

PRISONER OF THE HEART

by

Phillip Guthrie

prisoner of the heart is based on a true story

© 2000, Phillip Guthrie

FADE IN:

As the opening credits roll, we see several scenes of JENNIFER GREGORY and DOUG MARTIN as young lovers in the mid 1970's. The scenes are choreographed to "Only the Young" by Journey.

We watch them meet at a friend's party. They are talking happily and drinking. Doug pulls Jennifer off her chair and onto the dance floor. They begin slow dancing and talking. Jennifer is smiling and hugs Doug tightly.

Jennifer and Doug are driving in Doug's 1975 Blue Corvette Convertible. Jennifer is standing up in the car waving her arms in the air as they race down the road.

The two are standing in the crowd at a concert dancing and cheering. Doug leans over and kisses Jennifer.

Jennifer and Doug are camping alone in the woods. They make love by the light of a lantern.

Suddenly, we see them arguing on the front porch. As the discussion heats up, Doug throws his beer bottle on the ground and breaks it. He picks up a suitcase, runs down the steps, throws the suitcase in his Corvette and jumps in. Jennifer runs down to his car as he revs the engine. They argue a bit more until Doug peels out and drives off. Jennifer stands crying on the curb as we watch Doug's car drive down the road. JENNIFER'S MOTHER comes out of the house and stands with her arm around Jennifer. As Doug's car moves further away, it slowly vanishes leaving an empty road.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACKOUT

We see a title, "SEVERAL YEARS LATER."

INT. THEATRE STAGE - DAY

JENNIFER (21) is a beautiful, young woman with long dark hair and chestnut eyes, a striking face and shapely figure. She stands on a richly decorated stage with another young woman. The two are elegantly dressed in evening gowns. The spotlight is on them as they nervously hold hands.

PAGEANT ANNOUNCER

. . .and the New Miss Maryland Hemisphere
is. . . Jennifer Gregory.

The crowd cheers as Jennifer is draped with a sash and a crown is placed on her head. As she begins to walk down the runway, tears of joy fall from her eyes and flash bulbs flicker around her. As the camera zooms in on her face, we slowly. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A MOBILE HOME IN FLORIDA - DAY

A close-up shot of Jennifer looking out the window of a mobile home onto a gloomy, rainy day. There are black metal bars covering the window and casting shadows on her face. For a moment, she stares blankly with tears in her eyes. Then suddenly, she walks away from the window, sits on the couch and begins to page through a photo album. We see photographs of Jennifer, her brother Patrick and Jennifer's mother having a good time. As she continues through the album, she finds a picture of Doug. She quickly yanks it from the book and rips it in pieces. Still in a sad mood, she picks up the telephone receiver and dials a number.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK GREGORY'S COLLEGE APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

PATRICK GREGORY (20) a tall, slender young man with dark hair, eyes and a moustache is buried in a pile of school books. He hears the phone ring and, at first, appears aggravated to be disturbed. He picks up the receiver.

PATRICK

Hello.

OPERATOR

Collect call for Patrick Gregory from Jennifer, will you accept the charges?

PATRICK

(enthusiastic)

Hey Jennifer. I was thinking about you. . .

OPERATOR

Excuse me sir, do you accept?

PATRICK

Sorry operator. . .yes, I do.

OPERATOR

Thank you.

JENNIFER

Hey little bro! Just wanted to surprise you. How are you doin'?

As the conversation continues, Jennifer pages further through the photo album. We see more images of Jennifer, her brother and mother.

PATRICK

Not too bad. Worn out from all the school work, but isn't that always the case.

JENNIFER

Hang in there. Once you get that degree, it'll be worth it.

PATRICK

Where are you calling from?

JENNIFER

That's the surprise. I'm in Florida.

PATRICK

Where'd you get the money for a trip there?

JENNIFER

It's not a trip. I just moved here.

PATRICK

(surprised)

You moved!? When did this happen?

JENNIFER

It's a long story, but the details don't matter. I fell in love and just took off.

PATRICK

(concerned)

It's not that biker guy, is it?

JENNIFER

Yeah, you remember Bobby. But he's not what you may think. He's been really considerate and great at helping me get my life back together.

PATRICK

(knowingly)

Maybe he'll get your mind off Doug.

JENNIFER

(avoiding)

I think I'm finally over him.

PATRICK

(again knowingly)

Let's hope so.

JENNIFER

(changing the subject)

Anyway. . . Bobby's uncle is opening a branch of his insurance company in Florida, so he can retire here. Bobby's getting the business started, and it looks like he'll make great money.

PATRICK

What are you going to do?

JENNIFER

I haven't decided yet. I'll help Bobby for a while, till I find something I wanna do. But I feel really good about this, and the timing was just right. With mom moving out of state, I didn't know what else to do.

PATRICK

It broke my heart when she told me. I guess we should've expected it. She never did get on her feet after the divorce.

JENNIFER

I cried for days after she left. I'll always have such great memories of living with mom. I thought of keeping her townhouse, but I couldn't afford it. Besides, I feel my place is with Bobby.

PATRICK

What about your Miss Maryland title? Can you still represent Maryland if you're not living here?

JENNIFER

(feeling the sting)
Probably not. But, my year with the title is almost over. That was just the beginning.

PATRICK

You better not give up on yourself.

JENNIFER

No way . . .with Bobby, I finally feel things are turning around.

INT. A MOBILE HOME IN FLORIDA - MOMENTS LATER

BOBBY MATTHEWS (26), a young man of medium height and build with light brown hair and blue eyes, bursts in the room with anxious energy. As he signals Jennifer to get off the phone, he begins pacing.

JENNIFER

(continuing)
Speaking of Bobby, he just walked in. I have to run for now, but I'll be in touch. I'll send you my address and number once we get settled.

PATRICK

All right, take care of yourself. I love ya!

JENNIFER

I love you too.

Jennifer hangs up the phone. Bobby is noticeably irritated.

BOBBY

Who the hell was that?

JENNIFER

My brother Patrick. I can't wait for you to meet him. We lived together with my mom for years after my parents divorced.

BOBBY

Yeah, you told me.

JENNIFER

Those were such good times. After Patrick went away to college, I knew things wouldn't be the same. And now mom's moved back with her parents in Omaha . . . things change so fast.

BOBBY

They sure fuckin' do.

JENNIFER

Whenever we talk, it reminds me of so many good times.

BOBBY

Well, we're going back.

JENNIFER

(surprised)

What do you mean? We just got here. What about the job?

BOBBY

There is no job.

JENNIFER

What happened?

BOBBY

I called Uncle Joe today. He got on the phone talkin' a mile a minute. Something about a fire at the Maryland branch last night.

The place wasn't destroyed, but it's gonna take some time to get back together.

JENNIFER

How long?

BOBBY

He doesn't know. . .and he's not ready to take a chance on a new business right now. So without this, we have to go back.

JENNIFER

Back?! Back to what? I have no place to live. My mom and brother are gone. My father's wife won't let me live with them. I can't go back.

BOBBY

Sure as hell can't stay here.

JENNIFER

Why not? There are other jobs in Florida. We both can work. But we can't go back. Our future is here.

BOBBY

It was here. Now it's back in Maryland.

JENNIFER

With your record, Maryland isn't the place for us. The police will be on your every move.

Bobby lunges at Jennifer, grabs her by arms and shakes her.

BOBBY

(insisting)
But I wasn't guilty!

He pushes her onto the couch, stops and collects himself.

BOBBY

(continuing; calming down)
Look, after four years in that place, there is no fuckin' way I'm going back.

JENNIFER

I didn't say you were going back.

BOBBY

Then why bring it up?

JENNIFER

I just meant that Maryland isn't good for us anymore. We can make a new start here. You won't have to worry about going back to jail.

BOBBY

(uncontrollably)

God dammit! I just told you I wasn't going back.

Bobby grabs a vase and smashes it against the wall. He stops himself again. Jennifer stares at the broken pieces on the floor with tears in her eyes. There is a moment of silence.

JENNIFER

That was my mother's.

Bobby walks over to Jennifer on the couch and kneels in front of her. He takes her hand.

BOBBY

(calmer)

Jennifer, you don't know what prison is like. . .slowly watching your life waste away. . .hoping all the lunatics can keep their sanity. . .so they don't lose it and try to kill you. It's fuckin' insane. I couldn't go back there. .EVER!

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, I didn't realize.

BOBBY

Well it's over, and I'm free. So let's not talk about it any more.

JENNIFER

(cautiously)

Before we drop the subject, can I ask you something?

There is an uncomfortable silence.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Just one thing . . .and I'll never bring it up again.

BOBBY

OK. . .what?

JENNIFER

Why did you go to jail back then?

BOBBY

(pause, then blurts out)

Armed robbery. Well, it sounds worse than it was. I didn't kill anyone. It wasn't even my goddamn idea. It was pinned on my by a guy who was my friend.

Bobby gets up and begins pacing nervously.

JENNIFER

He turned you in?

BOBBY

Sort of. He dragged me out on some two bit heist. Said he needed money for his kid's medical bills or some shit. He didn't have a car, so he asked me to drive him. I still don't know why I fuckin' went. We were probably high on something. . .who fuckin' knows. Then he disappears out the back of the store. . .and I waited out front like a sitting duck. Before I knew it, there were cops everywhere.

JENNIFER

Didn't they realize it wasn't you when you didn't have the money?

BOBBY

It didn't matter. I was an accomplice and they wanted someone.

JENNIFER

Why didn't you turn him in?

BOBBY

I don't know. I guess I felt sorry for his kid. . .or I didn't think they'd throw me in jail. Worst of all, I had to leave behind a girl I loved.

JENNIFER

Who was that?

BOBBY

You don't know her. Her name is Tina. I probably would've married her if that didn't happen. But, that's the past.

Jennifer walks over to Bobby and hugs him.

JENNIFER

That's quite a story, Bobby. I admire what you did to help. You have a good heart.

BOBBY

It's just the rest of me that's fucked up. I can't seem to do anything right.

JENNIFER

Don't say that, we'll get through this. We're gonna stay here and make it work.

BOBBY

Jennifer, we have to go back to Maryland.
At least we have friends there to help.

JENNIFER

...and an old lover.

BOBBY

Don't be childish. I don't want to see
Tina anymore. We had something once, but
it's over. I even tried dating her once I
got out. But too much time had passed.
Besides, you're all I want now.

JENNIFER

If I'm all you want, then we can stay here.

BOBBY

(pause; then giving in)
OK, if it proves you're the only one, we
can stay here.

Jennifer screams with joy and hugs Bobby.

BOBBY

(continuing)
Who knows, maybe things will be better
here.

JENNIFER

At least we're both free from the past.

Jennifer kisses Bobby passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

We see CATHY JAMES (20), a young, slender blonde with beautiful
blue eyes. She is frantically cleaning in the kitchen.

CATHY

(calling)
Bruce, please take out the trash.

BRUCE FISCHER (27) a tall, burly biker guy with long hair and a
beard enters the kitchen.

BRUCE

Why all the trouble? It's only Bobby and
Jennifer, they're not inspecting the place.

CATHY

They're coming back from Florida to live
with us. I want everything to look good.

BRUCE

So you want 'em to think we're neat, then surprise 'em with what slobs we are.

CATHY

(chuckling)

That's not exactly how I'd put it.

BRUCE

It'll be great to see Bobby again.

CATHY

I'm looking forward to seeing Jennifer too. We've been through a hell of a lot. She's always been there for me, especially through all that shit with Tommy.

BRUCE

Bobby's the same, always ready to help.

CATHY

I would've never made it through my divorce if it wasn't for her. . .giving advice, watching little Steven, or just being there. She's been like a sister.

BRUCE

Which is more than we can say for your own sister.

CATHY

Exactly. Did you ask Diann and Kevin to pick up some beer?

BRUCE

Yeah. Ryan was there when I called, so he's coming over too.

CATHY

It's gonna be strange havin' everyone back together again.

BRUCE

Perfect timing. They needed a place and we needed help with expenses.

CATHY

Look, it's almost nine o'clock! Their bus arrived at 8:30. . .they'll be here any minute.

(changing to a seductive tone)

So Bruce, you know what that means.

Bruce moves closer to Cathy.

BRUCE

Yes I do. I can't believe we're thinking
the same thing.

Cathy wraps her arms around him.

CATHY

You're such a strong, handsome guy. I
really think. . .
(changing her tone)
you should take the trash out like I asked.

BRUCE

Well, maybe later. I still think we
should just dump the trash around and save
'em the surprise.

There is a knock at the door.

CATHY

There they are. Why don't you answer it.

She picks up the garbage and hands it to Bruce.

CATHY

(continuing)
. . .and since you are going that way.

Bruce takes the garbage bag and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bruce carries the garbage through the living room to the door.
There are few furnishings, just some scattered chairs, a lamp,
a small dining room table, a couple wall hangings (mirrored beer
signs, popular country bands, etc.) Bruce opens the front door.

Jennifer and Bobby are standing in the doorway. They
immediately see the bag in Bruce's arm.

BOBBY

A welcome home gift, you shouldn't have.

Bobby looks into the bag.

BOBBY

(continuing)
You really shouldn't have.

Bruce hugs Bobby with his free arm.

BRUCE

Hey buddy, how the hell are you?

The bag of trash gets pushed in Bobby's face.

BOBBY

I planned on getting trashed, but this isn't what I imagined.

Bruce pulls away and moves the bag from Bobby's face.

BOBBY

(continuing; laughing)
Sorry old man.

Jennifer tries to hug Bruce around the bag.

JENNIFER

Hey Bruce, you're looking good. But that cologne has got to go.

BRUCE

Let me get rid of this shit.
(calling to the kitchen)
Cathy, the house inspectors are here!
(to Bobby and Jennifer)
Come on in, I'll be right back.

Bruce exits as Bobby and Jennifer enter and sit their luggage by the door. Cathy enters from the kitchen running to Jennifer.

CATHY

(screaming)
Jennifer! I can't believe you're here!

JENNIFER

Hey CJ!

They meet in an embrace.

CATHY

(all in one breath)
Jennifer, it's so good to see you. How are you? How was Florida? I'm so glad you're going to be living with us! Sit down, tell me everything. We have to catch up.

Cathy finally notices Bobby.

CATHY

(continuing)
Hey Bobby! I'm sorry I missed you in all the commotion.

Cathy runs over to Bobby and grabs him in a bear hug.

BOBBY

(in a strangled voice)
That's because you are the commotion.

Bruce re-enters the room and sees Bobby and Cathy hugging.

BRUCE

So the garbage thing was just a way to get some time with Bobby.

There is general laughter. Cathy sits in one of the few chairs.

CATHY

Sit down and relax. Just leave your bags by the door. Bruce can put them in your bedroom later.

BRUCE

As long as Jennifer will help me.

CATHY

Don't push it, Bruce.

BRUCE

Just trying to keep things interesting till Diann and Kevin arrive with the beer.

Jennifer sits in another one of the chairs.

JENNIFER

Diann and Kevin are coming by? Great!

BRUCE

Ryan, too.

Bobby sits in the last chair.

BOBBY

Good ol' Ryan. This'll be like old times.

CATHY

Jennifer, tell me about Florida.

BRUCE

If this is girl talk, Bobby and I are headin' out for a brew.

CATHY

The beer will be here soon. Just sit down and be patient.

Bruce looks around at the lack of chairs.

BRUCE

Seems we're out of places to sit and be patient.

BOBBY

How about a round of musical chairs? The loser gets the floor.

Bruce and Bobby hi-five and laugh.

JENNIFER

I don't know which of you is worse.

CATHY

Back to my original question.

JENNIFER

I told you about the fire. That's when the trouble began to brew.

BRUCE

Did someone say "brew?"

CATHY

Bruce!

JENNIFER

After that, we both got jobs. But we still weren't making enough to get out on our own. Bobby finally called his father here in Maryland to borrow some money. . .

BOBBY

. . .and he just lost one of his best employees. So, he offered me a job tending horses at the stables.

JENNIFER

It's more money than we were both making, so he couldn't refuse.

BOBBY

I got an advance to pay off our debts and for bus fare back. By the time rent is due, I'll have enough to pay our half.

CATHY

Let me know if we can do anything to help. I was just telling Bruce about all you've done for me. . .

BRUCE

(under his breath)
Here we go again.

CATHY

. . .and how long we've know each other.

There is a knock at the door. Bruce walks over to answer it.

BRUCE

Saved by the beer!

