

A DOG AMONG DOGS

by

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FADE IN:

INT. LOS ANGELES/MOVIE THEATER - DAY

CHINA FIRE is a petite, very attractive black woman in her late twenties. She stares at the movie screen. We can HEAR the AD LIB dialog of the movie.

China is trying to watch the movie, but can't resist listening to LARRY DAEMON, a thin, somewhat conservative looking white man in his early thirties, who is sitting next to her.

LARRY

Do you remember your first lesbian experience?

CHINA

(exasperated)

Be quiet... don't say that.

LARRY

Seeing as how we're about to immerse ourselves in estrogen, you might want to dig deep for some related inspiration.

(pause)

A bet's a bet.

EXT. LOS ANGELES/SIDEWALK ON BUSY STREET - DAY

Larry and China are talking to each other as they walk down the sidewalk. In b.g., loitering Mexican day laborers admire China as she passes by.

CHINA

You're really taking advantage of me, you know. Don't you have some sales to make?

LARRY

Corporate serfdom can wait.

(pause)

My dear friend and Nubian succulent, we are on a holy mission to deliver you from the bondage of your inexplicable heterosexuality.

China is no longer listening to Larry. She sees something O.S. in a store window. She is thrilled and delighted.

LARRY (CONT'D)

In this character, your initial resistance arcs into eventual surrender.

WINDOW OF AND ENTRANCE TO PET STORE

China darts toward the door of the pet store. Larry doesn't even realize that China has veered off course until he turns and SEES her pulling open (with some effort) the heavy, old-fashioned door to the pet store.

We SEE an adorable PUPPY through a big glass window next to the door.

INT. PET STORE

CLERK hands Puppy to China who can hardly wait to hold it. Clerk smiles and walks O.S. China cuddles and kisses Puppy.

Out of the corner of her eye, China sees Larry approaching. China turns toward Larry and begins to slowly lower the squirming Puppy away from her face.

In a hyper-feminine way, she holds Puppy out to Larry and brings her elbows closer together. Her cleavage swells before Larry's eyes.

CHINA

(coyly)

Don't you want to hold the puppy?

Larry's eyes move quickly to look at Puppy for the first time. Larry reaches out to take the happily YELPING Puppy.

LARRY

Of course.

Larry smiles weakly, with flickering enthusiasm. After a few uncomfortable seconds, he looks around and SEES Clerk who is assisting another customer.

Larry walks with Puppy toward Clerk. China watches Larry walk away. Out of Larry's view, she smiles, satisfied.

EXT. DIFFERENT SIDEWALK - DAY

Larry and China walk down the sidewalk. Without missing a step, Larry takes a righteous pull from his flask and then returns the significantly lightened drinking vessel to an inside pocket of his jacket.

Larry and China arrive at the front door of a strip club.

CHINA

Larry, I can't do this...

LARRY

(taking her arm)

Come on... this place is safer than Disneyland and you don't have to listen to "IT'S A SMALL WORLD".

(beat)

Oh yeah... I also want to tell you about a friend of mine.

INT. STRIP CLUB

HOSTESS approaches Larry and China.

HOSTESS

I'll seat you. Follow me, please.

Hostess turns and walks into the club. Larry and then China follow her.

The entire club is crowded with exotic dancers and boisterous customers. AD LIB BACKGROUND DIN and LOUD HEAVY METAL MUSIC. On the main stage, LITHE DANCER clings to a chrome pole as if she is in suspended animation. Her eyes are locked in on China.

Suddenly, Lithe Dancer jerks her head to look in a different direction and slides (almost drops!) down the pole. With switchblade speed, her legs kick out into a split. She hits the stage floor with a loud slap.

China gasps and turns away to SEE two Asian dancers (LITTLE DEVIL and GIRL TOY) who appear too young to patronize the club that they work at. Little Devil is sitting on a bar stool and facing the main stage. Her hands are resting on the thighs of Girl Toy who is sitting on the same bar stool between Little Devil's legs. Little Devil turns, notices China, and winks at her.

GROUP OF WHITE COLLAR GUYS

are getting a table dance from BUSTY DANCER whose back is turned to us. Busty Dancer removes her top.

ON CHINA

as she continues to follow Hostess and Larry. China watches Busty Dancer straddle the lap of LUCKY WHITE COLLAR GUY who is enjoying every second of his lap dance.

As China moves across the room, the Busty Dancer's breasts gradually come into view in profile.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP - OF MIXED DRINK

being jostled. Most of the drink is spilled.

CUT TO:

CHINA AND COLLEGE BOY

China rebounds from COLLEGE BOY after bumping into him.

CHINA

Oh, I'm sorry.
(smiles apologetically)
Excuse me.

China quickens her stride to catch up with Hostess and Larry. In b.g., College Boy turns away from her, shaking his head in disgust.

China SEES a 50-something male EXECUTIVE talking (M.O.S.) with JADED DANCER who is seated next to him. The eyes of Jaded Dancer are distant as she takes a sip from her drink.

BOOTH NEXT TO MAIN STAGE

Larry and China are sitting in the booth facing each other.

LARRY

I sell a lot of computer chips to Roger's company... he's a good guy... I've known him for years.
(beat)
His body is somewhat Clooneyesque... compared to someone like me... but I reckon that's more your style anyway.

CHINA

Why isn't he already married?

LARRY

I don't see a ring on your finger.

CHINA

Is he tall?

LARRY

You mean standing up?

China inspects her fingernails by the light of the candle on their table. She finishes and moves her hands to her lap.

CHINA

I'm hungry.

Now, Larry is attempting (without much success) to pay attention to both China and something that is happening on the main stage (O.S.).

CHINA (CONT'D)

How much longer do we have to stay?

China forces a grin.

LARRY

Be quiet, you're ruining the
ambiance.

China sinks backward into the booth.

CHINA

So tell me some more about this
Roger. Is he like you?

LARRY

No, he's...

CHINA

... presentable?

Ignoring China's quip, Larry folds a five dollar bill lengthwise. After finishing the delicate operation, he resumes eye contact with China.

China is now sitting up straight and staring back into Larry's eyes with a strange ferocity. Larry moves his hand and the folded note toward the stage. China is determined not to break eye contact with Larry and give him this additional victory.

LARRY

Don't resist.

From the side of the screen, a pair of ample breasts floats toward the extended currency. The hands of the ENTREPRENEURIAL DANCER (who is mostly O.S.) cradle her breasts and push them together to envelop the outstretched note.

China's eyes flicker over to the breasts for a split second, and then shoot back to meet Larry's gaze.

She is more determined than ever not to bear witness to this culmination of Larry's philanthropy.

The motor behind the breasts gently reverses direction and pulls the bill from Larry's hand and eventually O.S.

LARRY (CONT'D)

We could always double date. Roger is the President and CEO of MGI which is a company that sells computer games and virtual reality paraphernalia...

(beat)

... definitely presentable.

Little Devil slides into the booth, firmly pressing her hips against China's. Her bare arm appears around China's shoulder.

LARRY (CONT'D)

At least he's not some New Age charlatan like the last guy you were shagging.

China turns and acknowledges the presence of Little Devil with a friendly but slightly nervous laugh. China wiggles across the booth to put a small but comfortable amount of space between herself and Little Devil.

CHINA

He's not one of those guys who only dates outside his race is he?

Larry finishes lighting a small cigar and then shakes his head "no".

With the cigar pinned between his teeth, Larry hands several dollar bills to China. She takes the notes and gives them to Entrepreneurial Dancer who leans over from the stage. China's facial expression is one of mild disbelief that she is actually doing this. Meanwhile, Little Devil appears next to China again -- she is not going to give up so easily.

Larry leans forward and raises his hand to one side of his mouth to shield China from what he is about to say.

LARRY

(to Little Devil)

Trust me... she likes you. I know her taste.

EXT./INT. DETROIT/APARTMENT - NIGHT

The neighborhood and street below have seen better days. Apartment buildings along the street are decorated with graffiti. BACKING AWAY, we begin to HEAR the sound of deep, meticulously controlled breathing.

The BREATHING grows louder as the shrinking street scene is eventually framed by a window.

PAN AROUND into a dimly lit apartment. Candle light flickers on the walls.

A burst of WIND momentarily joins the BREATHING. Lazily suspended incense smoke swirls away.

As we MOVE further into the apartment, the BREATHING grows louder. The top of a clean-shaven head comes into view. We cannot see the eyes of this person. The head is glistening with sweat.

The CAMERA LOWERS and EZEKIEL FLURRY, an athletic, black man in his late 20's, comes into full view. Ezekiel is sitting in a lotus position with the palms of his hands pressed flat against the floor. His eyes are closed.

He straightens his arms, raising his body (which remains in the lotus position) off the floor. His eyes open to reveal a penetrating gaze.

EZEKIEL
 (powerfully)
 Sacrifice...
 (beat)
 ... breathes color and life into
 the face of unity. It is the means
 by which we will emerge -- through
 this time of change -- intact,
 strong and relevant!

Ezekiel turns to survey the left side of his invisible audience.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)
 The sacrifice that I speak of is a
 level of productivity... five times
 that of our Mexican, Guatemalan or
 Brazilian competitors. Only when
 our manufacturing superiority is
 unquestionable... do we then
 deserve that many times their pay.

He turns to face the right side of his audience.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

Our way of life is gravely
threatened by the so-called Free
Trade Area of the Americas. Unless
we, in the collective, make the
sacrifices which I speak of --
brothers and sisters - our union
will wither...

(pause)

... and die.

Now facing straight ahead, Ezekiel lowers himself to the floor and closes his eyes.

A vein on Ezekiel's temple is pulsing as he inhales slowly and deeply.

He holds the inhalation.

Ezekiel exhales slowly and completely.

He holds the exhalation.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C./OFFICE OF UDO FRANKS - DAY - EZEKIEL'S FANTASY (OR PERHAPS RECOLLECTION)

We HEAR the sound of Ezekiel inhaling slowly and deeply.

UDO FRANKS, a corpulent man in his early 60's, and Ezekiel are arguing (M.O.S.). The sound of their voices joins the continuing background sound of Ezekiel INHALING.

EZEKIEL

You should let me control the negotiations. No offense, but this country gentleman lawyer bullshit isn't working.

UDO

Jesus... fucking... Christ, boy!
He's not going to respond to -- no offense -- to someone of your...
(beat)
... you know what I mean.

Ezekiel picks up a letter opener from the top of Udo's desk.

EXTREME CLOSE UP - OF ANTIQUE POCKET WATCH

The second hand glides smoothly past the "III".

