name Bradley Joseph Debrosky?

Brad's head whips round and he looks at the needle. It is
going crazy.

BRAD
(tearing off the sensor pads)
Well, well! There you have it! You know, this,
this, this, this is obviously flawed technology!
We won't be able to use it! No! I mean how could
we?!

He backs from the room, laughing nervously.

BRAD
You know, you know, I, I, I have, you may not
know this, but I, I suffer from low blood
pressure, so the slightest thing can make my
blood pressure seem to soar, you know! In
fact I'm feeling, you know, I'm just going to
lay down now for a second!

He leaves the room suddenly.

Clarissa looks at Sophie.

CLARISSA
Looks like you got a job, kid.

SOPHIE
I, I didn't want his job.

Clarissa takes Sophie's clipboard from her hand and looks at it.
It is blank.

CLARISSA
No questions.

Clarissa half-grins.

CLARISSA
You can be too decent, you know. Take
the rest of the day off. Come see me
Monday.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOME - BEDROOM -- DAY

Hilton enters the bedroom stealthily. He crosses to the bed and leans under it.

His hand gropes around for the tape recorder but misses it.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sophie comes from the garage, the door closing. She walks down to her mailbox to collect the mail.

BACK TO:

Hilton finds the tape recorder and pulls it out. He turns the tape over and replaces it under the bed.

BACK TO:

Sophie has her mail and comes up the pathway, sorting it as she comes.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- FOYER/STAIRS -- DAY

Hilton comes down the stairs as Sophie's image can be seen through the frosted window glass of the front door. His eyes grow wide and he realizes he has to flee. He vaults the handrail and hits the lower hall running.

Sophie enters and catches sight of Hilton running down the hall.

SOPHIE

Hey!

She checks the stairs then enters cautiously, following down the hall.

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Sophie enters the kitchen and sees the back door is wide open. She throws her mail on the table, crosses to it, shuts and locks it. She shakes her head with relief over the near miss. Her eyes have fallen on the mail and a particular envelope. It is a similar envelope to the two others she has received. It has "Sophie" printed on it. She picks it up, opens it and reads.

SOPHIE (VO)

Go to Forest Glen, on the corner of Woodlow and Myrtle. Once there, go on foot one mile due east. Come alone at midnight tonight. Look for an enchanted couple to enlighten you.

Sophie lowers the paper, mystified.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL -- NIGHT

Repeat footage (but in color). Sophie comes from her bedroom quietly, dressed in black. She moves down the hall and comes to an open bedroom door. She peeks in.

Jason is asleep in bed. Sophie leaves, tip-toeing down the stairs.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD INTERSECTION -- NIGHT

Sophie's car pulls to a halt and the lights go out. She looks around, apprehensive. There is nothing at the intersection except forest on all sides. Sophie gets out of the car, a flashlight already in her hand. She takes a compass from her pocket and opens it, shining the flashlight on it. Having established East she crosses the road and steps through a barbed wire fence, getting caught on it.

SOPHIE

Oh, great.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Sophie walks, picking her way with difficulty through the forest. She is ticked off. She is about to give up when she suddenly hears something and freezes.

It is a weird sound. Human voices mixed into a strange dirge.

Sophie peers hard into the night and moves on.

Sophie's hand pulls some foliage aside and through the forest small pinpricks of distant lights can be seen.

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Sophie approaches foliage, closer to the sound. There are flames from torches visible through the branches. The sound of the dirge is now loud. Cautiously Sophie reaches out and parts the foliage.

There is a troupe of DEVIL WORSHIPPERS hard at it, along with a few goats and other cult paraphernalia. Suddenly the identity of two of the devil worshippers becomes apparent. It is Frederick and Justina, her brother-in-law and sister.

Sophie gasps. She lets the bushes go and turns wide-eyed in shock.

SOPHIE (hoarse with emotion)
Oh my God, my God, my God!

EXT. FOREST -- NIGHT

Sophie runs through the forest, somewhat hysterical. Suddenly she falls, tumbling down a slope. She abruptly reaches the bottom, hits her head on a log, and is knocked out.

Hilton, dressed in black, looks down toward Sophie. He shakes his head, tuts and sighs with annoyance.

EXT. HILTON'S CAR INT -- NIGHT

Hilton drives, Sophie unconscious beside him. As he watches the road Sophie comes to slightly, looking at him. She already has a black eye. We descend into her semi-conscious world.

FX: Dream-like, Hilton turns and looks at her, then back at the road.

DISSOLVE TO:

Extracted from an earlier scene, but made dream-like:

SOPHIE
Don't I know you from somewhere?

HILTON
Not unless you're a member of The Poverty
Prevention League and attend court every day!

DISSOLVE TO:

Extracted from an earlier scene but made dream-like:

Sophie enters and catches sight of Hilton running down the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

SOPHIE'S POV: CAMERA FX: Soft filtered: The pathway up to her house as seen while hanging over Hilton's shoulder.

Without him being seen, Hilton deposits Sophie against the front door, rings the doorbell, and hurries away.

A light soon comes on upstairs, as Hilton can be heard getting in his car and driving away.

The foyer light comes on and through the frosted glass Jason can be seen descending the stairs. He opens the door. Sophie falls into the house, banging her head on the floor. Jason looks for the car and doesn't immediately realize what is at his feet. Then he realizes.

JASON

Oh my God!

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - SOPHIE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Jason, in a dressing gown, sits watching Sophie drink a cup of tea. She has a Band-Aid on her forehead and a black eye.

JASON

Well, you've come home without the car again.

SOPHIE

It's alright, I'll get it later.

JASON

Where is it?

SOPHIE

In the country.

JASON

In the country. What part of the country?

SOPHIE

I couldn't sleep so I went for a drive. Then I went for a walk, then I fell and hit my head. Someone must've found me and brought me home.

JASON

And how did he know where you live?

SOPHIE

Who said it was a he?

JASON

Well of course it was a he, either that or she was the Arnold Schwarzenegger of lesbians.

SOPHIE

I guess he checked my registration.

JASON

Sweetheart, last time you came home with nothing on but your panty hose, a G-string, and a nippleless bra. I think you should tell me what the heck is going on.

SOPHIE

I told you. I'm looking for enlightenment.

JASON

Well I don't like where you're apparently finding it.

He waits.

Well?

SOPHIE

I'm impressed by your apparent authority.

JASON

(getting up and putting the chair aside)
Enjoy mocking me while you can. But mark my words, I'll only be pushed so far. We'll see how well you explain yourself to your parents tonight.

SOPHIE

What?

JASON

Oh, did I forget to tell you? We're expected at your mother's for dinner.

SOPHIE

So soon?

JASON

She said she was worried about you.

SOPHIE (disbelieving)

Yeah...Right.

Jason shakes his head bitterly and leaves the room.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Scene begins as before i.e. Close on an origami figurine beside a dinner plate and a wine glass. This time, instead of conversation, only the sounds of people eating can be heard.

It is a significantly different atmosphere than the previously happy one. Sophie looks odd, dressed up but with a black eye. After a moment...

GORDON

Had a chap come before me today, and he was suing this alligator farm for negligence.

He grins but doesn't go on, and returns to eating. Various looks are exchanged round the table.

FREDERICK

And...?

GORDON

Well he won.

There is a strained silence.

MERRILL (perfectly at ease about it)
Darling, you forgot the bit in the middle.

GORDON

What?

MERRILL

The bit in your head.

GORDON

What bit's that, dear?