Bruce opens the door and DIANN (28) a tough, street wise woman with auburn hair and green eyes bursts in the room. She is attractive, but appears older than her years.

DIANN
(loudly)
Where the hell are those damn rejects from
Florida?

Jennifer jumps up and runs over to Diann.

JENNIFER
Diann!

They embrace in the doorway.

DIANN
It's great to see ya, kid. Of course, you
look beautiful as ever.

JENNIFER
Thanks Di, you look great too.

As the girls chat, KEVIN and RYAN nudge their way through the door with bags of beer in their arms. Kevin (25) is a dark haired, blue-eyed young man with a gentle nature. Ryan (26) is a tall blonde with hazel eyes and medium build. He's somewhat cocky but endearing.

RYAN
I'm not standing in the goddamn hallway
all night.

KEVIN
Keep pushin' Ryan. I'm right behind you.

Ryan spots Bobby in the room.

RYAN
There he is! Hey old man, get off your
lazy ass and say hello to your friends.

Ryan sets the beer down as Bobby stands up and walks over to him.

BOBBY
Ryan buddy. . .looking devious as usual.

They shake hands, then hug.

RYAN
You too, my man.

Bobby turns to Kevin and shakes his free hand.

BOBBY
Hey Kevin, good to see you man.

KEVIN

Always good to see a party buddy.

BOBBY

(lower)

So, how's the wife?

KEVIN

Who Diann? We didn't get married.

BOBBY

It's only a matter of time

KEVIN

(fumbling)

We talked about it, but we haven't got engaged or anything.

BOBBY

Relax old man. . .just giving you some shit.

BRUCE

(loud, over the crowd)

Wasn't that nice, kiddies. Now, let's get this party started?

DIANN

(calling)

Bruce, get your guitar and sing us some tunes.

CATHY

Yeah, do something constructive.

Bruce mimics Cathy as he exits the room.

CATHY

(continuing)

Everyone find a place to park it while Jennifer and I put away the beer.

The group starts to situate themselves as Jennifer and Cathy pick up the bags of beer and head for the kitchen. They are intercepted by Bruce on his way back with his guitar.

BRUCE

Hold up a minute!

Bruce digs into one of the bags, pulls out a beer, opens it and drinks the whole can. He throws the empty can into the bag as he grabs another beer, burps loudly and continues on.

BRUCE

(continuing)

OK, now we're ready!

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer and Cathy enter the kitchen and start putting the beer into the refrigerator. The rest of the group can be heard talking happily while Bruce begins to play country tunes on the guitar.

CATHY

I'm so happy you're back. I thought you were gone for good.

JENNIFER

Don't worry CJ, you'll never lose me.

CATHY

How do you feel about being home?

JENNIFER

It's really good to see everyone. . .

CATHY

But?

JENNIFER

But, my mother's moved away, my father married some witch, my brother's gone away to college and. . .I'm back near Doug.

CATHY

You're still not over him, are you?

JENNIFER

How could I be? I thought I got away from him in Florida, but it looks like I'm back to face it all again.

CATHY

You know can't run from your problems.

JENNIFER

Why not?! If you can get away and leave it all behind, why not? Sometimes nothing can undo what's been done.

CATHY

Let's forget it for now and have a good time. Everything'll be alright. I'm here for you.

Jennifer hugs Cathy.

JENNIFER

Thanks CJ! I can always count on you.

DIANN (O.S.)

(calling out)

Come on ladies! Where the hell is the beer?

CATHY

(calling back)

Hold your panties on, it's comin'!

(lower to Jennifer)

Are you ready?

JENNIFER

Sure.

Jennifer and Cathy grab a handful of beers and exit the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer and Cathy enter the room and hand out the beer. The group is still talking happily and singing. Diann stands up.

DIANN

(loudly, over the group)

Quite down! I wanna make a toast.

The room becomes quiet.

DIANN

(continuing)

First, I'd like to say how great it is to have "The Family" back together. We're sorry things didn't work out for Jennifer and Bobby, but we're glad they're back. So, with this toast, we welcome them home. No matter how far we may travel, or no matter what happens to any of us, we'll always be there for each other. . .cause we're family!

Everyone raises their beers and voices in agreement. Bruce guzzles his beer, then begins to play another song. As the group continues to party, Bobby slides closer to Jennifer.

BOBBY

See this. This is why I wanted to come back. These people are my life. They make me feel important. This is what waited for me in Maryland, not the cops, not Tina, but these people. I love them. . .and I love you. I'm glad to be home.

JENNIFER

(unsure)

Me too.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - A WEEK
LATER - DAY

The room is bare except for two open sleeping bags, three suitcases and some clothes lying on the floor. Jennifer wakes up lying in one of the sleeping bags. Bobby's sleeping bag is empty and in a pile. Jennifer slowly rises from her sleep, stands up and pulls her hair back in a ponytail. As she moves about, she can hear Cathy on the phone from the kitchen.

CATHY (O.S.)

Yeah Di, I'm just about ready. . . No, she's not up yet. . .I'll ask her before I leave. . .about 15 to 20 minutes. . .OK, I'll see you in a bit.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer enters the kitchen as Cathy hangs up the phone and begins to wash the dishes in the sink.

JENNIFER

Morning, CJ.

CATHY

Hey . . .did you sleep well?

JENNIFER

Not really. . .guess I'm not the sleeping bag kinda girl.

CATHY

It'll be better tonight. Bobby and Bruce left early this morning to get you a mattress.

JENNIFER

There's some good news.

CATHY

Diann called and invited me shopping. You wanna go?

JENNIFER

No thanks. I'm a little worn out. Think I'll just relax with some coffee.

Cathy dries her hands off and hands Jennifer a coffee mug.

CATHY

There's a pot on the stove. The sugar is on the counter and there's milk in the frig.

Jennifer take the mug, pours herself a cup of coffee, takes the milk out of the refrigerator, pours some in her cup, places the container back in the refrigerator and shuts the door.

JENNIFER

(remembering)

So what's been happening with Tommy and little Steven?

CATHY

He acts like he's got custody. And he tries to keep me from seeing Steven.

JENNIFER

Why don't you fight him. You've had enough time to get your head together after the divorce.

CATHY

I want to fight him, but I don't know what the court will think of Bruce.

JENNIFER

Then don't bring him up.

CATHY

Tommy knows I'm living with him.

JENNIFER

Say you and Bruce are getting married. He's got a steady income and you have a place to live now.

CATHY

I know, but once they see a 6'3" guy with long hair, a beard and a leather jacket who sings at a bar for a living, I don't think they'll give me custody.

JENNIFER

So, he's a good man.

CATHY

You and I know that. But the world'll see something different. It always does.

JENNIFER

What can you do then?

CATHY

I don't know. But I can't live without Steven. I hate to think I'll have to choose one or the other.

JENNIFER

Don't worry, it won't come to that.

CATHY

I hope not. But. . .it seems you just
can't have it all.

JENNIFER

Don't I know that.

Cathy realizes she is bringing Jennifer down, so she tries to
change the mood.

CATHY

Looks like someone has already forgotten
her Miss Maryland title?

JENNIFER

(brightening up)
Yeah, that was a great moment.

CATHY

You're damn right it was!

Cathy grabs a wooden spoon out of the sink and begins using it
as a microphone.

CATHY

(continuing)
And here she is, Jennifer Gregory, the new
Miss Maryland Hemisphere.
(to Jennifer)
Miss Gregory, please tell us how it feels
to be the most beautiful woman in Maryland.

Cathy holds the spoon toward Jennifer

JENNIFER

I wouldn't say I was the most beautiful,
but this is certainly an honor.

Cathy brings the spoon back to her mouth.

CATHY

Yes folks, look at her, not only beautiful
but modest too.

JENNIFER

You should've been there, CJ. I was on
top of the world. I didn't think I was
going to win. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATRE STAGE - DAY

As Jennifer relives her memory, we see the scenes from her day
in the pageant as she describes them.

JENNIFER

(continuing, O.S.)

But there I was, one of the five finalists. Then, one by one, the other girls were escorted off stage, until there were just two of us. It took forever for the announcer to get the words out. . .but then he said it. . .

As the announcer begins to say the winner, the tension mounts.

PAGEANT ANNOUNCER

. . .and the New Miss Maryland Hemisphere is. . . Jennifer Gregory.

The crowd in the theatre cheers as a woman places a sash and crown on Jennifer.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

. . .when they put that crown on my head I had the most incredible feeling of acceptance. . .like I really mattered. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The camera pulls out from a close-up of Jennifer's smiling face.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

. . .It was the best thing that ever happened to me.

CATHY

. . .and I thought happiness was finding a lost sock in the dryer. I truly haven't lived.

They laugh.

CATHY

(continuing)

Maybe you should get in another pageant, or modeling, or something like that. .

Jennifer's glow begins to fade.

JENNIFER

Eventually, I guess.

CATHY

Imagine the kinda life you'd have as a model.

JENNIFER

I'd be happy to fall in love, get married
and have a big house with a couple kids
running around.

There is a knock at the door.

CATHY

That's Diann
(calling out)
Come on in Di, the door is open!
(to Jennifer)
Sure you don't want to come?

We hear the apartment door open and close.

JENNIFER

Yeah, I'm sure. I need to rest.

Diann enters the kitchen

DIANN

I see our beauty queen has risen.

CATHY

Funny you say that. We were just talking
about her majesty's good fortune.

Diann bows before Jennifer

DIANN

Oh yes. Your Highness, would you honor us
with your company?

CATHY

It seems her schedule is full

Diann stands up again.

DIANN

So the queen doesn't mingle with the
peasants?

JENNIFER

That's not true.

DIANN

I see, she does mingle with the peasants.

JENNIFER

Di, you're crazy as ever.

DIANN

Have to be, or I'd drive myself nuts.
(to Cathy)
Are you ready, girl?

CATHY

Yes ma'am. Let's get the show on the road.

Cathy and Diann exit the kitchen.

JENNIFER

(calling to them)

Stay out of trouble.

DIANN (O.S.)

Does that mean you won't bail me out?

As we hear the front door close, Jennifer pours another cup of coffee. The phone rings and she answers it.

JENNIFER

Hello? . . .No, Bobby's not here, who's calling? . . .TINA? . . Can I take a message? . . .Tell Bobby you can't meet him tomorrow. . .Ok, I tell him to call you.

She hangs the phone up.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

You bet I'll tell him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Jennifer is sitting alone trying to read the employment section. It has started to thunder and rain. She seems irritated as she fights with the paper while turning pages. She stops for a moment and rests the paper on her chest. We see a look of pain in her eyes as she stares at the rain hitting the window.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - DAY

The camera zooms out from a close up of the rain beating the window in a hospital room. As the room is revealed, we see a younger, pale Jennifer lying in a hospital bed. She is unconscious and wearing a respirator. Hospital monitoring equipment is beeping around her. JENNIFER'S MOTHER (41), a dark haired woman with glasses sits at the bedside holding her daughter's hand.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

(sobbing)

Jennifer, can you hear me? Please wake up. I hope you know how much I love you. I'm so sorry. This was the hardest thing I've ever done. I don't know what I'd do if anything happened to you. Please forgive me.

There is a crack of thunder and lightning.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A loud thumping at the door jolts Jennifer out of her daze. She seems disoriented for a moment. The banging continues.

JENNIFER

Just a minute.

She quickly folds the paper and drops it on the floor. She runs to the door, opens it and sees Bobby standing in the hallway with a mattress. He is wet and seems to be in a great mood.

BOBBY

TA DA! No more sleeping on the floor.

JENNIFER

(unenthusiastic)

Wonderful.

Bobby slides the mattress into the living room, knocking into Jennifer. The both fall to the floor and land on the mattress. Bobby is amused by the accident and rolls on top of her.

BOBBY

It's perfect!

Jennifer quickly pushes Bobby off.

JENNIFER

Bobby, please. Someone might see you.

She gets up from under Bobby and closes the front door.

BOBBY

Hell with the neighbors. It's no crime getting close to the one you love.

JENNIFER

Where's Bruce?

BOBBY

I ran him to the bar, he was running late for work. Cathy and Diann showed up for a drink, so I. . .

JENNIFER

(quickly)

. . .had a few drinks. I guess you were snorting coke too.

BOBBY

Well, we. . .Bruce's friend just. . .

JENNIFER

Don't lie to me. I can tell when you've been doing drugs. I thought we were past this. You know how mean and reckless you can get when you do coke.

BOBBY

But I didn't have to pay for it.

JENNIFER

So that makes it right? You know how I hate this. You may have got it free today, but you'll be spending \$200 tomorrow. We can barely afford food.

BOBBY

I didn't mean to hurt you. I was just havin' a little fun.

Bobby takes off his jacket and Jennifer sees a large hunting knife hanging from a case on his belt.

JENNIFER

What the hell is that?

Bobby unfastens the knife and pulls it out of the case.

BOBBY

I had to get it. It's just like one I had years ago.

JENNIFER

What do you need that for?

Bobby moves close to Jennifer.

BOBBY

Just something to keep the beasts off my beauty.

He embraces her. Jennifer struggles from his grip.

JENNIFER

Bobby, please!

Bobby puts the knife back in the case and fastens it.

BOBBY

What's wrong with you?

JENNIFER

Tina, that's what's wrong. She called for you. Looks like your date for tomorrow is off. You've got a lot of nerve. One week back and you're snorting coke with your old girlfriend.

BOBBY

What? I wasn't partying with her.

JENNIFER

Fine, you didn't party with her. But you did see her today.

BOBBY

Ok, I ran into Tina. She does live in the area. She asked what I was doing, and I told her I was looking for a bed . . .for us. Next thing I know she's offering to sell me her bedroom furniture. I didn't know how you'd feel about it, so I put her off.

JENNIFER

Then, why are you meeting her?

BOBBY

She put me on the spot. I told her I'd have to see the furniture before I bought it.

JENNIFER

That's a convenient way to get in her bedroom.

BOBBY

Come on, Jennifer. Tina and I are just friends. You're the only one I love.

JENNIFER

But not the only one you wanna have sex with. I should've known. . .guess that's just life with a drug crazed ex-con.

Bobby flies out of control and slaps Jennifer across the face. They both freeze for a long moment. Eventually, Bobby breaks the silence.

BOBBY

I'm sorry Jennifer, that's not true. I don't know what you heard about guys from prison, but it's not me. When I first got out, I was so disgusted with myself, I didn't want to be with anyone.

Then, out of no where, I meet a beautiful woman with a great personality. I never thought someone like you would care about a guy like me. I guess heaven smiled on me for once. With you, I found my purpose. I wouldn't risk losing you for anything. Please believe me.

Jennifer breaks down and hugs Bobby, crying on his shoulder.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry too. It's been such a hard road. Ever since Doug broke my heart, I haven't been able to trust anyone.

BOBBY

Who the hell is this Doug guy, anyway?

Jennifer pulls away from Bobby and dries her eyes.

JENNIFER

I was only 16, but you know true love when it steals your heart. Maybe I clung to him because my family was falling apart. Or maybe he was my soul mate. . .I don't know. But I fell apart when he left me. I thought my life was over. Thank God my family kept me from going over the edge.

BOBBY

I understand he hurt you, but we all get our heart broken. Life has to go on.

JENNIFER

It's hard to explain. . .like he robbed me of my innocence. . I've never felt such regret.

BOBBY

You're still young, your heart will heal.

JENNIFER

I just hope my soul can.

BOBBY

How do you mean?

Jennifer wipes the tears from her eyes.

JENNIFER

I've gone far too deep already. Now you're beginning to see why I wanted to stay in Florida.

BOBBY

But you have me now.

JENNIFER

(happier)
That's right, I do.

Bobby embraces her. They hold for a moment.

BOBBY

Don't worry, I won't let anyone hurt you again.

Jennifer pulls away.

JENNIFER

(smiling)

Can I have that in writing?

BOBBY

I've got a better way to seal this deal.
Help me drag this mattress into the
bedroom and I'll show you.

The tense moment fades away as they begin to laugh. Bobby picks up one end of the mattress and Jennifer looks at him, then picks up the other end. They continue to laugh as they drag the mattress down the hall to come to their agreement.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE CATHY'S APARTMENT - DAYS LATER

Jennifer is sitting on a bench looking through the employment section of the paper. She is dressed nicely.

JENNIFER

(reading out loud)

Retail Sales. . .Roofers. . .Salesperson.
. .here we are. . Secretarial. Part time?
No. . .Bilingual Japanese/English?. . .I
don't think so. . .Hey, this one looks
good.