BACK TO UDO'S OFFICE

We HEAR the sound of Ezekiel breathing out slowly and completely. Udo is red-faced and quivering with anger. Ezekiel is standing in front of Udo and inspecting the letter opener in his hand.

EZEKIEL

(barely audible over the sound of Ezekiel BREATHING OUT)
... even more frightening than a black man with a badge...
(beat)
... a nigger with a blade.

Suddenly, Ezekiel thrusts the letter opener toward Udo's face, freezing its lethal trajectory at one of Udo's eyelashes. Udo is now delirious with fear.

THE POCKET WATCH

The second hand passes the "VI".

UDO'S OFFICE

We HEAR the sound of Ezekiel inhaling slowly and deeply. Udo is having a heart attack. His face speaks only of regret as he feebly attempts to open a child-proof container. Ezekiel flicks the container out of Udo's hand with the tip of the letter opener. Udo stiffens and begins to fall toward the floor like a giant domino. The container and Udo hit the ground simultaneously. The top of the container pops off. Pills spill out onto the floor.

THE POCKET WATCH

The second hand passes the "IX".

UDO'S OFFICE

We HEAR the sound of Ezekiel breathing out slowly and completely. Ezekiel is sitting in Udo's high back leather chair. He finishes reading the front page of Udo's "Wall Street Journal" and neatly refolds the newspaper. Ezekiel stands up and walks over to the still form that is Udo. After feeling Udo's neck for a pulse and finding none, Ezekiel returns to Udo's desk and dials "911" from Udo's telephone.

THE POCKET WATCH

The second hand glides to a stop at the "XII".

BACK TO EZEKIEL'S APARTMENT

Ezekiel is still suspended above the floor in the lotus position. Smoke swirls over his head.

EZEKIEL

Sacrifice... breathes color and
life into the face of unity. It is
the means... by which we will
emerge -- through this time of
change --

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY - SPARROW

Flying. In b.g., there is nothing but blue sky.

CONTINUE TO FOLLOW Sparrow. In b.g., we SEE various well-known sights of Washington D.C.: U.S. Capital, Washington Monument and The Mall, White House.

Sparrow flies past an old courthouse and then past several other impressive buildings. Sparrow lands on top of a telephone booth and looks down.

INSIDE TELEPHONE BOOTH

MONICA RAVEN, a 24-year old, sexy brunette with beautiful blue eyes, shakes her head clearing it for what she is about to face.

EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY - ON TELEPHONE BOOTH

Monica, boom box in hand and wearing a tart get-up, bolts out of the telephone booth and strides briskly down the sidewalk.

INT. UNION HEADQUARTERS/RECEPTION AREA - DAY

RECEPTIONIST, a matronly woman in her 50's, stands poised and unyielding before Monica.

Monica tosses Receptionist a knowing grin hoping that the bulldog-like sentinel will chase after it like a juicy bone. Receptionist remains unimpressed.

MONICA
(very serious)
Udo's buddies paid a lot of money
for this... so...
(beat; thinking)
...take a powder.

Monica smiles at Receptionist and walks past the seemingly paralyzed underling.

INT. OFFICE OF UDO FRANKS

UDO is caught by surprise when Monica glides into his office.

UDO
Who the hell let you in?

She gently lowers the boom box onto the surface on his desk. Both of her hands remain on the horizontal handle of the portable sound system. She slowly closes her eyes. For a moment, Monica remains perfectly still.

Almost leaning on the boom box, Monica's body begins to sway from side to side.

Her eyes open slightly, but only to small slits through which Udo can be observed. Udo, in turn, is carefully scrutinizing Monica.

One of Monica's hands gracefully leaves its perch on the boom box. She toys with the spaghetti strap on her shoulder for awhile and then breathes deeply into a regal bearing.

Monica's eyelashes sweep open. Her eyes speak to Udo...

MONICA

(sexy voice)

It's been my experience that men like you unfailingly prove to be icons of virility... predestined to be wildly pleased by entire congregations of bright-eyed women younger than your neck size.

(beat)

Udo, you know that I can make you believe that I really... truly... want you more than I have ever wanted any man.

(beat)

It's not just the double bourbon talking to you. You... really are different from the others.

Impure thoughts chase away the concerns of Udo's day. He looks oddly boyish and almost likable.

Monica presses the "PLAY" button on the boom box. We HEAR a massively-riffing, bone-crushing death metal instrumental arrangement of "76 TROMBONES" by Meredith Willson.

Monica begins a demented dance. First, her movements are marionette-like. After a few verses, Monica's performance art mutates into the movements of a drum major marching in place. Her right arm moves in and out horizontally (as if holding a baton), its movements synchronized with the stepping of her right leg. Her left arm is akimbo.

In victorious promenade down Champs Élysées, Monica beams confidently sporting a Kathie Lee Gifford perma-grin certain that Udo is absolutely loving her show.

Udo is starting to look annoyed. Monica notices something on Udo's desk.

INSERT - COVER OF MAGAZINE

entitled "AMERICAN LABOR WEEKLY". The headline story reads "BROTHERHOOD HELPS MAQUILADORA WORKERS TO FORM UNIONS".

BACK TO SCENE

The MUSIC mixes into a deep and eminently funky instrumental arrangement of "SUPERSTITION" by Stevie Wonder. Monica begins to dance sexily. Udo perks up. Now, Monica adds karaoke to her show.

MONICA
(singing: "[lyrics]")
"Very surreptitious, you're my
union man."

MONICA (CONT'D)
"Very surreptitious, but I know
your little plan."

MONICA (CONT'D)
"Forty years of service, fat
pension coming soon."

MONICA (CONT'D)
"There's something you should tell
me, before I leave this room."

MONICA (CONT'D)
"And there's a special prize, that
you'd like to collect..."
(beat)
"...

(MORE)

MONICA (CONT'D)

but I'm gonna make you suffer."
 (pause)
 "Strike breakin' ain't the way,
 hey, hey, hey, yeah..."

In between verses, Monica honors Udo with some almost professional caliber dance moves.

MONICA (CONT'D)

"You've just done the dishes, but
 you forgot two cups."

With her index finders, Monica telegraphs the double entendre by tracing around the underside of her breasts.

MONICA (CONT'D)

"I'll bet Roger wishes, that you
 were sleepin' rough."

MONICA (CONT'D)

"Do you think you'll break him, and
 save the union man?"

MONICA (CONT'D)

"Looks like time for your reward...
 just hold out your hands."

Monica forms a cup with her hands, demonstrating to Udo what he should do.

MONICA (CONT'D)

"When you believe in things like a
 boss fox reporter..."
 (pointing to herself)
 "...that you can trust,"

Seemingly out of nowhere, Monica extends a microphone toward Udo's face. Her other hand nimbly plugs the microphone jack into the boom box and then presses the "RECORD" button. The MUSIC STOPS.

MONICA (CONT'D)

This is Monica Raven from the
Washington Post.

(quickly)

Is it true that MGI's Roger Trapp
is planning not to renew his
collective bargaining agreement
with the American Brotherhood of
Electronics Assemblers?

Udo grunts.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Are you concerned about the fact
that MGI's new line of games is
scheduled to go into production
only a few months from now?

Udo gently pushes the microphone away from his face and
reaches over to turn off the tape recorder.

UDO

Suuuuuure... I'll give you an
interview... but this...

Udo looks around his cluttered desk. He sees the magazine,
picks it up, and rolls it into a tube.

UDO (CONT'D)

(moving the magazine
toward Monica's mouth)

... will be my microphone.

Udo smiles with faux benevolence.

UDO (CONT'D)

Would you become really depressed
if I swatted you on the butt... and
sent you home without a story?

Udo begins to project a somewhat menacing energy.

UDO (CONT'D)

(inspecting magazine more
carefully)

Do you think your mouth is big
enough to fit around this...

(beat)

... tube?

MONICA

How about if I ask the questions?

UDO

You know... this tube is about the same thickness as the exhaust pipe on my oldest son's new truck.

Udo tilts his head back and cocks an eyebrow as if he, as a special favor to Monica, is about to share a pearl of wisdom.

UDO (CONT'D)

If you were feeling suicidal... which you might be, right now...

(beat)

... you could come to the conclusion that this life just isn't fair... and, in a frightful act of retaliatory poetic justice, seek out the tightly closed garage where that big truck is parked, start the engine, wrap your pretty pink lips around that pipe...

(sotto)

... and start sucking.

With a big, self-satisfied grin, Udo hooks his thumbs under his suspenders and begins to slowly thrust his pelvis forward and backward.

UDO (CONT'D)

Do you think that you could draw enough of a vacuum to cause that 5.9-liter V8 engine to misfire? Or would the trembling of that pipe prove to be too much of a distraction?

Monica turns and walks out of the office past Receptionist in disgust.

RECEPTIONIST

You know, Udo, a little publicity might not hurt your cause.

UDO

That is not the way... we do things. You of all people should know by now.

INT. LOS ANGELES/ELECTRONICS ASSEMBLY SHOP - DAY

ROGER TRAPP, a clean-cut, athletic white man in his mid-thirties, is sitting at a work bench in the shop. A group of FEMALE ELECTRONICS ASSEMBLERS watches Roger finish laying a track of solder on a circuit board.

He smiles, pleased with the quality of his work. He puts the soldering iron back into its holder and pulls off his safety goggles.

ROGER

There...

(holding the circuit board
up to the light)

... a nice, clean connection like this is what we need between U1 and the buffer. The daughterboard redesign is just about ready, but until then, this is what we need to do... even though it takes a little more time.

(beat)

And we are doing this to avoid what thing that I hate even more than the I.R.S.?

ASSEMBLERS

(in unison)

... white wires.

ROGER

Thank you.

Roger puts the circuit board down and pulls a ground strap off his wrist.

ROGER (CONT'D)

You ladies be good now.

He smiles at the group of mostly middle-aged women and then makes his escape from their close range scrutiny.

SAUCY ASSEMBLER

(scrambling to see around
one of her co-workers)

Out of my way, woman!

Saucy Assembler watches Roger's ass as he walks down the aisle of the shop.

SAUCY ASSEMBLER (CONT'D)

(nodding her head with
approval)

Mmmm... mmmm... good.

The Assemblers break into a chorus of laughter.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE SHOP AREA - ROGER

His mobile telephone RINGS.

ROGER

Trapp...
 (listens for a few
 seconds)
 I'll be right there.

INSIDE ROGER'S OFFICE

Roger is having a videoconference with Udo Franks and Ezekiel Flurry who can be seen on a large video screen at the far end of Roger's office. Ezekiel is giving Roger the "thousand yard" stare.

UDO

We're still waiting for you to say something that addresses our concerns. Please tell me that these nasty rumors are untrue.