MERRILL

The part you find amusing.

GORDON

Well, I said, why are you suing the farm when you were clearly caught trying to steal an alligator. And his argument was that the farm should have a stronger enclosure to keep idiots like him out.

Everyone but Sophie is amused.

JUSTINA

Well, why was he trying to steal an alligator, daddy?

GORDON

He said he'd been out of work for a long time and wanted to retrain, and he'd always wanted to be a cobbler. But shoes are mass produced these days so the only ones that are handmade are alligator leather.

THOMAS

So he thought he'd steal an alligator? Why not just steal the hide?

GORDON

Ah, that's the crux of his argument. The hides are very well secured, whereas the alligators aren't, so naturally the temptation is to steal from the source.

JASON

(chuckling)

God, how ridiculous.

GORDON

Yes. But the jury still found in his favor.

JASON, FREDERICK, JUSTINA, THOMAS

What?!

GORDON

Well, there was ample evidence that anyone could have broken in there, and plus the man had his hand bitten off, so I guess that got him a lot of sympathy.

Everyone except Sophie laughs, making derisive sounds. Gordon seems a bit depressed.

GORDON

I sometimes wonder if I chose the right profession, the law seems so foolish sometimes.

SOPHIE

Well then thank God for the jury system.

The room falls quiet. Everyone stares at Sophie.

SOPHIE

Has anyone stopped to consider how desperate your life would have to be that you actually went out to steal an alligator? Has anyone stopped to consider what it would be like to get your hand bitten off or go through life with only one hand?

She goes back to eating. The others exchange uncomfortable looks. Merrill watches Sophie.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - REAR DOOR -- DAY

Sophie comes from the house in her pajamas, slippers and robe. She carries a bag of trash that she places in a garbage can. As she heads back into the house she spies something on the back window sill. It is an envelope with 'Sophie' written on it. She picks it up and turns toward camera.

LOW ANGLE: moving around Sophie, looking up at her as she remembers:

SUBLIM OPTICAL FLASHES:

Extracted from an earlier scene: on Hilton, when Sophie asks, "Don't I know you from somewhere?"

Extracted from an earlier scene: Sophie catches sight of Hilton running down the hall.

Extracted from an earlier scene: Her POV in the car, Hilton driving.

Finally Sophie comes to a decision. She crosses to the garbage can and drops the envelope, unopened, into it. She goes inside.

EXT. STUDIO CARPARK -- DAY

Sophie's car comes to a halt beside the elderly guard, George, at the carpark entrance.

GEORGE

Hey there, Sophie. They got you working on a Sunday? Hey, what happened to you?

SOPHIE

My husband's been beating me with a rubber hose.

GEORGE

Oh, no. God, no!

SOPHIE

Yeah, and he's been cheating on me with three different women.

GEORGE

Oh, God. You're kidding!

SOPHIE

And I think he's given me hepatitis.

GEORGE

(taking his hand off her door)
You're kidding?

SOPHIE

I'm thinking about going on Clarissa's show and telling the whole world.

GEORGE

Well, good for you, honey.

SOPHIE

I'll need someone to come on the show and back me up. You know, someone to say they saw him beating me. Would you do that?

GEORGE

What, me? On TV? Gosh. Well...for you, yeah, I'd do that.

SOPHIE

Sometimes I think you and I are the only two honest people on the planet, George.

GEORGE

Oh, ain't that the truth.

He raises the gate and she drives through.

INT. STUDIO - EDITING SUITE -- DAY

To the sounds of garbled audio, Sophie fast-forwards tapes of previous episodes of 'Clarissa'. She stop-starts the tape, searching for something.

She finds it. Hilton is in a show (actors on the tape ad-libbing) where his circumstances are similar to those of Harman i.e. he is separated from his family through economic circumstance and is

having affairs with other women. Hilton is angry with the booing audience.

Sophie has the tape backed up to the episode header. She copies down the date and show number.

INT. SOPHIE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sophie rifles through her filing cabinet. She comes up with a file and finds the episode number, muttering dates and details as she goes. She takes the file with her to the phone and dials a number.

TELEPHONE FX: Recorded message: "The number you have dialed is no longer connected, please refer to your telephone directory..."

Sophie tuts.

On her computer, Sophie opens a file called 'WhitePages', and types in the name 'Hilton Brown'. She is instantly taken to a listing. Her finger touches the screen where the highlight bar is over the name, address and phone number. She selects 'Print' and as the address is printing she returns the file to the cabinet. As she comes toward the computer the page is already out of the printer. She plucks it on her way to the door.

INT. SLUM AREA APARTMENTS, HALL -- DAY

Carrying the paper with the address on it, Sophie approaches a door. She gathers herself and knocks.

An attractive but intimidating black woman, HILTON'S LOVER, answers the door.

HILTON'S LOVER

And what do you want, bitch?

SOPHIE

Hi, I'm looking for Hilton Brown.

HILTON'S LOVER

And why would you be looking for him, bitch?

SOPHIE

Um, I'm a researcher from 'Clarissa' the TV show, and he once appeared on one of our shows.

HILTON'S LOVER

So?

SOPHIE

Ah, are you his wife or something?

HILTON (OS)

Who is it, baby?

HILTON'S LOVER

Some skinny white ass looking for a real man.

Hilton appears beside her. He sees Sophie and realizes the game is up.

HILTON

How'd you find me?

SOPHIE

Remembered your face. Can we talk?

HILTON'S LOVER

(closing the door)

No.

Hilton stops her, grabs his coat and comes out.

HILTON

It's business, baby.

HILTON'S LOVER

Where're you going?

HILTON

Back soon. Stay cool.

HILTON'S LOVER

You better be, or I won't be here.

She slams the door.

HILTON (to Sophie)

Let's walk.

EXT. SLUM STREETS -- DAY

Sophie and Hilton walk together.

SOPHIE

There is no Poverty Prevention League, is there?

HILTON

That one just popped into my head. Pretty good if I do say so.

SOPHIE

I threw your last note in the garbage. So what'd it say? That my little brother is gay? Or that my mother is a prostitute, or that...

HILTON

No, the first one.

SOPHIE

(stopping)

What?! My brother's gay?!

HILTON

Well you may not have recognized him, but he was Charity Queen at the Gay Mardi Gras.

SOPHIE

What?!

HILTON

And you know how you become Charity Queen.

SOPHIE

I don't want to know!

HILTON

S'okay, I'm just fucking with you.

SOPHIE

Why are you doing this?!

HILTON

Revenge.

SOPHIE

Re...wha...why?

HILTON

Hey listen, bitch, 'cause of you I can't see my kids no more. You know who religiously watches all them dumb ass TV talk shows? Social Security. Now I got to pay maintenance out of my Social Security and I can't see my kids no more.

SOPHIE

Social Security doesn't stop you seeing your kids.

HILTON

Yeah, but when my old lady found out about them other bitches I got on the side she went out and got full custody and she can do that 'cause I can't afford maintenance. Hell, she always knew about them others, but when all her friends found out she couldn't hold her head up. All I was doing was filling in time, 'cause I can't live with my goddamned wife and family, 'cause I ain't got no goddamned job.

SOPHIE

That's what the other guy said.

HILTON

Who?

SOPHIE

No one. Go on.

HILTON

Well you just thought you were so clever, didn't you. Finding all my girlfriends and bringing 'em on the show behind my back. Hell, I thought I was just there to explain why I couldn't marry my old lady.

