

"I WOKE UP IN LOVE THIS MORNING"

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN DENVER - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A cold gray day in Denver. Snow peppers downtown buildings bedecked with holiday decorations. A gigantic Christmas bear engulfs the Rocky Mountain News building. On the corner of 17th and Lincoln stands the landmark "Cash Register Building," a skyscraper that looks like it sounds.

INT. INVESTAR - LOBBY - CASH REGISTER BUILDING - DAY

A conservative Christmas wreath adorns the door of InveStar Property Management. Inside, dark woods, conservative decor. New secretary LORI works at her desk, upon which sits a smiling, cheesy little plastic singing Christmas tree, dormant for now.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

A big, richly dark conservative office. Large photographs of housing developments and office parks adorn the walls, along with maps of Colorado and the United States. No-nonsense InveStar owner DAVID KNIGHT--handsome, Brooks Brothers suit--reviews paperwork as he talks on the phone.

DAVID

The grading's too steep on the
access road to Raley's Peak.

(listens)

I don't give a damn about the
weather, and I don't give a damn how
you fix it--just fix it. You evict
the last holdouts?

(listens)

Bullshit! I'm going out of town.
Either you or those squatters better
be gone when I get back.

INT. INVESTAR - LOBBY - DAY

David exits his office, briefcase in one hand, contracts in the other, goes to Lori's desk--her cheesy little Christmas

tree starts to gyrate and SING Jingle Bells. Lori fumbles to shut it off, cringes. David frowns, hands her the contracts.

DAVID
File these, please.

LORI
Yes, Mr. Knight.

She notices his watch, an antique Waltham white gold and black enamel Art Deco vintage with flexible lugs, circa 1925.

LORI (CONT'D)
What a beautiful watch.

DAVID
Let me sign the escrow papers on the Raley parcels.

LORI
They're not here yet, Mr. Knight.

DAVID
Damn it! Wayne, get out here!
(to Lori)
Mr. Knight was my father. He's dead. I've told you that several times. If there aren't any clients around call me David, okay? Mr. Knight makes me feel old.

LORI
Yes, Mr. Knight.

Younger, cocky Investar executive WAYNE approaches.

WAYNE
I thought you left for the airport?

DAVID
What the hell's going on with Raley, Wayne? I handled the government morons, I pay you to handle the bank buffoons. It's a simple \$20 million transaction. What's the holdup?

WAYNE
You know what they say, patience is-
-

DAVID

A highly overrated virtue. The real world recognizes nothing less than performance and neither do I. Either that deal closes by Christmas or your career here does.

WAYNE

So where you off to? Romantic rendezvous with a Christmas mistress?

DAVID

(to Lori)

Just answer the phones and stack the mail until I get back.

LORI

When will that be?

DAVID

When I get back.

He exits.

LORI

Why is he like that?

WAYNE

On the bright side, I hear compared to his father David is asshole-lite.

LORI

But why so secretive?

WAYNE

He thinks everyone's out to steal from him, conspiring against him.

LORI

He never smiles. Does he have a wife, a family?

WAYNE

Nada. All he's got is this company. And if you stick around long enough, you'll see that all work and no play makes Dave a real dick.

INT. ELEVATOR - EVENING

David descends. The elevator stops at another floor. Attorney CHANNING LAIRD enters, surprised to see David. He hides a folder behind his back, feigns a smile.

CHANNING

David! I was just coming up to see you. Thought you were leaving town?

DAVID

I am. This elevator's going down.

CHANNING

Well then, I may as well call it quits myself. Join me for a cup of holiday cheer?

DAVID

You know I don't drink. Why were you coming to see me?

CHANNING

Eh--My wife called about you.

DAVID

How is Francis?

CHANNING

Terrific. And she's got a friend who she thinks would be terrific for you.

DAVID

You're a lawyer, Channing. Why not just take the key to my house and give it to her along with half my assets, dispense with the formalities?

CHANNING

I don't know why everyone says you're such a cold fish. You know, David, one day you're gonna end up dying alone in that big house of yours.

DAVID

We all end up dying alone.

The elevator stops and David exits.

CHANNING

Merry Christmas.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - EVENING

David climbs into his pricey black Range Rover and starts it. Clutching a Christmas gift-wrapped bottle of champagne in one hand and drawings in the other, a desperate ROBERT RALEY--average Joe, David's contemporary--hustles over.

RALEY

Mr. Knight! Can I talk to you for a minute? Please, David, can I talk to you for just a minute?

David sighs and lowers his window.

DAVID

Like I told you on the phone, Raley, your business is with the IRS and the State of Colorado, not Investar.

RALEY

But that land has been in my family for generations!

DAVID

Estate and property taxes have been around for generations too, and your family didn't pay yours.

David shifts to reverse and the Rover starts to roll back. Raley desperately grabs the window frame. David brakes.

RALEY

Can I just talk to you for a minute? We tried to pay! We didn't develop that land because my family wanted to preserve the beauty of the countryside! But land values and taxes kept going up! Remember, when we were kids, hiking up there in Cub Scouts? Now you're gonna build cookie cutter houses and strip malls on every square inch?

DAVID

It's my property now. Let's be frank, Robert. Your family never developed that land because you were lazy or stupid or both. And you got nailed by

the IRS because you were lazy or stupid
or both.

RALEY

That's not true! Besides, I have an
idea! Maybe we can work out a deal!

He tries to shove his drawings and the champagne bottle
through the driver's window, unsuccessfully, as David backs
out and drives off. Tears fill Raley's eyes.

INT. JETLINER - NIGHT

Sitting in first class, David reviews real estate documents
and aerial photos of vacant high desert and mountain land
labeled "U.S. Bureau of Land Management - Proposed Sale -
Clark County, Nevada," with a visual proximity to Las Vegas.

EXT. SKY, MOUNTAINS AND DESERTS - AERIAL - NIGHT

A zillion stars twinkle in the jet black sky. The Rocky
Mountains of Colorado and Utah roll into Lake Powell, the
high desert, more mountains, more darkness.

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - NIGHT

Joshua trees, cacti and spooky rock formations pepper the
arid landscape. Lizards and bugs chirp and buzz. A lone
COYOTE lets out a lonely HOWL. The wind picks up. The
coyote looks up, sees the jet, follows it with her gaze.

COYOTE'S P.O.V. - LAS VEGAS VALLEY - NIGHT

Vegas radiates in the distance. The jet zooms toward it.

ON THE COYOTE - Her fur ruffles in the wind. She HOWLS...

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

With the dazzling Las Vegas cityscape in the background,
David's jet lands at McCarran International Airport.

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - NIGHT

Briefcase in hand and carry-on bag over his shoulder, David hails a cab.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The CABBIE asks David,

CABBIE
Where to?

DAVID
Bellagio.

EXT. TROPICANA AVENUE - NIGHT

The cab struggles in heavy traffic. There's a loud "POP!"

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

The cab shudders and lists. The cabbie pulls over.

DAVID
What was that?

CABBIE
Flat.

DAVID
Oh for Christ's sake...

The cabbie grabs his radio microphone.

CABBIE
102 to base, over.

DISPATCHER (RADIO V.O.)
Dispatch, go ahead.

CABBIE
Got a blowout, west Trop east of Koval.

DISPATCHER (RADIO V.O.)
OK. About forty-five minutes.

CABBIE
Roger.

DAVID
Can't you just change the tire?

CABBIE
Against union rules.

DAVID
I'll walk.

EXT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

David exits the cab with his briefcase and carry-on bag, forgoes Tropicana Avenue and cuts up dark Koval Lane.

EXT. SEEDY AREA - NIGHT

David pulls his wool coat tight, cuts a path behind old buildings and dumpy apartments. TWO DRIFTERS emerge from the shadows, startling him.

DRIFTER #1
Hey, buddy. Buddy, can I talk to you for a minute?

David tries to step around. Drifter #2 blocks his path.

DRIFTER #2
Another rude fuckin' tourist.

BAM! Drifter #1 hits David over the head with a quart beer bottle. He falls to the pavement, his pants tear, his eyes roll back into his head--he's clearly suffered a tremendous blow to the brain. The Drifters rifle David's pockets, take his wallet, his wool overcoat--causing his cell phone to slip from a pocket and SMASH! They take his beautiful antique watch, even his shoes, along with his briefcase and carry-on bag. Finally, they heave his body into a nearby dumpster, then walk off laughing.

EXT. LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

A shoeless, disheveled and amnesic David shuffles up the Strip, dumfounded by the ersatz Sphinx, medieval castle, New York skyscrapers, Statue of Liberty, Eiffel Tower, erupting volcano, pirate ship battle, as tourists point, stare and make fun of him.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

Tacky Fremont Street. David stumbles down the gigantic canopied Fremont Street Experience mall, a zillion-bulb light show playing overhead, past low-end casinos, gift shops, strip clubs, desperate to get his bearings. Dizzy, his eyes roll back in his head again--he falls and passes out.

WE HEAR the sound of water being lapped up OVER...

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - McNEIL ESTATES, LAS VEGAS - MORNING

WE HEAR water being lapped up. It's the crack of dawn. Newspapers land in driveways of attractive suburban homes, many decorated for Christmas, a short two miles west of The Strip. Hope's house is typical of this area: Green lawn, manicured landscaping, mature trees, roses, pear shaped pool and jacuzzi, humming bird feeders. LAP, LAP, LAP...

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

LADY, a brown short-haired dachshund, laboriously drinks from a toilet. Quenched, she exits the hall bathroom and walks through the house. Nicely furnished. In the den near the TV is a collection of romantic videos: Love Affair, Love Story, Cinderella, Bridges Of Madison County, Pretty Woman, The Shop Around The Corner, It Could Happen To You. On the walls, framed posters of romantic movies: Sleepless In Seattle, Breakfast At Tiffany's, An Affair To Remember, Romeo And Juliet, City Of Angels, Honeymoon In Vegas. On the bookshelves, Shakespeare competes with self-help books. In the kitchen, it's Jenny Craig versus junk food.

Lady enters the master bedroom, makes a running attempt to jump up on the king size bed, manages only a heartbreaking crash to the floor. Two more attempts are equally futile.

HOPE SINGLETON is fast asleep. Fit, pretty despite the strand of drool hanging from her mouth. The ALARM CLOCK BUZZES, Hope blindly shuts it off, then clicks the remote control that turns on her bedroom's MINI STEREO.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

It's fifty-one degrees in the valley
right now. We'll have your forecast
and headline news right after this.

Hope eyes the unused companion pillow next to hers, SIGHS.

RADIO COMMERCIAL

This Christmas, remember: Nothing says I love you like a diamond. So whether you're asking her to marry you, or telling her you'd marry her all over again, say Merry Christmas with a diamond from Kay Jewelers.

LADY SIGHS--Hope looks down at the dog. She gets up, heads for the bathroom, Lady follows.

IN THE SHOWER - Hope showers, soaps her body, repeating,

HOPE

I accept. I accept.

MINUTES LATER - Hope towels off, the stereo plays on.

FRANKIE VALLI SINGING

You're just too good to be true,
can't take my eyes off of you,
you're just like heaven to touch, I
want to hold you so much.

Hope grabs the remote, changes the station.

98 DEGREES SINGING

I do cherish you, for the rest of my
life, you don't have to think twice,
I will love you still, from the
depths of my soul it's beyond my
control.

Hope frowns, changes the station again.

BING CROSBY SINGING

It's beginning to look a lot like
Christmas, everywhere you go...

Brushing her teeth, Hope looks at the second sink, the one that's never used. Defiantly, she goes to that sink and spits toothpaste down the drain.

HOPE

I accept.

Nude, Hope goes to her large double mirrored walk-in closet. Lady sits, looking at her reflection in the mirrored doors, GROWLING. Hope looks at her own reflection, checks out her figure, lifts her breasts, grabs some flab, then GROWLS too.

HOPE
Come on, Lady, say it with me: I
accept.

Lady BARKS.

JOHNNY MATHIS SINGING
You ask how much I need you, must I
explain? I need you, oh my darling,
like roses need rain.

Hope grabs the remote control, changes the station.

ELVIS PRESLEY SINGING
I want you, I need you, I love you,
with all my heart.

HOPE
Gimme a break.

She changes the station.

EMINEM RAPPING
Now bitch, let's see who gets the
best! Stuffed that shit in crooked
and fucked that fat slut to death!

HOPE
Oh my God!

She quickly punches in a station--nice CHRISTMAS MUSIC--and
heads for her closet.

INSIDE CLOSET - Choosing an outfit, Hope glances at the
"man's side" of the closet, the empty one. She grabs some
of her hanging clothes and slides them over to fill the
space.

HOPE
I...ac...cept!

She pulls a dress off its hanger and storms out of the
closet.

BACK IN HER BEDROOM - Hope hits the stereo's "seek" button;
the stations change every five seconds as she dresses.

PERRY COMO SINGING

In the meadow we can build a
snowman, then pretend that he is
Parson Brown.

BACKSTREET BOYS SINGING
He'll say Are you married?, we'll
say No man--

FRANK SINATRA SINGING
He'll say Are you married?, we'll
say No man--

BRITNEY SPEARS SINGING
He'll say Are you married?, we'll
say No man--

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS SINGING
He'll say Are you married?, we'll
say No man--

HOPE
Aaahhh!!!

Hope jabs the remote control.

EVANGELICAL PREACHER (STEREO)
Do-a you believe-a in the miracle of
Christmas? I'm askin' ya, do-a you-a
believe in the miracle of Christmas?
Well I'm askin' ya ta! Believe!

EXT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION & VISITORS AUTHORITY OFFICES - DAY

The executive offices of the world's busiest convention
center. Hope's new white VW Beetle pulls into the parking
lot. She walks toward her office building--A BILLBOARD
catches her eye.

HOPE'S P.O.V. - BILLBOARD

A huge, dreary photo of a decrepit, wheelchair-bound old lady.
In big letters above it reads "THIS WILL BE YOU!" Small
letters below read "Just do it," along with the Nike swoosh.

TWO MEN hustle through Hope's view, catch her ear.

MAN #1
There are three kinds of people:
Those who make things happen, those

who watch things happen, and those
who ask "What happened?"

Man #2 nods emphatically.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Christmas decorations adorn a hectic scene as WORKERS manage the busy office. Phones ring, keyboards tap, copiers flash.

LADIES ROOM - Hope drops Visine in her tired eyes. An old BUSYBODY startles her--Visine runs down Hope's cheeks.

OLD BUSYBODY

Hope! I haven't seen you in ages.
You going home for the holidays?

HOPE

I go home every day.

BUSYBODY

That's right, your parents retired to Florida. God awful humidity. My daughter's coming from Chicago. Her husband--he's a doctor you know--he booked a suite at Caesar's Palace for an entire week! It's going to be a second honeymoon for them, a Christmas gift from her husband!

HOPE

Well isn't that nice.

BUSYBODY

Of course the children will stay with me. They have three you know.

HOPE

Well isn't that nice.

BUSYBODY

Three darling little angels. Those two--my daughter and her husband, the handsome doctor--they're so in love, why I wouldn't be surprised if Santa brings them another bundle of joy while they're at Caesar's! Twelve years of marriage, three children, and they still act like horny teenagers, those two!

HOPE
Well isn't--that--nice!

EXECUTIVE AREA - Hope rushes toward her desk, passing many workers answering their phones "Las Vegas Convention And Visitors Authority." One of her high heels catches the carpet and she stumbles. She finally reaches her office and her own wailing multi-line phone, fielding one call after another.

HOPE
Hope Singleton, can you hold? Hope
Singleton, can you hold? Hope -
Single--
(knocks over coffee)
Shoot! Can you hold?

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

BABS is a Bronx-bred Puerto Rican and Hope's best friend.

BABS
No I cannot hold! I've been trying
to reach you for two hours!

INTERCUT - HOPE AND BABS

HOPE
Sorry, Babs. Bad hair day.

BABS
You're always having a bad hair day,
Hope, but the important thing right
now is, are we having lunch today?

HOPE
I don't--

BABS
Wait! I have your itinerary right
here. Yeah, we are having lunch!
Buffet at the Hilton. I pulled two
free passes from a Chinese junket.

HOPE
What about our diets?

Babs eyes the huge two-thirds-eaten lox & cream cheese-oozing bagel and whipped cream-dripping mocha latté grandé on her desk, right next to an unopened can of Slim Fast.

BABS
All I had for breakfast was half a bagel and coffee.

HOPE
OK, OK, I'll meet you there.

NAT BEAVERS, Hope's obnoxious co-worker, slithers in.

NAT
Hey, Hope. You look nice today. Is that your real hair?

HOPE
No, Nat, I borrowed it.

NAT
Wanna do lunch?

HOPE
I have plans.

NAT
After work? I'll buy you a drink but I'll be jealous of the glass.

HOPE
I'm busy. I'm busy now too, so...