ROGER

You just don't get it.
 (beat)

ROGER (CONT'D)

The twentieth century is over... and your attempts at extortion reek of ridiculous like the Clinton era Justice Department.

UDO

(threateningly)
 Mr. Trapp, you will deal with us, or...

ROGER

... or what? You have no lawful recourse!

Roger laughs and points at the image of Udo and Ezekiel on his video screen.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Look it's "The Night of the Living Union Suits."

(in zombie voice)

Brraaaiins...

(back to normal voice)

You're already dead. You just don't know it yet.

Udo rolls his eyes.

UDO

The agreements implementing the Free Trade Area of the Americas are open to a variety of interpretations, Mr. Trapp.

(to Ezekiel; pointing toward a nearby table)
Ezekiel, hand me that folder over there. As you...

ROGER

(interrupting)

I don't have time for your show-and-tell. I have work to do... the kind that actually creates jobs for people.

Udo sighs.

UDO

It saddens me... to see and hear such hostility against the American worker.

Udo spins in his chair to look at Ezekiel for support (or at least to see his reaction).

Ezekiel remains stone-faced and continues to stare at Roger. Udo sighs again and shakes his head ruefully, spinning back around to face Roger.

UDO (CONT'D)

I suppose other methods of persuasion will have to be explored.

(beat)

We'll be in touch, Roger.

Udo hangs up. The large screen in Roger's office goes black. Roger looks disgusted... and troubled.

Roger looks around his office and SEES various objects: a picture of his parents, some sports trophies, a group of plaques hanging on a wall, posters with boldly rendered "MAINTENANCE GAMING, INC." and "MGI" logos.

INSERT - DIGITAL VERSATILE DISK (DVD) PLAYER

Roger's hand guides a disk into the DVD player and then hits the "PLAY" button.

BACK TO SCENE

On the large screen, Roger watches:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) TEENAGE BOY is being yelled at by his DRUNKEN FATHER, who is calling him "worthless".

GOD
 (deep and resonant)
 The real world sucks! Answer the
 call from on high and join us... in
 the "MGI Virtual Universe".

Teenage Boy fires up a MGI game unit, morphs into a square-jawed, ripped, superhero character and leaps into the MGI Virtual Universe on his television screen.

B) PRETTY HISPANIC GIRL (smiling) morphs into a cigarette-smoking, Tank Girl-type character and dives into the MGI Virtual Universe on her computer monitor.

BACK TO SCENE

Roger's office telephone RINGS. He stops the DVD player and takes the call.

ROGER
 Trapp...

JIM
 Wow... I got through. Say, are you
 free this afternoon to get together
 and talk about the alumni
 association spring seminar?

Roger SEES a light on the telephone flashing.

ROGER
 Jim, can you hold on for a
 second...

Roger checks the display on the telephone to see who is calling and then switches to the incoming call.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 Hey, Larry. What's shaking?

LARRY
 Dude... I'm right outside!

EXT. LARRY IN HIS CAR

Larry, sporting aviator-style sunglasses, blasts through a red light in a beat up looking Jaguar E-type Series 1 open two-seater (circa 1964).

BACK TO ROGER'S OFFICE

ROGER

I wish you'd give me some heads up!
You just come rolling...
(pause; calmer)
Okay, okay. Bye.

Roger switches back to Jim.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Jim, sorry to keep you waiting...
you know, something's come up. I'm
afraid I'm going to have to pass
this time.

(long pause)

Hey... before I forget, I've been
meaning to "comp" you one of our
new VR-Master game units.

(pause)

Wake up, married guy. It's a
Trojan horse against the Lifetime
Movie Network. Repeat after me,
"This is a learning tool for our
children." Two operative words:
learning and tool.

(pause; laughing)

Good-bye.

Roger settles into his chair, now more serious and deep in thought. He pulls open a desk drawer and looks at a pistol inside. He stares at it for a few seconds and then closes the drawer.

INT. RECEPTION AREA

Larry is standing in front of YOUNG RECEPTIONIST, a cute girl just barely out of high school.

LARRY

You --

(dramatic pause)

Baby --

(another dramatic pause)

So fresh and beautiful...

Larry suddenly points to a bouquet on Young Receptionist's desk.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 Those flowers! Undoubtedly
 provided by some feckless and
 fawning would-be-suitor.
 (feigning anger)
 Who is he? I'll cut his balls off!

Young Receptionist laughs and almost chokes on her tea.

Larry SEES a box of MGI software on Young Receptionist's desk. The cover of the box shows a MGI logo tattooed onto the biceps of a muscular arm. The arm is wrapped tightly in a tourniquet. A syringe hovers over a bulging vein. A nasty-looking green fluid drips from the tip of the needle.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 That was my idea.

YOUNG RECEPTIONIST
 So you're the one that parents
 should be blaming. I knew Roger
 wasn't that sick.

ROGER

enters the reception area.

ROGER
 Hi, Larry.
 (to Young Receptionist)
 Don't believe any of his lies.

Roger continues toward the front door without breaking stride and gestures to Larry to follow him.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 (to Young Receptionist)
 Lunch.

Larry follows Roger toward the door.

YOUNG RECEPTIONIST
 Good-bye, Roger. Good-bye, Larry.
 Have a nice lunch!

EXT. LARRY AND ROGER IN LARRY'S CAR

Roger hears a BEEP from his pager. Larry SEES Roger reaching for his mobile telephone.

LARRY
 Don't use your phone. Let me show
 off my new toy.

Larry turns "on" his obviously after-market, in-dash, car telephone and dials the first seven digits of the telephone number for Roger's voice mail.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 One, four, five, four?

ROGER
 Yeah.

Larry finishes dialing the last four digits of the eleven-digit number. From a speaker, Larry and Roger hear an AD LIB SYNTHESIZED VOICE MESSAGE prompting them for a password and various other inputs which Roger keys in. From the speaker, we hear:

MONICA
 Hello, Mr. Trapp. This is Monica
 Raven from...

Roger quickly hangs up.

ROGER
 ... some newspaper reporter who
 keeps calling me.

LARRY
 Let me guess... you're going to be
 featured as one of L.A.'s most
 eligible bachelors.

ROGER
 God, I hope not. The last thing I
 need is damaged goods baying after
 me.

Larry laughs loudly. Roger laughs even louder.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

Larry laughs louder still. Larry and Roger are several drinks into their "power lunch".

LARRY
 "Lie or Fry"... think about it...
 the game has a polygraph as a
 peripheral.

(MORE)

LARRY(CONT'D)

If a player can't learn to lie successfully, he receives an electric shock...

(beat)

... through a VR suit or something like that.

Roger is thinking.

LARRY (CONT'D)

... electric chair theme for the cover art.

ROGER

It's already been done... besides, it's too "flavor-of-the-month"; and if the game is any good...

(mumbling)

... expert system... neural network...

(normal voice)

... it would be too expensive ... plus all of the politically correct idiots to deal with.

LARRY

Okay... how about this: "Morph Me, Baby!" A video camera provides a digitized image of the player to a processor. The processor real time morphs whatever part of the image the player tells it to and outputs the morphed image to a flat panel display...

ROGER

... and layered sensor arrays are getting cheaper by the day...
hmmm...

LARRY

Hey Mommy, look at me... I have Gerard Depardieu's nose.

Larry laughs at his own joke.

ROGER

About face, Larry.

AMAZINGLY ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE and her long luscious legs pass by.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Now there's some uber-baby
procreative material.

(beat)

I thought women like that only
existed at night.

Her hair rolls and breaks in waves, shimmering anew with each
of her steps (like in the Pantene® commercials).

Larry smiles slyly.

LARRY

Roger, let's go to the Laker game
on Friday with those two Filipino
chicks that I told you about.

ROGER

No thanks. I'll pass on the drama.

LARRY

Yeah, you're right.

(beat)

They're like heroin, but without
the chic.

ROGER

(smiling)

You ought to start writing some of
that shit down... and bury it as
deep as you can in the earth.
We'll pray together that future
generations don't find it.

Larry ignores the remark and lights one of his small cigars.
WAITRESS arrives with the next round.

LARRY

What's the latest with the
Brotherhood?

ROGER

They're nothing but a bunch of
sniveling poseurs.

(pause)

How are you coming along with
getting me those decoder chips?

Larry shadow boxes the air, bobbing and weaving.

LARRY

I'm at the rope-a-dope stage... by
the end of the month, for sure!

Roger looks at his watch.

ROGER
I think I'd better take off now.
And I'm not so sure if I can make
it tomorrow...

LARRY
(breathlessly; almost
violently)
Bullshit! I've been saving my best
stuff for tomorrow. I'm about to
set you up with something really
great.

ROGER
(perplexed)
Okay, already.
(pause)
I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. PLAZA LEVEL OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

China and other people who work in the building are walking through the plaza. She SEES a flower shop with a glass door and windows. FLOWER SELLER, a man in his early 40's, is moving about inside the shop.

ESCALATOR UP TO PLAZA LEVEL

Larry steps off the escalator and joins a stream of people walking through the plaza level.

He turns a corner and SEES China standing outside the flower shop. Larry stops to watch from a distance. Flower Seller, inside the store, is shaking his head "no" and pointing to a sign that says "CLOSED".

LARRY

is still watching China. He swallows hard. Eventually, he begins to smile.

FRONT OF FLOWER SHOP

Flower Seller is unlocking the door and letting China in.

SAME - A SHORT WHILE LATER

China emerges from the store with a bouquet of daisies. She turns from looking at the flowers to see a grinning Larry loitering outside the store.

LARRY

Now that's pussy power.

CHINA

They're for Bobby in accounting.

LARRY

But these flowers are so you. You have to have them! I'll send her a better arrangement... twice as big... tell me what the card says.

CHINA

Ohhh... thank you, Larry. You're so sweet... but that's okay.

(beat)

How is your friend Roger doing?

LARRY

I'm sorry, but I simply cannot speak of something as hairy and brutish as Roger before coffee... and certainly not in the presence of your dewy glory.

(pause)

Actually, his coif is impeccable.

They begin walking through the plaza.

CHINA

Let me tell you a little story about a goat, a fox and a leopard.

LARRY

Excellent... new management!

CHINA

It's not gossip, Larry. It's one of my grandmother's stories.

China bumps Larry's hip with hers, as if she were smacking a dog with a newspaper.

CHINA (CONT'D)

Goat said to Fox, "I wish for you to go into the banana grove and wait to be seen by Leopard so that I might surprise and take the great cat." Fox replied, "Fine, I will go and I will also return the favor to you."