Just then, Bruce's truck comes screeching up the parking lot and stops abruptly in front of Jennifer. Cathy and Bruce are in a heated discussion as Jennifer walks up to the truck.

CATHY

No Bruce, I'm done with him. He's an
asshole.

BRUCE

You shouldn't let him get you so angry.
Can't you see he's trying to piss you off?

JENNIFER

Is everything ok? If this is a bad time,
I can reschedule my interview.

BRUCE

No, get in. Cathy's just blowing off steam.

Jennifer opens the passenger door and slides in the truck.

CUT TO:

INT. BRUCE'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy slides over as Jennifer gets in the truck. Jennifer shuts the door and Bruce pulls off.

CATHY

I don't know why I married that jerk off.

JENNIFER

CJ, take a minute and calm down.

CATHY

He just knows exactly how to get at me.
But I'm going to get him this time.

(to Bruce)

I'm serious about what I said earlier.
Are you still with me?

BRUCE

I guess. I don't think its a good idea.

JENNIFER

CJ, what are you up to?

CATHY

Bruce and I are leaving.

JENNIFER

Leaving?! Let's back up a bit.

CATHY

Tommy found out that you and Bobby are
living with us. So, he's trying to get
full custody because my living situation
is not appropriate for a child.

JENNIFER

Bobby and I can get our own place.

BRUCE

It probably won't end there. He'll never
stop.

JENNIFER

Where will you go?

CATHY

Tomorrow, Bruce and I are packing up the
truck, picking up Steven and leaving the
state.

JENNIFER

You're taking Steven?

CATHY

And were getting the hell out of here.

JENNIFER

CJ, didn't you tell me you can't run away
from your problems?

CATHY

Then you said, "Why not, if you can get away and leave it all behind, why not."

JENNIFER

(fumbling)

I did. But my problems were just waiting for me till I got back.

CATHY

We're not coming back.

JENNIFER

(trying not to cry)

Now you're leaving me.

CATHY

I wouldn't if I didn't have to.

BRUCE

How do you think Bobby'll take the news?

JENNIFER

He'll understand. . .once I tell him why.

CATHY

We'll have to tell him tonight.

JENNIFER

And risk having the family talk you out of it. No, let me tell him after you leave.

CATHY

What about the apartment?

JENNIFER

Bobby's making enough to cover the rent, and I'll have a job soon. Besides it'll be nice to finally have a place of our own. . .as long as you're sure about this.

Jennifer looks at Cathy and sees the answer in her eyes.

CATHY

I'm sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Jennifer is talking on the telephone with Patrick.

JENNIFER

. . .I would've told you sooner, but things have really been hectic.

PATRICK (O.S.)

I'm just glad to know you're back.

JENNIFER

Maybe you can visit sometime soon.

PATRICK (O.S.)

How about this weekend?

JENNIFER

(surprised)

That would be great! I'd love to see you.

We hear the apartment door open and close.

BOBBY

(calling)

Hey, sweetheart. I'm back.

PATRICK (O.S.)

I think I could stand to get away.

JENNIFER

Hey, Patrick. Bobby just walked in. I should probably go.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Are you going to be all right?

JENNIFER

Yeah, I'll be fine.

PATRICK (O.S.)

You don't think he'll hit you again?

JENNIFER

I deserved that last time. I'm positive it won't happen again.

PATRICK (O.S.)

If there's any trouble, you better call me. I don't care how late it is.

JENNIFER

You live an hour away, what can you do?

PATRICK (O.S.)

Get there in 45 minutes.

JENNIFER

I'll be fine. . . and I'll look forward to seeing you. We'll take you out and burn up some excess brain cells.

PATRICK (O.S.)

I'll stock up then. Good luck.

JENNIFER

Thanks. See you soon.

Jennifer hangs up the phone and exits the kitchen.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PATIO OUTSIDE CATHY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer walks out onto the patio and finds Bobby leaning on the railing looking at the sky. The sun has just started to set and the sky is bright and colorful.

JENNIFER

What a beautiful day.

BOBBY

It's going to be a helluva sunset.

JENNIFER

Let's grab a bottle of wine and some glasses. We can take a walk by the lake and watch the sun set from there.

BOBBY

Sure. It's a perfect place to tell you my good news.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE PATH TO THE LAKE - MINUTES LATER

Bobby and Jennifer are walking and holding hands. Bobby is carrying a bottle of wine and Jennifer has two glasses.

JENNIFER

Seems like you're in a great mood.

BOBBY

It feels good to be getting on my feet again. Before you know it, we'll have a place of our own.

Jennifer loses her nerve and misses the opportunity.

JENNIFER

What's the good news?

BOBBY

I bought you the bedroom set we were looking at the other day.

JENNIFER

You're kidding? We can't afford that.

BOBBY

The manager of the furniture store has a horse at the stables. He's letting me make payments.

JENNIFER

That's nice of him.

BOBBY

. . .and there's still enough money to last till my next pay. Then I can cover our half of the rent.

JENNIFER

I thought we had more than that.

BOBBY

We will. Once I finish paying back my father, I can even put a down payment on a new bike.

JENNIFER

A motorcycle? I don't know about that.

BOBBY

I need some way to get around. I can't keep asking Bruce for rides everywhere.

Jennifer and Bobby find a cozy spot by the lake.

JENNIFER

(interrupting)

This is nice, let's stop here. Why don't you pop the cork?

Bobby uses a corkscrew to open the wine. He pours wine into the glasses as Jennifer holds them.

BOBBY

You'll look so good sittin' on the back of my bike. I'm such a lucky man.

Jennifer quickly drinks most of her wine.

JENNIFER

Bobby, I have to tell you something.

He realizes her serious nature.

BOBBY

What is it? You look worried.

JENNIFER

(blurting it out)

Cathy and Bruce had to leave.

BOBBY

(not sure)

What do you mean?

JENNIFER

They packed up the truck and moved out.

BOBBY

What the fuck? Where the hell'd they go?

JENNIFER

I don't know. They're going to call when they get there.

BOBBY

(getting angrier)

Why didn't anyone fuckin' tell me?

JENNIFER

They told me yesterday and left today.

BOBBY

They left us with the goddamn apartment? Did they leave any money to help cover the rent?

JENNIFER

They had to borrow money from Cathy's sister to make the trip.

BOBBY

How could they fuckin' do that to us?

JENNIFER

They didn't do it to hurt us. Cathy took off with Steven. Tommy wanted to get full custody. . .she panicked.

BOBBY

I knew it was too muthafuckin' good to be true. We're ruined.

JENNIFER

Bobby, please calm down. I'll get a job, everything'll work out.

BOBBY

(sarcastic)

Everyone relax, little miss perfect says everything will work out. . .

Bobby pulls a small brown vile from his pocket, unscrews the lid, spoons out some cocaine and snorts it.

JENNIFER

What the hell are you doing?

BOBBY

Going down in flames. . .so let me enjoy the fuckin' ride.

Bobby snorts more.

JENNIFER

Put that away, you're making it much worse.

BOBBY

This certainly isn't my fault.

JENNIFER

Do you think it's my fault? I didn't ask them to leave. I told Cathy it was a bad idea, but she just threw my words back at me. I didn't know what to say.

BOBBY

What the hell were you all thinking? In the world I come from, people have responsibilities. You can't just run off 'cause your fuckin' feelings got hurt.

As Bobby snorts again and Jennifer grabs the vile from him.

JENNIFER

Stop it . . .you're not going to ruin us over this.

BOBBY

It's a little goddamn fuckin' late for that. . .Fuck!

Bobby lunges at Jennifer and tries to grab the vile back.

BOBBY

(continuing)
Gimme my goddamn coke.

Bobby and Jennifer wrestle for a moment. Bobby gets the vile back and snorts more.

JENNIFER

Just what the world needs. . . another coked-out ex-con.

Bobby backhands Jennifer so hard, she drops her glass and falls to the ground. He stops for a moment, then throws his wine glass down, smashing it on the concrete as he turns and walks away.

JENNIFER

(continuing)
Where are you going?

BOBBY

(yelling back)
Don't you fuckin' worry. . .I can take care of myself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY

Jennifer sits alone at the kitchen table trying to read a book. A small television set is sitting on the kitchen table. The TV is on and tuned to a soap opera. The program dialogue can be heard low in the room. The action on TV is taking place in a hospital bedroom as we hear the sounds of life support equipment.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)

The doctor said there were complications during the operation.

The dialogue gets Jennifer's attention and she looks up from her book. We see a very serious look on her face.

VOICE #2

Is she going to be alright?

VOICE #1 (O.S.)

She may never come out of the coma.

As Jennifer's eyes look over at the TV set, we . . .
CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A close up of Jennifer's face as she lies unconscious on an operating table with a respirator shoved in her mouth. As the camera pulls out to a wide shot of the room, we see a flurry of activity. The atmosphere is tense.

DOCTOR

I need more suction. . . I don't think we got it all.

NURSE

She's starting to hemorrhage. . .

DOCTOR

We have to stop the bleeding or we'll have to go back in.

We hear the heart monitor flat line.

NURSE

We're losing her. . .

We hear a loud knocking sound.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer is jolted out of her daydream. We see tears in her eyes as we hear the loud knocking again. She realizes someone is at the door. She jumps up and runs out of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

We see Jennifer frantically running to the front door. She places her hand on the door knob and stops to think for a moment. When she finally opens the door, she is surprised to see Patrick standing in the hallway.

JENNIFER

Patrick! Thank God.

She throws her arms around him and cries on his shoulder.

PATRICK

Hey, it's OK, I'm here for you.

She lifts up her head and steps back to dry her eyes. They enter the apartment and Patrick closes the door behind them.

JENNIFER

It's much worse than I expected. Bobby got so angry . . .we had a terrible fight . . .he ran off and hasn't been back since.

PATRICK

Maybe he just needed time to cool off.

JENNIFER

I don't know what to think.

PATRICK

It doesn't look like you have many options.

JENNIFER

If he left, I can't afford this apartment on my own.

PATRICK

First, you need to get yourself together. You can't help yourself if you are falling apart.

JENNIFER

I know. . .you're right. . .everything happens for a reason.

Suddenly, the front door swings open and Bobby enters.

BOBBY

Hey sweetheart.

JENNIFER

Bobby!

Bobby grabs Jennifer and kisses her.

BOBBY

I'm sorry about last night. It was wrong to blame you. Cathy and Bruce did this, not you.

JENNIFER

You right, I should've tried harder to talk them out of it.

BOBBY

Let's forget about all that shit. There was no argument and I didn't run off.

Bobby pulls Jennifer closer and they embrace.

BOBBY

(continuing)

Let's imagine we spent the night in each other's arms.

JENNIFER

I'm so glad you're back.

Jennifer suddenly remembers Patrick and pulls out of the hug.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

I'm sorry. Bobby, this is my brother. Patrick, this is Bobby.

They greet each other with a handshake.

PATRICK

It's nice to finally meet you.

BOBBY

Good to meet you too. Your sister has many good things to say about you.

PATRICK

. . .and she means the world to me.

BOBBY

Then I better straighten my ass up!

JENNIFER

Just don't run off like that anymore.

BOBBY

I needed to think. I was so angry, I thought it was better to get away from you. Besides, last night changed everything.

JENNIFER

What happened?

BOBBY

I just kept walking. I got as far as the mall before I realized where I was. Then, I was sitting on a bench for a while and my high school buddy Robert shows up.

JENNIFER

Isn't that the guy who borrowed all that money from you years ago?

BOBBY

Same one. At first, I was ready to beat his ass. I was hatin' the world. Then, just as I was ready to confront him, he reminded me about the money.

JENNIFER

Is he going to pay you back?

BOBBY

He already did. His uncle passed away a couple months ago and he got a load of cash. He was really honest about the money and told me to meet him at his bank this morning.

JENNIFER

Is there enough to pay the rent?

BOBBY

Damn straight! And I can put a down payment on a bike.

JENNIFER

I can't believe this.

PATRICK

That really is good news.

BOBBY

It gets better.

Bobby pulls a box out of his pocket and hands it to Jennifer.

BOBBY

(continuing)
There's one more surprise.

Jennifer nervously opens the box and sees a diamond and gold ring.

JENNIFER

I don't know what to say.

BOBBY

Sure you know what to say. Just let me ask the question.

Bobby drops to one knee and takes her hand.

BOBBY
(continuing)
Jennifer, will you please marry me.

JENNIFER
I never expected this to happen.

She drops to her knees in front of him.

JENNIFER
(continuing)
Yes Bobby, I'll marry you.

Patrick cheers as they kiss.

PATRICK
We definitely have to celebrate now.

BOBBY
My treat.

PATRICK
If you insist.

JENNIFER
I'll get Diann to round up the family.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

Later that evening, "The Family" gathers at the bar. It is a cozy place with booths, pool tables, pinball machines, a jukebox, an area for a small band and a dance floor. As the scene opens, Jennifer, Bobby, Patrick and Diann are seated in one of the booths, while Kevin and Ryan play a game of pool. The bar has a medium crowd, the jukebox is playing and everyone is in a good mood.

JENNIFER
(to Patrick)
So, what do you think of the place?

PATRICK
It's nice and laid back. The bars at college can get a little wild.

DIANN
Bruce used to play here a couple nights a week.

JENNIFER
I wish they were here tonight.

BOBBY
(with an edge)
Their loss. . .

JENNIFER
Down boy.

DIANN
(stopping it before it starts)
I've got a great idea. Let's make Patrick
a member of the family.

JENNIFER
Sounds like initiation time.

PATRICK
I won't have to moon the bar, or get on
all fours and bark like a dog, will I?

DIANN
No, that's my job.

BOBBY
You just have to guzzle your beer without
stopping.

PATRICK
Another thing college has prepared me for.

JENNIFER
Then you're a natural.

PATRICK
There's a pun in there somewhere.

DIANN
I better do this before I change my mind.

Diann raises her glass.

DIANN
(continuing)
This toast is in honor of our new family-
member-to-be. Patrick, you're a good
person and a fun partier.

PATRICK
. . .with a great sense of humor.

BOBBY
. . .but not better than mine.

DIANN
. . .and the kind of person we need in our
family. To Patrick.

Everyone raises their glasses and Patrick succeeds in guzzling his beer. The group cheers as Patrick let's out a burp.

PATRICK

Excuse me.

BOBBY

Now it's official.

Kevin and Ryan return to the booth after their pool game.

RYAN

What's going on?

DIANN

We just initiated Patrick into the family.

RYAN

Great!

(quickly to Patrick)

Wanna play pool?

KEVIN

Don't, he's on a winning streak.

RYAN

Like every night.

KEVIN

So you won a couple games of pool.

RYAN

. . .and 40 dollars.

KEVIN

(quickly)

. .35 dollars, you owe me five.

RYAN

He's just jealous. How about it Patrick?

DIANN

I can't believe you are trying to make a fast buck off Jennifer's brother.

RYAN

He's family now. I wouldn't feel guilty.

BOBBY

Sounds like you need someone to put you in your place.

RYAN

Or you need to put your money where your mouth is. . .

BOBBY

Better yet, how about this?

Bobby pulls back his jacket and takes out his hunting knife.

JENNIFER

Bobby, put that away.

Ryan quickly grabs the knife and inspects it.

RYAN

Let me see that.

DIANN

Look you idiots, this is no time to play cool.

RYAN

My man here has offered me a bet, and I've decided to accept.

BOBBY

What the hell are you puttin' up?

Ryan motions to the pool tables.

RYAN

Step into my parlor and we can talk.

JENNIFER

Bobby, before you move from here, put that knife back.

RYAN

Maybe I should hold on to it.

Bobby snatches the knife back and puts it in his jacket.

BOBBY

Slow down, buddy. You haven't won yet.

(to the group)

Excuse me. . .have to see a man about a game.

Bobby and Ryan bicker as they walk from the table. Kevin sits down in the booth next to Diann.

JENNIFER

You have to excuse them, they don't get out much.

DIANN

Seems like they never get out at all.

KEVIN

Just a little ego at stake.

DIANN

I just don't want any trouble.

KEVIN

It's cool, no one's causin' any trouble.

JENNIFER

Bobby can get me so nervous.

KEVIN

I thought we were here to party?

DIANN

That's right, this is a celebration.

Diann raises her glass.

DIANN

(continuing)

To Jennifer and Bobby, nothing can stop
'em now.

The group clinks glasses and drinks. As Jennifer finishes her sip, she glances at the front door just as DOUG MARTIN (25) enters the bar. He's a handsome guy with a smooth face, blue eyes and long, sandy brown hair parted in the middle. Jennifer tenses up and leans over to Patrick.