INT. STUDIO - BOARDROOM -- DAY.

Flashback. Brad and the Researchers, including Sophie, are assembled at a production meeting.

BRAD

Because she's the wrong star sign?! (Laughs) Jesus. Tell you what, find out if this dumb ass's got any girlfriends and book 'em on, but make sure he doesn't know.

Sophie frowns at the order.

BACK TO:

Hilton is at a bit of a loss. He musters conviction.

HILTON

Well she is the wrong star sign! I'm a very spiritual man! But getting me there and springing something like that is doing a deal under false pretences. You don't know nothing do you? We're all just monkeys in a cage for

HILTON (Cont'd)

you, ain't we? Throw 'em some peanuts and watch 'em fight over 'em. Shit, you can fire the bullets, honey, but you sure as shit don't like it when they're fired at you. Well now you know. Your sugar and spice and all things nice white life is just as down and dirty and in the gutter as for all us niggers, spiks, injuns and wops. Shit, yours is even worse. You folks don't even admit to yourselves what your lives are like.

He begins to leave, but comes back.

HILTON

Oh, and by the way, that last note... wasn't mine.

SOPHIE

What?

HILTON

You heard me, bitch.

SOPHIE

Would you stop calling me that! I am not a bitch, but you certainly are a bastard!

HILTON

Oh, yeah? Well if I'm such a bastard then why didn't I leave you lying in that ditch in the forest?

SOPHIE

Well, that's true.

HILTON

If I'm such a bastard then why didn't I take pictures of your daddy getting his ass paddled by sex slaves and sell it to the 'Enquirer'?

SOPHIE

Well that's true.

HILTON

Stop that!

SOPHIE

What?

HILTON

Agreeing with me.

SOPHIE

Sorry.

HILTON

Have you any idea how annoying it is to take revenge on someone then find out she's got nothing wrong with her? You know, you're so fucking pure you make me want to puke. You're like Mary fucking Poppins and Mother fucking Teresa all rolled into one and you're working in a whorehouse and all 'a time thinking it's a hospital! You have no idea how annoying that is!

SOPHIE

Sorry.

Hilton whips out a gun.

HILTON

You say sorry one more time! You say sorry one-more-time!

Holding up her hands and cowering a little, Sophie looks around. No one seems to be paying attention. People just walk by.

SOPHIE

Ah, doesn't it bother you we're in public?

HILTON

You see anyone round here looking bothered?

SOPHIE (a strange realization)

No.

HILTON

Well maybe, just maybe, that should give you some perspective that you're in a whorehouse, not-a-hospital!

EXT. SOPHIE'S CAR INT -- SOPHIE'S STREET -- DAY

Sophie turns into her street but becomes aware her steering is faulty. She pulls to the side of the road and looks out her window. The front tire is flat.

SOPHIE (really irritated)

Oh...

She gets out of her car. As she contemplates her tire she notices a garbage truck in the distance picking the garbage lined along the sidewalk. As she watches the garbage truck moves forward, about to take her garbage can.

SOPHIE

No! No! Wait!

EXT. SOPHIE'S STREET/HOUSE -- DAY

Sophie runs down the street.

SOPHIE

Wait! Wait!

But the GARBAGE MAN doesn't hear her and throws her garbage into the back of the truck.

SOPHIE

Wait!

Jason reads a newspaper and sips coffee on the front porch.

As the garbage truck pulls away from his house Sophie appears, sprinting after it.

SOPHIE

Wait! Wait!

Jason freezes, about to sip his coffee. The garbage truck and Sophie disappear round the corner.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET -- DAY

To the consternation of the Garbage Man and the DRIVER, Sophie is digging through the garbage in the back of the truck. She comes up with the envelope.

SOPHIE

Yes!

Garbage hanging from her hair, she climbs out, grins self-consciously and walks away, the two men watching her.

SOPHIE

Thank you!

GARBAGE MAN 1 (to Garbage Man 2)
That's the third time today that's happened.

Sophie opens the envelope as she walks, the first thing that falls into her hand is a micro-cassette. She stops and reads the note.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Sophie walks briskly up the path and front stairs.

JASON

So are you finding enlightenment by chasing garbage trucks now?! Why? You like to pee on their tires?! Where's the car this time?! What are you doing?!

Sophie enters the house, ignoring him.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- DAY

Jason comes to the bedroom door and stops. Sophie is on her knees. She has the recorder from under the bed now on the bed. It is playing the tape:

JASON VO: You've no idea what she's like, it's like she's a little princess living in an enchanted forest.

WOMAN VO: What's she like in bed?

JASON VO: Inhibited. I mean you've no idea. Making love to her can actually be a chore. It's like you have to get the foreplay just right and the...

The cassette is turned off. As she looks round, Sophie's face is streaked with tears.

SOPHIE

You bought her to our bed?

JASON

I was...just saying what she wanted to hear.

He leaves shot.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

(Dream sequence, no FX) Jason's car is parked in the driveway. It is raining. Jason takes two suitcases from the front porch and hurries with them to the car.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Sophie is by the bedroom window, watching Jason leave below

BACK TO:

Jason closes the back door of the car, opens the driver's door, looks forlornly up at the house, gets in the car, and drives away.

Sophie turns to Camera. She is evilly glad. Lightning flashes.

INT. FOYER/STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Looking at the front door from the stairs, the form of a man through the frosted glass is apparent. It is still raining outside. The doorbell rings.

Sophie comes down the stairs and hesitates before the door. She opens it.

It is Brad. There is a flash of lightning behind him, a roar of thunder. They look at each other. Suddenly they embrace and kiss passionately. He picks her up and turns with her, hermetically sealed to his lips. She bats the door shut. But his hand is still on the doorframe. The door slams onto his fingers.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BRAD'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Brad wakes, bellowing in pain. He is in bed and Hilton is jamming his fingers in the bedside table drawer. On the bedside table is the figurine Brad took from Sophie's office. It is raining outside.

BRAD

Ow!! Jesus! What'd you do that for?!

Hilton has him by the collar and is throwing him around.

HILTON

You son of a bitch! You told me she got my girlfriends on that show and now I find out it was you all the time!

BRAD

Did she say that?!

HILTON

Yes she did, and I sure as shit believe her before I'd believe a scum sucker like you!

BRAD

Yeah, she is honest, isn't she.

HILTON

(pointing to Brad's erection)
Man, what the fuck is that?!

BRAD

Oh God, sorry, I was dreaming about her.

HILTON

You're pretty fucking far gone, ain't you?

BRAD

Yeah, I guess so.

HILTON

I just want to know one thing. That time I rang up and told you how pissed I was, why'd you give me all that info on her?

BRAD

I wanted to find out. You know, about her life.

HILTON

Why?

BRAD

Got my reasons.

HILTON

(pulling his gun)

Listen, motherfucker, you used me! In fact you used me twice! (Pointing at his erection with the gun) Hey, I thought I told you to get rid of that!

BRAD

I'm trying!

HILTON

(pressing the gun into Brad's groin)
Do you find this sexually arousing?! Do you find this a sexual stimulant?!

BRAD (overlapping)

No! No!

HILTON

'Cause if you do I want you to know that you're a half second away from me blowing that motherfucker a second hole to piss through! Now I'll ask you one more time. Why'd you make me go after her like that?!

BRAD

Because I love her!

HILTON

I know that! I ain't completely fucking stupid! Why do you love her?!