(beat)

(MORE)

CHINA (CONT'D)

Goat went for a walk in the jungle and suddenly Leopard appeared out of the bush. Goat said, "Leopard, what are you doing here?" Leopard replied, "My little one is sick." Then Goat, thinking quickly, said, "Fox has medicine that will make your little one well, and I just saw Fox in the banana grove."

(beat)

Leopard raced to the banana grove where she found Fox waiting. Breathless, Leopard said to Fox, "Goat told me that you have medicine that will make my little one well." "Yes," said Fox, "I have medicine that will cure your little one, but in order for the medicine to work I must have a little goat horn to put it in."

China turns to Larry and smiles. They arrive at a bank of elevators.

LARRY

Okay... I have a story for you. Salesman says to Fox, "In order to complete my transformation into a human being, there is medicine in the form of a quadruple latte that I must mainline immediately."

(pause)

Does Fox care to join Salesman for morning coffee?

CHINA

I don't have time, Larry. I'll see you upstairs.

China and Larry go their separate ways.

EXT. COSTA RICA/TORTUGUERO NESTING BEACH - NIGHT

Larry is precariously juggling a flashlight and a data book as he scrambles for a position closer to a large hole in the sand in which GREEN TURTLE #1 is about to lay its eggs.

Larry trains his flashlight on Green Turtle #1. Startled by the light, Green Turtle #1 aborts its egg laying mission and lumbers back toward the ocean. Larry shrugs, turns off the flashlight and heads toward another one of the giant nesting reptiles, GREEN TURTLE #2.

Just after Larry finishes positioning himself, leaning on his stomach over the edge of a large hole in the sand, to watch Green Turtle #2, TEENAGE TICA, a slender, young Costa Rican lady intrudes. Naked except for her bikini bottom, she stands a few feet away from Larry covering her breasts with her hands.

TEENAGE TICA

Señor, I lose my bikini top in the ocean. Please you can help me find it with your flashlight?

Larry slowly turns from the task at hand to glower at Teenage Tica.

LARRY

You know, Chiquita, you're seriously impeding the progress of science.

CUT TO:

LARRY

is on his feet and shedding his equipment as fast as he can.

LARRY

This is hard work...
(gasping for air)
... this eco-hero shit.

CUT TO:

LARRY AND TEENAGE TICA

running toward the beach, hand-in-hand.

CLOSE SHOT - LARRY

He is in heaven.

MATCH CUT:

EXT. LOS ANGELES/BUSY INTERSECTION - DAY

Larry is in his car. The driver of the car behind Larry is leaning on his HORN. Larry had been daydreaming and didn't see the light turn green.

Larry puts his car into gear. Together, man and machine push forward and into the night. Larry looks happy.

INT. LOS ANGELES/COLLEGE BAR - NIGHT

Television monitors everywhere and ALTERNATIVE MUSIC draw a primarily collegiate crowd along with a sprinkling of older degenerates trying to recapture something that they never had in the first place.

REEDY BLONDE and her sidekick, CHUNKY ASIAN, both in their young 20's, orbit around the bar. They glide -- not making eye contact with anybody.

BAR FLY #1 AND BAR FLY #2

sitting at the bar.

BAR FLY #1

... without the invention of the humble alkaline battery, simultaneous WeHo faggot vibrator usage would I God-damn guarantee you overload the power grid!

BAR FLY #2

Well that certainly puts the term "brown out" into a more sinister context.

LARRY AND ROGER

leaning against the bar. Roger finishes paying BARTENDER for a round of drinks. Larry is watching someone O.S.

LARRY

They're making another pass, stud.

Roger licks the tips of his index fingers and pretends to smooth his eyebrows back. Larry sees this, howls with delight and begins to bark like a dog.

Reedy Blonde and Chunky Asian are closing in. Larry and Roger compose themselves. Across the aisle from where Larry and Roger are standing, Chunky Asian stops to talk to someone she knows. Reedy Blonde stops also. Roger interrupts.

ROGER

Hey... I want to talk to you.

Reedy Blonde turns around to look at Roger.

ROGER (CONT'D)

You and your friend are smart to keep circling the bar... you're more a part of the energy flow.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

It's so much better than just sitting on a bar stool.

REEDY BLONDE

Yeah... it's kind of shark-like.

Roger turns to Larry.

ROGER

Larry, don't be so rude, introduce me to your friends.

LARRY

(to Reedy Blonde)

Doesn't my friend Roger look like someone you've seen on television?

Larry turns, quickly scrutinizes Roger and turns back to face Reedy Blonde.

LARRY (CONT'D)

And your name is... ?

REEDY BLONDE

I'm Sondra -- not my real name -- and...

(motioning toward Chunky Asian)

... Lisa's the girl with.

ROGER

With what?

Reedy Blonde gives Roger a funny look.

REEDY BLONDE

... here, with us.

Larry laughs. Chunky Asian joins the group.

ROGER

Here's a trivia question I bet you guys can't guess: Who played the ventriloquist in the late 70's movie, "Magic", and went on to star in a movie that won five Academy Awards?

CHUNKY ASIAN

Sir Anthony Hopkins.

ROGER

Wow. I'm impressed.

REEDY BLONDE
Can an American get knighted by the
Queen of England?

CHUNKY ASIAN
I don't --

LARRY
(belligerently)
Fuck, no! They won't even knight
John Lennon.

CHUNKY ASIAN
But don't you have to be alive?

Roger turns toward the bar to grab his drink, bringing him
closer to Larry who is standing next to the bar.

ROGER
(softly)
Calm down.

Roger turns back to face the two Coeds. He is giving off a
very mellow relaxed sort of energy. Then Roger reverses
fields and steps dangerously close to Reedy Blonde. He looks
deep into her eyes. She looks back into his.

REEDY BLONDE
(to Roger)
Are you here for Stephanie's party?

ROGER
I wouldn't want to be anywhere
else.

Larry butts in.

LARRY
... except back at the laboratory.

Everyone looks at Larry.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Yeah -- that's right. Roger and I
are at a critical stage of our
residency.

CHUNKY ASIAN
Oh, you guys are in medical school?

LARRY

Yes. In fact, Roger plans to become a Doctor of Pediatric Gynecology.

Chunky Asian crosses her arms and backs away (one step) from Roger and Larry. Reedy Blonde looks amused, but also notices that Chunky Asian has been offended.

ROGER

Larry didn't want you two to be overly charmed with us right away... he was just pretending to be an asshole... as a prophylactic measure.

Roger smiles and nods his head affirmatively hoping to salvage what little credibility he has left. Larry yawns.

CHUNKY ASIAN

This is so Delta House and Star Trek Convention at the same time. Fucking amazing.

Chunky Asian takes the hand of Reedy Blonde and leads her away.

LARRY

Fuck them.

ROGER

Thanks to you, not likely.

LARRY

Roger, my friend, let me tell you about those two. They are nothing less than arch-practitioners of "The Philosophy of Vacancy" which I will now explain to you as quickly as possible.

ROGER

Oh no, here it comes...
 (to Bartender; pointing toward Larry)
 ... another scotch for The Great Pontificator!

LARRY

Have you ever been with a woman who told you that she wasn't going to get emotionally involved with you...

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

and that you shouldn't take it personally?

(beat)

Most likely, she can love... but detachment, and ultimately vacancy, is much safer. She's a true High Priestess of Vacancy.

(growing more excited)

That's right! It's more than a philosophy... it's a religion!

ROGER

... a Hollywood faith begging to be organized...

LARRY

An advanced practitioner... of the Philosophy of Vacancy... genuinely believes that when they are insulted, shit on, kicked in the head, whatever... that there is no reason why they should feel bad about what is happening to them, or even be the least bit angry at the person who is now boning them up the ass.

(beat)

Why not? Because what is happening is not directed at them personally. What is happening... is nothing more than what the other person is doing. You... just happen to be nearby.

(beat)

And so... if you weren't there to be rejected, it would have been someone else. Therefore... why take it personally?

Roger takes a sip from his drink.

LARRY (CONT'D)

When you live according to the Philosophy of Vacancy, you optimize efficiency. You don't waste time harboring resentments or disappointments against anyone... including yourself. You don't give anyone else any of your head space. You save it all for yourself and fill it with a whole lot of nothing... because with nothing, there can be no pain.

ROGER
And your point is?

Roger laughs; Larry doesn't.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Have we come to the end of this
great Philosophy of Nothingness?

LARRY
It's Vacancy.

A glass of scotch arrives and Larry drinks half of it. He closes his eyes to enjoy the river of smoky liquid fire tumbling down his throat.

LARRY (CONT'D)
(regrouping)
Even though you don't deserve it,
I'm about to do you a huge favor.
(pitching like a true
salesman)
I have a woman for you...
beautiful, beautiful face...
exquisitely crafted body... no
caveats in the Looks Department.
Tans well too.
(in W.C. Fields voice)
But wait there's more... her power
to stimulate extends beyond the
corporal realm.

Roger still isn't buying.

LARRY (CONT'D)
(back to his normal voice)
How can I describe her...
(beat)
She's tactile and inventive... like
girl punches all over you.
Effortlessly irresistible, clever
even... not at all a ball-buster.
Totally egalitarian... super cool
with an island style. Her name is
China.

Roger is expressionless.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Go out with her, you jack off!
(beat)
Hell, if you don't like her, just
sport her a few times and move on.
(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

No, I don't really mean that. Or maybe I do.

(pause)

Are you sure you're not gay?

ROGER

Take a look at that...

Roger points at Reedy Blonde and Chunky Asian who are now being chatted up by a posse of FRATERNITY BOYS.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I ladle out chum. You... fuck things up. Ergo, slackers move in for unopposed feeding frenzy. And now you want me to go on a blind date with some broad named after a country?

(wearily)

Piss off.

LARRY

Do it... you'll thank me later.

ROGER

(cheerily)

So what's happening with your upcoming "vacation" in Costa Rica?

Larry lights one of his small cigars. He says nothing for a moment, but ultimately cannot resist talking about himself.

LARRY

At the behest of my brilliant, globally-thinking employer, lucky me pulls volunteer research assistant duty in a mosquito-infested Caribbean swamp, thus leaving behind all First World comforts with the added bonus of falling behind in serving my clients back home.

(pause)

Ohhhhh, what the fuck... maybe I'll have a good time... and do some good for once and learn something...

(beat)

Maybe I'll be like The Professor on "GILLIGAN'S ISLAND"... and figure out how to kludge together a scotch distillery from a couple of coconut shells and a penis pump... or whatever I'm stranded with...

ROGER

(laughing)

You're the de facto Chosen One because none of those married fucks can stretch their leases all the way down to the rainforest. Besides, they know that you'll work even harder when you get back...

(upbeat)

Hey, you're a Sales God. This can't slow you down.