JENNIFER

Look who just walked in.

PATRICK

There goes the neighborhood.

Diann looks up to see who they are talking about.

DIANN

Isn't that Doug?

KEVIN

Who's Doug?

JENNIFER

Someone I dated once.

PATRICK

That's an understatement.

DIANN

Has Bobby ever seen him before?

JENNIFER

No, but he knows about him.

KEVIN

We all agree there's not going to be any
trouble. Want me to ask him to stay away?

JENNIFER

No! Don't bother him. Maybe he won't stay long.

Jennifer notices that Bobby and Ryan are returning to the table. The group tenses up.

JENNIFER

(continuing)
Here comes Bobby, just drop it.

Bobby and Ryan get back to the table.

DIANN

(quickly)
That was a fast game. Who won?

BOBBY

We didn't play. The tables are full.

RYAN

. . .and we're out of beer.

BOBBY

Ryan's gonna let me take his bike out for a spin.

DIANN

You brought your bike? Isn't it going to rain tonight?

RYAN

No big deal. Besides my car's in the shop.

JENNIFER

I don't want you driving in the rain. You've been drinking.

BOBBY

It's not raining yet. If it starts, I'll come back.

RYAN

Don't worry mommy, Bobby's a big boy.

BOBBY

I'll be back in a bit.

Bobby kisses Jennifer and exits the bar. Ryan pours another beer.

RYAN

While Bobby risks life and limb, who wants to play pinball?

DIANN

Now you're talkin'. . .let's play teams.

RYAN

Jennifer, you wanna play?

JENNIFER

Not now, you guys go ahead. Patrick, why don't you play?

PATRICK

Sure, I'm in.

KEVIN

I'll play too. But not for money.

RYAN

Chicken shit.

DIANN

Better not put these two on the same team.

(to Jennifer)

Will you be all right by yourself?

JENNIFER

I'll be fine.

DIANN

I just mean. . .

JENNIFER

(quickly)

Don't worry. I'll be fine.

Kevin and Ryan quarrel about money as the group walks from the table. Jennifer pours another beer and glances at Doug across the bar. Suddenly, their eyes meet. Doug whispers something to his friend, BRIAN (26) a tall, muscular young man. Doug walks over to the jukebox, takes change out of his pocket, puts it in the jukebox and makes a selection. As the song begins to play, he walks over to Jennifer.

DOUG

Hey Jennifer.

JENNIFER

Hi Doug.

DOUG

It's been a while.

JENNIFER

I guess.

DOUG

They're playing our song. May I have this dance?

JENNIFER

I don't feel like dancing.

DOUG

You know, to remember the old times.

JENNIFER

Who says I wanna remember?

DOUG

Just one dance. . . that's all.

JENNIFER

If I dance with you, promise me you'll
leave afterward.

They look into each other's eyes for a moment. As she seems to
break down, Doug takes her by the hand. He leads her to the
dance floor and they begin to slow dance.

DOUG

It's good to see you again. You're
beautiful as ever.

JENNIFER

Who are you with?

DOUG

Brian? Just a friend from work. He's
teaching me how to box. He knows the
owner of the gym, so we get in for
nothing.

JENNIFER

When did you start boxing?

DOUG

A little while ago. It's a good way to
get in shape. Brian's pretty damn good.

There is a moment of silence.

DOUG

(continuing)

I have been hoping to run into you again.
I've been wanting to talk.

JENNIFER

What about?

DOUG

About us.

JENNIFER

There is no "us" anymore.

DOUG

Things are different now.

JENNIFER

Yeah, they're much worse. Don't you remember what you put me through?

DOUG

I was young and selfish.

JENNIFER

That's a little too easy.

DOUG

I wasn't ready for that kind of commitment. I couldn't even take care of myself. But, I'm stronger now.

JENNIFER

It's too late. Besides nothing can change what you did to me.

DOUG

Won't you let me make it up to you?

JENNIFER

Where the hell were you when I needed you?

DOUG

I was wrong. I admit that. But, I still love you.

Jennifer stops dancing for a moment, then with all her strength.

JENNIFER

But I don't love you any more.

Doug pulls her closer and starts dancing again.

DOUG

Then I'll make you fall in love again.

JENNIFER

No, Doug. I don't want you any more. I'm already engaged to someone else.

DOUG

Not that redneck you're with?

JENNIFER

Who are you to judge? Besides, your opinion doesn't matter.

DOUG

Please give me one more chance.

Bobby re-enters the bar and immediately sees Jennifer dancing. He walks over to the pinball machines to confront the group.

BOBBY

Who's she dancing with?

DIANN

(fumbling)

. .a friend from high school.

KEVIN

I think his name is Doug.

Diann backhands Kevin in the stomach.

BOBBY

I knew it.

Bobby starts for the dance floor.

DIANN

(calling)

Bobby, please don't start anything.

Bobby walks up to Jennifer and Doug and pulls them apart.

BOBBY

I believe it's my dance.

JENNIFER

Bobby!

DOUG

Hey buddy, what's your problem?

BOBBY

You're my fuckin' problem, and I'm not your goddamn buddy.

JENNIFER

We were just dancing.

BOBBY

(to Jennifer)

You don't need that shithead.

DOUG

Doesn't mean much coming from a redneck.

Bobby throws a punch to Doug's face, then another to his stomach.

JENNIFER

Bobby, please stop!

Bobby and Doug continue to fist fight. As Doug seems to be losing, his friend Brian jumps up from the bar and hurries over to the fight. Seeing the fight break out, the BAR OWNER picks up the phone and calls the police. Brian steps into the fight, throws a couple punches to Bobby's face and knocks him out. As Bobby falls to the floor, Brian grabs Doug and pulls him out the door. The family members run over to the scene. Ryan watches with anger as Brian and Doug run out the door.

RYAN

They're not getting away with this shit.

Ryan starts for the door and Jennifer tries to stop him.

JENNIFER

Ryan, please, no more trouble.

Diann catches up with Jennifer and grabs her.

DIANN

Jennifer, stay with Bobby. Ryan, don't do anything stupid.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - MOMENTS LATER

We see Doug and Brian running to their car in the parking lot. Brian gets in the driver's side and Doug gets into the passenger side. Ryan suddenly appears, running across the parking lot to his motorcycle. Ryan jumps on his bike and starts it on the first try. As Brian pulls out of the parking lot, Ryan reaches under his seat and pulls out a revolver. It begins to rain as he drives his bike out of the parking lot.

Just as Ryan pulls onto the street, a police car pulls up to the bar with flashing lights and TWO OFFICERS jump out.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The two officers enter the bar as Bobby regains consciousness. The BAR OWNER walks up to meet the officers.

OFFICER #1

What's going on?

BAR OWNER

There's been a fight. The one on the floor started it.

The Bar Owner points at Bobby and the officers walk over to where he sits on the floor. Diann sees them approaching and calls to them urgently.

DIANN

The guys you want ran out of the club.

One of the officers looks at Bobby.

OFFICER #1

Are you all right? Do you need medical attention?

Bobby is rubbing his head.

BOBBY

No, I'm fine.

KEVIN

(to the officer)

Some guy started a fight with Bobby. Then his friend jumped in and knocked Bobby out.

The officer bends over to help Bobby off the floor. As Bobby begins to stand, his knife falls from his jacket to the floor.

OFFICER #1

(to Bobby)

The owner says you started it.

The other officer picks the knife off of the floor.

OFFICER #2

What do we have here?

On Bobby's look of panic, we. . .

CUT TO:

EXT. A RAINY, DARK ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan pulls up next to Brian's car on his bike, points the gun at him through the window and motions him to pull over. Brian swerves the car and knocks into Ryan's bike. As Ryan drops back a bit to regain control, we. . .

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The police are escorting Bobby out of the bar in handcuffs. "The Family" follows out into the rain and watches as they put Bobby into the car.

JENNIFER

(crying)

What's going to happen to him?

Diann puts her arm around Jennifer's shoulder.

DIANN

I'm sure it's just a minor charge. They'll let him go.

JENNIFER

Not with his past record.

PATRICK

Did Ryan leave?

KEVIN

I'm not sure. Looks like his bike is gone.

JENNIFER

I feel so helpless. What can we do?

DIANN

I don't know. . .but we have to stick by
Bobby no matter what happens.

As the police car begins to pull away, we see Bobby staring out
of the back window. Diann hugs Jennifer as they cry in the rain.

CUT TO:

EXT. A RAINY, DARK ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan catches up to Brian's car again. He fires a shot into the
trees to alert Brian to pull over. Brian swerves his car again
and knocks Ryan's bike out of control. Ryan skids across the
pavement and drives off the side of the road. As Ryan
disappears into a ditch, we see Brian's car drive off into the
rainy night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Jennifer sits silently by herself staring at the wall. She
picks up a coffee mug to take a sip and realizes it is empty.
She sets the mug down and sits motionless.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - NIGHT

A younger Jennifer is sleeping in a hospital bed. Jennifer's
mother sits at her bedside while a nurse checks Jennifer's vital
signs. As the nurse is finishing, the Doctor enters the room.

NURSE

She's resting comfortably, doctor.

DOCTOR

Do you have the paperwork?

NURSE

I gave it to Mrs. Gregory.

DOCTOR

Thank you, that'll be all.

The nurse exits and the doctor walks over to Jennifer's mother.

DOCTOR

(continuing; concerned)

Mrs. Gregory, we still need your signature.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

I know, I'm just having trouble handling this. It's the hardest thing I've ever done.

DOCTOR

It's never an easy decision.

Jennifer's mother begins crying as she looks down at the papers on the table in front of her. She looks at Jennifer and continues crying while holding her hand.

DOCTOR

(continuing)

Mrs. Gregory. . .

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

(still crying)

Jennifer, I'm so sorry . . . Please forgive me.

With her hand shaking, Jennifer's mother signs the papers.

DOCTOR

In time, you'll be able to put this behind and forgive yourself.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

But will God forgive me?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Still in a daze, Jennifer walks over to the coffee pot and pours herself another cup. Suddenly, the phone rings and the sound startles her. She knocks the mug over and coffee spills over the table. She frantically tries to clean up the mess as she answers the phone.

JENNIFER

Bobby!?

DIANN (O.S.)

It's Diann. . .just checking on you.

JENNIFER

Have you heard anything about Ryan?

DIANN

Still no word. No one has seen him since last night.

JENNIFER

I hope everything's all right. I'm so sorry you all had to get involved.

DIANN

I guess you haven't heard from Bobby either.

JENNIFER

Nothing. . .I don't know what to think.

DIANN

Maybe they're makin' him sweat it out.

JENNIFER

He still should've called by now.

DIANN

I better get off the line then. Call me if you need anything.

JENNIFER

Thanks Di.

She hangs up the phone and finishes cleaning up the mess. The phone rings again and she quickly picks it up.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Bobby!?

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

We see Cathy in an unfamiliar apartment on the phone.

CATHY

Hey Jennifer! It's Cathy.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

JENNIFER

(enthusiastic)

CJ! I've been hoping to hear from you.

CATHY

Sorry it's taken so long. Kidnapping isn't easy you know.

She chuckles.

JENNIFER

I hope things are working out.

CATHY

They're better. I feel a little more in control.

JENNIFER

Where are you anyway?

CATHY

Bruce's brother's place in New Jersey. Tommy'll never find us here.

JENNIFER

What are you gonna do now?

CATHY

We're talking to a lawyer here. He's had some good advice.

JENNIFER

I hope he told you taking Steven was a bad idea.

CATHY

Well. . .he also said I have to let Tommy see him soon. But, my divorce doesn't limit where I can take Steven, so I can probably get around this stunt.

JENNIFER

CJ, I need to tell you something.

CATHY

You sound serious, what is it?

JENNIFER

It's about Bobby. . .He. .

(stopping herself)

He asked me to marry him. I'm just a little nervous, that's all.

CATHY

That's great news! Congratulations! Have you set a date?

JENNIFER

No. I think we're gonna take it slow.

Little Steven can be heard in the background as he begins to cry. Cathy sets a baby bottle of milk in a pan on the stove and turns the fire on low.

CATHY

That's what they all say. You two'll be married before you know it.

We hear the Steven crying louder. Cathy turns from the phone.

CATHY
(continuing; calling)
Bruce? . . please check on Steven.

JENNIFER
Let me get used to being engaged.

Steven continues to cry.

CATHY
Jennifer, I better go. Steven's still
crying . .I don't know where Bruce is.

JENNIFER
It's good to talk to you again.

CATHY
You too. Give my love to the family.
I'll be in touch.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

We can still hear Steven crying. Cathy hangs up the telephone
and exits the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy walks over to the crib and picks Steven up. She carries
him to the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy enters the bedroom and sees Bruce sitting on the bed
reading a newspaper. A television set is turned on and playing
low in the background.

CATHY
There's that mean old man who let you cry.

BRUCE
I don't know how to take care of babies.

CATHY
Maybe it's time to learn.

Cathy pulls the newspaper from Bruce and hands Steven to him.
Bruce fumbles a bit to hold him right. Cathy begins to leave the
room.

CATHY
(continuing)
I'll be right back with his bottle.

BRUCE

(calling)

Get me a beer while you're at it.

(lower to Steven)

I'm gonna need it.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy walks over to the stereo and turns it on. We see her walk into the kitchen and take the baby bottle out of a pan on the stove and dries it off. She walks out of view for a moment and we hear plastic rattling.

Then she comes walking out of the kitchen with the bottle in one hand and a bag of trash in the other. As she walks back to the bedroom, she sets the trash on the floor in the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy enters the bedroom and hands the bottle to Bruce.

BRUCE

This really isn't a good time for this.
My brother is expecting me to find some
work.

CATHY

Stop bitchin', this won't take long. He's
pretty good at feeding himself. Just sit
with him. I'll take the trash out, since
you can't seem to do that either.

BRUCE

Hey, what about my beer?

Cathy dismisses Bruce's comment as she exits the room.

BRUCE

(continuing; to Steven)

Guess I'll have to throw a fit to get a
little attention myself.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy picks up the bag of trash and walks over to the front door. When she opens the door, she is startled to see TOMMY standing in the hallway.

TOMMY

Surprise!

Cathy drops the trash in panic and tries to shut the door.
Tommy blocks the door with his foot.

CATHY

How the hell did you find me?

TOMMY

I stopped by your mom's house and had a talk with your sister.

CATHY

She didn't know we were here.

TOMMY

Not at first, but I found an address book in your old room. This was the most obvious place.

CATHY

That bitch. I should've never got her involved.

Tommy pushes his way in the door.

TOMMY

Who the fuck do you think you are, kidnapping my son?

CATHY

Did you actually think I'd let you keep him?

TOMMY

After this stunt, I don't have to worry. You'll never fuckin' get him now.

CATHY

Don't be so sure. I have a great lawyer and he's got it all worked out.

TOMMY

Yeah right. Just gimme my son and there won't be any trouble.

CATHY

He's not here. Bruce took him to the park.

TOMMY

Isn't that so goddamn cute?

Tommy drops on the couch and gets comfortable.

TOMMY

(continuing)

I'll wait. We have some catching up to do.

CATHY

Tommy, you're not taking Steven.

TOMMY

You bet your ass I am.

CATHY

We're not married any more, so you can't have your way. Unless you plan on beating me around again.

TOMMY

No, I have a better way.

Tommy pulls a revolver from his pocket.

CATHY

You wouldn't dare.

TOMMY

I won't have to, if you cooperate.

CATHY

You have a long wait. They won't be back for hours.

Just then Steven begins to cry.

BRUCE (O.S.)

Dammit Cathy, where is my beer?

Tommy jumps up.

TOMMY

Lyin' bitch. Enough fuckin' stalling, I want my son.

CATHY

Ok, I'll get him.

As Cathy begins to walk to the bedroom, Tommy pushes her out of the way.

TOMMY

Oh no you don't. I'll get him myself.

CATHY

(yelling)
Bruce, lock the door. . .get out the window . . . Tommy's here. . .he's got a gun.

Tommy grabs her from behind and tries to cover her mouth. As she bites his hand, Tommy whips her around by the arm and throws her across the room. Cathy knocks herself out as her head hits the coffee table.

BRUCE

(calling)
Cathy, I can't hear you. What did you say?

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy enters the room pointing the gun at Bruce.

TOMMY

She told you to give me the baby.

BRUCE

What the hell??

TOMMY

I just came here for Steven. . .set him on the bed and back away.