NAT
Right. I mean, me too.

EXT. LAS VEGAS HILTON HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Limos and taxis pull up to the valet area of the Hilton.

BABS (O.S.)
You wanna meet classy businessmen, you gotta eat where they eat.

HOPE (O.S.)
Tourists and conventioners eat at buffets, Babs.

INT. LAS VEGAS HILTON HOTEL - DAY

Slot machines clang as Hope and Babs wait in the buffet line, indeed full of TOURISTS and CONVENTIONEERS.

BABS
Duh, Queen Doofus! Classy
businessmen don't go to conventions?

Hope spots TWO HARDCORE LESBIANS kissing in line--she quickly looks away. An open shirted, gold nugget jewelry wearing "VIC FERRARI" type saunters over.

VIC
If I said you had a beautiful body
would you hold it against me?

BABS
De qué matorral saliste?
(What hole did you
crawl out of?)

VIC
You gals no speakin ze English, eh?

BABS
We no speakin ze loser. Bug off!

He snorts and saunters off. A HANDSOME MAN in a business suit walks by, nods courteously. Babs grins,

BABS (CONT'D)
Mmm. *Va a chillar como animal herido.*
(off Hope's look)
He would moan like a wounded animal.

Moving down the buffet line, Hope and Babs select food items. Plates empty, a GRANOLA COUPLE peruses the selections, shaking their heads and holding up the line. Babs frowns at them.

GRANOLA GUY
The beef looks okay.

GRANOLA GAL
E coli bacteria. There's chicken.

GRANOLA GUY
Salmonella. Seafood?

GRANOLA GAL

From polluted oceans? Served in the middle of the desert? Not to mention mercury poisoning. There's cheese.

GRANOLA GUY
Bovine growth hormones, listeria bacteria. Ah-ha! Salad bar!

GRANOLA GAL
Ugh! Pesticides, insecticides, contaminated ground water.

BABS
Excuse me.

GRANOLA GUY
Maybe we should skip lunch, go to the pool, catch some sun?

GRANOLA GAL
Hello! "Melanoma?"

BABS
Mira! People from this planet would like some chow, OK?!

The Granolas put down their plates and walk away, scoffing--

GRANOLAS
Tourists.

Hope and Babs carry their half-full plates towards the meat carving station. Again Hope catches her high heel--this time it breaks off. She stumbles, spills some food on the floor and some on herself, then reaches down to get the heel.

BABS
Why do you still wear those? Join the new millennium--wear Nikes.

HOPE
I wear them because I like them, okay?! I think they're pretty, I think they're feminine, and yeah, I think they're sexy! I like the way they make my calves flex, I like the way they make my hips sway, I even like the way they make my butt jiggle! Only the older I get, the

less flexing and more jiggling I
seem to be doing!

BABS
What's your major malfunction?

HOPE
I'll tell you what my major
malfunction is!

At the meat station, the CARVER stares at Hope. She pulls a computer printout from her purse and hands it to Babs while motioning the Carver to start carving the friggin' roast beef and piling it on her friggin' plate. The pile of meat grows. Hope waves the Carver on. Fellow buffeters stare.

HOPE (CONT'D)
It's been 884 weeks since I went on
my first date. Since then I've had
476.25 dates.

A passing HOOKER remarks,

HOOKER
You're with the wrong agency, honey.

HOPE
Dates! Not "men," dates!

BABS
Really, she's a very nice girl.
(hushed)
You have seriously got to get laid.

HOPE
Well I've certainly gotten screwed!

The Carver eyes the mounting mound of meat. Hope waves him on.

MONTAGE - HOPE'S PREVIOUS BOYFRIENDS

A) LARRY flirts with scantily clad cocktail waitresses.

HOPE (V.O.)
There was Larry. He loved me almost
as much as he loved half a dozen
cocktail waitresses on the Strip.

B) EDDIE buys sporting goods with Hope's VISA card.

HOPE (V.O.)
And Eddie, he loved me to the tune
of \$6,000 on my VISA card.

C) BOB looks at himself in the mirror, sobbing, nodding.

HOPE (V.O.)
Bob? He loved me almost as much as
his "inner child."

D) DERRICK looks at himself in the mirror, grinning,
nodding.

HOPE (V.O.)
Derrick? He loved me, oh, about
half as much as he loved himself.

E) We see TED from the back, typing on his computer.

HOPE (V.O.)
Ted? That great guy I chatted with
on the Internet for six months?

Moving around to the front we see Ted's a very old man.

HOPE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Instead of 39 he turned out to be 93!

F) A smiling Hope waves frantically. Her smile fades.

HOPE (V.O.)
And who could forget Steven?

Hope sees STEVEN with his WIFE and KIDS.

HOPE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For an entire year, he loved me--just
not as much as he loved his wife and
kids!

BACK TO SCENE

Everyone stares at the huge pile of beef on Hope's plate.

HOPE
I'm on the Atkins diet!

She storms off. All eyes turn to Babs--She puts her hand up.

BABS
I'm on the Slim Fast plan.

AT THEIR TABLE - Babs chows down, Hope plays with her food.

HOPE

I've tried being cold, sensitive,
dominant, submissive, aloof, blithe,
bitchy, coy, cloy, feminine,
masculine, new age, career focused,
liberal, conservative. I've tried
men who are cold, sensitive,
dominant, submissive, aloof, blithe,
bitchy, coy, cloy, masculine,
feminine, new age, career focused,
liberal, conservative--

BABS

Problem is you always lookin' for Mr.
Right. Me, I look for Mr. Right Now.

HOPE

I can't believe we're friends.

BABS

What, you wanna get married then
divorced like everybody else?

HOPE

You know, people say things loud and
long enough and other people believe
them, but that doesn't make it true.

BABS

Just turn on the news.

HOPE

They tell you about the Titanic, not
about the beautiful cruises.

BABS

Half of all marriages end in
divorce--

HOPE

Bull! That's the Larry-Liz factor!

BABS

Say what??

HOPE

The Larry King-Liz Taylor factor!
Larry King's been married seven

times! Liz Taylor's been married
eight! Two people, fifteen
marriages, fourteen divorces and
counting!

Hope illustrates with her food, pushing the beef off her
plate and furiously pairing up olives and broccoli spears
and boiled shrimp and Swedish meatballs and--what a mess.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Take ten women. If two of the women
each get married and divorced three
times, and the other eight women each
get married once and stay happily
married, that means 80% of women have
successful marriages! Even though
you've got six divorces out of ten
women married, it's not six divorced
women out of ten! It's only two!

BABS

(staring at the
mess)

You lost me.

HOPE

That's what they want!

BABS

That's what who wants?

HOPE

John Gray, author of "Men Are From
Mars, Women Are From Venus"? Barbara
DeAngelis, "Are You The One For Me"?
Those two have been married nine
times, once to each other! And they
give relationship advice??

BABS

So it's a conspiracy?

She eyes the Swedish meatballs on Hope's plate.

BABS (CONT'D)

You gonna eat those?

HOPE

I'm sick of normal being weird and
weird being normal, of in-your-face
this and politically correct that, life

according to the latest poll--poll,
poll, poll, poll, poll! They don't ask
me!

She stops an OLD WOMAN shuffling by with a cream puff.

HOPE (CONT'D)
When was the last time you were
polled?

The old woman's eyes bulge--she scurries away.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Is it me or has the world gone nuts?
Shouting and potty talk pass for
entertainment, Mommy is Dearest,
Johnny Has Two Daddies, Rosanne has
twenty personalities, Geraldo has a
news program--Ugh!

EXT. THE LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

Hope and Babs stroll down the sidewalk.

HOPE
We were all kings and queens in
previous lives who were sexually
abused as children, had our fortunes
stolen by another race and/or
religion, then were abducted by
aliens as part of some right-wing
conspiracy to frame O.J. Simpson for
the murder of JFK, but we'll all
feel a helluva lot better if you
give us a million dollars, pump us
full of Prozac and put us on Oprah!

BABS
Speaking of Prozac--

HOPE
Can you even have a normal life
anymore? Is the word "normal" still
in the dictionary? Or does that
depend on what the definition of
"is" is? Am I crazy?

BABS
Well--

HOPE

I've worked hard. I hung in there.
I got an education, I repaid my
student loans. I don't break the
law--I even come to a complete stop
before making a right on red!

BABS

What the heck are you talking about?

HOPE

I exercise, I vote, I pay my taxes,
I recycle, I donate blood, I give to
the United Way, I'm kind to animals--
-

BABS

You want a freakin' medal?

HOPE

No! I want...

BABS

What? What??

HOPE

I want what my parents had--have. I
want the life I've read about in
books, and seen in old movies.

BABS

Life ain't a video rental.

HOPE

I want normalcy and decency and
tradition and hope and passion and
romance. I want "old fashioned." I
want to stay home and raise my kids
and keep my house and care for my
husband, and I want him to be my
best friend. I want true love.

BABS

As a wise woman once said, "What's
love got to, got to do with it?"
Who even knows what love is anymore?

HOPE

"Love is a smoke made with the fume
of sighs. Being purged, a fire
sparkling in lovers' eyes. Being

vexed, a sea nourished with loving
tears. What is it else? A madness
most discreet, a choking gall, and a
preserving sweet."

BABS
Who're you, Wilma Shakespeare?

HOPE
Romeo and Juliet. I love that
story.

BABS
They both commit suicide. How romantic.

Hope starts to weep.

BABS (CONT'D)
Jesus, it was a joke!

HOPE
Yeah, it's a joke. And stupid me, I'm
just living in the fantasy of a better
past, dreaming of a future that, deep
down, I know will never come.

Babs gets teary herself, but shakes it off. They pass some
ever-present sex-paper PEDDLERS thrusting out material on
the Strip. Babs' eyes light up. She grabs one of the
flyers.

BABS
I got it! Personals ad!

She pulls out a pen, starts writing on the sex flyer.

HOPE
Would you stop?

BABS
What's Mr. Perfect like?

HOPE
Don't be stupid.

BABS
What stupid? My cousin Maria in
Queens met her husband this way!
Come on! What's he like?

HOPE

Well? Not perfect. I'd love his imperfections. Attractive--

BABS

"Handsome," not "attractive." You say handsome, you at least get Homo sapien.

HOPE

A hint of macho. Decisive. But tender--really nice, you know? Chivalrous. Sweet. He's got a conservative head, a liberal heart, a libertarian spirit. He's smart, he reads. He'll talk, and listen, really listen. He's witty and funny, honest and loyal, romantic and passionate--

BABS

...multiple orgasms...

HOPE

He'll surprise me, cook my favorite dinner--grilled jumbo sea scallops and triticales berry-rice pilaf!--and bring me... Eskimo Pies! He'll write me a poem. He'll stand when I leave the table. Hold my hand in public. Kiss me passionately New Year's Eve. We'll be best friends as well as lovers, happy just being together. We'll have children and be a real family. And he'll love me, only me, forever...

Babs sighs, tosses the sex rag into a trash can.

BABS

Forget it. Guys like that don't even exist, let alone answer personal ads. Besides, every time Maria's husband picks up a newspaper she thinks he's cheating on her.

EXT. FASHION SHOW MALL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Hope and Babs enter The Strip's upscale mall.

INT. FASHION SHOW MALL - DAY

Christmas decorations adorn the upscale, shopper packed mall. A PIANO MAN PLAYS Christmas music on a baby grand.

Hope and Babs pass a tattoo parlor, where trendy guys and gals are getting identical tattoos through the glass wall.

BABS

Maybe you need to spice yourself up.
Why not get a tattoo? Express your
individuality exactly like everyone
else?

They stop at a music store. Promotional posters and CD covers of all music genres face potential customers and all have one thing in common: The artists--rap, rock, punk, pop, country, young and old, male and female--all are scowling in their cover photos.

HOPE

How can all these people I've never
heard of have greatest hits
collections? And remember musicians
used to smile on their album covers?
These all look so--menacing.

BABS

(picking up kiddie
CD)

Yeah--Even Barney looks like he
wants to bitch slap somebody.

Hope moves to the discount bin. She fishes around and finds a "Best Of The Partridge Family" CD.

HOPE

Gosh--I was so in love with Keith
Partridge.

BABS

Who wasn't?

HOPE

I'm getting this.

BABS

Jeez... Hey, what say we hit
Rumjungle tonight?

HOPE

Think I'll stay home.

BABS

Not gonna meet your Keith Partridge that way. I wish you'd come back East and spend Christmas with my family, all that exhaust gray snow, it'll be great! Last year my Uncle Pedro got drunk on Bacardi, stole a goat from the live nativity scene and rode buck naked through sunrise mass at St. John's Basilica!

HOPE

Thanks anyway.

BABS

Look, it's just the freakin' holidays. If the love you're after is out there you'll find it. Someday.

INT. VONS GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

CHRISTMAS MUSIC plays over. Hope pushes a cart around Vons, gets diet soda, "Dinner-4-1" frozen meals, fat-free bacon, no-salt saltines, sugar substitute, "lite" this and that.

She stops at the magazines. A 10-YEAR-OLD GIRL reads an article in Teen Beat, "20 Ways To Drive Guys Wild In Bed." Hope eyes her sadly, grabs a Family Circle and a Smart Money. THREE TEENAGE PUNKS bump her as she turns, rudely keep on walking.

She pushes her cart toward the exit, stops at a bank of ever-present video poker machines, this one adorned with Christmas garlands. Hope drops a few quarters in and plays a hand--she loses. Plays another hand--loses. She sighs.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope's white Beetle pulls in.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope checks her answering machine: "You have no messages."

EXT. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

David sits in a wheelchair, cleaned up a bit, still quite handsome but with very much the homeless look. A NURSE speaks with a VOLUNTEER from St. Vincent's homeless shelter.

NURSE

He hasn't said a word since they brought him in. Physically he's in pretty good shape, nasty bump on the head, some bruised ribs. Mentally? Our therapist tried to interview him but he won't or can't talk. And with no I.D., no proof of insurance, we simply have no way to admit him or any right to hold him. Wish we could. He's quite a hunk.

VOLUNTEER

We'll take good care of him, for a few days anyway. Maybe he'll open up.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Hope's on the phone, another busy day.

HOPE

No, no, no, Jack, it was two hundred and twelve display cases.

(listens)

I don't know what you're gonna do about your subcontractor, but I do know that you're gonna deliver two hundred and twelve display cases if you expect to get paid.

She punches another line.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Sandy? Yeah, everything's fine. The sound system will meet your specs exactly. It'll be like everyone at the convention has a front row seat.

(listens)

I'm working on Siegfried & Roy, but I definitely have Cirque Du Soleil locked up. Don't worry.

Punches another line.

HOPE (CONT'D)

So what's the deal, Leo? You guys gonna go on strike or what?

(listens)

Geez, it's Christmas! How about a little brotherly love?

(listens)

Then how about a little contract fulfillment? This is a right-to-work state, ya know.

She hangs up, rubs her temples. A stereotypical BUREAUCRAT enters and hands Hope a memo. Nat saunters in behind her.

BUREAUCRAT

Here's a copy of the new sexual *hairessment* policy.

HOPE

There's no such word! It's pronounced "her-ass-ment!" "Her-ass!" Look it up!

Hope tosses a paperback dictionary to her--the Bureaucrat huffs, shoves the book in Nat's hands and marches out.

NAT

You know, Hope, if I could change the alphabet, I'd put U and I together.

HOPE

Everything's gotten so friggin' politically corrupt.

NAT

That's "correct."

LVCVA honcho Dolan bellows from his office,

DOLAN (O.S.)

Beavers!

NAT

I think Dolan's grooming me for something pretty big. You play your cards right and--

MR. DOLAN, the 60ish gray haired boss, sticks his head in.

DOLAN

What are you doing?

NAT
I was just telling Hope I like "her
ass." Uh--I mean--

DOLAN
My office!

He exits, Nat follows. Hope's phone rings--she rolls her
eyes, rubs the back of her neck, picks it up,

BABS (V.O.)
I got a guy who's dying to meet you!

HOPE
Ugh--I've been on so many blind dates, I
should send Lady to Seeing Eye Dog
school.

INTERCUT - BABS AND HOPE

BABS
Show a little enthusiasm, will ya?
He's good looking and kinda macho
like you said.

HOPE
OK, so--What does he do?

BABS
Do? Eh, he's between jobs, sorta
making a career change.

HOPE
Changing careers isn't a crime.

BABS
Did you have to say crime? OK look,
he just got out of prison, but it
was strictly circumstantial.

Hope beats her forehead with the phone as Babs babbles on.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An empty "Dinner-4-1" container sits on a tray. Fireplace
lit, lights low, news on the television. Hope's on her
second magazine and third glass of wine.