Larry gets up off his bar stool.

LARRY

I'll be back.

Larry walks O.S.

ON LARRY

as he walks toward the back of the bar. Larry SEES COLLEGE JOCK with muscle shirt, backwards baseball cap and oversized pants bopping up and down to HIP HOP MUSIC. College Jock grabs his crotch every few seconds like a rap star. SORORITY GIRL watches College Jock perform his little jig.

ROGER AND BAR FLIES

Roger looks bored. He starts to eavesdrop on the conversation between BAR FLY #1 and BAR FLY #2.

BAR FLY #1

... she's so easy to hate, you won't even feel guilty when you cheat on her.

(magnanimously)

She'd make the perfect wife.

INSIDE MEN'S ROOM

Larry stands in front of a urinal. An OLD BLACK MAN sits on a bar stool next to the sink ensuring that TWO STUDENTS who are washing their hands each get a towel. An assortment of personal grooming products, candies, etc. is neatly arranged on the sink top. As Larry finishes, he chuckles to himself.

BACK TO ROGER AND BAR FLIES

POWER CHICK, a woman in her mid-thirties dressed in business attire, barges between Roger and the Bar Flies and up to the bar, waiving at Bartender (O.S.) as she talks on her mobile telephone.

POWER CHICK

Now remember, you are not to move the child outside of the camera-monitored perimeter. Once an hour, you are to pick him up and nurture him. Twice an hour, clean the dump out of his pants. No hitting, no shaking, etcetera, etcetera. And keep the classical music going.

(sweetly)

Good-bye.

Roger, looking agitated, turns to watch one of the television monitors.

ON THE TELEVISION MONITOR

A man in gray tights and matching cape rushes up marble stairs toward the doors of the United States Supreme Court. The man is wearing glasses, carrying a battered litigator's bag and wearing a "scales of justice" emblem on his chest.

ANNOUNCER

Less than human... more than reptilian... He's a superhero for a new, litigious millennium. He's Captain Scrivener!

BACK TO ROGER

ROGER

God-damn lawyers.

Larry returns -- landing on his barstool as if he had just jumped onto a horse -- seemingly energized.

LARRY

(to Bartender)

Another round, Joe!

(to Roger)

Whilst draining my lizard, I experienced an epiphany, namely, that it really doesn't matter whether a woman loves you or not, just so long as she is sufficiently skilled as an actress to make you believe that she does.

ROGER

If you really don't care what people's true intentions are, just go ahead hand your money to the first person who makes you feel good... and get to the end of the game.

LARRY

(angrily)

I'm talking about a person who never figures out that their role in a relationship had nothing to do with what it really was!

Roger lets Larry have the last word.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Larry weaves a bit as he and Roger walk down the sidewalk. Larry throws his arm around Roger's shoulder.

Larry and Roger are looking at each other, almost face-to-face.

LARRY

So I've convinced you to meet China haven't I?

Roger responds with a smile.

MATCH CUT:

INT. TRENDY RESTAURANT - NIGHT - ROGER

Smiles as he raises his glass of wine.

ROGER

To cowboys!

ROGER, CHINA, LARRY AND CINDY

all hold their glasses in the air. The foursome is seated around a table. Several plates of appetizers and a bottle of wine are on the table.

CHINA

(gleefully)

... and Indians!

Their glasses clink together.

ROGER

In early Hollywood, villains in the western movies were real outlaws who actually had to ride back across the border to Mexico whenever the law came around.

CHINA

Roger, show me the pictures that you carry in your wallet.

Roger shows China a photograph in his wallet.

ROGER

Here's my mom.

Roger closes his wallet.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(laughing)

You're getting to know too much about me too quickly. How about you? Is the name "China" a Malcolm X kind of thing?

LARRY

(muttering to himself)

Stop, you're killing me.

CINDY, a Caucasian woman in her mid-30's, turns to look at Larry.

CINDY

What did you say, Larry?

LARRY

(to Cindy; laughing)

Oh, nothing. I just remembered I have a meeting tomorrow at three.

CHINA

Oh Roger, ... you are very inappropriately curious for someone who won't let a girl look through his wallet.

(whispering to Roger)

But because you're so cute I just might have to reveal my secrets to you anyway.

Beneath the table, Roger takes China's hand.

ROGER
 (to China)
 Should you... feel like seeing me
 again after tonight... I would be
 honored.

China squeezes his hand.

CHINA
 (to Cindy)
 Come with me to the ladies room.

China and Cindy grab their purses and excuse themselves. For several seconds, Larry and Roger sit in silence.

ROGER
 Wouldn't it look ridiculous if we
 did that?

LARRY
 Imagine the things they would say
 about us when we left.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE TRENDY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Larry walks next to Cindy with his hands in his pockets. He turns around and SEES Roger and China waiting for the valet to bring their cars. Roger places his hand on the small of China's back; she turns and smiles up at him.

Larry and Cindy arrive at her car which is parked on the street. Larry shakes her hand. He is trying to be polite, but the best he can do is morbid.

LARRY
 It was a pleasure meeting you.

EXT. FRONT OF ROGER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Roger locks his front door and strolls toward his car with an extra bit of spring in his step.

IN ROGER'S CAR

Roger is driving a rare and immaculately preserved BMW 850 CSi (or similarly impressive vehicle). His mobile telephone RINGS. He flips it open to answer the call.

ROGER
 (smiling)
 Hello.

His smile fades quickly.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Don't worry...
(pause)
I'll handle them.

EXT. NARROW ALLEY - DAY

Roger slowly drives his car into the alley and comes to a stop. He shuts off the engine.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A black Lincoln Towncar is parked on the street. HIRED MUSCLE sits behind the steering wheel with his arm hanging out the window. Udo sits in the passenger seat.

Hired Muscle is eating a donut. He breathes in and accidentally inhales some powdered sugar. He coughs. Roger appears at the driver's side window.

ROGER
Looking for me?

Roger sprays Hired Muscle's eyes with pepper spray, opens the door, and drags the blinded galoot out of the vehicle.

Roger SEES a nearby fence with a steel pole protruding upward. He runs Hired Muscle toward the steel pole.

After stunning Hired Muscle by plowing his face hard into the steel pole, Roger grabs the bottom part of Hired Muscle's jacket and hooks the jacket over the pole with enough force to puncture the jacket and push the top of the pole through the resulting hole thereby leaving Hired Muscle trapped -- face against the pole, arms flailing, and bent forward at the waist. A handgun falls out of Hired Muscle's jacket and onto the ground.

INSIDE THE LINCOLN TOWNCAR

Roger sits down in the driver's seat next to Udo who is visibly nervous.

ROGER
It sure is hard to get good help
these days.

UDO
Roger, hasn't this gone far enough?
A new collective agreement is in
everyone's best interest.

ROGER
 If your brand of socialism were
 such a good thing, ...

Roger tosses Hired Muscle's handgun to Udo.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 ... it would sell itself and
 wouldn't need these little toys at
 the end cap.

Roger calmly gets out of the car and slams the door shut.
 Udo winces in pain and grabs the upper part of his left arm.

INT. ROGER'S OFFICE

Young Receptionist is peeking outside through the window
 blinds behind Roger's desk. She sighs with relief, lets go
 of the two blinds that she had been prying apart and hurries
 out of Roger's office.

INT. CHINA'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING (SAME DAY)

China smiles at Larry from behind her desk. A name plate on
 her desk reads: "CHINA FIRE - MANAGER OF HUMAN RESOURCES".
 Larry leans against the back of a guest chair.

LARRY
 Would you like to go to lunch?

CHINA
 Oh, I can't. I need to run some
 errands today. Sorry.
 (beat)
 Hey... your friend, Roger... I like
 him. You were right.
 (pause)
 What do you think of my friend,
 Cindy?

LARRY
 She's not fucked up enough.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Larry is sitting on a couch and holding a wireless telephone
 to his ear.

CHINA
 I'm not home right now, so please
 leave a message. Bye...

Larry quickly hangs up and dials another number. Nervous energy is flowing. He gets up off the couch and begins pacing around his apartment with the telephone pressed against his ear.

ROGER

This is Roger. Please leave a message and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Larry hangs up the telephone by smashing it into pieces on the tiled surface of his wet bar. Each tile is decorated with a stylized picture of a smiling-faced sun.

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry is sitting at his desk. He slowly presses a button on his telephone labeled "ROGER". With his bandaged hand, Larry picks up the receiver.

LARRY

Hi, it's Larry.
(pause)
Is Roger in yet?

Larry looks toward his window and SEES his own reflection superimposed over the city below. He begins slowing moving his arms and legs like Godzilla wading through downtown Tokyo.

ROGER'S OFFICE

Roger picks up his telephone.

ROGER

What's up, Larry.

LARRY

I called you this weekend, but couldn't get a hold of you. Did you do anything with China?

Roger signs a document held in front of him by SECRETARY.

ROGER

I saw her Friday night... nothing much else.

(pause)

Yeah, sure. I can't ink it yet... but call me later.

(pause)

Bye.

BACK TO LARRY

He hangs up the telephone and walks out of his office and down the hall to

CHINA'S OFFICE

where she sits behind her desk.

CHINA

Hi, Larry. Roger and I really had a great time in Santa Barbara this weekend.

(whispering)

We just got back this morning.

CUT TO:

MEN'S ROOM

Vomit pours out of Larry's mouth into the toilet.

RECEPTION AREA

On his way out, Larry walks quickly past LATINA RECEPTIONIST.

LATINA RECEPTIONIST

Are you gone for the day?

LARRY

Yes.

Latina Receptionist looks down at schedule of events.

LATINA RECEPTIONIST

Don't forget tomorrow's presentation.

(smiling)

Bright and early!

Larry steps into the elevator and O.S.

EXT. MGI HEADQUARTERS/ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

Roger is standing a few steps above Larry. A MGI logo looms behind Roger.

LARRY

... blatantly lied to by my supposed best friend!

ROGER

I didn't lie.

LARRY
Bullshit! Error of omission then?

ROGER
Larry...
(trying to reason with
him)
... I didn't think she would want
it spread around.

LARRY
I'm her friggin' friend, you moron!
She told me first thing this
morning.

ROGER
So what's the big deal?

LARRY
You don't think there's anything
wrong with trying to deceive me?

ROGER
You're acting like a god damn
woman!
(pause)
It's none of your business.

LARRY
Do you really believe that?
(pause)
Well, you think about what I've
said.

ROGER
I have.

LARRY
Consider the possibility that I'm
right... and that you're wrong on
this one. All you have to do is
admit it.

ROGER
This is ridiculous!