BRAD

Because!...Because, I'm a scumbag...And because you're a scumbag, and everyone I know is a scumbag. I've always wanted to be good, but I've never found anyone to be good with. To show me how. She's like a diamond in...in the mud.

Hilton decides it is a good explanation.

HILTON

A diamond in the mud, huh...Yeah.

He puts the gun in his pocket and moves toward the door.

HILTON

She is rare.

He halts.

HILTON

So how'd you manage to give her your job?

BRAD

All that money I paid you. Came from the show. Came back and bit me in the ass.

Hilton looks at him, snorts with ironic amusement.

HILTON

I don't know how you're going to get her, man, a greaseball like you, but...

His voice trails off as he begins to leave.

BRAD

Hey. Why were you talking to Clarissa?

HILTON

My business. Good luck with that chic.

He leaves. Brad notices the figurine on his bedside table has fallen over, and rights it.

EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

It is still raining. Clutching a box of chocolates and some flowers in his bandaged fingers, Brad walks with trepidation up the pathway to the house. There is thunder and lightning. He pauses on the front porch before the door. Mustering courage, he collects himself then reaches for the doorbell.

INT. FOYER/STAIRWELL -- NIGHT

Same framing as in the previous dream scene i.e. Looking at the front door from the stairs, the form of a man is apparent through the frosted glass as before. The doorbell rings. Someone is coming down the stairs but before they intrude into frame...

BACK TO:

Brad waits on the doormat. He grins in anticipation. The door opens. Brad's look turns to barely contained horror.

BRAD

Hi. I...I was wondering if Sophie is home?

JASON

Who are you?

BRAD

Oh, my name is Brad. I work on 'Clarissa' with her, that is, I did. Um, we had a bit of a falling out and I brought these round to apologize.

JASON

Oh, I see. I'm Jason, her husband.

He shakes his hand.

BRAD

Oh....Ahhh!

JASON

Oh, sorry.

BRAD

Oh that's okay, I jammed my fingers in a drawer.

JASON

Oh. Well, look, um, I'd invite you in but I'm afraid my wife and I recently separated. Very recently.

BRAD

Oh...Gee...Well...Sorry.

JASON

She's gone...moved out.

BRAD

Oh...Well...um (looking at the useless flowers and chocolates)...well, maybe you'd like a... you know.

He hands him the box of chocolates.

JASON

Thanks.

BRAD

That's okay.

He nods and begins to leave.

BRAD

Oh...ah...Bye.

He hands him the flowers. He leaves.

Jason looks at the flowers and the chocolates sadly, seems about to cry, and closes the door.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES, BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Close on an origami figurine of a man being made by Sophie's hands. In the background the 'Clarissa' show can be heard coming through the office monitor. Sophie places the figurine on her desk.

JENNY (OS)

(entering)

Hey you won't believe this but I
got electric thingys everywhere.

Jenny is excited about their new environment. There are boxes about the room, full of files and stationary from Sophie's office.

JENNY

I got an electric pencil sharpener, not that I ever use pencils, and I got an electric binder, electric file labeler, I even got an electric chair, you know, one of those vibrating ones that gives you a massage. Hey, that's good. Who's that? That Jason?

SOPHIE

Yep.

Sophie flattens the figurine with a slap.

JENNY

Oooh...(exiting) Got some unpacking out here...

Sophie picks up the squashed figurine, and dumps it in her waste paper basket. She sighs heavily and looks around. Her eyes go absently to the wall monitor.

In a very agitated scene (ad-libbed) Harman adamantly denies the existence of other girlfriends in his life in the presence of Flo. He is being constantly booed by the audience.

Sophie freezes, surprised to see it is Harman. Clarissa is trying to get the audience to quiet down.

CLARISSA

Alright, alright, alright. Alright,
Harman, now you say there are no other
women? Right?

HARMAN

That's right.

CLARISSA

But Flo says she's sure there are other women.

FLO

I know they's other women!

CLARISSA

Okay. One last chance, Harman, are there other women in your life?

HARMAN

No, absolutely not.

CLARISSA

Okay, bring it out, please.

ASSISTANTS wheel out a lie detector. The audience whistles and cheers.

CLARISSA

You know what this is, Harman?

HARMAN

No.

CLARISSA

Well this is a polygraph, otherwise known as a lie detector.

The audience 'oohs' and applauds. Shot zooms in on Harman, looking distinctly uncomfortable, unaware that this trick was going to be played on him.

CLARISSA

Now, Harman, if you're telling the truth about these other women, then you won't mind taking this test.

Sophie is close to the monitor and fixated.

SOPHIE

Don't...Don't...

Harman looks around, scared.

FLO

He won't do it. See, he a liar. He nothing but a liar!

HARMAN

Flo, you don't know what you're saying!

CLARISSA

Well, c'mon, Harman, are you a liar?

SOPHIE

Leave...leave.

FLO

He a liar alright! Now the whole world's going to know!

CLARISSA

You know, not taking this test could have some pretty dire consequences, Harman.

Harman gets her double meaning about payment.

SOPHIE

Leave.

HARMAN

Well, guess I got no choice.

Audience applauds.

SOPHIE

No!

She rushes in three different directions, not sure what to do, then finds files stacked in boxes. She flicks through them desperately.

SOPHIE

Jenny! Jenny! Come here! Jenny! Quick!

Jenny comes to the door.

JENNY

You know there is an intercom here.
An electric intercom.

SOPHIE

Help me find the file!

JENNY

(crossing to her)

What file?

SOPHIE

(indicating the monitor)

The guy, the guy...

Harman is being wired up by the lie detector Expert.

SOPHIE

Harman...Harman...Harman...

She slaps her forehead trying to remember. She gets it.

SOPHIE

White! Harman White! And that's his wife,
Flo, something or other.

She grabs Jenny.

SOPHIE

Now look, I've got to go to the studio. You
find that file. When you do, I want you to
do an immediate electronic funds transfer
of two thousand dollars to his wife's
account. Have you got that?

JENNY

Sure.

SOPHIE

No, no, no, don't say 'sure'. Say 'yes, I
will do it immediately'.

JENNY

Yes, I will do it immediately.

SOPHIE

(running out)

No! No! Do it now!

She exits hurriedly. Jenny rolls her eyes and looks calmly for
the file.

INT. STUDIO OFFICES -- DAY

Sophie rushes through the door marked "Studio".

INT. STUDIO HALL

Sophie rushes down the hall and enters the door with
the illuminated sign above it: "RECORDING".

INT. STUDIO SET -- WINGS

Sophie enters the wings and Harman is now wired up to the
lie detector.

CLARISSA

And your name is Harman White?

HARMAN

Yes, sir.

EXPERT

The machine is reading true.

Sophie gathers her breath and courage.

CLARISSA

Okay, now Harman, you say there are no other women in your life. Is that true?

Sophie moves forward.

EXT. STUDIO SET -- DAY

SOPHIE

Stop! Don't answer that!

CLARISSA

What? What are you doing?

SOPHIE

Clarissa, as your producer I have to warn you that giving a polygraph test without proper written consent is in violation of the law and we could be sued.

CLARISSA

What?! (To the control room) Alright, stop tape, stop tape! (To Sophie) Listen, you bimbo, aside from screwing up this segment at the cost of around a quarter of a million dollars, I have an entire legal department that assures me I can do this, and sues anyone's ass off that says I can't! Now get off my set!

SOPHIE (to Harman)

Don't worry, Mr. White, our agreement with you is intact.