TV REPORTER

Continuing our series on the holidays and the homeless, tonight a truly special story. What if a person doesn't appear to be homeless on the one hand--handsome, well groomed--yet he does appear homeless on the other--tattered clothes, no coat, not even shoes in the middle of December? He has no identification, and he can't, or won't, tell authorities who he is?

Hope perks up, looks at the television. She's immediately captivated by the man's face on TV: David's face.

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)

Meet John Doe number 164. They call him that here at the shelter because no one knows his real name--He can't, or won't, tell anyone who he is...

INT. WORKING CLASS CASINO - NIGHT

Tacky, aging locals' favorite COOK E. JARR AND THE CRUMBS perform cover tunes in the lounge of an aging locals casino.

At a smoky video poker bar, Nat sips his whiskey sour, slicks back his hair, and tries his luck with a CHAIN SMOKING GIRL.

NAT

Is it hot in here or is it just you?

She looks in his eyes, puts her cigarette out in his drink and walks off. He turns his attention to the TV above the bar, where "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" is on, and frowns.

NAT

Great, George Bailey. Figgin' sap. C'mon, Gino, change the channel.

GINO the bartender clicks the remote. The same news feature Hope's watching on the holidays and the homeless continues.

TV REPORTER

...and he's the 164th John Doe they've taken in since the shelter opened.

NAT

Another pathetic loser! What's the matter, pal, the "Will Work For Food" gig too stressful for ya?

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sipping her wine, Hope is entranced by David on TV.

TV REPORTER

Karen Davis is a volunteer counselor at St. Vincent's.

KAREN

We suspect he's suffering from a form of amnesia, but--There's just something about this man, a certain "je ne sais quois." Unfortunately, with no funds to help someone like John 164, all we can do is give him some hot meals, clothes if we've got them, a cot if we've got space, then a prayer as he heads back out onto the streets, which'll happen tomorrow in this case.

TV REPORTER

Shelter officials are hoping that someone, a family member or friend, sees this broadcast and claims "John" in time for the holidays, making at least one person's Christmas that much more meaningful.

Hope hits the mute button, grabs the phone and dials 411.

HOPE

Yes, um, the number for St. Vincent's shelter please.

She listens, mouths the number, hangs up and dials.

TELEPHONE (V.O.)

St. Vincent's, can I help you?

Hope bites her lip.

TELEPHONE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hello? Can I help you?

Hope hangs up, gulps her wine, stares at the television.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hope's asleep in bed. She tosses, turns...

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE - INTERCUT WITH REALITY

David, spit shine clean, sharply dressed, radiating charm and machismo, hands Hope a dozen red roses.

In bed, sleeping Hope pulls the covers up, hugs them, smiles.

David and Hope are in a church, amid their large traditional wedding. They say "I do" and kiss.

In bed, Hope rocks gently, pulls her pillow close.

David and their two perfect children walk blindfolded Hope toward a big beautiful new house with a "Sold" sign out front. David removes the blindfold, Hope and family jump for joy.

In bed, sleeping Hope grins and coos. She completely envelopes the previously unused companion pillow.

In a luxurious bed, David and Hope make passionate love.

In her real bed, Hope coos and moans louder, more intensely,

HOPE

Yes, yes...

Tossing, squeezing that other pillow--with a shrill orgasmic shiver she startles awake! Confused, embarrassed, she looks down at herself and wonders, "Did I just have an orgasm?"

INT. VW BEETLE - TRAVELING - DAY

Hope drives to work down Las Vegas Blvd. She pops in her "Best Of The Partridge Family" CD.

PARTRIDGE FAMILY SINGING

I woke up in love this morning, I
woke up in love this morning, went
to sleep with you on my mind.

She passes countless small, tacky Vegas wedding chapels.
Signs proclaim "Michael Jordan/Joan Collins got married
here!" and "Free Elvis Witness!" Then, passes a BILLBOARD
for David Cassidy's nightclub show "Copa!"

PARTRIDGE FAMILY SINGING (CONT'D)

I woke up in love this morning, I
woke up in love this morning, went
to sleep with you on my mind.

Hope thinks, shuts off the stereo. ECHOS fill her head.

MAN #1 (V.O.)

There are three kinds of people:
Those who make things happen, those
who watch things happen, and those
who ask "What happened?"

OLD BUSYBODY (V.O.)

My daughter and her husband, they're
so in love.

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS SINGING (V.O.)

He'll say Are you married?, we'll
say No man--

EVANGELICAL PREACHER (V.O.)

Do-a you believe-a in the miracle of
Christmas?

Hope's mind races, she shakes her head, bites her lower lip.
She SEES another BILLBOARD for David Cassidy's nightclub show
"Copa!"

PARTRIDGE FAMILY SINGING (V.O.)

I woke up in love this morning.

BABS (V.O.)

If the love you're looking for is
out there you'll find it.

MAN #1 (V.O.)

...make things happen...

PARTRIDGE FAMILY SINGING (V.O.)

I woke up in love this morning.

EVANGELICAL PREACHER (V.O.)

Believe!

Heart pounding, Hope makes a hard screeching left turn, cutting off traffic--cars HONK!

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S SHELTER - DAY

Hope scans the derelicts loitering around the shelter.

INT. ST. VINCENT'S SHELTER - DAY

Hope hesitates, then enters, scans the soup kitchen of the shelter. Finally, she spots David across the room, sitting alone, looking at once like he belongs here yet disturbingly out of place. Their eyes lock--a palpable sparkle.

BURT, a surly "seen it all" shelter worker, shatters the moment, slaps David on the back.

BURT

OK, Johnny, move 'em out.

Hope watches desperately as Burt leads David out the door. The Volunteer who took David from the hospital startles her.

VOLUNTEER

Can I help you?

HOPE

I, uh, I--
(calling out to
Burt)
Wait!

EXT. ST. VINCENT'S SHELTER - DAY

Hope rushes out, the Volunteer follows. David and Burt turn.

VOLUNTEER

Do you know this man, dear?

HOPE

Yes.

VOLUNTEER

Well who is he?

HOPE

He's... This is... He's my...

BURT
Your what?

HOPE
My fiancé!

BURT
Your what?

VOLUNTEER
Thank God! What's his name, dear?

HOPE
His what?

BURT
His name.
(beat)
You don't know your own fiancé's
name?

Hope panics--eyes darting, across the street she spots yet
another BILLBOARD for David Cassidy's show "Copa!"

HOPE
David Cassidy!

VOLUNTEER
David?

BURT
Cassidy?

HOPE
David Cassidy.

BURT
David Cassidy.

HOPE
Yes, David Cassidy.

VOLUNTEER
David. Do you remember your name,
David Cassidy? Say your name,
David.

David doesn't speak, but something resonates inside him.

HOPE

He never was very talkative around strangers.

BURT
Never was, huh?

VOLUNTEER
Do you remember--?

HOPE
Hope Singleton.

VOLUNTEER
Do you remember Hope, David?

DAVID
David.

VOLUNTEER
Oh, my! He said his name!

BURT
He said David. I got three buddies down the lodge named Dave.

Hope goes for it, tearfully throws her arms around David, fights back her urge to gag at the stench.

HOPE
Thank God you're alright! I've--
I've--been worried sick!

PARKING LOT - Suspicious Burt helps David into Hope's Beetle.

VOLUNTEER
I'm so happy for you, dear. So happy for both of you. Merry Christmas.

HOPE
Yes. Merry Christmas.

INT. VW BEETLE - DRIVING - DAY

Hope and David exchange several nervous glances.

HOPE
Um, are you hungry?

DAVID

A little.

INT. CAPRIOTTI'S SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

Hope and David enter the old fashioned sub shop. David seems transported by the place--mom & pop feeling, black & white tile floors, deliciously thick aroma. They peruse the overhead menu. The plump COUNTER WOMAN asks,

COUNTER WOMAN

What can I get you folks?

HOPE

David?

DAVID

I don't... I can't decide.

COUNTER WOMAN

Between what, Hon?

DAVID

Egg salad...

COUNTER WOMAN

Our egg salad's really good.

DAVID

...or meatball.

COUNTER WOMAN

Made fresh this morning, yummy.

David just stares, painfully confused.

HOPE

Can we get one of each, please?

LATER - Hope and David share egg salad and meatball subs.

HOPE

Do you like it?

DAVID

Yes.

Hope watches him. David curiously drifts between well mannered and voracious, alternately sips and guzzles his soda, nibbles and chows the sandwiches.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hope and David enter. He scans the unfamiliar surroundings.

DAVID
I thought it was a lot bigger.
(off Hope's look)
No, it's very nice. I just remember
a bigger house.
(notices movie
posters)
You like movies.

Lady turbo-waddles into the room. She goes to David, sniffs his clothes, SNEEZES, backs away, WHIMPERS.

HOPE
Lady? You--you remember David?

Lady BARKS. David reaches down and pets her. Lady quiets down, wags her tail.

HOPE
Why don't you relax, take a shower,
change your clo-- whoa!

DAVID
Guess I could use a shower.

HOPE
Whoa!

DAVID
And we'll burn the clothes.

HOPE
Wait here!

BEDROOM - Hope frantically searches her closet--dresses, blouses, negligees. Her dresser--bras, panties, Danskins. She thinks, eyes darting.

Hope pulls a Mirage logo garment box from beneath her bed. Inside, the tag on a plush bathrobe reads, "Unisex-- One Size Fits All." Hope sighs relief.

LIVING ROOM - David looks around. Hope returns with the robe.

HOPE

Here's your robe.

BATHROOM - Hope stands outside the bathroom, the door slightly ajar. She sneaks a peek, sees David's naked reflection in the bathroom mirror, quickly turns away. Then looks back, school girl guilty, and grins--nice bod.

David comes out, robe on, clothes balled up in his arms.

HOPE
Let me take those.

DAVID
Thanks. Listen, Hope... I don't remember everything. Actually, I don't remember any of this, the car, this house, this robe. I'm sorry.

Hope bites her lip, guilty tears well in her eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
But I remember you.

HOPE
You-- You do?

DAVID
OK, not all the details. But you're so familiar. You make me feel so good. It's like you light my way, while all around is dark.

HOPE
It is?

DAVID
I was lost without you.
(gazing at Hope)
God, you're beautiful.

HOPE
I am?

David pulls her close, hugs her tightly.

HOPE (CONT'D)
A bath! I think what you need is a long hot bath. Might help.

DAVID
A long, hot bath it is then.

(kisses Hope's
forehead)
Thank you for saving me.

He goes into the bathroom.

KITCHEN - Hope frantically spreads David's ragged clothes on the kitchen table, grabs a grocery pad and writes down all of his various sizes, measure lengths and widths, pausing momentarily to admire the quality of the dirty suit fabric. She looks inside the jacket, sees the Brooks Brothers tag.

EXT. THE MEN'S WEARHOUSE - DAY

Hope's Beetle tears into the parking lot.

INT. THE MEN'S WEARHOUSE - DAY

Clutching her grocery list and the stinky suit, Hope dashes up to a SALESMAN.

SALESMAN
Can I help you?

HOPE
I need half a dozen suits, a dozen
white dress shirts, button down
collar, couple'a dozen ties--mix'em
up, jazzy and conservative--dozen
pairs of dress socks, coordinated
with the suits of course, three pairs
of shoes--black, brown, oxblood--nice
belts to match. Here are the sizes.
(hands over the
list, plops David's
ragged suit on the
counter)
Use these for the tailoring. And I
need them by closing.

The Salesman remains stoic, takes the list, peruses it.
Sniffs the smelly clothes. Then bursts out LAUGHING.

SALESMAN
Tonight? You're not serious?

HOPE

I'll tip you \$200 plus VIP passes to
the Adult Entertainment Expo at the
Aladdin.

SALESMAN
(clapping loudly)
Manuel! Juanita! De prisa!

EXT. SAV-ON DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

Hope's Beetle skids into a parking space.

INT. SAV-ON DRUGSTORE - NIGHT

Hope races around with a cart, grabbing items--shaving
supplies, deodorant, tooth brush. She reads a can of Cruex
jock itch spray, shrugs, tosses it in.

INT. SPORTS AUTHORITY - NIGHT

Hope picks out sweats, shorts, socks, t-shirts, shrugs at a
jockstrap and tosses it in the cart, baseball caps, flip
flops, hiking shoes, running shoes, tennis shoes, tennis
racquet. She struggles with a set of dumbbells.

INT. DILLARDS DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Hope selects slacks, jeans, polo shirts, sweaters. She
looks at underwear, BVD whites and boxers, puts them back in
favor of four tubes of colored low-rise briefs. At the
fragrance counter, she samples men's cologne, smiles.

SALESWOMAN
Will that be all?

HOPE
Yes. No!

In Fine Jewelry, Hope tries on a round diamond solitaire
engagement ring, stares at it dreamily.

SALESWOMAN
It's a gorgeous ring--traditional,
classic, simply beautiful.

HOPE
It is, isn't it...

(pause)
I'll take it.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Hope's Beetle approaches, she kills the lights and engine. The car covertly coasts into the driveway, bags and boxes pressed against its windows.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope hears SNORING. Peeking through the bathroom door she sees David asleep in the tub. She backs out quietly.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope races to her car, pulls out armfuls of bags.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope creeps into the bathroom and fills the medicine cabinet and drawers on the "man's side" with the toiletries she bought, opening boxes, pulling off price tags.

DAVID (O.S.)
Hi.

HOPE
Ahhhi!

David stands there naked, dripping wet. Averting her eyes, Hope grabs a towel and thrusts it towards him.

DAVID
What's the matter?

HOPE
I thought you were asleep.

DAVID
I woke up.

HOPE
Um, you go ahead, shave and stuff.
You do remember where your shaving
stuff is, right? In that cabinet?

She points to one cabinet, but David has opened another.

DAVID

You mean this cabinet.

HOPE

Uh, yeah. Right. Okay. So, you
shave. Floss. Do your man
thingies. I'll just--be--you
know...

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope grabs more bags from the Beetle, dashes back to the house.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope races around the bedroom, opening bags, cutting off tags, making space in the tall dresser and filling it with men's underwear. In the closet, Hope pushes her clothes back into place and hangs polo shirts, casual pants, sweats and such on the "man's side." There's lots of space leftover.

HOPE

The suits!

DAVID (O.S.)

What suits?

HOPE

AHHHI!!

David stands behind her--wearing the Mirage robe, clean shaven, wet hair combed back--lookin' mighty fine.

DAVID

You okay? I mean--I understand.

HOPE

Understand?

DAVID

If you're jumpy, worried that I
might have some kind of brain damage
from this thing, that I might be a
nut case now, that I could wig out
at any moment and go on some sort of
rampage or something.

HOPE

Rampage?

DAVID

If you're uncomfortable I'll leave,
go stay with friends or relatives.
If you tell me where they live. But
I assure you, Honey, I feel great.

HOPE

Great?

DAVID

Better than ever.

HOPE

Better than ever... I'm so glad!
But you've been through a very
traumatic ordeal.

She grabs sweats off a hanger.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Now, I want you to put on some
sweats, kick back, relax. How about
a drink?

DAVID

Sure.

HOPE

What would you like?

DAVID

What do I drink?

She spies a magazine's back cover--an arty Absolute Vodka ad.

HOPE

Absolute. And tonic. With a twist.

DAVID

Absolute?

HOPE

Absolutely.

IN THE KITCHEN - Hope opens a cabinet, sighs relief,
retrieves a bottle of Absolute. She makes two vodka and

tonics with a twist of lime, then does a shot for good measure.

LIVING ROOM - David clicks on the TV news. He looks around the room, trying to remember. Hope enters with the drinks.

HOPE
Here you go.

The local ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER is on the TV screen.

ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER
...will be right back with a review
of David Cassidy's new show--

HOPE
Oh!

She pretends to trip and tosses the drinks in David's face. His eyes burn. Hope grabs the remote, changes the channel.

HOPE (CONT'D)
I am so sorry! I'm such a klutz!

DAVID
No problem. This round's on me.

After a tense pause, they chuckle, fall into each other's arms, gaze into each other's eyes--and kiss.

LATER - David escorts Hope to the door.

DAVID
Sure you don't want me to go?

HOPE
I'm just gonna pick up a few things.

EXT. THE MEN'S WEARHOUSE - NIGHT

Hope's Beetle flies into the parking lot. The Salesman is waiting for her, helps load her purchases into the car.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Again Hope's Beetle covertly coasts into the driveway.

She tiptoes across her yard, through the flowers, gets caught up in the thorns of rosebushes, struggles to free

herself, falls to the ground. Finally, she peers through the window.

HOPE'S P.O.V. - David is sitting on the living room couch, nursing his drink, stroking sleeping Lady, watching TV.

Hope tiptoes back across her yard. The lawn sprinklers come on and spray her--she tries to dance around the spraying water, finally resigns her soaked self and marches on.