Roger storms inside. The door SLAMS SHUT leaving Larry
standing outside alone. He is motionless. SOUNDS OF RAW
PRIMAL TERROR roar through his head.

MONTAGE - LARRY'S EVENING

- A) Larry drinking and driving. He finishes a can of beer and tosses it behind him into the air.
- B) Larry drinking by himself in a bar.
- C) Larry getting escorted out of a bar by BOUNCER.
- D) Larry driving the wrong way down a one-way street.
- E) Larry pouring himself another drink at home.
- F) NEXT MORNING: Larry waking up fully clothed on his couch. Unshaven and disheveled, he SEES a nearby clock which reads 10:30.

INT. LARRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry, looking dreadfully hung over, listens to BOSS over his speakerphone.

BOSS

Where the fuck were you this morning? You left us standing there with our dicks hanging out. Get your ass into my office -- right now!

LARRY

Blow me, sir.

Larry hangs up his telephone. He puts a few things into his briefcase and walks out of his office and down the hall.

Boss intercepts him.

BOSS

(calmly)

Daemon, you're fired. Pack up your personal items and leave.

LARRY

I will, Mr. Smith.

(pause)

I'm sorry for what I said about you blowing me.

Larry extends his hand; it isn't taken.

Larry turns and continues down the hall.

CHINA'S OFFICE

LARRY

China, I've done a horrible thing.

(pause)

Roger is going to use you up like
penis fodder...

CHINA

What are you talking about? He's
nice to me!

Larry takes a deep breath.

LARRY

In a former life, Roger was an
alchemist capable of transforming
incorruptible self-importance,
vapidity and revoltingly unstylish
posturing into a cloak of virtue.

China is looking at Larry as if he has lost his mind.

LARRY (CONT'D)

... a wellspring of unmitigated,
reiterative inconsequence... an
aesthetic vacuum of biblical
proportions... a relentlessly self-
promoting troglodyte -- unashamedly
parasitic!

(pause)

My indictment will follow in due
course.

Larry turns and walks away.

RECEPTION AREA

On his way out, Larry pauses at Latina Receptionist's desk
and reaches over to grab an envelope with his name on it.
Larry looks inside the envelope and SEES a plane ticket to
San José, Costa Rica.

LARRY

(blowing her a kiss on his
way out)

Dame el último beso, mi amor.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C./CEMETERY - DAY

Ezekiel and ABRAHAM RICHARDSON, a tall, silver-haired gentleman in his late 50's, are walking together away from a concluding funeral service. In b.g., MOURNERS comfort each other.

ABRAHAM

Although incompetent by every measure of a man, Udo did at times display a colloquial, endearing quality. God, rest his soul.

EZEKIEL

I'll need the D.C. Trapp files ASAP, especially the surveillance information. I'm also going to need --

ABRAHAM

Blame will be assigned to you, and to you alone, if your activities in any way tarnish the image of this union.

EZEKIEL

Mr. Richardson, I'm not sure if you appreciate the seriousness of the situation: Mr. Trapp is in the process of relocating his key manufacturing operations to Costa Rica; he has no intention of renewing the collective bargaining agreement.

(beat)

The Brotherhood is barely surviving with its current membership roles. Losing MGI would destroy this union.

ABRAHAM

Yes... it would be a Waterloo of sorts.

EZEKIEL

The problem... is that Mr. Trapp has not been given a reason to believe that we possess the means, or even the will, to do anything other than beg for his charity.

(pause)

(MORE)

EZEKIEL(CONT'D)

He thinks that I am no different
from the dearly departed Mr. Franks
and the rest of you.

(pause)

His very own, personal reeducation
camp is about to begin.

EXT. LOS ANGELES/GROUNDS OF APARTMENT COMPLEX - EVENING -
SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Roger is carrying a bag of groceries and walking through the
landscaped common area of a typical L.A. apartment complex.

He SEES a door, his destination; it opens and China bursts
out running to greet him. She leaps into the air throwing
herself around him. He somehow manages to shift the
groceries to one arm and catch her with the other. Roger is
laughing all the while.

CHINA

You're finally here to worship me
and cook me dinner. Well, that's a
good start.

Roger kisses her lips.

ROGER

Yes, my queen. And you also get
free taxi service...

Roger begins walking into China's apartment with her still
clinging to him like a monkey.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Putt, putt, putt, putt, putt,
putt...

Roger hooks the door with one of his feet and closes it
behind them.

INSIDE CHINA'S APARTMENT

Her cozy apartment is filled with Afro-Caribbean art and
furnishings consistent with this motif. Many framed
photographs of China and her relatives and friends are
prominently displayed.

LATER THAT EVENING

While washing dishes in the kitchen, Roger cranes his neck to
see the television in the adjacent living room.

ON TELEVISION

SLACKER #1 and SLACKER #2 are sitting side-by-side on a big, mushy couch. They are being orally pleased by GOTH CHICK #1 and GOTH CHICK #2, respectively.

SLACKER #1

Wow! What amazing technique...

(pause)

... otherworldly!

(beat)

These chicks haven't said a word of English. We must be scoring with bitches from another country.

SLACKER #2

It's like I've been trying to tell you, dude. The blow job speaks an international language.

CLOSE ON GOTH CHICK #2

She bares vampire fangs and opens her mouth wide as she sets her sights on his engorged member (O.S.).

ON SLACKER #2

SLACKER #2

Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!

BACK TO GOTH CHICK #2

Twin streams of blood splatter across her face as she hungrily caps the gusher.

BACK TO SCENE

Roger laughs loudly.

China appears in a doorway next to the television. She is wearing bikini briefs and a cutaway shirt exposing her midriff.

On the television screen, we SEE the words, "EROTIC HORROR THEATRE" spelled out in dripping blood. Over EERIE MUSIC we hear:

HOST

We will return to "VAMPIRE COCKSUCKERS FROM OUTER SPACE"... after these messages.

Roger finishes drying the last plate and puts it away in a cupboard. He turns to China.

ROGER
It's okay if I stay tonight?

China walks up to him.

CHINA
You are very brave...
(pause)
... earthling.
(smiling evilly)
Aren't you just a little worried
that I can get under your skin too?

INT./EXT. SAN JOSÉ (COSTA RICA)/BAR - NIGHT

Larry (bearded, scummy, dirty, disheveled, etc.) is drinking in a sleazy open air bar. He watches AUSSIE CHICK, young and fresh out of university, trudging down the street with her backpack.

CUT TO:

Larry watches several LOCAL TOUGHS in the bar who are eyeing Aussie Chick with malicious intent.

CHINA'S BEDROOM

China and Roger are on her bed. China smiles (almost childlike) and caresses Roger's cheek with her hand.

BACK TO LARRY

Wild-eyed, Larry shakily raises a glass of whisky to his mouth. Larry SEES three of the Local Toughs saunter into the street to confront Aussie Chick (who has stumbled into a part of town rarely explored by tourists or foreigners at night).

CUT TO:

The Local Toughs in the street NOTICE Larry, teeth bared and snarling, careening toward them.

Larry is punched in the stomach and doubles over.

Aussie Chick slips into the shadows.

BACK TO CHINA'S BEDROOM

Most of the buttons on Roger's shirt are undone. China runs her fingers across his chest.

BACK TO STREET

Larry is on his knees. One of the Local Toughs crescent kicks the side of Larry's head.

BACK TO CHINA'S BEDROOM

China crashes over Roger like a wave, kissing him passionately.

BACK TO STREET

A boot slams into Larry's ribs; his face buffs the street.

BACK TO CHINA'S BEDROOM

China is lying on top of Roger who has already fallen asleep.

CHINA

You like to spoil me, don't you.

BACK TO STREET

Aussie Chick looks down at Larry and grimaces at the mess she sees.

LARRY

What fucking dreadful judgment...

Larry laughs in a very disturbed way.

AUSSIE CHICK

(helping Larry to his feet)

Come on, hurry! You can stand up.

Larry makes it to his feet.

AUSSIE CHICK (CONT'D)

Yeah... that's good!

LARRY

Fucker beat me to the punch.

AUSSIE CHICK

Fucking hell... terrible judgment's right!

(pause)

You don't even know me, Mate!

(catching a whiff of Larry's breath)

Thank God for alcohol.

Aussie Chick walks the staggering Larry down the street toward a train station, looking around nervously all the while.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C./EZEKIEL'S OFFICE (FORMERLY UDO'S OFFICE)
- EARLY EVENING

Comfortable in what was once Udo's high back leather chair, Ezekiel is having a teleconference with Roger who appears on a large video screen.

ROGER

I'm sorry to hear about Udo's passing away.

EZEKIEL

(playing with the letter opener)

Yes, we're all deeply saddened by his unexpected departure.

EXT. EZEKIEL'S OFFICE - MONICA'S POV (THROUGH BINOCULARS)

Ezekiel walks to the window. He looks directly at Monica while drawing the blinds shut.

NEARBY BUILDING

Monica, standing next to an open window, lowers her binoculars.

BACK TO EZEKIEL

EZEKIEL

Here are our demands. Fly out to D.C. with your attorney. My staff will prepare the necessary documents for you to renew the collective agreement. We are willing to make the concession of not requiring you to agree in writing to keep your manufacturing operations within the United States, ... provided you and I have a gentlemen's agreement that you won't expatriate your operations, say... for at least the next five years.

ROGER

The last time I checked, I was the one running my business.

(beat)

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

That chair looks really good on you.

EZEKIEL

I know that you're... very excited about the prospect of tariffless borders within the Free Trade Area of the Americas. But in the long run, your workforce will remain unionized. You can step up, as a responsible member of the business community, and right now lock up a very fair collective bargaining agreement, or you can save a little money in the short term... that is until some regressive Central American labor union gets its hands on you.

(beat)

But when The Brotherhood soon reaches south and begins operating jointly with Central and South American labor unions, I guarantee you that the price will be a hell of a lot higher... and you won't have much room for negotiating being so deep into capital expenditure.

(pause)

So here's your chance to get in on the ground floor, ... and start generating some good will. Also, you don't need to set yourself up for so much negative publicity.

(beat)

We will all be doing business together in Costa Rica soon enough... but it just wouldn't be fair for you to begin gorging yourself before anyone else has even sat down at the table.

ROGER

Wonderful speech. What makes you think that these people even want The Brotherhood standing between them and their first real chance to upgrade their standard of living?

EZEKIEL

Unorganized laborers in Costa Rica have suffered greatly!

(MORE)

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

Workers on banana plantations exposed to toxic chemicals have produced a generation of children, ... a ridiculously high percentage of which have congenital deformities.

ROGER

What the hell are you talking about! Bananas have nothing to do with MGI's products!