Harman nods, getting her meaning. He begins to remove the lie detector sensors.

CLARISSA

Get off my set!!

Sophie leaves. Clarissa looks up at the control room.

CLARISSA

Call security! I want her out of the building, now!!

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Sophie enters the office. Jenny looks at her sternly.

JENNY

(glancing at the monitor)

What'd you do?

There is now a test pattern on the monitor.

SOPHIE

Hope you didn't get too attached to your
new electric thingys.

JENNY

There's always another Bob round the
corner, honey.

They hug. Sophie pulls back, seeking an explanation.

JENNY

Battery operated boyfriend. Memorize it.
May save your life.

They separate.

SOPHIE

I'm so sorry.

JENNY

Don't be.

They look round as two big SECURITY GUARDS fill the doorway.

JENNY

Take care, Sophie.

Taking her handbag, Sophie begins to exit.

JENNY

Oh, and Sophie.

Sophie turns.

JENNY

That transfer went through just fine.

Sophie nods sadly, and leaves with the guards.

EXT. CARPARK ENTRANCE -- DAY

Sophie, in her car, arrives at the carpark boom gate and pulls up.

GEORGE
Beautiful day, Sophie.

Sophie looks around, and grins.

SOPHIE
You know, you are absolutely right, George.

She puts her sunglasses on, smiles, waves, and drives through.

INT/EXT. SOPHIE'S CAR - SLUM AREA -- DAY

Sophie drives slowly. As she looks out, scenes of dire poverty are everywhere - the homeless, children playing in the streets, young men hanging around with nothing to do. Sophie is finally 'seeing' the poverty she has only previously observed.

INT. BRAD'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- DAY

Brad wakes. He is unshaven and looks disheveled. The light through the window reveals it is well into the day. He begins to get up, but indicates 'what the hell', and lies back, staring at the ceiling. He sighs.

SUPER: 6 months later...

INT. BRAD'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Brad enters, wearing a dressing gown and slippers.

Brad crosses to his answering machine and presses a button.

ANSWERING MACHINE
You have no new messages.

Brad turns off the machine and stares at it.

EXT. BRAD'S PLACE -- DAY

Brad approaches his mailbox, still in his dressing gown and slippers. It is obvious by the street activity it is late in the morning. Brad takes the mail from the box and sorts through it. There are a lot of 'window' envelopes suggesting nothing but bills, then an advertising leaflet. There is a flash of the words, "Sophie Baker's" as Brad shuffles it to the bottom of the letters. But he stops and brings it to the top again. The leaflet reads:

"Stop Poverty!
Donate to Sophie Baker's
Poverty Prevention League."

BRAD (reading)

"Yes, we want your money, but we are also
grateful for any food, clothes, or
household goods you don't need."

Brad is stunned.

EXT. SLUM AREA - BRAD'S CAR INT -- NIGHT

Brad drives slowly, searching. On the seat beside him he has a
box of groceries. He sees something ahead.

Up ahead a white van is parked by the roadside and a queue of
DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE are lined up before it. The van has
"Poverty Prevention League" written on its side. Brad slows. He
comes to a halt and as if viewing a goddess sees Sophie at the
rear of the van, dispensing food to the people.

EXT. SLUM STREET -- NIGHT

Carrying the groceries, Brad approaches from the rear of the
queue. MAN 1 sees him and misinterprets his intention.

MAN 1

Hey, man, back of the line.

Brad consider explaining, but joins the queue.

EXT. REAR OF VAN -- NIGHT

There is a FAMILY in front of Brad, two adults with three
small children. Sophie, and her helper, MARCIE, are serving
them.

MOTHER

Oh, bless you, Sophie, thank you.

SOPHIE

Oh, hey, I think I've got you some
accommodation too. Can you come round to the
kitchen tomorrow, around nine, and I'll take
you to the place.

MOTHER

Oh, really? That's so wonderful! Thank you!
Oh, thank you!

SOPHIE

That's okay. If you go with Marcie
now, she's got some warm clothes for
your kids.

MOTHER

Oh, thank you, Sophie, thank you.

FATHER

Yes, thank you, ma'am. God bless you.

SOPHIE

Thank you.

MARCIE

Just come on round.

Marcie takes them round the side of the van. As they depart,
Sophie is getting a meal out for the next person, unaware it is
Brad. Brad moves forward and waits, feeling awkward. Sophie
turns to him.

SOPHIE

And how are you this...?

She freezes.

BRAD

I...I brought some food for, um...

SOPHIE

Oh...thank you. Um, how have you been?

BRAD

Oh, great, great. I, I've got...I'm
working on a few things, projects...you
know...um....

SOPHIE

Well, thank you for the donation.

She takes the box. There is a difficult pause.

SOPHIE

How did you know I was here?

BRAD

Oh, I got your leaflet in my mailbox.

SOPHIE

We don't have leaflets.

Brad pulls the leaflet from his jacket and hands it to her.

BRAD

But...

Sophie looks at it and frowns.

SOPHIE

That's odd.

BRAD

It gave me an idea, you know, for a project I have in mind. You know, with you.

SOPHIE

Oh...So you didn't just come to donate food.

BRAD

Yeah, well, yeah I did but, I thought, we could, that is, if I could talk to you...

SOPHIE

(referring to the leaflet)
You made this yourself, didn't you.

BRAD

No. No, I...

SOPHIE

I should have known you'd have some selfish motive.

BRAD

No, Sophie, I...

SOPHIE

Could you move aside, please, there's hungry people waiting.

BRAD

But Sophie I...

MAN 2 behind him moves forward.

MAN 2

Sophie, this guy bothering you?

SOPHIE

Yes, he is.

Brad looks at Man 2 who is considerably tougher looking than he is. Brad nods and walks away. Man 2 moves forward and Sophie serves him, shooting Brad a resentful look. Brad continues away. He is beginning to breathe quickly, an anxiety attack building. He suddenly returns to Sophie.

BRAD

Do you have a paper bag, please.

SOPHIE

What?

BRAD

I'm just going to have a little anxiety attack right now. Would you have a...

He is swaying on his feet.

SOPHIE

Oh. Wait!

She grabs a paper bag, which she gives him.

BRAD

Thanks.

He tries to put it to his mouth, but faints. He hits the road with a thud. Sophie and Man 2 stare down at him. He is out cold.

INT. HOSPITAL -- DAY

Brad wakes to find the blurry image of Sophie next to him. His head is bandaged.

SOPHIE

You okay?

BRAD

What?

SOPHIE

Are you okay?

BRAD

Oh, sure. So anyway about the leaflet...

SOPHIE

What?

BRAD

From my mailbox.

SOPHIE

Brad, you fell down and hit your head.

BRAD

I did?

SOPHIE

You're in a hospital.

He looks around.

BRAD

Oh.

SOPHIE

And you made the leaflet yourself.

BRAD

I did?

SOPHIE

You had an anxiety attack. 'Least that's what you said.

Brad nods, trying to take it all in.

SOPHIE

Do you remember what you were anxious about?

He does, but is not about to tell her.

BRAD

I...I've developed this TV concept. It's a filler between shows on the Lifestyle Channel. I'm under a lot of pressure to get it up.

SOPHIE

Cable?

BRAD

(nods)

And I thought a little, you know,
like, craft segment. You know,
origami, then some decoupage, then
some...

SOPHIE

Is that why you came to see me?

Brad wants to say more but just nods.

SOPHIE

Well why didn't you just say so?