Dripping wet, Hope carries the Men's Wearhouse bags and boxes from her car to the backyard, slinking around the steaming pool and piling them beneath the bedroom window--one trip, two trips. On the third trip, Hope trips--tossing the bags and boxes to safety mid-fall, she plunges into the pool.

Drenched, teeth chattering, Hope struggles to open her bedroom window. She tosses the bags and boxes inside.

Back at the Beetle, Hope retrieves her gym bag.

In the backyard, Hope starts to remove her soaked clothing. A neighboring DOG BARKS--Hope jumps, calms down. Naked, she bends down for her gym bag.

FLASH! A POLICE HELICOPTER SPOTLIGHT shines down on Hope's backyard and all her glory. She frantically tries to cover herself. The spotlight moves on to other yards. Hope again reaches for her gym bag. The Police spotlight returns. Hope again tries to cover up. The spotlight goes away. She reaches for her bag a third time--The Police spotlight returns. Hope rolls her eyes and plops into the steaming jacuzzi.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hope enters, dressed in her workout wear, wet hair tied back. David and Lady look her over, confused.

HOPE
Stopped at the gym for a quick
workout. Gonna take a shower.

She bolts for the bedroom. Lady jumps off the couch and follows. Hope pulls the door shut. David shrugs.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Freshly showered, Hope sits at her vanity and discusses her immediate dilemma with Lady.

HOPE

Okay. If I don't let him sleep with me, there's a good chance he'll know something's up. On the other hand, if I do let him sleep with me, there's a really good chance he'll know something's up. And I don't want him to think I'm a slut.

Lady BARKS.

HOPE (CONT'D)

You're right. Why would he think that? We're engaged! Oh, God--what have I done..?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hope enters apprehensively, then smiles tenderly: David is fast asleep on the couch. Hope puts an afghan over him, then reaches for the remote to turn off the TV--just as the late night EVANGELICAL PREACHER on the screen asks,

EVANGELICAL PREACHER

Do-a you believe-a in the miracle of Christmas? I'm askin' ya, do-a you-a believe in the miracle of Christmas? Well I'm askin' ya ta! Believe!

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lady stares at David as he practices his signature on the grocery pad--"David Cassidy." It's awkward, doesn't flow. The PHONE RINGS. David hesitates, answers.

DAVID

Hello?

INTERCUT - DAVID AND HOPE ON THE PHONE

HOPE

Good morning.

DAVID

You left early.

HOPE

You were exhausted. I didn't have
the heart to wake you.

DAVID

I hated not seeing you. I was
afraid all of this was a dream.

(pause)

Hope? I feel like a complete moron
for asking, but--What do I do?

HOPE

Do? Duh-duh-duh-do?

DAVID

Yeah, for a job. What am I?

Hope frantically scans the walls of her office, posters and
one sheets for conventions--COMDEX, GAMING EXPO, C.E.S.,
SULLIVAN REUNION, UNITED GARMENT WORKERS, and WRITEX. On
her desk a Post-It note reads, "WRITEX/Confirm Publisher VIP
List/check w/Nat."

HOPE

Why, you're--You are a--Writer.

DAVID

A writer?

David searches his brain--Nothing.

HOPE

David?

DAVID

Sorry. So, what do I write?

HOPE

Wha-wha-what do you write? Well,
you--Can you hold a sec?

She puts him on hold, panics,

HOPE (CONT'D)

He writes... A sports column. No,
technical manuals. Obituaries.
Greeting cards. Keno tickets.

She takes a deep breath then punches the line.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

DAVID
So? What kind of writer am I?

HOPE
You're a--Novelist.

DAVID
A novelist?

HOPE
Yeah, you know--guy who writes novels.

DAVID
Where are they?

HOPE
Where are what?

DAVID
My novels. Don't we have any here?

HOPE
No!

DAVID
No?

HOPE
I mean, no, they were all lost!
Lost--in the big--accident!

DAVID
Accident?

HOPE
Yes, accident! When we were--
Moving! The-the-the U-Haul trailer--
-flipped over--and burned! Oh, we
lost everything! Your books, our
photo albums--it was horrible! I
can't even tell you...

INT. HOPE'S GARAGE - DAY

David searches the garage for clues, finds the usual--
hardware and gardening stuff, old boxes. He sees Hope's
mountain bike.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

David rolls Hope's mountain bike down the driveway. He spots a LITTLE BOY struggling with his little bike, and walks over.

DAVID
It's scary at first, huh?

LITTLE BOY
I'm not scared!

DAVID
I said "it" is scary. You're not scared, no, brave guy like you.

David adjust the boy's hands, feet and his position on the seat, then grabs hold of the bike and starts gliding it along.

LITTLE BOY
M-m-maybe I'll try after lunch.

DAVID
No time like the present. Now, keep your eyes on the road, not on the pedals. Look forward, toward where you want to go, not at the scary thing.

Shaky at first, the little boy gets the hang of it and, grinning ear to ear, pedals away. David smiles, waves.

EXT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - DAY

David rides up on Hope's mountain bike.

INT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - DAY

David goes to the information desk. A CLERK looks up.

CLERK
Can I help you?

DAVID
I'm looking for novels by David Cassidy.

CLERK
Novels? David Cassidy? Checking...
I think he just sings. Checking...
Sorry, no novels by David Cassidy.

BABS (V.O.)
You did what?!

EXT. OUTDOOR BAR & CAFÉ - DAY

Sheepish Hope sits on the café patio hiding behind a margarita. Outraged Babs opens her second can of Slim Fast, pours it into a glass, then dumps in two shots of vodka.

BABS
Are you completely insane?!

She guzzles her "shake," spots a PANHANDLER holding a "Will Work For Food" sign on the street:

BABS (CONT'D)
Hey, buddy! My friend'll feed ya
(thrusting her hips)
but you will have to work for it!

HOPE
Stop! It's not like that!

BABS
Oh!, it's not like that! *Anda pa'l sirete, puse un huevo!* I thought you just told me you picked up a bum at the homeless shelter and brought him home as your fiancé. *Ea rayos!* Look at that freakin' ring!
(grabs Hope's margarita, downs it)
Okay--Let's start with the basics. What's this guy's name?
(off Hope's fidgeting)
Come on, what's his name?

HOPE
David.

BABS
David. David what?

HOPE

Cassidy.

BABS

Cassidy.

HOPE

There was the dream and the CD and
the billboards--

BABS

David Cassidy. David-*freakin*-
Cassidy!

HOPE

--and the lady was asking and the guy
was staring and it just came out!

BABS

Un-freakin-believable! Jesus, Hope,
you don't know where this guy's
been! Or where "it's" been--yeech!
Not to mention the fact that "David
Cassidy" could be cleaning out your
house at this very moment!

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

David vacuums. Does dishes. Takes out the trash.

EXT. OUTDOOR BAR & CAFÉ - DAY

Hope and Babs have margarita mellowed.

HOPE

There was just something about him.
When I saw him on TV, I felt... It
was so weird.

BABS

There's the understatement of the
new millennium.

HOPE

And then the dream. God--the dream.

BABS

Dreams are dreams, girlfriend.

HOPE

But dreams can come true, if you pursue them. When I saw him in person, when our eyes met... I don't expect you to understand.

BABS

He's really a nice guy, huh?

HOPE

Sure seems to be. Very nice.

BABS

And gorgeous?

HOPE

Oh yeah.

BABS

Stranger things have happened. I don't personally know of any... You know, if he really can't remember anything, you can tell him whatever you want, make him your ideal man.

(beat)

So--you fuck this guy yet or what?

Hope spit-sprays her margarita.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Glistening with sweat, David mows the lawn. Hope drives up.

HOPE

Thank you!

DAVID

Don't I always do this?

HOPE

Uh--yeah! Then I take you to dinner.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Hope is dolled up. Wearing one of the new suits, David stands in front of the mirror, pulls at the waist.

DAVID

Must've lost some weight. Have you seen my watch?

HOPE
Shoot! I mean, you were probably wearing it--when--you know.

DAVID
Right. I'll have to get a new one.

INT. HOPE'S GARAGE - EVENING

Hope and David walk to the Beetle.

DAVID
Want me to drive?

HOPE
Uh--no--that's OK.

EXT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - EVENING

Hope puts the Beetle in "Park," turns to David,

HOPE
I'll just be a minute.

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Hope frantically dials the phone, grabbing two tickets to the huge COMDEX computer trade show.

HOPE
Babs! Does that computer geek you went out with still work at the DMV?

INT. DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES - EVENING

Hope and David sit at the COMPUTER GEEK's window. He stealthily types in information, prints out a drivers licence form and slides it to David for his signature. Hope smiles and slips the Geek two tickets to COMDEX as they walk away.

COMPUTER GEEK
Awesome. COMDEX! Awesome.

Elsewhere, David's picture is taken. Moments later, a DMV EMPLOYEE calls out,

DMV EMPLOYEE
David Cassidy?

The DMV CROWD turn their heads excitedly, then GROAN when they see it's just David. He's handed his Nevada licence.

INT. GATSBY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Epicurean elegance tucked inside the MGM Grand. Hope and David peruse menus, sip wine, pick at a bowl of bread.

DAVID
Went to the bookstore today. And
the library. Couldn't find any of
my novels.

Hope CHOKES on bread! David jumps, pats her back, offers her water. She regains her composure.

HOPE
That's because you haven't been
published yet.

DAVID
Not published? I'm that bad, huh?

HOPE
No! You--Would you excuse?

David stands as she leaves the table.

INT. GATSBY'S LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Hope talks to her reflection in the mirror.

HOPE
He's a good writer, he just--he's
had a dry spell. His entire life?
What kind of career is that? What
am I gonna tell him?

A toilet flushes. A stall door opens and an attractive middle aged WOMAN in a tight sequined gown advises,

WOMAN

Tell him whatever he wants to hear,
dear, just get the money up front.

INT. GATSBY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

David stands, holds her chair as Hope returns to the table.
They sit. And sit. Finally,

DAVID

I suck.

HOPE

What?

DAVID

As a writer. I suck.

HOPE

No!

DAVID

I'm a derelict dramatist. A no-
talent troglodyte. A--

HOPE

No, no, no! You're--an artistic,
soul searching spirit, that's what
inspires you. But you're also a
shrewd businessman, and you're
waiting for the right publishing
deal.

DAVID

A tortured artist with business
savvy, huh? Is that what finally
led to my little personal
apocalypse? Face it, Hope, I'm just
an arrogant jackass who's wasted his
life kidding himself and finally had
a mental breakdown.

HOPE

Stop it! Why are you doing this?

DAVID

Because I don't remember anything!
I know things, I feel things inside,
strong, burning things, but I just
can't reach that part of my brain.

HOPE

Oh, David--there's something I--

DAVID

(takes her hand)

Please, let me finish. I can't reach that part of my brain--

(her hand to his chest)

--but I can feel my heart. I don't know what I'd do without you, Hope. I know this entire ordeal has been hell for you, but I'll make it up to you, I promise. As God is my witness, I will be worthy of you.

(kisses her hand)

Now, what did you want to tell me?

HOPE

(grabs a large roll)

I--I--

DAVID

What is it, Sweetheart?

HOPE

(bites roll, gulps wine)

I hear the scaloppine's to die for.

DAVID

Great. So, tell me. What kind of alleged novels does this alleged novelist write anyway?

HOPE

(mouth stuffed full)

Wr-r-r-r...romanth nobles.

DAVID

I'm sorry, did you say romance novels?

HOPE

Mm-hmmf.

DAVID

So I'm a soulful, business savvy, unpublished romance novelist?

Mouth bread-packed and dripping wine, Hope nods emphatically.

EXT. THE LAS VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT

David and Hope exit the MGM Grand hotel, the world's largest, beneath its gigantic bronze lion statue, the world's largest. Ahead, the Statue Of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge and skyline of New York-New York. To its right, the Monte Carlo. Up the street, the Eiffel Tower and Arc de Triomphe of The Paris.

DAVID
New York, Monte Carlo, Paris--Name
it and it's yours.

Hope giggles. Hand in hand, they stroll up the Strip.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Tell me more about me.

HOPE
You sure are handsome.

DAVID
Oh yeah, I'm hot. Seriously. I
don't know, what about--politics?

HOPE
Well--you've got a conservative
head, a liberal heart, and
libertarian spirit.

DAVID
Political anomaly.

HOPE
Oh-too-silent majority. You're
chivalrous and sweet, and kind,
honest, loyal.

DAVID
Combination Don Quixote/Boy Scout.

HOPE
Funny and witty and charming.
Romantic, affectionate, passionate.
And--Mmm--masculine.

DAVID

A stud to boot.

HOPE

And we're happy, just being
together.

David stops, spins her around, pulls her close.

DAVID

I am happy just being together.

HOPE

Really?

They kiss. The dancing waters of Bellagio's lake SPRAY up to
the sky and MUSIC fills the air.

DAVID

I feel so lucky.

Hope grins.

INT. HARRAH'S CASINO - NIGHT

The "Fun Pit" inside Harrah's--low stakes and lots of fun.
David and Hope sit at a crowded blackjack table. He wins
one hand, loses another. Finally, he cashes out with \$60, a
smile on his face, and Hope on his arm.

Nearing the exit, carrying a change bucket containing only
half a dozen quarters, David stops at a "Wheel Of Fortune"
progressive slot machine. He plunks in three quarters,
presses the button.....Goose egg. He smiles at Hope.

DAVID

Oh well--I already hit the jackpot.

He pulls her close, plunks in his last three quarters,
pushes the button.....Bells RING, lights FLASH--a \$1,732.75
jackpot!

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - POOL AND JACUZZI - NIGHT

Steam rises seductively from the water into the winter air.
Hope in a bikini, David a Speedo, they swim across the
lighted pool, slither over the tile wall into the bubbling
jacuzzi. They reach for their wine glasses on the deck.

DAVID

Since I'm having all this trouble
remembering things, remind me: Who
stole the stars from the skies and
put them in your eyes?

Hope melts, puts down her wine glass, grins,

HOPE
C'mere, you troglodyte...

She pulls the bikini string around her neck. They make
love.

HOPE (O.S.)
I love you.

DAVID (O.S.)
Boomerang--right back to you.

MONTAGE - UPBEAT CHRISTMAS MUSIC PLAYS OVER

- A) Hope radiates in her office. Nat is puzzled.
- B) Lady watches David fix some loose kitchen tiles.
- C) Hope directs dozens of workers setting up a huge array
of items inside the cavernous Convention Center.
- D) David buys a dozen romance paperbacks, pays cash.
- E) David reads a romance novel--he grimaces, Lady WHIMPERS.

DAVID
"He nuzzled her swollen bosom like a
baby, but he was a man, a big, brutish
man, a wild beast, his golden mane
cascading over her boiling cauldron of
womanhood as he ravished her." Bluck!

- F) Hope walks the mall, buying Christmas decorations, etc.
- G) David visits a cluster of old antique shops.
- H) Two teenage boys struggle to shove a large Christmas
tree into the hatch of Hope's Beetle.
- I) David struggles at the home computer, pecks the
keyboard.
His pecks gradually blossom into legitimate typing.

J) David and Hope flip the switch, lighting their beautifully decorated Christmas Tree. Lady BARKS her approval.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hope looks up as David enters the room, carrying the romance paperbacks boxed up for Goodwill.

DAVID
I wanted to write this drivel?
(Hope shrugs)
It's so weird, Hope, the things I remember, the things I just don't believe. Like you.

HOPE
Li-Li-Like me?

DAVID
I can't explain it. I feel this sense of, I don't know, yearning, an enormous unquenched aspiration, something--so close, yet so far away.

HOPE
Oh, God.

DAVID
Then there's you. My soul mate. And that is so real.

HOPE
It is?

DAVID
I skimmed this stuff and figured maybe that's why I snapped.

HOPE
It was?

DAVID
I mean, I'm broke, except for the money I won gambling the other night. But I don't even have a bank account. These books sell millions. Some of the writers who churn them out make millions. Don't you see? I craved money so much, I didn't

care what I had to write to get it.
And when I realized the shallowness
of my life, "Bam!" I just snapped.
Slowly but surely, I'm gonna figure
everything out. I guarantee it.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David and Hope get ready for bed.

DAVID

I did some research at the library.
I was trying to find a new angle on
that romance drivel. Anyway, I
found out some interesting
historical facts. Take the ancient
Romans, for instance. They believed
in the romantic potency of eating
hippopotamus snouts.

HOPE

Gross!

DAVID

Think that's bad? They also ate
hyena eyes to turn themselves on.

HOPE

Gee, I'm getting hot and hungry.

DAVID

They had fertility festivals where
women masqueraded as wolves and
pranced around, desperate to be
whipped by guys wearing ceremonial
loincloths.

HOPE

You know what they say about a man
in uniform.