Ezekiel is leisurely leafing through a file.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Why am I not understanding the sounds that are coming out of your mouth? You've gotta be too old to be a crack baby.

Ezekiel smiles with renewed satisfaction at the turning of each page.

ROGER (CONT'D)

What's that you're reading, Zeke? "The Communist Manifesto"? You ought to give that bugger a rest and get outside once in awhile.

EZEKIEL

If you have it in you... to objectively assess this situation, I'm sure that you will comply with our very reasonable demands.

(pause)

But just between you and me... I hope that you don't.

INT. CHINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

China's eyes open. Her head is at the foot of the bed and her toes are touching the headboard. She SEES something next to her on the bed (O.S.). She rolls across the bed plunging her face into an unceremoniously arranged pile of clothing that includes a man's shirt. She smells the shirt... then she hugs the shirt.

INT. ROGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Roger (who is finishing up a meeting with ATTORNEY) receives a call on his speaker phone.

ROGER

Trapp...

CHINA

It's me! Do you miss me yet?

Realizing the caller is China, Roger quickly picks up the receiver.

BACK TO CHINA

Still in her beloved bed, China holds a can of soda in one hand and her telephone in the other. An opened bag of potato chips is perched on top of Roger's shirt.

CHINA

You know, at the end, when we were making love... I saw colored lights.

FX. CHINA'S VISION

From a pulsating sun-like nucleus, molten colors flow outward and back in rivers forming the shapes of flower petals. The multicolored petals caress each other as the entire flower begins to disintegrate, pixel-by-pixel, leaving only scintillating points of light which dance for awhile, before assuming their places in the heavens as ancient stars.

BACK TO ROGER'S OFFICE

Roger reacts in an amused way and gives Attorney a knowing look, as if Attorney must certainly understand the ritual in which Roger is now a participant... but hopefully not for too much longer.

BACK TO CHINA

CHINA

I love you Roger.

ROGER

Okay, I'll call you later.
(pleasantly)
Bye.

BACK TO ROGER'S OFFICE

Roger hangs up the telephone.

ROGER

I'll get that environmental report to you as soon as I can.

Attorney is putting documents back into his briefcase. Behind small wire-frame spectacles, his eyes flicker with doubt and frustration.

ATTORNEY

Please do. It's not our practice to predicate advice of counsel upon faith-based assumptions.

INT./EXT. AIRPLANE COCKPIT - DAY

Ezekiel is seated next to PILOT in the cockpit of a small twin-engine airplane. Through an open window, he SEES...

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Mountains shrouded in mist.

B) Banana fields/plantations.

C) Tropical rain forests.

D) A brackish-looking canal which cuts a path through incredibly dense foliage.

E) A thin peninsula of heavily forested land which is bound on one side by a canal and on the other side by a black sand beach that falls into the Caribbean Sea.

F) A dilapidated airstrip which comes into view as the airplane approaches the end of the peninsula.

CUT TO:

EXT. COSTA RICAN RAINFOREST - DAY

MONKEY's mouth opens wide, letting out LOUD, SCREECHING SOUNDS. Monkey swings to a nearby branch and SEES...

EXT. CANAL/COCONUT BARGE - DAY

Larry is sitting on the upper deck of a coconut barge which moves slowly through the jungle-bound canal.

BACK TO MONKEY

The howler motions (like an angry traffic cop) for the barge to move along... and to stay the hell away from his jungle.

CLOSE ON LARRY

Sweat runs down his face.

BUZZ of insects. RUSTLING of palm fronds/trees. CRASHING of waves in the distance.

We SEE animals such as crocodiles, herons, etc. along the bank of the canal.

The sun continues to beat down on Larry, but he's too shattered to even move.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - THE NIGHT BEFORE (FLASHBACK)

The small, shabby single room includes bed and a kitchenette (of sorts) with a table. The only source of light is a lamp on a table. The lamp has a hideous, orange-red colored shade that adds a hellish quality to the room.

Larry is sitting on the edge of the bed. In b.g., PROSTITUTE, a Latina in her mid-to-late 20's, is putting her clothes back on.

A nearly empty bottle of whiskey sits on a small nightstand next to the bed. Larry looks down at his crotch (O.S.).

LARRY
(blubbering)
Ohhhhhhhhhh... fuck me. Betrayed
by my own fffffffucking penis.

Larry's disappointment quickly turns to rage. Just as rapidly... a darker purpose draws him inward. Oblivious to Prostitute (who is taking money from the top of a dresser), Larry grabs the bottle by the neck and smashes it on the top of the nightstand.

Larry drunkenly inspects the portion of the bottle remaining in his hand and, in particular, the glittering, blade-like edge. It will do.

Larry walks across the room toward the table.

ANGLE ON - LARRY

from the rear, bare-assed and hoisting his genitalia onto the edge of the table.

MED. SHOT - LARRY

He grips the neck of the bottle with both hands and raises it upward. His hands quiver violently. The jagged edge of the bottle is pointed downward like a guillotine.

POV LARRY - SLOW MOTION

The edge of the broken bottle, wet and still dripping whiskey, comes in and out of focus.

LARRY AND PROSTITUTE

Prostitute rushes toward Larry.

PROSTITUTE
¡Cabrón loco!

Larry lets out a bloodcurdling howl and whips around toward Prostitute. The broken bottle in Larry's hand hits Prostitute in the face, shattering and knocking her to the floor.

Prostitute slowly begins to push herself up off the floor. Blood trickles down her face, but she ignores it.

Larry looks at her but everything is out of focus. SOUND OF LARRY PANTING.

She finally comes into "focus", now appearing to Larry as a WOLF.

WOLF
(different voice)
You can't do this alone.
(turning to leave)
You know where to find me.

Wolf leaves.

Hit by a wave of self-loathing and shame, Larry crumples to his knees and begins to weep.

The predawn WHOOPING SOUNDS of howler monkeys, one group of simians competing against another for aural supremacy, build layer-upon-layer into a mad symphony.

END FLASHBACK

Larry SEES a small pier and research station (a primitive cinder block building with a hip roof) drawing nearer. He grabs his back pack and shakily pulls himself to his feet.

INT./EXT. RESEARCH STATION - AFTERNOON

Larry is standing in front of GEOFFREY MAITLAND, a thin, white man in his late twenties.

Geoffrey SEES a mosquito sucking blood from Larry's arm. Geoffrey grabs a container of mosquito repellent from a nearby shelf.

GEOFFREY
Close your eyes and mouth.

Larry complies. Geoffrey sprays Larry with mosquito repellent from head to toe.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)
Christ, Larry... these bugs will
make you sick...
(pause)
... if you don't take better care
of yourself.

Geoffrey stuffs the mosquito repellent into Larry's backpack.

Geoffrey gives Larry an opened box.

INSERT - INSIDE BOX

We SEE turtle tags, data sheets, a small flashlight, and other scientific paraphernalia.

BACK TO SCENE

GEOFFREY
I need you to break out these tags
and data sheets into individual
kits for the new crop of research
assistants.

Larry takes the box and exits the research station through already opened double doors.

A few meters from the door, he carefully steps over a trail of cutter ants and then continues across a grassy common area toward a big shade tree.

EXT. RESEARCH STATION - LATER

Geoffrey is testing out a directional microphone on some nearby jungle birds. LOUD CHIRPING SOUNDS.

CUT TO:

EZEKIEL

striding up a dirt path toward the side of the research station where Geoffrey is working.

Ezekiel walks up to Geoffrey and stands in front of him, blocking the path of the directional microphone. Ezekiel, in black trench coat and expensive Italian leather ankle boots, is holding a dossier.

GEOFFREY

Don't you think you're a bit overdressed for turtle tagging?

(pause)

We don't start for another five hours. Go catch some sleep.

Ezekiel extends his hand toward Geoffrey.

EZEKIEL

Mr. Maitland, my name is Ezekiel Flurry and I care even less about turtle tagging than you do.

Geoffrey smiles cautiously.

GEOFFREY

Have all the lodges filled up? You can't seriously want to stay here...

Ezekiel lowers his unshaken hand. Before responding, he slowly looks Geoffrey up and down.

EZEKIEL

The Great Geoffrey Maitland... baby sitting an eclectic international group of turtle-hugging college students on summer holidays just like it says in the brochure... and stuck in a stinking tropical swamp surrounded by thieving, poaching, allegedly indigenous village ingrates. Let me guess how all of this came about.

Ezekiel begins pacing around Geoffrey like a big jungle cat sizing up its quarry.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

Several months ago, you were in San Antonio de Belén gathering data for an environmental impact study.

(MORE)

EZEKIEL(CONT'D)

But unfortunately, the big shot who was subsidizing your cushy gig didn't appreciate your preliminary findings, thus resulting in your prompt and highly prejudicial dismissal. And now, here you are...

(spreading his arms)
... you've arrived.

Geoffrey is getting uncomfortable.

GEOFFREY

Why are you here? And what do you want?

EZEKIEL

I'm interested in the test results.

GEOFFREY

There will be no adulterations or misinterpretations of data for the purpose of arriving at Roger Trapp's preferred conclusion.

Ezekiel looks at Geoffrey as if he's an insect.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

(thinking quickly)
Let me show you what I've discovered.

INT. RESEARCH STATION

Geoffrey and Ezekiel approach a whiteboard mounted on the wall. Geoffrey picks up a marker.

On the whiteboard, Geoffrey draws a crude outline of Costa Rica and writes "SJ" in the center, circling the initials. Below and to the left of the "SJ" annotation, Geoffrey draws a building with a pipe spilling out liquid.

GEOFFREY

Trapp wants to build a facility for manufacturing integrated circuit chips just outside San Antonio de Belén.

(beat)

(MORE)

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

As is typical of the manufacturing processes that he would necessarily have to employ, in addition to integrated circuit chips, this plant is also going produce polychlorinated biphenyls, PCBs, and various other harmful by-products.

Geoffrey draws some trees near the building.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

The last surviving viable grove of the nearly extinct manú tree is located only half a kilometer from MGI's proposed site.

Geoffrey draws a double line, which intersects the spilled liquid and runs through the groove of trees.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

This line represents streamflow.

Geoffrey puts the marker down.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

Trapp and his bought-and-paid-for scientists want you to think that PCBs are harmless to these trees. My data shows that even treated PCBs have a delayed effect on mycorrhizas, the symbiotic relationship between soil fungi and plant roots that directly affects the nutrient uptake of trees, or I should say vascular plants -- phosphorus uptake, in particular.

(pause)

If you're asking me to abandon my hypothesis about the long term effects of PCBs entering the streamflow, it's not going to happen.