Bruce carefully lays Steven on the bed and backs up. Tommy slowly walks over to the bed and, as he bends down to pick him up, Bruce lunges at him and a struggle begins.

CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW JERSEY - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As the camera slowly pulls from a close up of Cathy's face, we see blood running down her forehead. She is still unconscious. Steven's cries ring through the apartment as we hear the sounds of a struggle. Suddenly, a gunshot is heard and the sound of a body hitting the floor. There is more fumbling, then Tommy comes running out of the bedroom carrying Steven. He quickly runs out the front door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - TWO DAYS LATER

A priest finishes his final prayers and blesses a casket as it is lowered into the ground. As the casket disappears, we can see the faces of the people at the grave site. Jennifer, Patrick, Diann and Kevin are crying and hugging each other as the ceremony ends. They begin to walk from the grave.

JENNIFER

I can't believe this. It's like a bad dream.

DIANN

Worst of all, it didn't have to happen.

KEVIN

I don't know what he was thinking.

DIANN

Does Bobby know?

JENNIFER

Not yet. I had to get through this first. I'll tell him today when I see him.

PATRICK

Maybe you should wait till he gets out.

JENNIFER

I have to tell him. Ryan was like a brother. Besides, I still don't know when he's getting out.

DIANN

Why are they holding him so long?

JENNIFER

I'm not sure. I feel there's something he's not telling me.

KEVIN

Do Cathy and Bruce know?

JENNIFER

I talked to Cathy a day or two ago, before we knew what happened. I haven't heard from her since and she didn't leave a number.

PATRICK

Maybe it's better off for now.

JENNIFER

I'm really going to miss Ryan. It won't be the same without him.

DIANN

He'll always be one of "The Family."

As Diann hugs Jennifer, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DETENTION CENTER - LATER THAT DAY

Jennifer and Diann are sitting and waiting. They seem lost in thought as an OFFICER calls to Jennifer.

OFFICER #3

Miss Gregory?. . .Mr. Matthews is ready to see you.

Jennifer stands up from her chair and walks over to the officer's desk.

OFFICER #3

(continuing)

You have a half-hour. He'll be called when time's up. Please sign in here.

The officer points to a sheet of paper on a clipboard. Jennifer signs her name.

JENNIFER

Thank you officer.

Jennifer is guided to a fenced area and is led into a smaller, fenced in compartment. As she sees Bobby approaching from the other side of the fence, she begins to tense up.

BOBBY

Hello sweetheart.

JENNIFER

Hi Bobby.

They hold hands through the fence and Bobby kisses her fingers.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

I miss you so much.

BOBBY

It's only been a couple days. I'll be out soon.

Jennifer and Bobby sit down.

JENNIFER

I got a job yesterday. That new club downtown. They hired me on the spot.

BOBBY

A beautiful girl like you. . .I'm not surprised.

JENNIFER

Now I can help with the bills.

BOBBY

I knew I could count on you.

JENNIFER

What about your job? Is your father keeping it for you?

BOBBY

For now. . .but he's not happy about this.

JENNIFER

It shouldn't be a big deal, you'll be out soon.

BOBBY

Well. . .something has kinda come up since I've been in here.

JENNIFER

What do you mean "something?"

BOBBY

There was this. . . robbery a couple days ago. The guy got away with over 25 hundred dollars. It seems I fit the description.

JENNIFER

That's ridiculous. You were with me every night except. . .

Jennifer quickly looks into Bobby's eyes. He nods to her.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Bobby, where the hell did you go the night we fought?

Bobby does not respond. He just looks into Jennifer's eyes as if he's asking for forgiveness. We see tears filling up in her eyes.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Please don't tell me it's true. Do you know what's happening? I may lose you forever.

BOBBY

(trying to smile)

Maybe only 10 to 20 years.

JENNIFER

How can you make jokes?

BOBBY

It's the only thing keeping me from losing my mind.

JENNIFER

You should've thought about that before you got in this situation.

BOBBY

You were the one who got us in this mess.

JENNIFER

I may have been wrong about letting Cathy and Bruce leave, but I never would've done what you did.

BOBBY

I guess it's too late to fight about it now.

JENNIFER

You're right. So, now what?

BOBBY

Of course I'm going to deny it. If anyone asks, I was with you at the apartment. Get the family in on it.

There is a moment of silence.

JENNIFER

Bobby, there's something else.

BOBBY

I'm afraid to ask.

JENNIFER

It's about Ryan.

BOBBY

I never did hear what happened. Knowing him, he beat the shit out of Doug's friend.

JENNIFER

No, he didn't. He wrecked his bike.

BOBBY

Not Ryan? Damn, he loved that bike too. Is he all right?

JENNIFER

No, he's not. Ryan was killed in the accident.

BOBBY

(with rising anger)

No! That's not true! Ryan's not dead.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, but it's true. I went to his funeral this morning.

BOBBY

(angrier)

It's a mistake! Ryan can't be dead!

Bobby jumps to his feet, grabs the fence with both hands and begins to shake it uncontrollably.

BOBBY

(continuing)

He's not dead! I don't believe it!
Someone get me the hell out of here!
Please get me out!

Two OFFICERS see the commotion, run over to Bobby, pull him off of the fence and wrestle him to the floor.

OFFICER #4
(to the other officer)
Cuff him!

As the officer begins to put the handcuffs on Bobby, Jennifer jumps up from her seat.

JENNIFER
Officer, please don't! He's very upset.
He just found out his best friend died.

BOBBY
(sobbing)
He did it for me, and I couldn't even go
to his funeral.

The officers finish cuffing Bobby, stand him up and begin to take him away.

JENNIFER
(calling)
I didn't want to you tell in here, but I
was afraid you'd find out from someone
else. I'm sorry.

BOBBY
(calling back)
Please don't give up on me!

As we see the officers taking Bobby away, we . . .
DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIANN'S APARTMENT - TWO WEEKS LATER - NIGHT

Diann is racing around the kitchen in her robe, trying to clean up as she talks on the phone.

DIANN
Yes Kevin dear, I'm almost ready. . .No,
we have to go to the early show. . .I told
Jennifer we'd pick her up after work. . .
OK, that's fine. . .OK, OK, let me get off
the phone. . .I am not always late. .
.you're just early. . .Ok, see you in a
bit.

She hangs up the phone and goes into the bedroom. We hear a knock at the door.

DIANN
(continuing; calling O.S.)
Hold on, I'll be right there!

Diann comes out of the bedroom pulling up her pants and zipping them. She throws on her shirt and attempts to button it as she walks toward the door. Once she gets most of the buttons fastened, she opens the door and sees Cathy and Bruce standing in the hall. Cathy has a bandage on her forehead and Bruce's arm is bandaged and cradled in a sling.

DIANN
(continuing)
What the hell happened here?

CATHY
You won't believe it.

BRUCE
I still don't believe it.

DIANN
Not much'll surprise me any more. Come on
in. Sit down.

Bruce enters the apartment and Cathy hugs Diann in the doorway and enters. They walk over to the couch and sit down.

DIANN
(continuing)
Where's the baby?

CATHY
Tommy found us in New Jersey and took
Steven with him.

DIANN
Oh my God! I'm sure he was pissed.

CATHY
He threatened us with a gun and shot Bruce
in the arm.

BRUCE
Fortunately he only nicked me.

DIANN
What's up with this family?

CATHY
It was terrifying at the time, but it
could work in my favor.

DIANN
How do you mean?

CATHY

I may have been wrong about taking Steven, but I never resorted to violence. Now, in addition to all the reports I have on Tommy from our marriage, I can add an attempted murder charge. He'll never get custody.

DIANN

Did you already report it to the police?

BRUCE

The police in New Jersey took a report. But I think we have to file something with the police department here.

DIANN

You need to get a lawyer and handle this right from here on.

BRUCE

That's what I told her.

CATHY

What happened to Jennifer and Bobby? We stopped by their place first and it looked empty. One of our old neighbors said they moved out.

DIANN

They did move. Jennifer's living with me.

CATHY

Last we heard, they were getting married.

DIANN

They still plan to get married. They're just working through some problems. But, if you need a place to stay, you're welcome to crash here.

BRUCE

We're staying in a motel on Route 40 till we can find a place. We don't want anyone to get a surprise visit from Tommy.

CATHY

So what's up with Jennifer and Bobby?

DIANN

It's been tough on them since he went to jail.

Cathy and Bruce react with complete surprise

CATHY

Diann, what's going on here?

DIANN

You didn't know about Bobby?

CATHY

Jennifer never said anything.

The telephone rings.

DIANN

Dammit. Let me get that. It's probably Kevin checking up on me again.

She picks of the phone.

DIANN

(continuing)

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. A PHONEBOOTH IN A DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer is dressed nicely and is standing in a phone booth. The music and crowd in the club is muffled in the background.

JENNIFER

Hey Di, what's going on?

DIANN

Kevin's on his way over to get me and I'm not ready. The phone keeps ringing off the hook and Cathy and Bruce are here. Seems they didn't know about Bobby.

JENNIFER

That's my fault. I didn't want to upset Cathy the last time I talked to her.

DIANN

So, whatcha need?

JENNIFER

Don't worry about picking me up tonight. A friend from work offered me a ride.

DIANN

Are you sure? It's not a problem.

JENNIFER

I'm sure. You and Kevin deserve a night out.

DIANN

Bobby called to let you know court is still on for tomorrow. But he said to make sure you didn't come.

JENNIFER

I wish I knew what was going on.

DIANN

I'm not sure. But from the way he sounded, it would be better for you to stay out of it.

JENNIFER

I guess he knows what's best.

DIANN

Not to cut you off, but I have to finish getting ready.

JENNIFER

That's ok, I have to run. Give my love to Cathy and Bruce.

Jennifer hangs up and exits the phone booth.

CUT TO:

INT. A DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer enters the bar and sees her friend, BOYD (25) a tall, handsome, muscular guy with a chiseled face and body. He has brown hair, deep blue eyes and a moustache.

BOYD

Hey sexy.

JENNIFER

Boyd, are you sure it's not a problem taking me home.

BOYD

It's not every day I get to chauffeur a beauty queen.

JENNIFER

(smiling)

I guess that means you don't mind.

BOYD

Really, I don't mind.

JENNIFER

Thanks. One day, I'll have my chauffeur return the favor.

As Jennifer walks away, we see Boyd staring at her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIANN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jennifer enters the apartment and turns on the light. Boyd follows in behind her.

JENNIFER

Have a seat on the couch. I'm sure there's a few beers in the frig.

Boyd sits on the couch as Jennifer exits to the kitchen.

BOYD

Don't worry about it.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

It's the least I can do.

BOYD

Mind if I take off my coat and tie?

JENNIFER

Make yourself comfortable.

Boyd stands up, takes off his jacket, loosens his tie and sits back down. Jennifer enters the room carrying two beers.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

I really appreciate your help. It's hard to manage without a car.

She hands him a beer.

BOYD

I've been there myself. If you ever need a ride, just let me know.

JENNIFER

Thanks, I may take you up on that.

She sits on the couch, takes off her shoes and sips her beer.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Much better. So, what brought you to work at the club?

BOYD

Just wanted some extra cash.

JENNIFER

You have another job?

BOYD

Yeah. Accounting work for a trucking firm.

JENNIFER

Accounting. . .sounds like good money.

BOYD

It's getting better. But, it's like anything else, you have to pay your dues.

JENNIFER

Don't I know it.

BOYD

I can't imagine a beautiful girl like you having that much trouble. Don't you have a boyfriend to help you?

JENNIFER

(uncertain)

Well. . .yeah.

BOYD

You don't sound too sure.

JENNIFER

It's a long story.

BOYD

I'm not in a hurry.

JENNIFER

. . .and kinda personal.

BOYD

Nothing serious I hope. Anything I can do to help?

JENNIFER

I'm beginning to think nothing can be done.

BOYD

I don't understand.

JENNIFER

Either do I. I'm engaged to a guy in jail and he may not be getting out.

BOYD

How did a nice girl like you get mixed up in this?

JENNIFER

Bobby's got a great heart. He helped me through a very difficult time. All that support and attention made me fall in love with him.

BOYD

Do you still love him?

JENNIFER

I never had any doubt. . .till now.

BOYD

What's the worst that could happen?

JENNIFER

He could get 10 to 20 years.

BOYD

Sounds serious.

JENNIFER

I know, and I'm getting scared.

BOYD

Maybe you should break off the engagement for now and see what happens.

JENNIFER

Deep down, I think you're right. I'm just worried about hurting him and disappointing my friends.

BOYD

If they're your friends, they'll understand. Even if they don't, you're the one that has to live with your decision, not them.

JENNIFER

I know.

BOYD

When will you see him again?

JENNIFER

Tomorrow after court.

BOYD

Do you need a ride?

JENNIFER

No thanks, I wouldn't feel right.

BOYD

You can borrow my car if you want.

JENNIFER

I'll be fine. I can get a ride from my friend Diann.

Boyd takes a small pad and pen from the jacket of his pocket and writes his phone number.

BOYD

If you change your mind, give me a call.

He hands Jennifer the paper, she reluctantly takes it and puts it on the table.

JENNIFER

Thanks, I appreciate your concern.

(awkward pause)

Well, you should probably go. I have a busy day tomorrow.

BOYD

Yeah, me too.

Boyd stands up, picks up his jacket and walks to the door. Jennifer follows him.

BOYD

(continuing)

Good luck. I hope everything works out.

JENNIFER

I'm not sure if it's luck I need anymore.

BOYD

Then what do you need?

Boyd and Jennifer stare into each other's eyes for a moment. Then, Boyd grabs Jennifer by the shoulders and kisses her. At first, she tries pulling away.

Then, slowly, she returns the embrace and kiss. Suddenly, the front door opens and Diann walks in.

DIANN

I see you weren't expecting me.

Jennifer quickly pulls away.

JENNIFER

Boyd was just leaving.

DIANN

Looks like he was just getting comfortable.

JENNIFER

It's not what you think.

DIANN

No, it's probably worse.

JENNIFER

Boyd works at the club, he just gave me a ride home.

BOYD

Maybe I should explain. . .

DIANN

Why don't you take your sorry excuses and get the hell out.

JENNIFER

You better leave.

BOYD

I'm really sorry. I guess I didn't understand the situation like I thought.

Boyd walks over to the door, stops and turns to Jennifer. He tries to find something to say. Jennifer keeps from looking back at him. He exits, shutting the door behind him.

JENNIFER

Diann, please let me explain.

DIANN

Save it for Bobby.

JENNIFER

Bobby and I will talk tomorrow. You and I need to talk tonight. You came in at the end of the conversation. Boyd was only trying to help my situation.

DIANN

Looks like he was trying to help you out of it. Just make sure you tell poor Bobby.

JENNIFER

Poor Bobby!? What about poor Jennifer? Can't you see that I'm trapped too? My heart is a prisoner and it's about to be sentenced with Bobby.

DIANN

It's not that bad. You'll have your answers tomorrow.

JENNIFER

Will I? Will my whole life just fall into place after a judge says "guilty" or "innocent?" I don't think so. No matter what happens, I have to live with what Bobby did. . .and I don't know if I can.

DIANN

That Boyd really did a number on you.

JENNIFER

He just helped me see a little clearly. I thought I could put up with Bobby's past, his temper and even the drugs. But now he's a criminal. It's just too much.

DIANN

I don't know what to tell you. But you're deliberately hurting my family and I don't like it.

JENNIFER

Aren't I family anymore?

DIANN

I didn't say that.

JENNIFER

Then what are you saying?

DIANN

I'm not sure. But I don't think things can be the same between us.

Diann walks into her bedroom and slams the door. Jennifer drops on the couch and begins to cry. As she wipes the tears from her eyes, she notices the piece of paper with Boyd's phone number.

She picks up the paper, holds it to her chest and stares at the phone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOYD'S CAR - THE NEXT DAY

Jennifer is driving Boyd's car to the detention center. As she stares blankly at the road before her, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - DAY

Jennifer is being lifted from her hospital bed and placed on a gurney by two hospital attendants. She seems barely coherent. Her mother paces as she watches with anxiety.

JENNIFER

(barely)
Mom, did he make it?

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

(angry; to the attendants)
Has anyone seen him? He could at least have the decency to show up.

ATTENDANT

I'm sorry Mrs. Gregory, I really don't know.

They finish moving Jennifer and begin to wheel her out of the room.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

(getting angrier)

That no good bastard, how could he?