DAVID

Oranges were huge. Chinese men
would share slices with their
favorite concubines and sprinkle
orange blossoms on their beds. And
the Europeans believed that to
attract a lover, you make pin pricks
in an orange then sleep with it

under your armpit. Whoever eats the
orange will fall in love with you.

She turns toward him. He pulls out an orange. She grins.

HOPE
You don't have any hippo snout on
you by any chance?

DAVID
No, but I've got a killer loincloth
under this robe.

HOPE
I bet you say that to all the
concubines.

DAVID
Hey, I only have hyena eyes for you.

LATER - IN BED

David and Hope spoon in bed, basking in passion's afterglow.

HOPE
This is what I've always wanted, how
I always knew it could be.
(beat)
How do you feel about children?

DAVID
Something you're not telling me?

HOPE
I'm serious.

DAVID
Haven't we talked about this before?

HOPE
No.

DAVID
I love children. Being a good
father, a good husband, those are
the most important things a man can
do.

They kiss.

HOPE

So, if you're not going to, um, you know, write anymore--

DAVID

Who said I'm not going to write anymore? I have an idea for a novel.

HOPE

You do?

DAVID

Already working on it.

HOPE

You are? What's it about?

DAVID

It's a lot more Dickensonian than the romance novel stuff--not to flatter myself. I guess it's about the triumph of hope over experience.

(beat)

Writing's very safe. I mean, you control what happens, you control the outcome. You can't have that kind of control in real life...

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Hope uses the Xerox machine. Nat waits behind her.

NAT

Reproducing, eh? Can I help?

(Hope rolls her eyes)

Going to the office Christmas party?

HOPE

For the obligatory ten minutes.

NAT

I know what you mean. We could slip away to our own private party.

She thrusts her diamond ring in his face.

NAT (CONT'D)

That'd look great on my nightstand.

HOPE
I'm engaged, Nat.

She walks off.

NAT
Engaged? Since when? Hey! Who is
this bum?!

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David's at the stove. Hope enters, sniffs the aroma.

DAVID
Hi, Hon.

HOPE
You cook?
(stunned by the
stove)
Grilled scallops...

DAVID
Awesome jumbo sea scallops at that
market on Valley View.

HOPE
Triticale berry-rice pilaf? But
how--?

DAVID
And for desert?

He opens the freezer and retrieves a box of,

HOPE
Eskimo Pies...

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The fireplace crackles. Christmas music plays. Hope lays
against David's chest as they share an Eskimo Pie.

DAVID
What about my family?

HOPE
Your family?

DAVID

My parents.

HOPE

Oh God--your parents...

DAVID

That's what I thought.

HOPE

It is?

DAVID

You don't have to coddle me, Hope.
I know they would've been the first
ones you called if--they were alive.

HOPE

Oh God...

DAVID

I'm okay. In a way it's easier.
You don't want your parents to see
you as a failure. I just wish we
hadn't lost the photo albums in the
accident.

HOPE

(fighting her tears)
Accident?

DAVID

The trailer fire, when we were
moving.

HOPE

Oh, right.

DAVID

Are your parents..?

HOPE

Yes, they live in Florida.

DAVID

I'm kinda afraid to ask but--what do
they think of me?

HOPE

Eh--well--they haven't met you.

DAVID

I haven't met my future in-laws? I didn't ask your father for your hand? That's not me. And if it was, it ain't anymore. Let's call them!

HOPE

Who?

DAVID

Your parents.

HOPE

My parents? Call my parents??

DAVID

You're right. I'm sorry. I forgot about the time difference. It's after midnight back there.

HOPE

Oh, God...

DAVID

I didn't mean to upset you, Honey.

He pulls her close, kisses the top of her head. A guilty tear rolls down her cheek.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Besides, we're a family now, you and me. Pretty soon I'd like to start adding to our family. And don't you worry, Princess. We'll make a million times more memories than the ones I've lost, and we'll fill more photo albums than you can imagine.

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David is asleep in bed, alone.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - POOL AREA - NIGHT

Clenching her bathrobe, Hope is curled in a lounge chair, staring at the stars, tears streaming from her eyes.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

By the light of the Christmas tree, Hope scans David's things, books he's bought, note pads. She stumbles upon a printout of his manuscript, and curiously flips to a page.

DAVID (V.O.)

In the summer, flowering white
dogwoods, radiant crabapples. In
winter, majestic ponderosas a
hundred feet high and twice as aged,
cloaked in coats of snow. Alas, the
estate's aura was hotelesque,
someplace you stayed, not lived.

Hope closes the manuscript. A piece of scrap paper falls out, a hand written poem, "For Hope." She reads:

DAVID (V.O.)

Had I no eyes but ears, my ears
would love that inward beauty and
invisible; or were I deaf, thy
outward parts would move each part
in me that were but sensible: Though
neither eyes nor ears, to hear nor
see, yet should I be in love by
touching thee. Say, that the sense
of feeling were bereft of me, and
that I could not see, nor hear, nor
touch, and nothing but the very
small were left of me, yet would my
love for thee be still as much.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - CHRISTMAS DAY - MORNING

FLASH! A camera sits on a tripod near the Christmas tree. Blinded by the flash, Hope and David laugh. Lady waddles around in a new sweater, a Santa hat on her head. Stockings have been emptied, several presents opened. David hands Hope a small gift wrapped box.

DAVID

Merry Christmas.

Hope opens it--Inside, a beautiful antique gold Irish Claddaugh ring: A heart encircled by a pair of delicate hands and topped by a royal crown.

HOPE

It's beautiful.

DAVID

It's a Claddaugh ring, from 17th century Ireland. I found it in an antique shop. The heart symbolizes love, the hands friendship and faith, and the crown loyalty and fidelity. "In love and friendship let us reign."

Hope hugs him.

HOPE

You have one more.

She retrieves a slender, exquisitely decorated box and hands it to him. He opens it: Inside, an antique Waltham white gold and black enamel Art Deco vintage watch with flexible lugs--THE watch. David stares at it, starts to zone out, his eyes glazing over, his head dizzy.

HOPE (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

DAVID

It's beautiful, it's...

HOPE

I found it in an antique shop too. OK, it was a pawn shop, but anyway, I was walking by and saw it in the window and fell in love with it.

David straps the watch on, stares at it, gets dizzy.

HOPE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

DAVID

Too much eggnog I guess.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Hope goes to the front door, opens it: A pissed off Babs stands holding a bakery box.

BABS

Fa la lala la, la la freakin' la!

HOPE

What are you doing here?? I thought you went back East??

BABS

Every freakin' airport northeast of Cleveland is snowed in. I've been sitting down at McCarran for 42 freakin' hours.

(hands over the box)

Here. Fruitcake. Uncle Pedro is going to be so disappointed. Speaking of fruitcake, where's Keith Partridge?

HOPE

Don't screw this up for me, Babs!

BABS

Tranquilizate, huh? I know the drill. He and I have known each other for years! It'll be great to see me again.

She walks into the living room, Hope right on her tail. David looks up from his watch, smiles. Babs is amazed.

DAVID

Merry Christmas.

BABS

Ay dios mio!

DAVID

Babs?

BABS

Told ya he'd remember me! Who could forget all those great times we had together? C'mere, papi chulo.

She hugs him, "accidentally" grabs his butt, gives him a sustained kiss on the mouth. Hope fumes. David politely pulls away, chuckles.

BABS

Ay caramaba...

EXT. DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS - CHRISTMAS PARADE - DAY

David, Hope and Babs watch the parade floats and bands go by along with thousands of spectators lining the streets.

Across the street is Nat, scanning the crowd for babes. He spots Hope and company, stares curiously.

Babs gawks. Hope elbows her. David blows on his cold hands.

DAVID

You ladies want something hot?

BABS

Whaddaya have in mind?

DAVID

Coffee? Cocoa?

HOPE

Yes, thanks, Honey.

BABS

(as David walks off)

Mira, I don't know how naughty or nice you've been, but Santa was extremely good to you this year.

HOPE

It's the most amazing, incredible thing that's ever happened to me! The other night he cooked my favorite dinner. How'd he know what my favorite dinner was?

BABS

Lucky guess.

HOPE

Triticale berry-rice pilaf side dish??

BABS

You must've mentioned it.

HOPE

No! And he wrote me a poem. And, God, we think so much alike.

BABS

Just like the personals ad.

HOPE

He makes this strange noise when he's brushing his teeth--

(gargles funny,
hacks)
--and it just melts my heart!

BABS
That is so *sángano*.

HOPE
I know!, isn't it great? God, I
want to do all these things for him,
wash his clothes and rub his feet
and look pretty for him and--

BABS
Never mind all that. Has he
introduced you to "Mr. Kincaid" yet?

HOPE
And--he's the most romantic, most
caring, most passionate, most
talented lover any woman could ever
want.

BABS
That does it.
(looks, whistles)
Taxi! St. Vincent's, *avanza!*

NAT (O.S.)
St. Vincent's?

They turn around--Nat is checking out Babs.

NAT (CONT'D)
Feliz Navidad.

HOPE
Babs, this is Nat.

BABS
The *pendejo* you told me about?

NAT
Babs, eh?
(touching her arm)
Sure it isn't "Babe?"

BABS
Move that hand or number the bones
so you can bring'em all home in a
plastic bag.

NAT

So where's lover boy? I saw him
from across the street. He looked
familiar. Really familiar.

Hope and Babs exchange nervous glances.

HOPE

Look, Nat, you should go.

NAT

Go? Oh no, no, no. Not until I
meet my competition.

BABS

*Mira--sángano--*if you don't leave
right now, I'll bash your brains
till the lice start chirping!

NAT

Alright, I'm goin'. But I know I've
seen that guy someplace before.

He walks off.

HOPE

I want you to do something for me.

BABS

Does it involve you going out of
town for an extended period of time
and me baby-sitting Mr. Cassidy?

HOPE

I'm serious. I want you to check
the airline records, see if you can
find the names of anyone who flew
into Las Vegas but never left.

BABS

I work at a travel agency, Hope, not
the freakin' FBI!

HOPE

Just for, say, the last month or so.

BABS

Why don't you hire a freakin'
detective if you wanna know so much?

HOPE

What the heck am I supposed to tell
a detective?

BABS

You know how many people come to
Vegas each month--three million.
Each month, three million! And
wouldn't you know it? A lot of
those people fly! On airplanes!
Besides, he might just be some schmo
from Toledo who decided to go
Greyhound.

HOPE

I know, but, won't you at least--

David returns with steaming styrofoam cups. Hope's eyes
plead--Babs' reply "I'll try."

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Hope hustles down the hall, secretively scanning a legal
pad. She bumps into Mr. Dolan.

DOLAN

Whoa there!

HOPE

Sorry, Mr. Dolan.

DOLAN

Great job on the oil show last week.

HOPE

Thanks.

DOLAN

How's WRITEX coming along?

HOPE

WRITEX? Eh--Right on!

LATER - HOPE'S DESK

Hope checks her pad, dials the phone, speaks in a hushed
tone.

HOPE

Idaho State Police? Iowa, sorry. I was wondering if you had any recent missing persons cases, white male, very handsome...

(listens)

No, he is not single! I think...

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

David types his novel, Lady asleep by his side. The words rush from his head, through his fingertips, onto the screen.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Hope continues her detective work.

HOPE

Unsolved Mysteries? Have you had a recent case of a man--Caucasian, thirties, handsome--disappearing or being kidnaped, anything like that?

(listens)

Nothing? Thanks anyway.

She hangs up, checks her pad, dials another number.

HOPE

Hi, America's Most Wanted?

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Very late. Hope reads more of David's manuscript.

DAVID (V.O.)

School didn't hold much interest. He was a straight A student, as required. But he preferred slipping away from St. Mary's Prep to wander Manhattan.

EXT. SAINT MARY'S PREP SCHOOL - MANY YEARS AGO - DAY

David kisses his teen GIRLFRIEND on the cheek and slaps his BEST FRIEND on the shoulder, then takes off into the city.

DAVID (V.O.)

He loved movies, especially old ones, with heroes, where the guy gets the girl in the end. He'd play cat and mouse with employees at the old Greenwich Village theater, sneaking in and out of matinees.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE RENAISSANCE THEATER - DAY

David slips into an exit door one step ahead of an usher.

DAVID (V.O.)

He loved the sport of it. He was caught once. His father gave him a severe tongue lashing, reminding him that life was not a game.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE GAME - MANY YEARS AGO - DAY

7-year-old David plays baseball with other little boys. Parents watch and root them on, including a particularly enthusiastic MAN IN HIS 50s wearing a baseball cap and a "Kappy's Sandwich Shop" t-shirt.

DAVID (V.O.)

Not a game. Every time he heard that phrase it reminded him of little league. His team was sponsored by Star Realty. They were playing the team backed by Kappy's Sandwich Shop. The game couldn't have gone better for the young slugger. A home run in the very first inning. A triple in the third. A stolen base in the fifth. A spectacular diving catch in the sixth--spectacular for a little boy. But his father didn't come to the games like the other dads.

Another boy comes over to young David: Little Robert Raley.

ROB

Wicked game, Davey!

YOUNG DAVID

Boomerang, Robby!

They slap a "high five." Young David eyes the majestic Rockies.

YOUNG DAVID (CONT'D)
Boy them mountains are cool. Gonna
build me a cabin up there one day.

DAVID (V.O.)
His team had won, six to two. As he
walked off the playing field, Eskimo
Pie trophy in hand, the pint-sized
slugger couldn't believe his eyes!
There stood his father.

His face smeared with chocolate, Young David's eyes go wide:
He drops his melting Eskimo Pie and races over to his
FATHER.

YOUNG DAVID
Dad! Did you see my home run, Dad??
Did you see my triple?? My stolen
base?? Did you see my diving
catch??

DAVID'S FATHER
You bobbled that easy lob in the
eighth inning.

The little boy is crestfallen.

DAVID'S FATHER (CONT'D)
Perhaps you need a different glove.

David's father heads for the car. Dejected David stares at
the ground, then something catches his eye: A CUTE LITTLE
GIRL smiles at him. David beams! The man in the "Kappy's
Sandwich Shop" shirt grins. David's father notices, marches
over, grabs David's hand and pulls him away.

INT. TRENDY HEALTH CLUB - DAY

PAN DOWN a long row of treadmills, each occupied by WALKERS,
every single one yakking on a cell phone. Last in the row
is Babs, puffing and sweating profusely. The machine next
to her opens up--Hope bounds onto it.

HOPE
New York!

BABS
Hey! I'm tryin' to walk here!

HOPE

You do realize that you drive a \$30,000 four wheel drive vehicle on paved city streets to a building where you pay \$400 a year to walk indoors on a conveyor belt?

BABS

OK! OK! New York what?

HOPE

I think he's from New York!

BABS

What makes you think that? He doesn't talk like he's from New York.

HOPE

His manuscript. He's writing about New York, places and streets--

BABS

You went to New York, with me, remember? Statue of Liberty? Broadway? The guy who threw up on your shoes? Besides, anyone who's seen reruns of Seinfeld could do that. Whaddaya wanna do this for? Why risk wrecking it? So many people meet the wrong person the right way--you just met the right person the wrong way. I haven't seen you this happy since--I've never seen you this happy!

HOPE

Am I happy because I'm in love with David, or because I'm in love with someone I made up? And what about him? What if he has a wife, kids? People who are worried about him?

BABS

Obviously they ain't too worried. You don't see his picture on no milk cartons, do ya? No posters, news stories? Cops ain't knockin' on your door. I've seen more effort put into finding a lost gerbil.

(off Hope's pleading look)

Aw-right aw-ready! When I get back
to the aw-fice I'll have a cup of
caw-fee and see what I can find.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

David's at the computer. Hope sneaks a peek over his
shoulder.

HOPE
How's the writing?

DAVID
Just flying out of my fingers. But
one thing I really can't remember is
feeling this exhausted sitting in a
chair all day.

The TELEPHONE RINGS.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - NIGHT

Cradling her phone, Babs studies a computer printout.

BABS
I got some info for you. 1,809
males from New York have flown into
Vegas and not yet flown out since
December first. 602 were traveling
with female companions, 294 were
part of a family, leaving 913 male
travelers either flying alone or
with other, unrelated males. It's
impossible to tell.

HOPE (V.O.)
(whispering)
Make me a copy.

BABS
Of 913 names? What, you gonna
read'em off one by one and see if he
recognizes anybody?

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

David and Hope push a cart around the huge hardware store, gathering home and yard supplies. David reads the label on a bag of fertilizer. Hope sneaks a peek into her purse.

HOPE
Mike Maroni.

No reaction from David. Hope peeks, feigns a cough.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Aaron McBain.
(no reaction)
Steve Dayton? David Schwartz?

DAVID
I'm sorry, Honey, what?

HOPE
David Schwartz?

DAVID
Who's David Schwartz?