BRAD

Well, I...I didn't think you'd talk to
me, you know, me being such a...

SOPHIE

Liar?...Sleazebag?...Sexist?

Brad pulls the covers up protectively.

BRAD

Sophie, I was a different person then.

SOPHIE

But now you've changed?

Brad nods.

SOPHIE

How do I know you're not lying now?

Brad shrugs.

SOPHIE

Brad...I've had enough of people
lying to me in my life. Are you lying
now?

Brad shakes his head.

SOPHIE

Tell you what, if you can get the spot
I'll do it for half the profit. Half to
you, half to the Poverty Prevention
League. And I'll want it independently
audited.

She hands him a card.

SOPHIE

Give me a call when you've got a contract.

She begins to leave.

BRAD

Sophie.

She stops and turns.

BRAD

You won't be sorry.

They lock eyes for a long moment. She wants to believe him. She nods slightly, and leaves.

BRAD

Yes!

He suddenly realizes his head hurts.

INT. A POOR APARTMENT, HALL -- NIGHT

Sophie knocks on the door. It is opened by someone who remains unseen.

SOPHIE

Hi. You told me I should let you know if Brad ever contacted me again.

INT. BRAD'S HOUSE, HIS OFFICE -- DAY

Brad is at his desk and on the phone. While he is talking he is also selecting a file on his computer called 'Sophie-Contract', and printing it.

BRAD

Okay, that sounds fine. So I can move forward on the assumption we have a deal and prepare the relevant paperwork? ...Good, then I have your assurance I can contractually engage the show's star?...Terrific. Great talking to you, Peter, and thank you.

As the contract pages drop into the printer tray, Brad is dialing another number.

INTERCUT:

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT, KITCHEN -- DAY

There are several KITCHEN WORKERS preparing food. A wall phone rings. It is answered by Sophie.

SOPHIE

Poverty Prevention League, Sophie speaking.

BRAD

Hi, it's me.

SOPHIE

Who?

BRAD

Brad.

SOPHIE

Brad who?

BRAD

Pitt, you know, fell down and broke his crown, Brad.

SOPHIE

Oh, Brad! Sorry, I'd forgotten all about you.

BRAD

Oh...Well, um, I got that deal, you know, that that deal with the Lifestyle Channel.

SOPHIE

Uh huh.

BRAD

Well, we got, you know, I mean, it's a contract for fifty shows with a possible pick-up for another hundred.

SOPHIE

Oh.

Brad is confused.

BRAD

Well, you'll still do it, won't you?

SOPHIE

Ah, yeah, sure.

BRAD

Great. Well, do you have a fax machine?

SOPHIE

Yes.

BRAD

And...the number?

SOPHIE

Oh, it's, um...

Brad writes down the number. He pops the contract pages into a fax machine and dials the number as he is talking.

BRAD

Okay, so I'm putting it in the machine now. Maybe we could get together, you know, and discuss the contract when you've read it.

Sophie says something on the line.

BRAD

Well, see, Sophie, contracts these days aren't that simple, and I didn't write this one. If the show's a success they might want personal appearances and product endorsements and all that. I really think we should get together and discuss it.

She sees the fax coming through on her dirty old fax machine.

SOPHIE

Oh...Okay. Well, why don't you come round for dinner, tonight.

BRAD

Oh, um, sure. Ah, where do you live?

SOPHIE

Let's do it at my kitchen. I usually finish my rounds at ten, so can we say eleven?

BRAD

Eleven? Tonight?

SOPHIE

Yeah.

BRAD

Oh. Okay, fine. I'll have to reschedule my digestion, and I'll probably get constipated, But, no, eleven sounds great. What's the address?

Sophie takes a moment and smiles.

Brad copies the address down.

BRAD

Great. Um, well, I look forward to seeing you.

He hangs up. He clenches his fists in triumph.

Yes!

EXT. SLUM AREA - DISUSED RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

In his car, Brad looks across the street at the restaurant, blacked out with only a faint light inside. He turns on the car's interior light and inspects his hair and teeth in the rear view mirror before getting out. He has a bottle of wine with him. He braces himself.

BRAD

You can do this.

He crosses the street.

EXT. DISUSED RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Brad looks inside. There is a table set for dining, with candles, and further in Sophie can be partially seen in the lit kitchen, apparently preparing dinner. Brad takes a minute to drink in the vision of her, then knocks on the door.

Sophie comes toward the kitchen doorway. She smiles, holds up her finger for him to wait a moment, and takes off her apron. She hangs it up and crosses to the door.

EXT. DISUSED RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Sophie opens the door.

SOPHIE (smiling)

Hi.

Brad is smitten.

BRAD

Hi.

SOPHIE

Come in.

Brad nods like it's the most wonderful invitation ever given.

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Brad enters behind Sophie. She notices the wine bottle.

SOPHIE

Oh, you bought wine.

BRAD

Yeah, hope you like red.

SOPHIE

Oh, I love red. (Taking the wine)
Please, sit.

Brad sits and Sophie goes to a sideboard with the wine where she collects a corkscrew and begins to open the bottle, her back to Brad.

BRAD

Thank you...well, this is, um, cozy.

SOPHIE

Yeah, it's not much, but the landlord said we could use it until the building is demolished.

BRAD

Then where will you go?

SOPHIE

Oh, I'm looking for another place. I've found people are very kind when they know you're a charity.

BRAD

This is very you, you know.

She looks at him.

BRAD

Oh, I mean, not the place, but what you're doing. You always seemed like a kind person to me.

SOPHIE

Huh, didn't think you noticed anything but my boobs.

BRAD

Oh, no...I also noticed your ass.

Sophie looks round at him and smirks.

There is a noise in the kitchen. Brad realizes someone is in there. He looks down and notices the table is set for three.

BRAD

Um, is someone...joining us?

Sophie has the bottle open and turns.

SOPHIE

Oh, just my boyfriend. Honey! Come meet Brad!

Appalled, Brad looks toward the kitchen doorway. He sees the shadow of someone coming. His eyes are growing wide.

Hilton appears in the doorway. He stops and smiles.

HILTON

Hi.

Brad's jaw is on the floor. He begins to hyperventilate. He looks around desperately. Suddenly he grabs a vase of flowers off the table, throws the flowers away and uses the vase to breathe into. It's not enough. He passes out and hits the floor with a thud.

Hilton and Sophie exchange an ambiguous look.

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Moving along the kitchen wall, the distant sounds of cutlery on crockery can be heard. Eventually camera discovers a chair, situated right next to a doorframe, then encounters the doorframe and through it reveals Sophie, Hilton and Brad sitting round the table inside the restaurant and eating in silence.

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Brad has a barely disguised look of bitterness on his face as he eats. He glances at Hilton and catches his eye. Hilton grins at him.

BRAD

Well this sure is nice, Sophie. You're a great cook.

SOPHIE

Oh, no, Hilton's the talented one.

BRAD

Ah...Of course.

HILTON

It's the marinade. Got a combination of herbs and spices that'd make that old Colonel roll over in his grave.

BRAD

I thought those spices were just to disguise that you're eating old boiling hens.

HILTON

(indicating Brad's meal)

Well, what do you think this is?

Hilton and Sophie burst out laughing, falling together. Sophie eventually sobers, not noticing that Brad is livid.

SOPHIE

Oh, this guy. I tell you, we just laugh all day long.

She gets up and puts on a shawl.

BRAD

Oh, you're leaving?