JENNIFER

(beginning to cry)

Mom. .I'm afraid. .please don't leave me.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

Don't worry, I'm here for you.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DETENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

We see Jennifer crying as she pulls the car into the parking lot. She turns off the car, sits for a moment to dry her eyes, then gathers her things and gets out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. DETENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer walks into the fenced area where she saw Bobby the last time. Bobby can be seen walking up to the other side of the fence. As their eyes meet, they almost look away. Both seem to be hiding something as they sit down.

JENNIFER

Hello Bobby.

BOBBY

Hey beautiful.

JENNIFER

(starting right in)

I'm a little nervous. Before you tell me what happened, I need to tell you something.

BOBBY

Ok, but I've got something important to tell you too.

JENNIFER

If I tell you now, you won't think it had anything to do with the verdict.

BOBBY

What if I told you the prosecution introduced your name as an accomplice?

JENNIFER

(recovering from the blow)

What? How did that happen?

BOBBY

I think they were just trying to pressure me into talking.

JENNIFER

I guess I'll be getting arrested soon.

BOBBY

The prosecution did want to postpone until they could subpoena you.

JENNIFER

Isn't that convenient? I could get a cell right next to you. What a perfect way to keep me on hold till you get out.

BOBBY

(quickly)

I already cleared your name.

JENNIFER

(taken by surprise)

What? What did you say in my defense?

BOBBY

I pleaded guilty and told them I acted alone.

JENNIFER

I thought you were trying to clear yourself?

BOBBY

I was. . .until your name came up.

JENNIFER

You did that for me?

BOBBY

No matter what you think of me, I'll always love you Jennifer. I couldn't let this happen to you.

JENNIFER

I don't know what to say.

BOBBY

You know, I'd do anything for you.

JENNIFER

How long did the judge give you?

BOBBY

Fifteen years. . .but I could get paroled in six. Since I did it for you, it won't seem as bad.

There is an awkward silence.

BOBBY

(continuing)

So, what did you wanna say?

JENNIFER

After this, I'm not sure how to feel.

BOBBY

You have the right to your feelings. . .
and I guess I just need to hear you say it.

JENNIFER

I'm overwhelmed with how strong you feel.
I've never been on the receiving end of
this much affection. . .it feels really
good.

BOBBY

You mean the world to me, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

I can see that. You have a very unusual
way of making me feel special. I may
never find anyone to care about me like
you. Guess it's just fate telling me we're
meant for each other

BOBBY

I hope so.

JENNIFER

I'll be here for you Bobby. I'm sure
you'll get paroled in a few years.
That'll give me time to focus on my career.

BOBBY

I promise you won't regret it.

As Jennifer and Bobby hold hands through the fence, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOYD'S APARTMENT - A WHILE LATER

Boyd is caught up in a pile of paperwork when there is a knock
at the door. He walks over to the door and opens it. Jennifer
is standing in the hallway holding his car keys.

BOYD

Back so soon? I thought you'd be most of
the day.

JENNIFER

I only get a half-hour visit.

BOYD

Come on in, I'm just finishing up.

Jennifer enters the apartment.

BOYD

(continuing)

Would you like a drink?

JENNIFER

No thanks. I was hoping you could take me home soon.

BOYD

Sure, no problem. Is everything all right?

JENNIFER

I'd rather not get into the details. But, since I'm not sure what you're thinking, I feel you should know.

BOYD

Why don't you sit down for a minute.

He motions her to the couch. Jennifer sits down and Boyd sits in a chair next to her.

JENNIFER

Over the last couple days, every possible option has gone through my head. Even last night with you, a few new options came to mind. But nothing prepared me for today.

BOYD

You sound so serious.

JENNIFER

I am. Bobby was sentenced to fifteen years and I've decided to wait for him.

BOYD

You're kidding. You're going to wait fifteen years to marry an ex-con?

JENNIFER

He'll get paroled in six.

BOBBY

You're throwing your life away.

JENNIFER

You'll never understand why I'm doing this, even if I could explain.

BOYD

Why don't you just climb in the jail cell with him. Are you really happy with this decision, or do you just feel sorry for him?

JENNIFER

It was my choice, so yes I'm happy about it. I think the problem is. . .you're not. But it's my life.

BOYD

After everything you told me about the pageants, I can't believe you're throwing it away on nothing.

JENNIFER

Bobby isn't nothing. . .and you can't change my mind.

Jennifer quickly stands up, walks to the door and holds out Boyd's car keys.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Can you please take me home now?

BOYD

Whatever you want. I'm sorry if I made you angry. I just want what's best for you.

JENNIFER

Then let me decide that.

Boyd walks over to Jennifer and reaches for the keys. He takes her hand for a moment and holds it. They stare at each other briefly as Jennifer suddenly pulls her hand away and walks out the door. Boyd stands for a moment and exits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT DIANN'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Diann, Kevin, Cathy and Bruce are sitting in the living room as Jennifer enters the apartment. Jennifer is surprised to see Cathy and Bruce.

JENNIFER

CJ! Bruce! Welcome back.

Cathy jumps up to hug Jennifer.

CATHY

Hey Jennifer, we wanted to be here for the news.

JENNIFER

Diann, I'm surprised to see you waiting for me.

DIANN

I just wanted to know what happened to Bobby, then Kevin and I are outta here.

KEVIN

We are?

JENNIFER

Do as you like. I'd hate to impose any more than I already have.

DIANN

Like you care either way.

CATHY

(scolding)

Diann, come on.

KEVIN

You said you'd behave.

BRUCE

Jennifer, why don't you get a beer and sit down. We're all anxious to hear the news.

DIANN

Yeah, I haven't got all night.

JENNIFER

(reeling at her)

If you must know that bad, Bobby pleaded guilty and was sentenced to fifteen years.

The room is silent.

DIANN

(breaking the silence)

Just like that, that's it? You tear our hearts out without batting an eyelash.

JENNIFER

Diann, when are you going to stop thinking about yourself? How do you think I feel?

DIANN

After last night, I think this was just the news you were hoping for.

CATHY

How can you say that?

DIANN

All I know is what I saw. I think you gave up on Bobby long before the verdict came in.

JENNIFER

You can believe whatever you want about last night. It was a mistake and it's over. Someday I'll find a way to tell Bobby, but for now I need to let it go.

DIANN

Don't drag Bobby into this now. You got what you wanted, leave him alone.

JENNIFER

Diann, you don't understand. I told Bobby I'd wait for him.

DIANN

You mean you looked Bobby right in the eye and told him you're going to wait years for him. . .when you couldn't even wait a couple weeks?

Diann jumps up and pulls at Kevin.

DIANN

(continuing)

Come on Kevin, let's get the hell out of here.

KEVIN

Cool down Diann.

DIANN

No! I'm not listening to any more of this shit.

JENNIFER

You can ask Bobby if you don't believe me.

CATHY

Why don't you two stop fighting and think about what you are saying.

DIANN

Sure, I'll think about it. But I'd rather do it somewhere else.

JENNIFER

Don't leave on my account. I'll be more than happy to get out of here.

DIANN

No way! I don't want to be accused of throwing you on the street.

BRUCE

All right! Knock it off. . .you're just making it worse. The news about Bobby is hard on all of us.

CATHY

Kevin, take Diann out and let her calm down.

KEVIN

If she wasn't do damned pigheaded. . .

BRUCE

(cutting him off)
Not now, Kevin. You two go out and we'll stay here and keep Jennifer company.

DIANN

Just call Boyd over for that. . .

Kevin grabs Diann, opens the door and drags her out. As the door closes behind them, Jennifer breaks down in tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIANN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - TWO MONTHS LATER - DAY

We see a close-up of Jennifer's hand as she writes a letter. The camera pulls out to reveal Jennifer sitting at a small desk by the window. As she continues to write, we hear her reading the words.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

"Dear Bobby, Two months have passed since I told you I would wait for you. So many things have gone through my mind since then. It's not that I'm giving up on you. . ."

She stops writing, crumples the letter and throws it in the trash with a few others.

JENNIFER

. . .it only sounds like I have.

She takes out another sheet of paper and starts to write again. There is a knock at the door. She crumples the paper again, throws it away and exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. DIANN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer walks over to the door, opens it and sees Patrick standing in the hallway. She reaches out and hugs him.

JENNIFER

Hey, what are you doing here?

PATRICK

I had a free day, so I thought I'd take you to lunch.

JENNIFER

Come on in.

Patrick enters the apartment and Jennifer closes the door.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

I was trying to write Bobby a letter, but I can't find the right words.

PATRICK

How's he doing?

JENNIFER

Ok, I guess. He says the food is terrible and he can't stand the radio station they listen to. . .other than that, he seems to be in good spirits.

PATRICK

How about you?

JENNIFER

I'm not sure. I think the reality of waiting for him is finally sinking in.

PATRICK

It's a tough decision.

JENNIFER

What if I wait all those years, and our relationship doesn't work out?

PATRICK

Maybe you should explain that to him.

JENNIFER

I've tried. Every time I say the words, it sounds like I'm dumping him.

PATRICK

You can't keep leading him on if you don't think you can wait.

JENNIFER

I know. . .I don't want to hurt him either. I should've never said I'd wait for him. I was just so relieved he cleared my name, and so touched that he stood up for me. I do love him.

PATRICK

You certainly can't pretend to wait six years.

JENNIFER

Who knows, I'll probably feel different tomorrow. I've been up and down about this.

PATRICK

You can't keep doing this to yourself.

JENNIFER

I know, I guess I just keep hoping for the answer to come to me.

There is a knock at the door. Jennifer walks over, opens the door and sees a delivery man with a box of flowers.

DELIVERY MAN

Flowers for Jennifer Gregory.

JENNIFER

That's me. Who are they from?

DELIVERY MAN

I just deliver them, ma'am. There's probably a card inside.

He points to a clipboard.

DELIVERY MAN

(continuing)

Please sign here.

Jennifer signs the sheet and the man hands her the flowers. She reaches in her pocket, pulls out some money and hands him tip. As he walks away, she closes the door and begins digging for the card.

JENNIFER

I can't imagine who sent them.

PATRICK

(joking)

Maybe they opened a florist at the State Penn.

She finds the card and reads it.

JENNIFER

(chuckling)

No, they're not from Bobby. Some guy at work sent them.

PATRICK

Uh oh! No wonder you're confused.

JENNIFER

It's not like that. We're just friends.

PATRICK

And what does your "friend" have to say?

JENNIFER

(reading)

"Beautiful flowers for a beautiful girl. I have some business in Las Vegas and need a traveling companion. Let me know if you are interested. Boyd."

PATRICK

So, are you going?

JENNIFER

I couldn't do that to Bobby.

PATRICK

If you're only friends, it shouldn't matter.

JENNIFER

I know we're friends, Diann seems to feel differently.

PATRICK

So, don't tell anyone you're going with Boyd. You deserve a vacation.

JENNIFER

I just wouldn't feel right about it.

PATRICK

At least think about it. You won't get many chances like this.

JENNIFER

I'll think about it. Let's go get something to eat, I'm starving.

PATRICK

Put the flowers in some water, I'll pull the car around.

As Jennifer fumbles with the roses, the phone rings.

JENNIFER

Just let it ring. I don't want to talk right now.

PATRICK

It could be Boyd checking to see if you got the flowers.

JENNIFER

Then I really don't want to answer.

PATRICK

You could thank him for the roses.

JENNIFER

All right. I'll put him off if he wants an answer about Vegas.

Jennifer sets the roses down and answers the phone.

JENNIFER

(continuing)

Hello?

CUT TO:

EXT. A PHONEBOOTH ON THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Cathy is in a phone booth as Bruce sits in the truck.

CATHY

Hey Jennifer.

JENNIFER

CJ! Where have you been? The motel said you guys checked out a while ago.

CATHY

We've been staying with some of Bruce's friends. The motel was getting expensive and we still haven't found a place.

JENNIFER

How's the custody battle?

CATHY

We got a court date, I just haven't been able to get in touch.

JENNIFER

When is it, I want to be there.

CATHY

Tomorrow at one o'clock.

JENNIFER

I have to work tomorrow afternoon.

CATHY

Sorry about the short notice. We've been tied up with the lawyer and apartment hunting.

JENNIFER

I'll see if I can swap for an earlier shift.

CATHY

Could you tell Diann and Kevin for me?

JENNIFER

I'll leave a note. Diann and I still aren't talking.

CATHY

I wish you two could work things out.

JENNIFER

I guess we're both being stubborn.

Bruce waves to Cathy, urging her to get off the phone.

CATHY

Jennifer, I gotta run, Bruce is getting impatient. We've gotta meet with the lawyer. I hope I'll see you tomorrow.

JENNIFER

Good luck.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB - THE NEXT DAY

Jennifer is finishing serving the brunch shift and is getting ready to leave. She gathers her things, gets some change out of her purse and walks over to the pay phone to make a call. As she lifts the receiver and puts money in, Boyd enters the club and walks past her.

BOYD

Hey Jennifer.

She hangs up the phone.

JENNIFER

What brings you in so early?

BOYD

The owner needs help moving some office furniture. Did you work the brunch shift?

JENNIFER

Yeah. I swapped with Jill.

BOYD

Wait around a bit and I'll take you out for a something to eat.

JENNIFER

Thanks, but I've got to be somewhere in a little while.

BOYD

Do you need a ride?

JENNIFER

I was just calling a cab.

BOYD

Where are you headed?

JENNIFER

The courthouse. My friend Cathy has a custody hearing. I told her I'd be there.

Boyd reaches into his pocket, takes out his car keys and holds them out to Jennifer.

BOYD

Here, take my car. A cab will cost a fortune from here.

JENNIFER

Thanks, but I couldn't.

BOYD

No strings attached.

She stops for a moment, then reaches for the keys.

JENNIFER

You're always so nice to me. I never thanked you for the roses.

BOYD

I was wondering if you got them.

JENNIFER

They were beautiful. Thank you.

BOYD

So, what about Vegas?

JENNIFER

It sounds great, but I'll have to pass.

BOYD

If it's a matter of work, I can help get your shifts covered.

JENNIFER

That's only part of it. The timing's just not right. I'd feel guilty if I went.

BOYD

Why should you feel guilty about having a good time?

JENNIFER

Bobby's in jail. I can't fly off to Vegas and party. It wouldn't be fair to him.

BOYD

Do yourself a favor, enjoy life for a change. Someday it might be too late.

Jennifer is quiet for a moment as a tear streams down her cheek. She tries to hide it.

BOYD

(continuing)

I didn't mean to make you cry.

JENNIFER

It's not you. . .I'm already beginning to feel it's too late.

BOYD

Of course it's not too late. You're so young, there's still plenty of time for your dreams to come true.

JENNIFER

I don't think my dreams matter any more.

BOYD

Sure they do. But it's up to you to make them come true. Please think about going. I promise, all I'll ask is that you have a good time.

JENNIFER

When do you need to know?

BOYD

The plane leaves the day after tomorrow. Can you call me in the morning?

JENNIFER

(nervously)

Yes, I'll call. I'd better go, I'm already late. Thanks again for your car. I'll get it back as soon as I can.

BOYD

No hurry, I'm here till closing.

Boyd hardly finishes his sentence as Jennifer darts away from him and goes out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

Jennifer walks into the courthouse and sees Cathy and Bruce standing outside one of the courtrooms. Diann and Kevin are sitting on a bench a little further away talking to each other.

JENNIFER

CJ! Am I too late?

CATHY

The court's in recess while the judge reaches a decision.

JENNIFER

How does it look?

CATHY

Good, I think.

BRUCE

It didn't start out too good. Tommy's lawyer kept pushing the kidnapping issue.

CATHY

But my lawyer finally explained how Tommy threatened us with a gun and shot Bruce.

The judge was impressed that we dropped the charges. My lawyer said I did it to make up for my error in judgment for taking Steven.

BRUCE

You should've seen the look on Tommy's face when Cathy's lawyer presented all the police reports she filed against him.

JENNIFER

I see Diann and Kevin made it.

CATHY

She said she got your note. I think she wants to talk with you about something.

JENNIFER

She probably wants me to move out. I guess, we can't keep going on like this.

CATHY'S LAWYER pops his head out of the courtroom.

CATHY'S LAWYER

(calling to her)

Cathy, the judge is returning with the verdict. We need you back in the courtroom.

CATHY

Well, this is it.

JENNIFER

Good luck, CJ.

CATHY

(calling)

Diann. . Kevin. . it's time.