HOPE
Oh, just--somebody I have to call.
Business.

David goes back to the bag label. Hope sneaks another peek at the list, struggles to pronounce the name:

HOPE
Akk--Akk--Akmed--Akmed Mohammed
Akkhaha--Akkhahaha--Akkkkk!

Hope realizes David and other PATRONS are staring at her.

HOPE (CONT'D)
I just need some water.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - POOL AND JACUZZI - DAY

David checks the pool's PH. Hope approaches with an address book, the printout from Babs folded within its pages.

HOPE
I was just updating our address
book. Is William Collins a friend
of yours?

DAVID

Don't recognize the name. Could be.

HOPE
How about Milton Glaser?

DAVID
Doesn't ring a bell.

HOPE
Hmm... Can I read your book?

DAVID
It's not finished. I want you to wait until I'm done so I can get the same reaction a publisher's gonna have, OK? I trust you.

MONTAGE - HOPE AND DAVID FALLING DEEPER IN LOVE

- A) David and Hope picnic and feed the swans at Sunset Park.
- B) Wet'n Wild: They play like kids on the water rides.
- C) Dressed to the nines, they tour the new Guggenheim Museum.
- D) Hoover Dam: David and Hope look in awe, then tour inside.
- E) Lake Mead: As in "From Here To Eternity," Hope and David kiss passionately on the sands of Boulder Beach.

DAVID
Hope? Do you think some people live their lives, I mean their entire life, based on what others think?

HOPE
I suppose they--I mean, yeah...

- F) Red Rock Canyon: David and Hope ride horses through the spectacular mountains and canyons ten miles and thousands of years from The Strip. David studies the mountain peaks as if they're familiar, momentarily gets dizzy.

HOPE
I love it up here.

DAVID

Those mountains are so cool...

INT. SMALL CASINO - LOW RENT LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

A bingo room is packed with old ladies--and Nat, frustrated, a pile of spent losing bingo cards in front of him. The CALLER calls out numbers. The OLD LADY next to Nat yells,

OLD LADY

Bingo!

Nat shakes his head, checks his wallet--empty. He gets up and heads for an ATM machine. It's out of order. He finds another, dead too. A SECURITY GUARD informs him,

SECURITY GUARD

All our ATMs are down.

EXT. LOW RENT LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

Nat exits the casino, looks around, spots a tall bank sign and starts up the sidewalk. He takes a dark, seedy shortcut. He walks past St. Vincent's homeless shelter and scoffs.

NAT

Losers.

Nat reaches the bank, gets cash from the ATM. He starts back toward the casino. Out of the darkness step the same two Drifters who mugged David. Nat's knees tremble.

DRIFTER #1

Buddy, can I talk to you for a minute?

NAT

Wha--Whaddaya want?

DRIFTER #1

Can you help a coupl'a veterans down on their luck?

NAT

Sorry, I don't have any money.

Drifter #1 nods toward the ATM machine and grins. Drifter #2 wraps David's belt around his fist. Nat is petrified. A POLICE SIREN CHIRPS.

POLICE P.A.

Move along.

The Drifters give Nat a menacing look, then walk off.

NAT

Lucky for you the cops showed up or-

-

POLICE P.A.

Move it! Now!

Nat nods nervously, crosses the street.

Several homeless, sad men stand, sit, and lie sleeping in front of St. Vincent's Shelter. Nat's truly uncomfortable. The sadness and loneliness appear to touch him. He stops.

A particular HOMELESS MAN catches Nat's eye--he's quite good looking, wearing a tattered suit. They stare at each other. A light bulb goes on--Nat grins.

NAT

Bingo.

INT. LAS VEGAS CONVENTION CENTER OFFICES - DAY

Hope walks down the hall past Mr. Dolan's office.

DOLAN (O.S.)

Hope, may I see you please?

INT. DOLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Dolan looks solemn. Hope looks nervous.

DOLAN

Close the door. Have a seat.

HOPE

Why do I get the feeling you have something serious to tell me?

DOLAN

Because I do. I mean, how long can a person honestly expect to keep a thing like this a secret? Sooner or later everyone's bound to find out.

The gossip's already started and we both know good gossip runs on wheels with every hand greasin' it as it goes. So no use puttin' it off.

Hope bows her head, awaits the ax.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

In this position, obviously I've made some pretty powerful, influential friends and acquaintances. Some of those friends and acquaintances have convinced me to run for mayor.

HOPE

Ma-ma-ma--Mayor?

(laughs)

That's it? You're running for mayor?

DOLAN

You find that amusing?

HOPE

No! No, sir! It's fabulous!

DOLAN

Thank you. Now, obviously they're going to have to find a replacement for me. I'm recommending you.

HOPE

Me?

DOLAN

You've done a helluva job here, Hope. I've never seen anyone with both the intestinal fortitude and genuine sweetness you possess. You've got more balls than most men I know yet you're more feminine than most women I know. Lately you've been positively glowing. Not pregnant, are you?

Hope LAUGHS NERVOUSLY, unsure...

INT. HOPE'S OFFICE - DAY

Hope works at her desk. A PASSERSBY give her thumbs up.

PASSERBY

I'll keep my fingers crossed!

Hope smiles. Nat slithers in, devilish grin.

NAT

Why be with a zero when you could be with a hero? I can't believe no one else figured it out. Then again I do possess rare powers of observation, among other things.

HOPE

What the heck are you talking about?

NAT

Mr. Will-Work-For-Food! How do you think Dolan would feel about recommending you for his job if he knew you had a fetish for vagabonds?

Hope jumps up, shuts her door.

HOPE

What do you want?

NAT

A date.

HOPE

What??

NAT

On New Year's Eve!

HOPE

No! I couldn't. I wouldn't!

NAT

It's shocking, really. When Dolan finds out that his star employee has sex with street people. Not a very good image for the city.

HOPE

Why do you want to go out with me, Nat? I don't even like you!

NAT

Au contraire! You don't really know me. A situation I intend to rectify.

HOPE
God... Not New Year's Eve.

NAT
Well, how about next Friday night?

HOPE
Next Friday, next Friday... If I go out with you--once!--you'll keep your mouth shut and leave me alone?

NAT
I'm like a Lays potato chip--one just won't be enough. But if you feel that way after our little tête-à-tête? Okay.

HOPE
Don't you even think about lays or tête-à-têtes!
(closes her eyes)
Okay...

MONTAGE - TIME SEQUENCE

- A) Hope's desk calendar shows December 27, OVER...
- B) SUPERIMPOSE - David and Hope doing their life...
- C) The calendar pages turn--December 28... December 29...
December 30... December 31...

EXT. LAS VEGAS - NEW YEAR'S EVE - NIGHT

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF REVELERS mob the Strip. ROCK BANDS play at the Fremont Experience. ERRANT FIREWORKS explode. The countdown begins: "Ten, Nine, Eight..."

EXT. TOP OF THE STRATOSPHERE TOWER - NIGHT

A quarter mile in the sky, REVELERS crowd the outdoor observation deck with its stunning view, David and Hope among them. "...Seven, Six, Five..."

HOPE
I love you, David.

DAVID
Boomerang.
(they kiss)
Let's get married! Tonight!

"...Four, Three, Two, One--Happy New Year!" David and Hope kiss passionately, sky rockets, fireworks and glittering confetti exploding all around them!

EXT. LITTLE WHITE WEDDING CHAPEL - DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT

The "Tunnel Of Love" is a drive-thru canopy with angels and Elvis lyrics painted above. TRAFFIC HONKING, a long line of idling cars ahead, Hope's Beetle can't even make it within 300 feet of the entrance on Las Vegas Blvd. Nervous sighs. Shrugs. Resigned, they pull out of line and drive off.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Her Claddagh ring sparkles in the firelight as melancholy Hope fingers it. David enters in his bathrobe, realizes.

DAVID
Coming to bed, Hon? You've been up
since last year.

HOPE
I just need to be alone for a while.

DAVID
No matter what it is, remember:
Above the cloud with its shadow is
the star with its light.
(kisses her
forehead)
You know where to find me.

He exits. Hope wanders the room, touches the dying Christmas tree--dry needles fall to the floor. She goes to the desk, flips open David's manuscript, begins to read.

EXT. BOOT CAMP - YEARS EARLIER - DAY

A ramshackle bus pulls into the Army boot camp. Younger David steps off sporting a crewcut and private's uniform. He and OTHERS head for a Quonset hut office building.

DAVID (V.O.)
He thought about that last day at St. Mary's--graduation. How his father hadn't shown up but simply phoned in his arrangements. Dreams of the Ivy Leagues were replaced by the nightmare of Army fatigues. He needed discipline, his father said. Sadness filled him to the marrow, but his father had taught him that real men don't indulge emotions.

INT. QUONSET HUT OFFICE - YEARS EARLIER - DAY

A SERGEANT processes his new men.

DAVID (V.O.)
"Next," the sergeant called routinely.

Younger David steps up to the sergeant's desk.

DAVID (V.O.) (CONT'D)
He kept repeating to himself, over and over, that the experience would be worthwhile, perhaps invaluable. And it was only two years. "Name?" the sergeant asked. He didn't notice.

INT. BABS' APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Babs sits on the toilet seat cover, her face caked with a plastic-looking exfoliating mask--the slightest facial movement causes terrible pain. The TELEPHONE RINGS. She clenches her teeth.

BABS
Shit...

That cracks more of the tight mask--she SCREAMS!, causing more pain--she looks epileptic. Teeth clenched, she struggles to minimize her anguish as she answers,

BABS (CONT'D)

What??

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - POOL AND JACUZZI - NIGHT

Face puffy from crying, Hope talks on a cordless phone.

HOPE
Happy New Year. Busy?

INTERCUT - BABS AND HOPE

BABS
Yeah, I'm having wild sex with a
couple of Chippendale dancers.
(winces as the mask
cracks, SCREAMS)
They're kinda rough.

HOPE
Do you remember when you were
little, playing with Barbie, and
Ken, fantasizing about your dream
man, your dream relationship. You'd
pretend that Ken was everything
Barbie ever wanted, only really it
was everything you wanted.

BABS
Look, Hope, I'm kinda--Shit!

HOPE
And later, in junior high, drawing
hearts around a boy's name, adding
his last name to your first name,
putting "Mrs." in front of it.
(starts crying)
Is that what I've done, Babs? Am I
totally, completely in love with a
schoolgirl fantasy? Is David really
the way he is, or have I made him
that way because I told him how he
was, who he was? Have I stolen the
life of an innocent man because my
own life is so pathetic?

BABS
Wha--Shit! Hang on.

She grabs a wet towel and scrubs the exfoliate off her face.

BABS (CONT'D)

First of all, you're a sweet, attractive, professional woman who's managed to make a pretty nice life for herself in a pretty screwed up world. Second, you plucked this guy out of a dumpster and plunked him into a very nice home. Third, Ken was gay--everybody knew that!

HOPE

I'm afraid, Babs, so afraid of losing him. But I have to fill in his life for him. I have to...

INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lady snores at the foot of the bed. Hope crawls in behind sleeping David. A tear rolls off her cheek onto his bare back.

EXT. TRAVEL AGENCY - MORNING

The crack of dawn. Babs' SUV pulls into the empty parking lot.

INT. INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

Lori answers the phone. Wayne and Channing can be seen in the background through a cracked door, going over maps.

LORI

Good morning, Investar.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

The maid Isabella is on the phone.

MAID

Yes, this is Isabella, Mr. David's housekeeper. You heard from him?

INTERCUT - INVESTAR OFFICES AND DAVID'S HOUSE

LORI

No, we haven't heard from Mr. Knight.

MAID

His cell phone is not working and...

Wayne gets a heads up, goes to the phone, takes it from Lori.

WAYNE

Hi, Wayne Benson. Don't worry about Mr. Knight. Remember the time he went to Montana and Wyoming for like three weeks plus without a word? He's probably just negotiating another killer real estate deal.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Baggy eyed Babs types info into her computer. Cross referenced names, dates, locations scroll up the screen, followed by names of airlines, hotels, rental car companies.

She makes dozens of phone calls, shakes her head, frustrated.

Thousands of names and itineraries scroll up the screen...

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hope's on her way out the door when the TELEPHONE RINGS.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Babs wedges the phone between ear and shoulder.

BABS

Can you talk?

INTERCUT - HOPE AND BABS

Smiling, Hope touches a bud vase containing a beautiful rose from the garden.

HOPE

He went jogging, why?

BABS

After that inspirational phone call of yours I couldn't sleep. Go figure. So I came in and took

another crack at it. And I found a guy.

HOPE

Tell me!

BABS

December 19th, Continental flight 363 leaves Denver 6:55 PM, arrives Vegas 8:21 PM. Single male passenger bought a round trip ticket--First Class, open end return. That ain't cheap.

HOPE

What's his name??

BABS

Had a reservation at the Four Seasons. \$625 a night. Guy must be loaded. Anyway, he never checked in.

HOPE

What's his name, Babs?!

BABS

And he hasn't used his return ticket.

HOPE

Babs!!

BABS

OK! His name is David Knight.

HOPE

David Knight? David Knight...

Why is that familiar? Hope's eyes widen, she drops the phone.

BABS

Hello?

Hope frantically skims the pages of David's manuscript until she finds that page.

DAVID (V.O.)

"Next," the sergeant called routinely.

INSERT - BOOT CAMP OFFICE - YEARS EARLIER - DAY

Younger David stands at sergeant's desk.

SERGEANT
What's your name, boy?

YOUNGER DAVID
David Knight, sir.

BACK TO SCENE - Hope dashes back to the phone.

HOPE
It's him! God, it's him! Get me on
the next flight to Denver!

BABS
What?? What're you gonna do in
Denver?

INT. KINKO'S COPY CENTER - DAY

David's manuscript in hand, Hope dashes up to the counter.

HOPE
I need a copy of this.

A monotone EMPLOYEE picks up an order form.

EMPLOYEE
Name?

HOPE
I just need one copy.

EMPLOYEE
I need your name. Company policy.

HOPE
Hope Singleton.

EMPLOYEE
Address?

HOPE
Why?

EMPLOYEE

Company policy.

HOPE
3426 Bryant Avenue.

EMPLOYEE
Telephone number?

HOPE
I know! "Company policy!" 838-
0078.

EMPLOYEE
Number of copies?

HOPE
One! I just need one freakin' copy!

EMPLOYEE
All right then. It should be
ready... around four o'clock.

HOPE
Four o'clock?? I need it now!

EMPLOYEE
Well we do have self-service
machines.

Hope goes over to them. Frustrated and frantic, she copies the manuscript on a small Xerox machine, one page at a time.

INT. HOPE'S VW BEETLE - DAY

Hope speeds down the road. Something ahead catches her eye.

HOPE'S P.O.V. - David jogging a hundred feet ahead.

Hope hits the brakes and bangs a hard left down a side street.

EXT. MCNEIL ESTATES NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The streets of Hope's neighborhood form a large grid--north, south, east, west. David unwittingly plays cat-and-mouse with Hope--he zigs down one street, she zags down another, pulls U-turns, drives in reverse--as they get closer to home.

David jogs through an intersection without looking, mere feet in front of a PORSCHE--It screeches to a halt!

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

The real DAVID CASSIDY catches his breath and wipes his brow.

DAVID CASSIDY
Who the hell's that guy think he is?

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hope races inside. Lady cocks her head. Hope replaces the manuscript, dashes into the kitchen just as David enters.

HOPE
So late! Must hurry!

She bolts out the door. David shrugs, wipes off sweat, drinks a bottle of water. The TELEPHONE RINGS.

DAVID
Hello?

INT. HOPE'S VW BEETLE - DAY

Hope races toward the travel agency, talks on her cell phone.

HOPE
Hi.

INTERCUT - HOPE AND DAVID

DAVID
Miss me already?

HOPE
Yes... Um--I have to go out of town for a few days.

DAVID
Out of town?

HOPE
Yes. Very last minute. It's real important--business.

DAVID
Where are you going?

HOPE
Denver.

She winces, curses herself.

DAVID
Denver?

David gets dizzy. There's silence on the line.

HOPE
David?

DAVID
Yeah, sorry. Must've overdone it
with the running. Uh, why don't I
go with you? We could go skiing--

HOPE
I'd love that, but I'm going to be
so busy. Besides, this will give
you some quiet time to...
(glances at
manuscript)
...finish your novel.

DAVID
Yeah, my novel...

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

Babs hands Hope a plane ticket.

BABS
Got you a room at the Brown Palace.
Friend of mine owed me a favor. You
sure you know what you're doing?

HOPE
Of course not. I just know I have
to do it.

INT. CONTINENTAL AIRLINES JET - DAY

Hope stares out the window as the jet prepares for takeoff.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - DAY

David stares blankly at the computer screen, deep in thought.

EXT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Hope's plane touches down amid a light snow.