SOPHIE

(indicating across the street)

Yeah, just going across to Hilton's mom. She's made us apple pie for desert.

She crosses to Hilton and kisses him on the cheek.

SOPHIE

Now you keep your eye on Brad, and be nice to him. Just in case he has another anxiety attack. (to Brad) You know I'd seriously consider getting tested for that, Brad, seems to happen far too often.

BRAD (muttering)

Yeah...low blood pressure.

HILTON

(holding her hand to the last)
Bye, baby.

SOPHIE

Bye.

She goes out the front door and waves through the window. Hilton waves back.

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

For a while Brad keeps on eating, nodding to himself, almost seeming to grin. Hilton is grinning smugly, watching him. Eventually...

BRAD

You...prick...You...fucking prick.

HILTON

Hey, now now, what's with the attitude?

BRAD

You know how much I love her, and you, you...

HILTON

Hey, now hold on. For a start you don't own the bitch...

BRAD

Don't you call her a bitch!...

HILTON

And for another thing I didn't go after her, she came after me.

INT. MOTEL BAR -- DAY

Same motel bar as before. Sophie is at the bar with Hilton. She places her hand on his chest.

HILTON (VO)

She asked me to meet her at this motel bar. Then she said she wanted me to just go ahead and take her.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

(Semi SLOW-MO) Sophie leads Hilton by the hand into a motel room, the same one used by her husband.

HILTON (VO)

Said she wanted me to ball her in the same room as her old man used to ball his mistress.

BACK TO:

BRAD

And you made love to her.

HILTON

No motherfucker, we went into the room and gave each other a bang-up foot massage, what do you think.

BRAD

I think I'd like to lean over and tear the tongue out of your slimy, maggoty throat.

HILTON

Now, I repeat, I did not go to her, she came to me, and I can't help it if she finds out for the first time what it's like to have a real man. And I tell you, in bed, she is just...

BRAD (getting anxious)

But, but, but, she's not like that. She's, she's just not like that. And, why? Why do you want her, you can have any number of women.

HILTON

Why? Let me see now, why would a poor black man want a piece of genuine upper-class white ass? Hmm.

BRAD

Well you're not going to have her you son-of-a-bitch!

He reaches to grab Hilton but finds a gun shoved in his face.

HILTON

Let's get one thing clear, motherfucker, I'm on a good thing here, and if you think a dumb, greasy, slimeball, pukebucket no better than I am is going to muscle me outa here, then you sure as fuck can measure your life in micro-seconds from this moment on.

BRAD

You don't scare me.

HILTON

(cocking the hammer)

Oh, no?

BRAD

Well you do scare me, but if you want me to give up on Sophie then you're going to have to kill me right here right now. 'Cause I love her, and she's the only decent, beautiful thing I've ever seen in my entire life and I will not give her up to a piece of social refuse no better than I am!

He reaches out and puts the gun barrel in his mouth. He speaks unintelligibly.

BRAD

So you can go ahead and pull the trigger.

HILTON

Say what?

BRAD

(still swallowing the barrel)

You can go ahead and pull the trigger.

Hilton frowns, still not understanding. Brad realizes and takes the gun from his mouth and puts it to his forehead.

BRAD

I said, you can go ahead and pull the trigger. 'Cause I'd rather die without her in my life. My life is not worth living without her. So go ahead, go ahead.

He closes his eyes.

Hilton is looking serious.

ECU: Hilton's finger tightens on the trigger. The hammer of the gun goes back. The trigger pauses. The barrel of the gun is pressed hard into Brad's forehead, his eyes clenched shut. The hammer moves back slightly further. Suddenly the finger tightens. The hammer springs back and flashes forward, hitting home.

SMASH CUT:

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Loud laughter. On Frederick, next to Justina, who is next to Thomas.

Moving in the same arc as with the usual introduction to family get togethers.

FREDERICK

And then the curtain goes up and I'm like supposed to be doing this satanic ritual you know with this cup of blood, and then this goat, like on cue, lifts his tail and craps all over the stage!

Gordon is at the head of the table and Merrilll at the other end.

JUSTINA

Yeah, but tell them the rest. He craps all over my foot. And I squealed and stomped my feet like this!

FREDERICK

And this is like a serious play we're doing, right, "The Crucible" but already the audience is falling about in the aisles laughing their heads off.

Sophie is sitting opposite, laughing.

JUSTINA

So he decides to ad-lib. Tell 'em what you said!

We finally see Brad is the mystery guest, seated next to Sophie, smiling, amused.

FREDERICK

I said 'That's a sure fire sign from Lucifer that the spell is working'!

JUSTINA

And then he slips in it!

Everyone laughs.

JUSTINA

He slipped in it and fell off the stage!

Everyone is laughing hard.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, DEN -- NIGHT

The men, Gordon, Thomas, Frederick and Brad play 'Foozeball' boisterously.

EXT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, PORCH -- NIGHT

Sophie sits with Merrill on the front porch, having coffee. There is a roar of laughter from the men inside.

MERRILL

He seems like a nice man, that Brad.
Are you happy?

Sophie nods, very happy.

MERRILL

So how did you two meet?

SOPHIE

Oh...First I wanted to talk to you
about something, mom. It's been
bothering me for a long time.

MERRILL

Oh, sounds serious. What is it, dear?

Sophie looks at her mother, hesitant to tell her.

SOPHIE

It's just, I found out something about...

She looks at her mother's kind face.

SOPHIE

No...no, it's nothing.

MERRILL

Sweetheart, you father recognized you
at our club.

Sophie is stunned.

REPEAT FOOTAGE WITH NEW FOOTAGE: The paddle falls from Sophie's hand. She pulls off her mask as she runs away. Gordon, looks

round at her. He then looks round at Merrill, dressed as he is, not far away.

BACK TO:

MERRILL

He's very worried you might have gotten the wrong idea.

SOPHIE

'Our club'?

MERRILL

Oh, we've been members for years.

Eventually...

SOPHIE

I...I don't know what to say?

Merrill takes her hand.

MERRILL

Oh...There is nothing on this earth that is perverse or base if shared with love. You're young, you haven't had time to get bored with life yet. At least your dad and I do it together, and we've grown together.

SOPHIE

I...I just don't understand. Why?

MERRILL

Well, your father has a difficult job, dear. See it's not easy for a man to sit on a bench, all alone, and day after day send people to jail for the better part of their lives. You know the system's not perfect, some of those people are innocent even when the jury says they're not. So, Judge Fromby, who's a friend of dad's, we used to wife swap with him and Mrs. Fromby.

Sophie gasps.

MERRILL (Cont'd)

When you were a teenager. Well, Judge Fromby said why not come to the S & M club and get some punishment. And your father wouldn't go without me, and the next thing we were really enjoying ourselves, and your father didn't feel quite so guilty anymore.

Sophie, a little stiff with shock, is half-smiling.

SOPHIE

Mom.

MERRILL

Yes, dear?

SOPHIE

What's the rhinoceros for?

MERRILL

Oh, that's just an old joke. Everyone says, whatever you do don't go in the first door. And sooner or later everyone does. That's why they got that red light in there, so you can't see it's just a mechanical rhino. See a light comes on in the club to let us know and the man or woman usually comes running in screaming. We thought it was funny for the first five years.

SOPHIE

Oh.

Sophie gives a strained little laugh.

EXT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Everyone is seeing Sophie and Brad off. Among the chatter and handshaking, kissing, etc., Sophie comes to her father.