As they all walk over to the courtroom door, Jennifer and Diann glance at each other with uncertainty. They continue into the courtroom without saying a word.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Once everyone has returned to the courtroom, the COURT CLERK re-enters the courtroom. Tommy throws a cold stare at Cathy.

COURT CLERK

All rise.

The members of the courtroom stand as the JUDGE enters.

JUDGE

The Plaintiff and the Defendant will remain standing. The rest of you may be seated.

Everyone in the courtroom sits down, except Cathy and her lawyer and Tommy and his lawyer.

JUDGE

(continuing)

In this case, both parents have displayed undesirable actions. But, there is not enough evidence to support taking the child away from both parents, nor is there enough evidence to show that either parent has, at this time, a lifestyle that would be best for the child. So, it is the court's decision that custody of the child be given temporarily to his mother until one of the parents can prove themselves most fit to have full custody. The court also asks the council of both parties to come to an agreement on visitation rights for the father. These rights are to include two weekends each month.

As the judge bangs his gavel, Cathy hugs her lawyer. Tommy jumps from behind the table.

TOMMY

(bursting out)

But he's my son! You can't take him away from me.

JUDGE

Mr. James, your son has not been taken from you. If you want full custody, just prove you can control your violent behavior and that you can offer your son a safe home.

TOMMY

That's bullshit! Fuckin' bullshit! You're all in on it. I'll take this to a higher court if I have to.

JUDGE

Mr. James, you need to calm down, or I will hold you in contempt of court. I may also feel the need to change my decision.

Tommy's lawyer tries to restrain him, but he pulls away and moves toward the bench.

TOMMY

You're fuckin' right you need to change your goddamn decision. I can't believe you're giving custody to that fuckin' slut.

The Judge slams his gavel.

JUDGE

Mr. James, I am holding you in contempt. Any more from you and I will deny you custody of your son.

Tommy tries to climb up on the bench.

TOMMY

Look you bastard, if you think you're taking my son, you're out of your goddamn mind.

The courtroom becomes a scene of commotion as police officers race up to the bench to restrain Tommy. The Judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE

I want order in this courtroom.
(to the officers)
Hold him there for a minute.

(more)

JUDGE

(continuing; to Tommy)

Mr. James, I thought my decision was very lenient, especially with your history of violence. Now I see those reports did not show your inability to deal with reason. I'm afraid your actions have cost you the custody of your child. The court awards full custody of Steven James to his mother, Catherine, provided that she obtains a home within seven calendar days. As for you, Mr. James, any visitation rights will be denied until you can prove to the court that you can control yourself. For now, the court sentences you to three days in the county jail.

As the judge bangs his gavel again, Tommy struggles to break away from the officers hold him.

TOMMY

(yelling)

You fuckin' bastard. You can't do this to me. I'll sue your ass, too.

Tommy continues to shout as he is dragged from the courtroom. Jennifer, Bruce, Diann and Kevin run over to Cathy to congratulate her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A LOCAL RESTAURANT - LATER THAT DAY

Jennifer, Cathy, Bruce, Diann and Kevin are finishing dinner as they pour glasses of wine to celebrate. Once her glass is filled, Jennifer lifts her drink to make a toast.

JENNIFER

We should toast to Cathy's good fortune.

CATHY

. . .and to Bruce for paying for dinner.

JENNIFER

Ok, to Cathy and Bruce.

Everyone raises their glasses and toasts. Jennifer and Diann meet eyes as their glasses hit together.

CATHY

Once again, I can thank Tommy for acting like an ass.

BRUCE

And with the court on his back, we can be sure he won't be bothering us.

DIANN

It's great we're finally hearing some good news in this family.

KEVIN

(to Diann)

Maybe we should tell them our news.

DIANN

(quickly)

Not yet! I want to talk to Jennifer first.

JENNIFER

(taken by surprise)

Me? Can this wait till later?

DIANN

Let's take a walk out on the pier. We can have a little privacy there.

CATHY

What about your news?

DIANN

Kevin'll just have to stall till we get back. Come on Jennifer.

Jennifer and Diann get up from the table and walk out the back door as the rest of the group enjoys the wine and the good mood.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE PIER BEHIND THE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer and Diann begin walking down a long pier. A variety of sailboats line the water and the sun has just begun to set.

DIANN

I didn't mean to seem abrupt, but I finally got the courage to talk to you.

JENNIFER

If you want me to move out, I understand. You shouldn't feel uncomfortable in your own home.

DIANN

No, not at all. I want to apologize.

JENNIFER

Apologize? For what?

DIANN

For the way I've been treating you. I was wrong to tell you how to live your life. You don't have to answer to me.

JENNIFER

What made you change your mind?

DIANN

I wrote a letter to Bobby and told him some things.

JENNIFER

(worried)

What did you tell him?

DIANN

Nothing about Boyd, that's not my place. I just told him about your uncertainty and how angry it made me.

JENNIFER

I can't believe you told him that. What do I say the next time I see him?

DIANN

Don't be upset. He's not angry with you. If anything, he's mad at me.

JENNIFER

Why you?

DIANN

He's worried that I pressured you into saying things you don't feel.

JENNIFER

I don't follow you.

DIANN

When Bobby wrote me back, he went on about how I should be supporting you. He said that when I turned on you, I may have confused you even more. I thought about what he said, and I realized he was right. I put you in a tough place, you had to choose between your feelings for Bobby and our friendship. That wasn't fair. . .I'm sorry.

Jennifer grabs Diann and hugs her.

JENNIFER

It's so good to hear you say that. I was at the end of my rope, hoping things would change.

DIANN

I regret it took me this long to realize what I was doing.

JENNIFER

Did Bobby really say those things?

DIANN

Yes, and a few other things about how wrong I was. He supported your feelings the whole time.

JENNIFER

So where do you and I go from here?

DIANN

Hopefully back to where we left off.

JENNIFER

That would be great. I miss our friendship.

DIANN

Only this time, you can make your own decisions. Now you know, I'll give you my opinion. But feel free to tell me. . .

Diann points at the pier in front of her.

DIANN

(continuing)

. . .to take a long walk on a short pier.

JENNIFER

How about your opinion on this. . .what do you think about taking Cathy out tomorrow night to celebrate? You know, just the girls.

DIANN

Count me in. We'll drag Cathy along.

JENNIFER

I'll reserve a table at the club.

DIANN

I've got a better idea. I've been seeing ads for and All Male Review, let's take her there.

JENNIFER

Just the kind of decadence we all need.

DIANN

Let's not tell her till we get there. It'll be a great surprise.

Jennifer hugs Diann again.

JENNIFER

It's good to be friends again.

DIANN

I was just thinking the same thing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A LOCAL RESTAURANT - MINUTES LATER

Jennifer and Diann return to the table. "The Family" is in a great mood.

CATHY

There you are. Is everything ok?

JENNIFER

Couldn't be better. We were just out having some laughs.

BRUCE

Is this the same Jennifer and Diann we came in here with?

Diann puts her arm around Jennifer.

DIANN

No, it's not. This Jennifer and Diann are best friends.

CATHY

You're kidding. That's great!

Jennifer and Diann return to their seats.

DIANN

You might say we "stripped" away our anger.

JENNIFER

(catching on)

. .and "exposed" our feelings.

KEVIN

You two have only been friends again for five minutes, and already I'm suspicious.

DIANN

I know, isn't it great.

CATHY

So, what's your surprise? The suspense is killing me.

DIANN

Kevin, you may have the honor.

KEVIN

Diann and I are getting married.

There are cheers and clapping.

JENNIFER

When is the big day?

DIANN

Are you kidding? It took this long just to get him to propose.

KEVIN

Well, you were my next choice after Kim Basinger turned me down.

DIANN

If you tried to give her the same ring you gave me, I can see why she turned you down.

KEVIN

It was just a little small. You'll have it back next week.

BRUCE

Looks like the honeymoon's over already.

CATHY

This calls for another round.

JENNIFER

Better count me out. I have to get Boyd's car back.

DIANN

Come on Jennifer, just one more.

Everyone chimes in to persuade her.

JENNIFER

Since it's on Bruce, it may be two more.

They all laugh and continue joking, as we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB - A LITTLE LATER

Jennifer enters the club and Boyd is checking ID's at the door. At first, he doesn't see her enter. Jennifer is a little drunk and in a very good mood.

JENNIFER

Hey mister, aren't you gonna card me?

BOYD

No, but I may have to frisk you for concealed weapons.

She raises her hands in the air as if she is surrendering.

JENNIFER

Ok, then I'll have to do the same the next time you come in.

Boyd pulls her closer.

BOYD

Why wait? I'm free for the frisking right now.

She hugs him and they laugh.

BOYD

(continuing)

Aren't you in a good mood tonight. Things must have gone well for your friend.

JENNIFER

Yes, she got custody of her son.

BOYD

I can see you've been celebrating.

JENNIFER

It's been a good day. Diann apologized for the way she's been treating me.

BOYD

I was hoping she'd come around.

JENNIFER

I haven't felt this good in a long time. Maybe things are finally turning around.

BOYD

See, I told you it wasn't too late.

JENNIFER

I also realized I've been treating you wrong.

BOYD

No you haven't.

JENNIFER

I've been half holding on to you and half trying to avoid you. And the whole time, you've been so nice to me.

BOYD

I've always told you there were no strings attached. . .I still mean that.

JENNIFER

Maybe that's why I think I'm falling for you. . .or, what I mean is, I've decided to go with you to Las Vegas.

BOYD

Yes! I'm so glad to hear you say that. I was expecting to get a "Dear John" call tomorrow.

JENNIFER

Actually, I wasn't planning to go until the drive over here.

BOYD

What about Bobby?

JENNIFER

I tell him when I get back. There's no sense in making him think about it the whole time I'm gone.

BOYD

Are you sure?

JENNIFER

Yes, I am very sure. I still care a lot about Bobby. But, now that I've stopped feeling guilty, I can see how truly different we are.

BOYD

Don't let me be the reason you break up with him.

JENNIFER

You're not the reason. I have my own reasons and I'll feel much better when I explain them to Bobby tomorrow. Then I can go with a clear conscience.

BOYD

Do you need my car?

JENNIFER

I'll get Diann to take me.

BOYD

(changing the subject)

You're losing that great mood you came in here with.

JENNIFER

(brighter)

You're right, we should be celebrating. What's a girl gotta do to get a drink in this place?

BOYD

You've already done it.

(calling to the bartender)

Hey Steve, get me a bottle of Dom for the young lady.

As they continue to talk and laugh, we slowly. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - THE NEXT MORNING

We see the large, entrance doors to the Penitentiary from the inside. As they open, we see Jennifer and Diann enter. They walk over to the reception desk and Jennifer gives Diann a hug. Diann wishes her well and she takes a seat in the reception area. Jennifer talks with the office on duty, who asks her to sign the sheet on a clipboard. He then points down a long hallway behind a locked set of bars. The officer signals to another officer and the bars slowly open, revealing a long empty hallway leading to a set of double doors. Jennifer is frisked by a female officer and leaves her purse at the desk. As she begins to walk down the hall, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

A camera shot down a long, empty hospital hallway leading to a set of double doors. Suddenly, from around the corner, we see a patient being wheeled into the hall lying on a bed. Upon a closer shot, we see the patient is Jennifer. She is younger, pale and drugged. Around her are several hospital attendants and an IV being wheeled with the bed. Jennifer's mother walks along side of her bed, holding her hand.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

Jennifer. . .it's ok. . .I'm here with you
. . .everything'll be all right. . .I
promise.

As the bed continues down the hall, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - HALLWAY TO THE VISITING
ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer is a little further down the hall, walking toward the double doors. As we see a tear streaming down her cheek, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The hospital bed gets closer to the double doors and Jennifer is trying to say something to her mother. Her mother leans closer to hear what she is saying.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

What is it?. . .What are you trying to say. . .I'm listening. . .

JENNIFER

(barely able to speak)
Please. . . no. . .I can't do this. . .
please help me. . .

JENNIFER'S MOTHER

It's ok Jennifer. . .I'm here. . .no one's going to hurt you.

JENNIFER

I've changed my mind. . .I can't do this.
. .please don't let them take my baby.

As Jennifer and her mother cry, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - HALLWAY TO THE VISITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer has reached the double doors. She rests her hand on them for a moment, but does not push the door open. She stands crying. . .and remembering. As she wipes the tears from her eyes, she suddenly turns away from the doors and begins walking in the other direction. With each step away, she hears her mother's voice.

JENNIFER'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Jennifer. . .I know this is hard. . .my heart breaks for you. . .but one day you'll see this was the only decision.

She stops in her tracks, turns around and walks back to the doors. She places her hand on them again and slowly pushes the door open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - VISITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Once through the double doors, Jennifer is lead through one last set of bars to a large room with tables. In the center of the room, Bobby can be seen climbing to the top of a staircase. He sees Jennifer and walks over to her. They meet with a kiss and a hug.

BOBBY

This is a nice surprise. What brings you here today?

JENNIFER

I needed to see you.

BOBBY

Have you been crying?

JENNIFER

I'm just feeling a little emotional.

BOBBY

Why don't we sit down.

He gestures to a table and they sit down.

JENNIFER

So, how are things?

BOBBY

About the same. I finally got the guys to change the radio station once in a while. Other than that, things stay the same.

JENNIFER

Looks like you lost a little of that beer gut you were getting.

BOBBY

I've been working out. . .it helps pass the time.

JENNIFER

It's good to keep in shape.

BOBBY

Is something wrong?

JENNIFER

Why do you say that?

BOBBY

It's a little strange that you came all this way to talk about my beer gut. Besides, something is different. I can see it in your eyes.

JENNIFER

Diann told me about the letter you wrote.

BOBBY

Did it upset you?

JENNIFER

Not at all. It felt good to hear someone taking my side for a change.

BOBBY

Then, what is it?

JENNIFER

Do you really mean what you said?

BOBBY

Every word. . .you need support just as much as I do.

JENNIFER

If you really believe that, then you'll understand what I'm going to say.

BOBBY

You're dumping me, aren't you?

JENNIFER

(surprised)

No . . .not at all . . .I'm just. . .that's not what I'm doing.

BOBBY

Then, you're here to tell me. . . you've stopped loving me and you can't go on.

JENNIFER

No, I haven't stopped loving you. That's what's making this so difficult.

BOBBY

If you love me, then what's the problem?

JENNIFER

The problem is. . .I'm tired of just thinking I'm in love. I need to experience it. . .to walk hand in hand on the beach. . .to have a home and a family. . .to make love like nothing else matters.

BOBBY

So that's it. You've slept with someone else.

JENNIFER

I'm opening my heart to you for the first time since all this happened. Please don't turn it into an argument.

BOBBY

I'm trying to understand. I just afraid of losing you to another man, and it's driving me crazy.

JENNIFER

Bobby, I'm not looking to get serious with anyone. It's gonna take too long to get over you. I just want my life back again. I've realized I'll never make it through the next six years, if I have to live like a prisoner.

BOBBY

Will you date other guys?

JENNIFER

Maybe. . .maybe not. It's not about other guys, I want to concentrate on me for once. There are so many dreams I've had about my life. I'm just not ready to sit around and watch them pass me by.

BOBBY

What about me?

JENNIFER

I can't answer that for you. It's taken me this long to figure out something for myself. I'll keep visiting you, but you'll have to find a life of your own.

BOBBY

There is no life in here without you.

JENNIFER

What were you going to do before I told you this?

BOBBY

I don't know, read some books, find a hobby, maybe take some classes. I didn't have any plan. I was usually thinking of you.

JENNIFER

All we have is memories, and they're not enough to last six years. Eventually, we'll both grow tired of just thinking about what we could have had.

BOBBY

I guess it's all my fault.

JENNIFER

I'm not here to blame anyone. We can't change what's been done. We can only hope that one day we'll have the chance to love again.

BOBBY

That would make all this worthwhile.

JENNIFER

I kept wishing things could be different, but I found I was just wishing my life away. I had to do something. I'm sorry to hurt you, but I have to do this.

BOBBY

I guess this is it then?

JENNIFER

Please stop making it seem so final.

BOBBY

It's pretty final as far as I'm concerned. You get to walk out of here and have your freedom. I'm stuck here living like a caged animal. It's like you're leaving on an island cruise and I've been left behind on the pier waving good-bye.

JENNIFER

You could at least be happy for me.

BOBBY

You want me to throw confetti and say "Bon Voyage?" I'm trying here. It's just a little hard for me to be happy when the only thing that matters to me is being taken away.

JENNIFER

You know the old saying, "If you love something, you must set it free. . ."