INT. DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Hope finds a pay phone and flips through the phone book. There's no "David Knight" listed.

EXT. 18th STREET - DENVER - DAY

Snow falls lightly on downtown. Clutching David's manuscript, Hope spots a MAILMAN ahead on the sidewalk and stops him.

HOPE

Excuse me, but--do you know someone in Denver named David Knight?

MAILMAN

It's a big city, Miss.

SERIES OF SHOTS - HOPE SEARCHES DENVER FOR CLUES

A) A woman stands in the doorway of a beautiful old building, talks with Hope, shakes her head "No, sorry."

B) Hope dials 411 on a sidewalk pay phone.

411

What city, please?

HOPE

Denver. The number for David Knight.

411

I'm sorry, that number is unlisted.

HOPE

You do have it! Oh, God, please!
I've got to have that number!

411
I'm sorry, that number is unlisted.

HOPE
Please!! Please, please, please!!!

411
I'm sorry, that number is unlisted.

C) A horse trots the snow covered street pulling a hansom cab. Hope queries the driver--He shakes his head "No."

D) University of Denver. Hope speaks to an ALUMNI CLERK.

ALUMNI CLERK
No, I'm sorry--we have no alumnus
named David Knight.

EXT. THE BROWN PALACE HOTEL - NIGHT

A beautiful, posh old hotel in the heart of downtown Denver.

INT. THE BROWN PALACE HOTEL - HOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Exhausted, Hope plops on the large bed in her beautiful room. She quickly falls asleep in her clothes.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cheap flowers in hand, Nat walks up to the front door and rings the bell. David answers it. Lady growls.

NAT
What are you doing here?

DAVID
I live here.

NAT
What? Where's Hope?

DAVID
She had to go out of town on
business. I'm sorry, but I don't
remember you.

(extends his hand)
David Cassidy.

NAT
Yeah, and I'm Shirley Jones.

DAVID
Excuse me?

NAT
Give it up, pal! I'm on to you.

DAVID
What are you talking about?

NAT
Gimme a break! I admit, that was quite a clever gambit you used to get into Hope's pants--

David slams Nat against the door. Lady moves in right behind him, bares her fangs, growls. Nat's petrified.

DAVID
You'd better tell me what the hell you're talking about. Now!

NAT
On TV! St. Vincent's shelter!

DAVID
What about it?

NAT
Your amnesia! Hope went down there and claimed you like a lost dog!

Lady BARKS.

DAVID
Of course she did! We're engaged!

NAT
She never saw you before in her life! I've worked with Hope over three years and I never even heard of you! No one's ever heard of you! She was with a different guy at our Labor Day cookout, and another at the Halloween Ball! Don't you get it? Hope made the whole thing up!

David thrusts Nat away, eyes full of rage. He steps back into the house--LADY YELPS as David TRIPS over her! His head smashes against a table--he falls unconscious to the floor. Nat takes off. Lady whimpers, licks David's face...

EXT. KAPPY'S - WORKING CLASS DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The words "Sandwich Shop" are missing from the modern sign. Kappy's is slick, bright, more like a Subway franchise than a neighborhood place. Hope's rental car pulls up.

INT. KAPPY'S - DAY

Hope enters. Business is good. But the place is very prefab and plastic. All the food looks prepackaged. Hope makes her way to the front of the line and a plastic gloved, paper-hat-and-name-tag wearing COUNTER BOY.

COUNTER BOY

Welcome to Kappy's. Would you like to try our bacon-bacon-bacon wrap?

HOPE

No, thanks. Do you know David Knight?

COUNTER BOY

Does he work here?

HOPE

I don't know.

COUNTER BOY

Any you guys know David Knight?

All the other plastic gloved, paper-hat-and-name-tag wearing employees shake their heads "No." The Counter Boy shrugs.

Dejected, Hope moves to leave. An old photograph on the wall catches her eye: "Kappy's Sandwich Shop," circa 1970: Wooden, weathered, warm looking family place, you can tell they made great sub sandwiches just by looking at it. An interior photo shows the old black & white tiled floor, very similar to Capriotti's in Las Vegas.

KAPPY (O.S.)

Egg salad and meatball.

Hope turns to see KAPPY, the man in his 50s at young David's Little League game in the t-shirt and cap--now in his late 70s--leaning on a mop, smiling nostalgically at the photograph.

HOPE

Excuse me?

KAPPY

Don't forget a combo like that. I know, sounds strange, but that's what he'd get--a large sub, one half egg salad, the other half meatball. Made the Mrs. sick first time he ordered it.

(nods at photo)

Place looked like that back then.

My son runs it now.

(looks around,
sighs)

Progress.

HOPE

So you know David Knight?

KAPPY

Used to. A great kid, real nice. Always helping other kids, old people, rescuing stray animals. Brought a damn pigeon in here once.

(chuckles, shakes
his head; then
suspicious)

You with the Feds or somethin'?

That's one of life's three biggest lies--"I'm from the government, I'm here to help you."

HOPE

Oh, no. I'm--it's--you wouldn't believe me if I told you.

KAPPY

You're his girlfriend, it's getting serious, and you're doing some sorta background check on him.

HOPE

Something like that. But how'd you-

-

KAPPY

53 years in this business, I know people.

(offers his hand)

Charlie Kaplan. Call me Kappy.

HOPE

Hope Singleton. So David eats here?

KAPPY

Aw, he ain't been in here in probably 15 years. When he was home on vacation from prep school--

HOPE

St. Mary's?

KAPPY

Yeah, New York City. He'd ride his bike down here. Even in the snow. Long ride. His old man was rich by then--real estate--and they'd moved into this big old mansion way over on 6th Avenue. Biggest asshole I ever met--oh, pardon me.

HOPE

David?

KAPPY

His father.

HOPE

You said real estate. Star Realty?

KAPPY

Back then it was. Bunch of us small businessmen sponsored Little League teams. Fella named Tom Gallagher owned Star--crazy Irishman, but the sweetest guy. David's father worked for him. When Gallagher got sick, Knight circled like a vulture. Finally bought old Tom out. Star didn't sponsor no team after that.

HOPE

Is he still in business?

KAPPY

Oh, that rat bastard died a few years back. Don't know about the company.

HOPE

What about David's mother?

KAPPY

She'd passed. Never knew her.

(checks his watch)

Well, better get back to work before my son fires me. Yep, David sure was a great kid. I hope he turned out to be a good man. You tell him to stop by--the Mrs.'ll make him an egg salad and meatball.

HOPE

I will. Thanks.

They shake hands. She turns to leave, stops.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Kappy? What are the other two lies?

KAPPY

"The check is in the mail." And the third one--well, I can't say that in front of a lady.

Hope smiles, Kappy tips his cap.

EXT. 16TH STREET MALL - TROLLEY - DAY

Hope rides the trolley down the 16th Street mall. She steps off outside Brooks Brothers.

INT. BROOKS BROTHERS - DAY

Hope approaches a CLOTHIER at a register/computer terminal.

CLOTHIER

May I help you, madam?

HOPE

Yes. I'd like to buy a birthday present for a friend, a customer of yours, but I don't know his sizes.

CLOTHIER

That shouldn't be a problem. We keep a database of all our customers. What's your friend's name?

HOPE
David Knight.

The Clothier types the name into the computer. David's name, home address, phone number, and sizes appear on the screen.

CLOTHIER
Here we are, David Knight. What was it you had in mind?

The TELEPHONE RINGS.

CLOTHIER (CONT'D)
Will you excuse me one moment?

He turns his back, answers the phone.

CLOTHIER (CONT'D)
Thank you for calling Brooks Brothers.

Hope looks at the computer screen, at David's home address. The Clothier hangs up the phone and turns back to Hope.

CLOTHIER
I'm sorry. Now then--

But she is gone.

EXT. 6TH AVENUE - DENVER - DAY

Lined with stately old mansions, snow falls on 6th Avenue,

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

Hope's rental car pulls into the driveway of the big beautiful old house. She marvels at the grandeur, and the trees.

HOPE (V.O.)
"Majestic ponderosas a hundred feet high and twice as aged, cloaked in coats of snow..."

Hope goes to the front door. She rings the bell. A Hispanic MAID, Isabella, answers the door.

HOPE

Hi. Uh--Is Mrs. Knight home?

MAID

Mrs. Knight? There is no Mrs. Knight. Mr. David lives here all alone.

Hope smiles.

INT. RENTAL CAR - HOPE - DAY

Hope gropes for a pad and pen, dials 411 on her cell phone.

HOPE

Do you have a listing for Star Realty?

411 (V.O.)

One moment... I'm sorry, no listing.

HOPE

It's really important. Could you check real estate management companies, things like that, for anything similar?

411 (V.O.)

One moment... I have InveStar Property Management.

HOPE

I'll take that.

INT. INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

The PHONE RINGS. Lori answers.

LORI

Thank you for calling InveStar.

INTERCUT - HOPE AND LORI

HOPE

David Knight, please?

LORI
I'm sorry, Mr. Knight is out of
town. May I take a message?

Excited, Hope struggles to talk, write and drive
simultaneously.

HOPE
No! That's OK! But can I get your
office address, please?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

Hope hesitates outside the door of InveStar.

WAYNE (O.S.)
Can I help you?

HOPE
Ah! Um--I'm looking for David
Knight?

WAYNE
Join the club.

INT. INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

Wayne ushers Hope inside. He asks Lori,

WAYNE
Any word from Scrooge?

LORI
Nothing.

HOPE
Why'd you call him that?

LORI
Mr. Raley's waiting in your office.

WAYNE
Shit. Excuse me.

He goes to his office.

HOPE
Why'd he call David Scrooge?

LORI
Mr. Knight's pretty tight with
money, and he's kind of--cold.

HOPE
Cold? David?

The TELEPHONE RINGS--Lori answers it, turns away. Hope's
eyes wander, landing on David's office door.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

Hope slips in, shuts the door. She sits down and tries the
desk--locked. Nothing telling in the in-box. She goes to a
large credenza, opens a cabinet door. Inside, several
dusty, framed photographs: David as a boy, smiling in his
Little League uniform; David as a stoic teenager, standing
with his father; David in his Army uniform, eyes sad; and an
old picture of David's mother, her yellowed obituary taped
to the back--Hope reads it:

HOPE
Lois Knight, 32, died at St. Lukes
Hospital immediately following the
birth of a son, David, her only
child.

RALEY (O.S.)
Wait! Stop! Please!

INT. INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

Hope rushes out to the lobby. Robert Raley is being hauled
away by TWO SECURITY GUARDS.

RALEY
My plan! Please listen to me! Call
Mr. Knight! I know we can work
something--Call David! Please!

The guards drag Raley out the door.

HOPE
What was that all about?

WAYNE
(grins)
Progress.

INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT

Hope drives, lost in thought. Finally, she dials her home in Las Vegas on the cell phone.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The ANSWERING MACHINE answers--David's Nevada drivers licence lies next to it on the kitchen counter:

DAVID'S VOICE (ANSWERING MACHINE)
Hi, you've reached David and Hope.
Sorry we can't take your call right
now...

INTERCUT - HOPE AND HER KITCHEN IN LAS VEGAS

HOPE
David? Are you there? Hello?

Sitting next to a week's supply of water and food bowls, Lady looks up at the answering machine and WHIMPERS.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Just wanted to tell you that I'll be
home tomorrow. Miss you. Love you.

"Click." Lady HOWLS.

INT. THE BROWN PALACE HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hope fishes for the key as she walks toward her room.

INT. THE BROWN PALACE HOTEL - HOPE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hope enters, shuts the door behind her. She flips on the lights, turns and SCREAMS! David is sitting in a chair.

HOPE
David!

DAVID
That's right. But not "David
Cassidy"--It's David Knight.

HOPE

How did you--

DAVID

Real people, particularly real rich people, can do anything, can't they?

HOPE

Oh, David, it's not like that. I didn't know. I can explain--

DAVID

What?! This sick joke with you and your friend "Babs"?

HOPE

No!

DAVID

How could you do that to me?? How could you lie to someone about their entire life??

HOPE

No! I mean, that's not what I did! I mean, that's not what I meant! I mean, it might seem that way--

DAVID

You're goddamn right it does!

HOPE

I felt something the moment I saw you!

DAVID

What--Rapacity? Oh, pardon me--you know us "writers" have a penchant for pretentious language.

HOPE

No! Something wonderful! Something I never felt before! So did you! And this--it just kept snowballing! I fell in love with you, and I didn't know what to do! You can't tell me what we have isn't real! It is real! I love you!

DAVID

You don't even know me!

HOPE

I do know you, the real you!

DAVID

You don't know anything about me!

HOPE

What do you think I was doing here??

(pause)

What about "boomerang"?

David takes a long, hard look at her.

DAVID

You know what you call a boomerang
that doesn't work, Hope? A stick.

He walks out. Hope drops her head and cries.

INT. CONTINENTAL AIRLINES JET - DAY

Tears roll down Hope's face as the jet takes off.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY

David stares out the window at the cold, gray Denver sky,
emptiness in his eyes. The INTERCOM buzzes.

LORI (O.S.)

Mr. Knight? David? Hello?

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hope pick's up David's Nevada driver's license. She notices
a cookbook out of place, flips to a marked page--There's her
excitedly handwritten note, tucked in the page, extolling her
favorite recipe: Grilled Jumbo Sea Scallops with Triticale
Berry-Rice Pilaf, along with the address to the seafood shop
on Valley View.

HOPE

That's how he knew...

Crying, Hope removes the engagement ring, then the Claddagh.

HOPE (CONT'D)

I...ac...cept...

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

David sits alone in the dark library, firelight flickering off his face. Concerned, the maid looks in on him.

MAID

May I get you something, Mr. David?

DAVID

No. Go on home, Isabella.

MAID

Remember: *Pro encima de la nube con su sombra está la estrella con su luz.* "Above the cloud with its shadow is the star with its light."

She smiles, exits. David considers her familiar words. He goes over to a polished antique bar, searches deep, pulls out a bottle of Absolute, pours himself a drink.

He picks up a copy of his manuscript and flips to a page.

DAVID (V.O.)

He was excited. The ring was perfect. Perfect for true love.

FLASHBACK - SAINT MARY'S PREP SCHOOL - DAY

Younger David fingers a gold Claddaugh ring, beaming.

DAVID (V.O.)

He'd give it to her the moment he saw her. Their dreams would be sealed.

Younger David sprints to his girlfriend's dorm room and opens the door: His girlfriend is having sex with his best friend.

BACK TO SCENE

David tosses the manuscript into the fireplace. He watches it burn, downs his drink.

INT. LVCVA - DOLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A drained Hope sits across from Mr. Dolan as MOVERS move file boxes and furniture in and out.

DOLAN

I gotta be honest, Hope, for someone who was just named head of the world's biggest, most exciting convention center, you're kind of a cold fish.

HOPE

Sorry. I just have a lot on my mind.

DOLAN

You know, if I become mayor, we'll be working very closely together.

He puts his hand on her knee--She's uncomfortable.

DOLAN (CONT'D)

Anything I can help you with?

HOPE

I'll be fine.

He pats her thigh, gets up and exits. The movers leave.
Nat enters.

NAT

And where were you Friday night?
Don't worry--I forgive you. So long as it doesn't happen again.

HOPE

Oh, it's not gonna happen again.

NAT

Good.

She hands him a copy of the sexual "hair-ess-ment" policy and a pink envelope.

HOPE

Nat? You're fired.

INT. INVESTAR OFFICES - DAY

Files and blueprints in hand, David pushes on Wayne's open door, sees him and Channing Laird, eyes them suspiciously.

CHANNING

Hey there, Houdini.

He surreptitiously folds papers and slips them in his pocket, pats David on the shoulder as he exits.

CHANNING (CONT'D)

My wife's friend still wants you.

DAVID

How come you didn't show me Raley's idea for a master planned development on his family's land?

WAYNE

C'mon, Dave! The guy's a flake! We're gettin' 1,400 more houses--

DAVID

And I never saw these proposals or letters of intent he got.

WAYNE

Hey, besides all the home developers, Channing and I--I mean, I lined up a Wal-Mart Supercenter, the brewery, the tire factory! We're all gonna get rich! Whaddaya say?

DAVID

Wayne? You're fired.

INT. DENVER ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

An old money mix of ancient wooden contraptions and modern high tech equipment. David works out. The few other exercisers are rich OLD MEN. David considers them, their thin, gray, wispy hair, their wrinkled, olive spotted skin, struggling to tone their aged bodies.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DENVER ATHLETIC CLUB - DAY

David exits the shower as TWO OLD MEN enter. Despite their half-century disadvantage, they look a lot happier than him.

OLD MAN #1

Big storm headed this way.

OLD MAN #2

Yep. Blizzard they're sayin'.

As he dresses, David listens to the old men's conversation.