SOPHIE

Goodnight, Daddy. I love you.

GORDON

I love you too, pumpkin.

As Sophie and Brad move down to their car, Gordon and Merrill stand arm in arm, waving. Merrill speaks to Gordon.

MERRILL

Thank God she didn't find out what the rhino's for.

Gordon, waving, smiling, nods in full agreement.

INT. BRAD'S CAR -- NIGHT

As they drive, Sophie is turned in her seat, looking at Brad lovingly, grinning. He eventually notices.

BRAD
What?

SOPHIE
I love you.

BRAD
I love you too.

SOPHIE
Mom said, "There is nothing on this earth
that is perverse or base if shared with love."

BRAD
She said that? That sweet old lady?

SOPHIE
Uh huh.

There is a devious grin on Sophie's lips.

BRAD
(smiling)
What?

The look on Sophie's face turns more sexual.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE, BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Gordon is in bed, reading a book, Merrill's head on his
shoulder, as she hugs him.

GORDON
So how did those two get together anyhow?

MERRILL
Oh, I just don't know with these
young people anymore. It's bizarre.

Gordon looks at her.

GORDON
So tell me.

MERRILL
Well...

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Moving along the kitchen wall as before. But this time on the way to discovering the door, dialogue is repeated OS.

BRAD (OS)

Well you're not going to have her
you son-of-a-bitch!

HILTON (OS)

Let's get one thing clear, motherfucker,
I'm on a good thing here, and if you think
a dumb, greasy, slimeball, pukebucket no
better than I am is going to muscle me
outa here, then you sure as fuck can
measure your life in micro-seconds from
this moment on.

BRAD (OS)

You don't scare me.

HILTON (OS)

Oh, no?

Camera arrives at where the empty chair is supposed to be, but now Sophie is sitting on it, listening. She wears her shawl.

BRAD (OS)

Well you do scare me, but if you want me to
give up on Sophie then you're going to have to
kill me right here right now. 'Cause I love
her, and she's the only decent, beautiful
thing I've ever seen in my entire life and I
will not give her up to a piece of social
refuse no better than I am! So you can go
ahead and pull the trigger.

Sophie frowns, not able to make out what he is saying.

HILTON (OS)

Say what?

BRAD (OS)

You can go ahead and pull the trigger.

Camera reveals Brad and Hilton in the background through the doorway. Brad takes the gun from his mouth and puts it on his forehead.

BRAD

I said, you can go ahead and pull the trigger.
'Cause I'd rather die without her in my life.
My life is just not worth living without her.
So go ahead, go ahead.

Tears come to Sophie's eyes as she realizes how much Brad truly loves her. There is a loud click. Sophie starts.

SMASH CUT:

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The barrel against Brad's forehead. Brad's eyes have tensed tight, flinching at the sound of the hammer hitting home. Brad's eyes open slowly. Hilton takes the gun from his forehead.

HILTON

Well, I'd say that was a pass. (He tosses back over his shoulder) What do you think?

Brad looks at the kitchen doorway. Sophie's legs appear as she swivels on the chair. She stands. She waits in the doorway. Hilton stands and looks at her.

HILTON

Told you he'd find you. Just a matter of time.

He looks at Brad.

HILTON

You owe me, man.

SOPHIE

I didn't like the way you lied to me about the leaflet, but I am touched you went to so much trouble.

Brad begins to answer her, but Hilton puts his hand on his shoulder. Brad looks at him and realizes Hilton supplied the leaflet.

Hilton moves past him to the front door.

BRAD

And you didn't...?

HILTON

No, I didn't meet her in no motel.

He opens the door.

HILTON

(exiting)

Later.

Brad looks at Sophie. She takes two paces into the room. Brad stands. He bursts into tears of gratefulness. They rush to each other's arms and hug, kissing. Brad squeezes his eyes tight with all the love he has for her in that magic moment.

INT. BRAD'S HOUSE - ENSUITE -- NIGHT

Through the bathroom doorway Sophie can be heard inside, cleaning her teeth, then putting her toothbrush in a jar.

SOPHIE (OS)

Ready?

Close on Brad in bed, in a state of high anticipation.

BRAD

Yeah!

Sophie appears in the bathroom doorway. She has the G-string on, and the nippleless bra, though the holes are filled with tissues again. She pauses for effect.

BRAD

Whoa!

Sophie saunters over to the bed and looks down on him.

SOPHIE

Are you sure you're ready?

BRAD

Yeah!

SOPHIE

Okay. Have you been unfaithful to me with other women?

BRAD

No. Uh uh.

SOPHIE

Have you stolen any money or done anything nasty to anyone?

BRAD

No, absolutely not.

Sophie grins. She glances off to one side. So does Brad. There is a lie detector next to the bed and Brad is wired up to it. The readout is an uninterrupted line.

Smiling, Sophie places her hands on the tissues over her nipples and looks at Brad.

SOPHIE

Well, I'd say that was a pass.

She makes to whip the tissues out.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. STUDIO.

ROLL CREDITS. ORIENTAL MUSIC. TILT UP from blackness, which we discover is the front of a studio bench, and discover a sheet of red paper on a polished bench top. Continuing on we drift up Sophie's body, her hands together in the Buddhist welcome sign, her head bowed. She wears a beautiful Asian-style dress. Her head tilts up and she smiles in welcome. She puts her finger to her lips for silence. Camera follows her hands down as she begins to demonstrate how to make an origami figurine.

Brad stands to one side of the set, beside a camera and CAMERAMAN, proudly watching Sophie.

As the origami is finished, Sophie smiles again and bows, Buddhist style.

The studio camera light goes out and Brad moves in and kisses Sophie.

EXT. FRUIT & VEG LOADING BAY -- DAY.

Brad, Sophie, and Marcie take boxes of donated fruit and vegetables down from the loading bay and put them in the van. Sophie, then Brad, shake the hand of the loading bay SUPERVISOR, thanking him. He is happy to help.

INT. SNACK BAR -- DAY

With Sophie in the van outside, Brad enters and is handed a box of raw chickens. He thanks the LADY, shakes her hand and exits.

INT. FREE RANGE CHICKEN FARM -- DAY

Brad, Sophie, and Marcie load full egg cartons into the van. Brad gets out a large load of vegetable scraps and hands it to the FARMER. They shake hands, all smiling.

INT. DISUSED RESTAURANT - KITCHEN -- DAY

Brad and Sophie, wearing hair nets, work in the kitchen along with several KITCHEN WORKERS. Sophie cooks in a giant pot. Brad washes up. She drops some dirty frying pans into the water and Brad rolls his eyes. She kisses him, and Brad grabs her and gives her a real kiss. The Workers hoot, laugh, and applaud.

EXT. SLUM STREET -- NIGHT

Brad and Sophie hand out food to the needy. They are thanked by an OLD MAN who pats Brad's shoulder. As the old man departs, Brad looks at Sophie. Their eyes lock. They are both so happy to be doing good for people, and are so much in love.

INT. S & M ROOM -- NIGHT

As CREDITS CONTINUE, MUSIC changes to heavy rock. Gordon and Merrill, with friends their own age, all dressed in the S & M gear, are having a good time.

PA ANNOUNCEMENT

Okay folks, let's hear it for the
owner of our happy little club!

As confetti and balloons rain down from above and Club Members applaud. Clarissa, in full S & M outfit, enters. She leads Hilton on a penis sheath chain. Everyone is glad to see her and all are having a wonderful time.

FADE OUT.