BOBBY

But will you come back?

JENNIFER

I can't say Bobby. I haven't had a chance to be free yet.

There is a moment of silence as they stare in each other's eyes. As he begins to cry, Bobby abruptly stands up.

BOBBY

I guess I better go.

Jennifer stands up after him.

JENNIFER

Please keep writing.

BOBBY

As long as you write back.

JENNIFER

I will.

Bobby turns and begins to walk away. Then, he stops, turns around and walks back to Jennifer.

BOBBY
(trying to smile)
Bon Voyage

JENNIFER
I love you, Bobby.

He leans over and kisses Jennifer, hugs her, then lets her go. He turns and walks toward the staircase. When he reaches the top of the steps, he turns around to see Jennifer's weeping face. He watches her as he walks down the stairs, stopping for a moment on the last step before her face disappears. She waves.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - CORRIDOR TO THE CELLS -
MOMENTS LATER

When Bobby reaches the bottom of the steps, he is greeted by a guard who leads him back to his cell.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - BOBBY'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

As Bobby enters his cell, the bars close behind him with a loud clang. He lays on his bed and stares blankly as tears stream down both sides of his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - HALLWAY TO THE VISITING
ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer re-enters the hallway through the double doors. Even with tears in her eyes, she seems stronger. As she walks, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - DAY

A younger Jennifer is lying unconscious in a hospital bed. Her mother sits at her side holding her hand. We hear the life support equipment beeping. Suddenly, Jennifer opens her eyes.

JENNIFER
Mom?. . .where am I?

JENNIFER'S MOTHER
Jennifer. . .you're going to make it. .
.everything's going to be fine.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - HALLWAY TO THE VISITING
ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer has reached the bars leading to the reception area. The bars slowly open and Diann is standing there waiting. Once the bars are opened, Jennifer and Diann embrace in a hug.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BEDROOM - DAY

Jennifer and her mother are hugging. As they let go, Jennifer is helped into a wheel chair and is wheeled into the hallway.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Diann has her arm around Jennifer as they walk to the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

As Jennifer is being wheeled to the front door, her mother holds her hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE STATE PENITENTIARY - RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Diann and Jennifer push the doors open to exit. As the doors open, a bright light shines on Jennifer's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

The front door to the hospital is open, the sun shines on Jennifer's face. She stands up from the wheel chair and walks out the door. Her mother walks with her arm around Jennifer.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE STATE PENITENTIARY - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer walks out to a beautiful day. She stops for a moment to wipe the tears from her eyes. The sun is shining and a breeze blows through her hair. She is finally free. As we see her smiling face, we. . .

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIANN'S CAR - LATER THAT EVENING

Jennifer, Diann and Cathy are riding in Diann's car on their way to the night club. Diann and Cathy are sitting in the front talking happily. Jennifer sits quietly in the back.

CATHY

Where are you taking me anyway?

DIANN

I'm not telling you till we get there.

CATHY

You two are up to something.

DIANN

I guarantee you'll have a great time

CATHY

Just having the three of us together is already a great time.

DIANN

Jennifer, you're awful quiet back there.

JENNIFER

I'm fine, just lost in thought.

CATHY

We can do this some other time.

JENNIFER

Tonight is perfect. This is my first step back into the land of the living.

DIANN

Check it out, we have arrived.

Diann's car pulls into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The girls are fixing themselves as they walk to the door. Cathy notices a poster hanging on the wall.

CATHY

"All Male Review?" I don't believe it. What a great idea!

DIANN

(reading)

"Tonight, the Maryland Finalists for the Golden G-string Award."

JENNIFER

They have an award for everything.

DIANN

If this doesn't take your mind off your troubles, nothing will.

JENNIFER

What troubles?

CATHY

It's working already.

Cathy opens the door and they enter the club.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STRIP CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Inside the club, the energy is high and the room is full. A male dancer is on stage slowly removing his clothes, while the women cheer and wave money. Jennifer, Diann and Cathy are in good spirits as they make their way over to an empty table. As they seat themselves, a scantily clad, male waiter greets them and takes their order.

DIANN

Is he gonna take off that G-string?

CATHY

I guess it costs to see more.

DIANN

Then break out the bucks, ladies.

JENNIFER

I don't think he can take off any more.

DIANN

Maybe we can persuade him.

Just then, the music ends. The stripper bows and exits.

CATHY

(loudly)

Rip off!! We want more!

(to Jennifer and Diann)

There better be more dancers.

An emcee walks out on stage.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies, I hope you're good and ready.
We'll take a brief intermission as we set
the stage to bring you the Maryland
Finalists for the Golden G-string Award.

The crowd cheers as the lights fade on the stage. Up tempo music continues to play as the waiter returns with the drinks. After he sets the drinks on the table, Jennifer hands him money and he gives her change. Diann raises her glass to make a toast.

DIANN

Here's hoping the next stripper goes all
the way.

CATHY

I second that one.

They clink glasses and drink.

JENNIFER

Shouldn't the toast be a little more
moving?

DIANN

If the next guy takes it all off, I'll be moved. . .from here to the stage in a hot second.

JENNIFER

You have me there. But, at the risk of sounding serious . . .

She raises her glass

JENNIFER

(continuing)
To Cathy and the baby.

CATHY

. . .and Diann and Kevin.

DIANN

. . .and to "The Family."

They clink glasses and down most of their drinks.

JENNIFER

I'm starting to feel much better.

CATHY

It must be the company.

DIANN

. . .could be the alcohol.

JENNIFER

. .and I thought it was the men.

CATHY

Now there's the old girl!

Just then, the lights partially dim as the emcee walks out on the stage.

ANNOUNCER

All right ladies, the moment has arrived.
I'd like to present the first finalist representing Maryland in the National Golden G-string Competition. . .The Renaissance Man.

As the lights fully dim, the crowd goes wild. Colored lights swirl around the room as the music begins to play. Suddenly, in a puff of smoke, a stripper appears on stage in a 17th Century costume and mask. As the music kicks in, he begins to remove his clothes.

DIANN

Oh yeah, he's a stud!

JENNIFER

Has anyone seen the waiter? We need another round.

CATHY

I wish that bimbo would get out of my way.

The waiter walks near the table and Jennifer signals him.

JENNIFER

There he is. . .
(to the waiter)
. . .we'll have another round.

He nods and walks off to the bar.

CATHY

Jennifer, you're missing it! He's taking off his shirt.

DIANN

Look at that chest!

CATHY

Look at that ass!

The crowd cheers louder. The dancer strips down to his G-string and mask.

DIANN

Check out that blonde bitch throwin' herself at him.

JENNIFER

That tramp.

DIANN

I better show her how it's done.

The dancer walks off the stage into the audience.

CATHY

Hey, he's coming out into the crowd.

DIANN

It's gonna take some cash to get his attention.

JENNIFER

Here come the drinks.

AS the waiter returns, Diann is digging in her wallet.

DIANN

Does anyone have change for a twenty?

JENNIFER

That's ok, I'll get this round too.

DIANN

Hell, I wasn't paying. I just need change
for his G-string.

The waiter places the drinks on the table and Jennifer pays him.

DIANN

(continuing; to the waiter)
Can I have change for a twenty?

WAITER

If I had a dime for every time I heard
that line. . .

Diann hands him the twenty and he counts out the change. She
slips a dollar in his shorts.

DIANN

Thanks sweetie.

As the waiter walks away, Diann stands on her chair and waves
the money in the air.

JENNIFER

Diann, you're a nut. I'm having a great
time.

The stripper continues through the crowd.

CATHY

Here he comes.

DIANN

See if you can get him over to our table.

Cathy reaches over to Diann and yanks all the money out of her
hand and begins waving it around.

CATHY

All right ladies, you asked for it.

Cathy walks over to the stripper and stuffs money in his G-
String. He immediately turns around and begins to dance slowly
and sensuously in front of her. As they dance, Cathy backs up
to their table and lures the stripper over to them. Once he's
at the table, Diann reaches over to him and pulls off his mask.
He quickly turns around to see who is behind him and meets eyes
with Jennifer.

JENNIFER

(shocked)
Boyd!?

BOBBY

Jennifer?

JENNIFER

I should have known.

She grabs her purse and runs out the door. Boyd runs to the stage, grabs his robe and wrestles it on as he chases after her. The crowd begins to "Boo" as he runs out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STRIP CLUB PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Boyd catches up to Jennifer as she is trying to hail a cab. He grabs her by the arm and turns her around.

BOBBY

Please let me explain.

JENNIFER

Why would I believe anything you have to say? How could you lie to me?

BOYD

I never lied to you.

JENNIFER

How can you stand in front of me, in a G-String stuffed with money, and say you never lied? What was all that accounting crap?

BOYD

It's true, I do accounting work.

JENNIFER

. . .and you're a bouncer, and you strip in your free time. Aren't you a Jackass-of-all-trades.

BOYD

What's wrong with working hard to get what I want in life?

JENNIFER

Something's wrong if you have to lie about it.

BOYD

When the hell was I supposed to tell you? When you were on the way to see Bobby? No, maybe the night Diann threw me out? Or, how about the day you were going to court for Cathy's custody battle?

JENNIFER

Stop it! That's not fair.

BOYD

You're not being fair. If your situation had been different, I could've told you from the start. But with all that was happening, I thought I would just complicate things.

JENNIFER

As if this doesn't complicate things. You still should have had the decency to tell me before I went on a trip with you.

BOYD

I was planning to tell you tomorrow.

JENNIFER

What? Were you going to turn to me as the plane was taking off and say, "by the way, I strip for a living?"

BOYD

You don't have to make it sound so nasty.

JENNIFER

How did you get mixed up in this, anyway?

BOYD

Isn't that a switch? I remember saying the same thing to you.

JENNIFER

(realizing)

You're right. . .I think you did.

BOYD

Jennifer, I'm really sorry you found out like this. But, in a strange way, I'm kinda glad. I wasn't sure how to tell you. I was so caught up in making you want to go, I didn't think about what to say if you did.

JENNIFER

I really don't feel comfortable about this now.

BOYD

Please don't give up now. We were just starting to get somewhere.

JENNIFER

No strings attached, remember?

BOYD

That's not what I meant. I just really want you to go with me.

JENNIFER

Why are you going, anyway?

BOYD

I thought you would have figured that out by now. The finals for the Golden G-string Awards are in Vegas.

JENNIFER

(trying not to laugh)

Is it just me, or does everyone have such dumb luck?

BOYD

At least you used the word "luck." If it makes you feel any better, I've never slept with anyone I met during a show, unless we were dating.

JENNIFER

Right!? All those beautiful girls?

BOYD

It's true. I've had plenty of offers, but that's not why I do this. I'm a performer, not a prostitute. When I'm up on that stage, I'm putting on a show, not trying to get laid. It's just like you in a beauty pageant.

JENNIFER

(defensive)

I never slept around during those pageants.

BOYD

My point exactly. It's what you make of it. Look, I'm not asking you to fall in love with me, or even to sleep with me. Just give me a chance to prove I care about you.

JENNIFER

We can see each other when you get back.

BOYD

Jennifer, you have to go. You're the best part of my act.

JENNIFER

What do you mean by that? I'm certainly not stripping for your show.

BOYD

No way. I wouldn't let you. I just thought it would be perfect to have the act from Maryland introduced by Miss Maryland Hemisphere.

She pauses for a moment. He seems to have broken through.

JENNIFER

That's the thing I've always liked about you. You seem to know just the right thing to say.

BOYD

Does that mean you'll go?

JENNIFER

Yes, I'll go. But, no strings, right?

BOYD

Well, there is one string I must insist on.

JENNIFER

Ok, here we go. What is it?

BOYD

My G-string. You wouldn't want me up there naked, would you?

They both laugh.

JENNIFER

By all means, the G-string stays.

BOYD

(tenderly)
I'm very lucky to have met you.

She begins to pull all the money out of his G-string.

JENNIFER

I don't know how lucky you'll feel when I spend all your money in Vegas.

Boyd hugs Jennifer as she counts his money.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE AIRPORT - THE NEXT MORNING

Jennifer, Boyd and Patrick are walking through the airport toward the gate. Jennifer and Boyd are carrying small suitcases.

JENNIFER

(to Patrick)
Thanks a lot for driving us on such short notice.

PATRICK

No problem. All I ask is my share of the prize money if Boyd wins.

BOYD

Then start counting your winnings.

JENNIFER

Remember, it's not whether you win or lose, but how well you bump and grind.

PATRICK

There's your gate. ..F6.

JENNIFER

Did I tell you our plane has a 5 hour stopover near Omaha.

PATRICK

Are you going to see mom?

JENNIFER

I hope so. I called her this morning to see if she could meet me. She seemed excited about it.

PATRICK

Give her my love. And take some pictures.

Cathy and Bruce are seen weaving their way through the crowd to catch up with Jennifer. Bruce is carrying Steven.

CATHY

There you are. I almost thought we missed your flight.

JENNIFER

You didn't have to come all this way.

CATHY

We didn't want to miss saying good-bye and wishing Boyd good luck.

BRUCE

The truth is, I've decided to sign up with Boyd's show.

CATHY

Right. The only pants you'll be taking off are Steven's when you change him.

BRUCE

Can't say I didn't try.

CATHY

Well, I do have another reason for being here. I want to ask you a favor.

JENNIFER

Sure, whatever you need.

CATHY

I'm finally getting Steven baptized and I want you to be his godmother.

JENNIFER

I'd be honored, but you didn't have to come all this way to ask.

BRUCE

That's what I told her, but you know Cathy.

JENNIFER

Can I hold my godchild?

BRUCE

I thought you'd never ask.

Jennifer and Boyd set down their suitcases as Bruce hands Steven to Jennifer. She hugs the baby and kisses him on the forehead.

JENNIFER

(to Steven)

I hope you don't mind that your godmother is going away with a stripper.

Diann and Kevin are seen running through the crowd.

DIANN

(calling)

Jennifer! I'm so glad we caught you.

JENNIFER

Come join the party!

DIANN

I've got some great news. I just couldn't wait till you got back.

JENNIFER

What is it?

DIANN

After we got home last night, I told Kevin where we went and he got so jealous.

KEVIN

I wasn't jealous. I was embarrassed you went there. No offense, Boyd.

DIANN

If you were so embarrassed, why did you drop to your knees and ask me to marry you again?

There are a variety of smart comments.

JENNIFER

That's sweet, Kevin. But you don't have to ask again if she already said, "yes."

DIANN

Only this time, we set a date, and I want you to be my maid of honor.

Jennifer hands Steven back to Bruce and hugs Jennifer.

JENNIFER

I'm overwhelmed. I'd love to, Diann.

DIANN

Maybe this'll make up for the way I treated you.

JENNIFER

You've already made up. Let's just forget about it.

A voice is heard over a the loudspeaker.

VOICE #3

May I have your attention please. Flight 191 for Omaha and Las Vegas is now boarding at Gate F6. All passengers in seats 20 and higher, please have your boarding passes ready.

BOYD

That's us. We'd better go.

JENNIFER

Ok, but I need to give kisses and hugs.

Jennifer goes around hugging everyone.

CATHY

I wish we all could go.

JENNIFER

I'd take you with me, but I'm sure someone would notice.

Jennifer leans over and hugs Patrick

JENNIFER

(continuing)
Bye, little bro.

Patrick hugs her a second time.

PATRICK

Pass this hug to mom for me.

JENNIFER

I will. . .and I'm sure I'll have one for you when I get back.

BOYD

Come on, Jennifer.

DIANN

Yeah, stop flappin' your gums and get on that plane. Boyd, we'll be ready to celebrate your victory when you get back.

BOYD

Thanks, I'd like that.

Jennifer and Boyd pick up their carry on luggage and walk toward the gate. "The Family" waves good-bye as they board the plane.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE THE AIRPLANE - MINUTES LATER

Jennifer and Bobby are seated on the plane. Jennifer is sits near the window.

BOYD

You're gonna love Vegas. There's so much to see. I'll teach you how to gamble.

JENNIFER

I'm already pretty good at gambling. I'm here with you, aren't I?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE SHOT OF THE AIRPLANE - MINUTES LATER

Jennifer's smiling face can be seen as she looks out the window of the plane. The morning sun casts a warm glow on her face, as a new ray of hope shines into her life.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE OMAHA AIRPORT - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Jennifer runs out of the gate and sees her mother. They run to each other and hug.

As Boyd snaps a few pictures, we freeze on a shot of Jennifer and her mother with their arms around each other.

FADE OUT:

THE END