OLD MAN #1

Hope it doesn't ruin your big day
Saturday. Tell me, Tom, does it
feel like fifty years?

OLD MAN #2

Feels like a hundred! My wife and I
been together so long, even our
underpants look alike--big and
rubber.

The old men chuckle. David stifles his snicker.

OLD MAN #1

Did you have a long courtship?

OLD MAN #2

Not really. My philosophy is, if
you truly love her, marry her for
chrissakes! Now I don't mean just
because your johnson has a
conniption fit every time you see
her in a tight sweater. But if you
got that, and she makes you laugh,
and she takes good care of you--AND
you want to take good care of her!--
and you're happy just being
together--if you love her--marry her
for chrissakes! Of all sad words of
tongue or pen, the saddest are
these, "It might have been." I told
my boys, "You only get one life.
You wanna spend it kickin' yourself
in the patookiss for lettin' her
go?"

OLD MAN #1

No regrets?

OLD MAN #2

Christ. Do I regret my three sons?
My eight grandchildren? The fourteen
cards I received last Father's Day?
The finger paintings framed in my
office? Do I regret that people of
my seed care more about me than some
other old coot? That someone was
there to help me when I suffered two

separate heart attacks? Regret spending more than 50 years with my best friend? And who'd regret a half century of great sex with the person they love? Seventy-two years old and that woman can still raise the flag and salute it! My only regret is that you only get one life, and it's over before you know it. I love my wife with all my heart. And I'd do it all over again, the whole goddamn 50 years, if she'd have me.

OLD MAN #1
Six billion people on this planet and you two hook up. How do you explain it?

OLD MAN #2
Can't. That's what makes love so special. No matter how it happens, if you're lucky enough to find it, you're a goddamn fool to let it go.

David stares deep into his locker.

INT. CLUB RIO - RIO HOTEL, LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

Club Rio's huge dance floor is packed with the hip and pseudo-hip. Bawdy HIP-HOP MUSIC blasts. Babs bops, Hope plops.

BABS
Will you snap out of it? It wasn't real! I told you, guys like that don't exist!

TWO YOUNG GUYS approach, NICKY D and MASTA P, dressed in cliché hip-hop clothes and carrying rum and Cokes.

NICKY D
Yo, I'm Nicky D. Dis my homey, Masta P.

MASTA P
Whaaazzzuuuuuup?

HOPE
Obviously not your I.Q.

The two hip-hoppers stare dumbfounded. Hope walks off.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David sits on the edge of his bed, phone wedged on his shoulder, listens to it ring on the other end. In his hand, the picture of him and Hope on Christmas morning. Hope's machine picks up, a brief melancholy message:

HOPE (V.O.)

Leave a message at the tone.

David hangs up, tosses the photo in the nightstand drawer. He retrieves another wallet--proceeds to fill it with new, replacement credit cards and business cards. The clear driver's license slot is conspicuously empty. He goes to a painting, removes it, opens a safe, retrieves a wad of cash.

INT. HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Curled up in her robe, Lady on her lap, the same picture of her and David on Christmas morning in her hand. Hope watches the morning TV NEWS, the weather report.

TV WEATHERMAN

Another mild day for us in the valley. 74 should be our high. Meanwhile, our neighbors to the northeast are facing one heck of a storm that, wow, could drop more than ten feet of snow on the Denver area.

The PHONE RINGS. Hope lunges for it,

HOPE

Hello? Oh, hi, Mr. Dolan... Phil... It's going--Dinner? André's? That's kinda romantic. I wouldn't want your wife to... Oh, okay. See you then.

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David looks in the refrigerator, the cabinets. Blah.

EXT. KAPPY'S - NIGHT

Heavy snow falls. David's Range Rover pushes through the curbside plow deposit in front of Kappy's sandwich shop.

INT. KAPPY'S - NIGHT

David enters smiling, but is disappointed by the "new" Kappy's.

COUNTER BOY

Welcome to Kappy's. Would you like to try our Geezy-Weezy-Cheesy bread?

DAVID

No, I--I'd like a large sub, half meatball, half egg salad.

COUNTER BOY

Gross!

DAVID

To go.

KAPPY (O.S.)

Well punch my ticket and cash me out.

DAVID

Kappy!

KAPPY

Figured she'd send you in here sooner than later

DAVID

How are you? Who'd send me in here?

KAPPY

Hope.

DAVID

Hope?? You know Hope?

KAPPY

53 years in this business, I know people. She didn't order any of this crap so I know she's got taste. And I know she's in love with you.

DAVID

Is that so! Well, there's a lot more to think about than--

KAPPY

If people'd stop thinking so much
they'd get a lot more done and be a
helluva lot happier.

DAVID

Well... So how are you? How's Mrs.
Kaplan? She doesn't really know me.
The place has, um, changed.
Besides, it's not how it looks.

KAPPY

Present surroundings
notwithstanding, appearances can be
deceiving. "Love looks not with the
eyes but with the mind, and
therefore is winged Cupid painted
blind."

DAVID

Is this a sub shop or dinner
theater?!

KAPPY

Everybody missed you. You were a
great kid, David. A good person.
You don't have to be like your
father.

DAVID

What the hell does my worm feeding
father have to do with anything?!
(yelling over
counter)
How long does it take to make a damn
sub sandwich these days?!

The trembling counter boy slides a messy sub wrapped in
cheap plastic across the counter--Kappy grabs it before
David can.

KAPPY

Take this old man's advice: It's your
sandwich, David. Enjoy it.

He hands over the sub--David grabs it and storms out.

INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

Angry and emotional, David drives home through the snow.

FLASHBACK - DAVID AT HIS DYING FATHER'S HOSPITAL BEDSIDE

The old man coughs, struggles to breathe as David looks on.

DAVID'S FATHER

Don't screw it up. Don't fall prey
to temptation. I built you. You
owe it to me--and to your mother,
God rest her soul. You never were
much of a success on your own.
Don't screw up what I made you.

EXT. ANDRÉ'S RESTAURANT - DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

A four star romantic restaurant in a refurbished old
mansion.

INT. ANDRÉ'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hope and Mr. Dolan sip after dinner brandy.

DOLAN

So things are running smoothly
without me. I don't know whether to
take offense or pay tribute. I knew
you were the one for the job.

He places his hand over hers. Uncomfortable, she slips it
away to sip her brandy.

HOPE

So how's the campaign coming?

DOLAN

Ah, lots of bullshit, but I love it.
A lot of very powerful, very
influential people involved. You
know, Hope, it could prove highly
beneficial to your own career if you
hopped into bed with my campaign.

He slides a little closer, puts his hand on her thigh.

HOPE

Phil?!

DOLAN

Oh, c'mon. You know I've always
been attracted to you.

HOPE
You're married!

DOLAN
Don't remind me. Besides, everybody
does it. Sex scandals help rather
than hurt nowadays.

He pulls her close, tries to kiss her.

HOPE
Stop!

DOLAN
C'mon--Use what mother nature gave
you before father time takes it
away.

He tries to kiss her again--She dumps her brandy on him,
slides out of the booth and dashes toward the exit.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Tears roll down her cheeks as a dazed Hope walks. Her high
heel gets caught in a sidewalk crack--without missing a
step, oblivious, Hope steps out of her beloved shoes, leaves
them behind, keeps on walking in her stocking feet.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - GAME ROOM - NIGHT

The storm rages outside, fireplace burns inside. David sits
in the big, dark room flipping channels on a big screen TV.

TALK SHOW GUEST
There are three kinds of people:
Those who make things happen, those
who watch things happen, and those
who ask "What happened?"

David punches the channel. 1953's "Julius Caesar" is on AMC.

CASSIUS (SIR JOHN GIELGUD)
Why, man, he doth bestride the
narrow world like a Colossus, and we
petty men walk under his huge legs

and peep about to find ourselves
dishonourable graves.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DENVER - NIGHT

Through the snow and darkness, David looks down at a
headstone: James Douglas Knight, December 16, 1933 - October
23, 1998.

CASSIUS (SIR JOHN GIELGUD - V.O.)
Men at sometimes are masters of
their fates. The fault, dear
Brutus, is not in our stars, but in
ourselves.

David removes his antique Waltham watch, considers it, and
drops it in the snow at the foot of his father's headstone.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS HOUSE - DENVER - NIGHT

Files and plans in hand, snow blanketing his head, David
climbs the icy stairs of an old middle class house. He rings
the bell. Robert Raley opens the door. David nods.

DAVID
Robby.

RALEY
What are you doing here?

DAVID
I spoke with the IRS and the state.
I think we can work something out.
(hands over folder)
I reserved 50% of the land for non-
development, doubled the minimum
home lot size, and restricted
commercial property to a single
area. It's a fair compromise.
National Park land borders the north
and west, so that'll help preserve
the beauty and all. There's a scout
camp. And I added a bunch of
playing fields, you know, for Little
League and stuff. Let me know what
you think. Maybe you could, like,
work on it with me or something.

RALEY

Jesus...

DAVID

Boomerang.

David disappears into the heavy snow, leaving Raley stunned.

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Fixing an Absolut and tonic, David talks into a speaker phone.

DAVID

When's your next flight to Las Vegas?

TRAVEL AGENT (SPEAKER PHONE)

All flights are canceled due to this crazy storm. Could be three or four days before anything leaves.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The lights of the Range Rover burn through blinding snowfall as it roars out of the driveway, blows through deep drifts!

SERIES OF SHOTS - DAVID DRIVES TO LAS VEGAS

- A) Blinding snow. The Range Rover hits I-70, passes a sign, "Grand Junction, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles," igniting a huge plume of white powder in its wake.
- B) The speedometer holds steady at 75 MPH.
- C) Raging through the Rocky Mountains, David sails past a "Welcome To Utah" sign. Please Drive Safely."
- D) The speedometer pushes 85 MPH.
- E) Dawn breaks through the waning weather as David flies past a sign, "I-15, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles."
- F) Gas station. David gulps coffee as he fills his tank, the Range Rover filthy from its journey.
- G) The speedometer pushes 95 MPH.
- H) The Range Rover races past a "Welcome to Nevada" sign.

as dusk settles in. The female coyote (from early on) watches David race by--her MALE MATE nuzzles against her.

INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

Through the filthy windshield David SEES the Vegas valley, the sparkling lights of hotels, casinos and 400,000 homes--he smiles. Then POLICE LIGHTS and WAILING SIREN flood the Rover.

EXT. I-15 - RANGER ROVER AND STATE POLICE CAR - NIGHT

A Nevada State TROOPER walks to David's window.

TROOPER
License and registration, please.

David takes out his new wallet. The driver's license slot is empty.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - NIGHT

Babs hands Hope a plane ticket as both fight back tears.

BABS
You sure about this?

HOPE
I'll be near my parents. And
Florida's a great place to live.

BABS
Mickey Mouse and manatees--What more
could a girl want? I'm gonna miss
you, Queen Doofus.

HOPE
Boomer... Ditto

The tears flow. They hug.

INT. RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

David looks at his ticket as the trooper walks back to his patrol car. David cautiously pulls away from the shoulder. The patrol car follows. In his rear view mirror, David SEES

the trooper pull a u-turn across the median and head back in the opposite direction. Then he floors it!

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - LAS VEGAS - NIGHT

David pulls up to the dark house, considers ringing the bell, checks his watch, slumps back exhausted--he closes his eyes and quickly falls asleep...

INT. RANGE ROVER - MORNING

David's asleep, a strand of drool hanging from his mouth. A HAMMERING NOISE wakes him.

EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A woman REAL ESTATE AGENT labors to pound a "For Sale" sign into the front yard. David jumps out and runs over.

DAVID
What are you doing??

REAL ESTATE AGENT
Selling this house. Interested?

DAVID
Where's Hope?

REAL ESTATE AGENT
It's got a lovely pool and--

DAVID
(slaps a business
card in her hand)
I'll take it!

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

David dashes in. Babs ain't pleased.

DAVID
Where's Hope??

BABS
Sacude, zapato viejo.
("get lost, leave me
alone")

DAVID
I love her, Babs! And if I don't
hold her in my arms in about two
seconds I'm gonna bust!

BABS
Well you're too late. She's gone.

DAVID
Gone where??

BABS
She quit her job and is moving to
Florida.
(looks at clock)
Her plane should take off any
minute.

DAVID
What flight??

BABS
Pff! Forget it.

DAVID
I'm beggin' you, Babs! What
flight??

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - DAY

"The white zone is for the immediate loading and unloading
of passengers only" drones over the P.A. SYSTEM. David's
Range Rover rips up and skids to a halt.

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - SERIES OF SHOTS - DAY

Lady WHIMPERS in her travel cage as it goes up the conveyor.

David dashes through the airport, dodging travelers and
leaping luggage.

At the metal detectors/baggage scanners there's a major
backup, fifty people deep. David checks his watch.

INT. CONTINENTAL AIRLINES FLIGHT 526 - DAY

Hope rests her heavy head against the window.

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - DAY

A WHITE ZONE COP reads the Range Rover's Colorado license plate into his walkie-talkie.

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - SECURITY METAL DETECTOR - DAY

It's finally David's turn. A SECURITY GUARD asks,

SECURITY GUARD
Ticket?

DAVID
What?

SECURITY GUARD
I need to see your ticket.

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - TARMAC - FLIGHT 526 - DAY

The accordion walkway retracts as flight 526 prepares for takeoff. Hope's melancholy face frames a window.

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - TICKET COUNTER - DAY

Once an old couple finishes purchasing their tickets, David pulls out his wallet and asks TICKET AGENT,

DAVID
Flight 526, anything you've got.

The ticket agent punches her keyboard.

TICKET AGENT
I'm sorry, that flight's sold out.

DAVID
The next flight then!

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - GATE - day

David rushes up to the GATE AGENT.

DAVID
Flight 526!

GATE AGENT
I'm sorry, that flight's already
departed. Next?

David can SEE flight 526 right outside the terminal window.

DAVID
It's sitting right there! Please!
I must talk to one of the
passengers. Her name is Hope
Singleton. Please?

The gate agent hesitates, sighs, picks up a telephone.

GATE AGENT
Donna, it's Pam at the gate.

INT. CONTINENTAL AIRLINES FLIGHT 526 - DAY

The Stewardess comes down the aisle to Hope.

STEWARDESS
Hope Singleton?

HOPE
Yes.

STEWARDESS
There's a gentleman back at the gate
who says he needs to speak to you.
David Knight.

Hopes emotions swell, her eyes glisten, she swallows hard.

HOPE
I don't know David Knight.

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - GATE - DAY

Phone wedged on her shoulder, the Gate Agent relays the
word.

GATE AGENT
She says she doesn't know you.

DAVID

Wait! Tell her it's David Cassidy!
And that I love her! I really,
truly love her!

GATE AGENT
Sir, I--

DAVID
I'm begging you!

GATE AGENT
Donna? Now he says he's David
Cassidy. Yeah, whatever. Says he
loves her.

INT. CONTINENTAL FLIGHT 526 - DAY

The Stewardess again approaches Hope.

STEWARDESS
Excuse me, but he says he loves you.

HOPE
He doesn't even know me. Remember?
And I don't know him.

INT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - GATE - DAY

The Gate Agent shakes her head,

GATE AGENT
Sorry. Look, if it's fate--

DAVID
Fate? Men at times are masters of
their fate! The fault is not in our
stars, but in ourselves!

EXT. McCARRAN AIRPORT - THE WHITE ZONE - DAY

David dashes outside just in time to see his Range Rover
being pulled away by a tow truck.

DAVID
Wait! Stop! Please!

But it's too late.

INT. CONTINENTAL FLIGHT 526 - DAY

Stewardesses go through their pre-flight safety routine.
Hope stares numbly out the window. The jet starts to move.

EXT. PRIVATE JET TERMINAL - McCARRAN AIRPORT - DAY

A taxi skids to a halt. David jumps out.

INT. EXECUTIVE AIR - DAY

David races up to the MANAGER at his desk.

DAVID

I need to charter a jet to Orlando,
immediately.

MANAGER

You have no idea how much that's
gonna cost.

DAVID

You have no idea how much I don't
care.

INT. CONTINENTAL FLIGHT 526 - DAY

Mid-flight, Hope drops her head back, deep in thought.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Mid-flight, David fidgets in his seat.

INT. ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

Hope collects her bags at baggage claim. She turns to see
David, holding Lady in his arms.

DAVID

There may be a lot of details we
don't know about each other, but
that's true in every relationship.
I don't know your middle name, or if
you even have one, I don't know your
favorite color--I think it's blue.

But I do know the love in your
heart. And I do know that I love
you. All those years sleepwalking
through a lonely nightmare called my
life, then you woke me up. It is
real, Hope, it is true. I swear to
God--I love you.

HOPE

Boomerang...

They embrace and kiss.

FADE OUT.

THE END