With as much defiance as he can summon, Geoffrey positions his feet shoulder width apart, puts his hands on his hips, and points his chin at Ezekiel.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

There will be no corporate bootlicking for this cowboy. So do your worst.

EZEKIEL

(reassuringly)

We're on the same team, Geoffrey.
I want you to continue your work...
and to develop scholarly and well
supported proof of your hypothesis.

(beat)

I would never seek to distort the
truth... or besmirch your integrity
as a scientist.

Ezekiel reaches into his dossier.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

But time is of the essence, and I
think that you'll need a little bit
of help in order to get this
environmental study back on the
fast track, if you will...

Ezekiel tosses a thick stack of one-hundred dollar bills onto
the table.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

... and you'll get a few more
stacks just like this one as soon
as I receive an environmental
impact study explaining that MGI's
proposed manufacturing plant will
eventually kill the last surviving
grove of manú trees in the Central
Valley... or whatever it is that
you just told me.

Geoffrey picks up the money.

GEOFFREY

Back to being a scientist...

(pocketing the cash)

Good day, Mr. Flurry. I assume
that you'll be in touch.

Geoffrey exits the research station through the opened double
doors.

EXT. RESEARCH STATION

Geoffrey is gathering up the directional microphone and his
other test equipment.

Ezekiel taps Geoffrey on the shoulder. Startled, Geoffrey
turns around. Ezekiel motions toward Larry who is sitting
under the shade tree and drinking from a brown bag.

EZEKIEL

(amusedly)

Who's the drunk under the tree?

GEOFFREY

Oh, that's Larry Daemon. He's kind of an embarrassment, but he helps out... so we give him a place to sleep...

(laughing)

... that is when he can find his way back here.

Geoffrey walks back into the research station with an armful of equipment.

Ezekiel searches through his dossier and pulls out a photograph.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Larry is holding a small cigar and gesticulating as if making a point to some unseen listener.

BACK TO SCENE

Ezekiel turns to look at Larry who is still sitting under the tree. Larry lights a small cigar.

INT. LOS ANGELES/COFFEE SHOP - DAY

LOLITA BARISTA, a pretty Latina high-school girl made up with massive amounts of eye-liner, is standing behind the counter and looking at Roger with the same timeless sparkling teenage gaze that probably inspired Vladimir Nabokov so many years ago.

LOLITA BARISTA

So that's a double espresso and...

(takes a deep breath)

... an extra-hot grandee percent double caramel mocha cap with cinnamon, French black winter chocolate truffle sprinkles and a tall dollop of diet organic hazelnut/pistachio whipped cream on the side. Right?

ROGER

Yeah... that's for her.

He motions behind his back toward China who is sitting at a table. China is chatting in an animated fashion with three young men who are sitting at nearby tables.

The would-be chatter-uppers include: WITCH (jet-dyed Goth pretty boy), FUTURIST (luckless SciFi Channel aficionado), and GURU (unwashed New Age slacker varietal).

Roger hands a twenty dollar bill to Lolita Barista.

ON CHINA AND HER ADMIRERS

China is flirting (M.O.S.) with the three young men. In b.g., Roger is looking toward China hoping that she'll see him, but she appears to be fully distracted with socializing. Behind Roger, impatient CAFFEINE JUNKIES fidget in the queue.

GURU

(to China)

I can sense that your Root Chakra needs to be realigned.

WITCH

(to China)

Don't listen to him. Your Earth Magick is strong... and your choice of caffeinated beverage... highly symbolic of nature's cycle of life and death.

FUTURIST

(to China)

You don't have to die! After the technological creation of greater-than-human intelligence, I will be The Coin of the New Realm!

Roger is now standing next to China's table holding their drinks. He hands the cappuccino concoction to China, sits down next to her, and then takes a slow deliberate sip of his double espresso before setting it on the table.

ROGER

(to Guru)

Have you ever been in a fist fight?

(to Witch)

Have you ever filed a tax return?

(to Futurist)

Have you ever shaved a pussy?

(to the young men)

If any of you can answer "yes,"...

(pointing at China)

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

... I will eat the condom in her purse.

Guru laughs nervously.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Is that a "yes"? If it is, ...

(to China)

... let's get on with serving me my lunch already. I need to close on that villa outside San José in about an hour.

CHINA

Villa?

WITCH

(to Futurist)

What a hard-on.

FUTURIST

(to Witch)

Should we call security?

ROGER

(to the young men)

This chit-chat must be building toward a crescendo of "yes's".

(to China)

China, let's get on with it. A ribbed model will do just fine... more roughage anyway.

CHINA

I don't have a condom in my purse.

ROGER

You're God-damn right you don't!

CHINA

(hugging Roger; to the young men)

See how much he loves me.

INT. COSTA RICA/TORTUGUERO VILLAGE BAR - NIGHT

Larry sits on a barstool. He looks like shit. No one is sitting on the barstools next to him. A bottle of whiskey sits on the bar in front of him. Behind the bar, TICO BARTENDER rearranges some drinking glasses.

POV TICO BARTENDER

Larry is pouring himself a big glass of whisky.

LARRY

(to himself; with British
accent)

The wolf bit the hand feeding him
poison, reclaimed by instinct from
dog domesticity. Now banished from
the house... running alone in the
cold of night.

In b.g., Ezekiel glides toward Larry (like a killer emerging
from a London fog). Larry glares at Tico Bartender and
drains the glass of booze.

Ezekiel is now standing next to Larry.

EZEKIEL

(to Larry)

What's happening, brother.

(extending his hand)

Man, am I glad to find someone from
back home...

(laughing)

... someone... anyone who can speak
English.

LARRY

Fuck off.

Ezekiel jerks Larry up from his barstool by the collar of his
shirt. Ezekiel is in Larry's face.

EZEKIEL

Don't disrespect me, motherfucker.

I'm not some idiot, homesick
tourist.

(beat)

I'm here to tell Larry Daemon,
salesman on hiatus, something that
will give him a reason to live.

Ezekiel slowly lowers Larry back onto his barstool. Ezekiel
then sits down next to Larry and pours some more whiskey into
Larry's empty glass.

ON TICO BARTENDER

discretely sliding a sawed-off shotgun back into its holster
beneath the bar.

BACK TO SCENE

Larry looks at Ezekiel with contempt.

LARRY
I'm listening...

EZEKIEL
This is a business proposition.
Have you heard of the Free Trade
Area of the Americas?

Larry nods as he takes a sip of his life blood.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)
It's similar to N.A.F.T.A. and
imposes various requirements on
U.S. companies that want to do
business here in Costa Rica or in
other Central and South American
countries. U.S. companies have to
purchase these things called
"Carbon Bonds"... which supposedly
will be used to pay the Costa
Ricans to manage their rain forests
like national parks instead of
cutting them down.

(beat)
The rationale behind this contrived
obligation is that a strong
ecotourism industry will help the
locals make more money in the long
run and, also, that these rain
forests will somehow vacuum up
enough of the earth's pollution to
compensate for additional polluting
that industrialized nations will be
authorized to continue doing in
return for having purchased the
Carbon Bonds. Are you with me so
far?

LARRY
Yeah... it's like going to church
on Super Bowl Sunday so you can
justify beating your wife when the
game's over.

EZEKIEL
A U.S. company cannot qualify to
purchase these bonds until an
environmental impact study on its
proposed business activities in
Costa Rica is done and the results
come back favorable.

(beat)
Here's where you come in.

(MORE)

EZEKIEL(CONT'D)

I can get you a job for which you are perfectly qualified. It pays well and your only responsibility is to review applications to purchase Carbon Bonds that have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce and, in particular, the environmental impact reports that accompany them.

LARRY

You want me to leave this paradise... to go rubberstamp paperwork? You said, "Department of Commerce"?

(laughing)

Jesus Christ... I'd be a government worker.

EZEKIEL

We are having a difficult time finding just the right qualified person... someone who doesn't have an agenda of his own.

(pause)

Perhaps ironically, you would actually have a lot of power... deciding who gets to rape this country first.

LARRY

Please go away.

Ezekiel reaches inside his coat and pulls out a newspaper which has been folded open to a particular article. He looks at the article.

EZEKIEL

(to himself)

Isn't this interesting news... an American is planning on building a factory just outside San Antonio de Belén.

(to Larry)

His application to purchase Carbon Bonds and its accompanying environmental impact report would have gone straight into your hands for review.

(pause)

It's really too bad that you're not interested in this... once-in-a-lifetime opportunity... to make a difference in the world.

(MORE)

EZEKIEL(CONT'D)

(laughing)

Oh... and look at this...

Ezekiel tosses the newspaper in front of Larry.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

The American is Roger Trapp.

Larry breathes in sharply. His pupils constrict. He reaches for the bottle of whiskey. Ezekiel grabs the neck of the bottle before Larry can lift it from the bar.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

Easy on that hooch. We have a lot to talk about.

INT. RESEARCH STATION - NIGHT

Larry, carrying a gym bag, walks through the main room of the research station.

At the end of the main room, he arrives at a doorway leading to another room. He flicks a switch on the wall. A dim overhead light bulb is lit, revealing a small office with several filing cabinets, a desk, a chair, and a notebook computer sitting open on top of the desk.

A screensaver generates images of green sea turtles swimming across the monitor.

Larry sits down on a chair in front of the notebook computer and uses the keyboard and a nearby mouse to establish an on-line connection. While various electronic handshakes requisitely proceed, Larry lights a small cigar.

ON NOTEBOOK COMPUTER SCREEN

Larry is composing an e-mail message. We SEE a screen image with various user input fields (To:, Subject:, etc.).

After "To:", Larry types: "rtrapp@mgi.com".

After "Subject:", he types: "It's The Larry Daemon Show... coming at you LIVE from Col. Kurtz's compound!".

In the message field, he types: "Roger, I'm having a great time in Costa Rica. You should take some time off and come down. I'll talk to you soon. Larry".

Larry moves the screen cursor over a "SEND" icon and clicks the mouse sending his message to Roger.

GYM BAG

Larry unzips the gym bag. He pushes aside a passport and other personal items and stuffs the notebook computer into the bag.

MAIN ROOM OF THE RESEARCH STATION

Larry walks over to the whiteboard which has some mathematical equations written on it. Larry picks up a marker and writes: "Adios, Geoffrey. Pura Vida! Tu amigo, Larry".

INT. LOS ANGELES/MANSION - DAY

China and Roger are standing in the kitchen. REALTOR stands nearby. The skin on her face is red and glistening with some sort of balm -- perhaps the aftermath of an overly ambitious chemical peel.

CHINA

(to Realtor)

Yes, these certainly are nice-looking space-age polymer surfaces...

She taps the countertop several times with her knuckles.

CHINA (CONT'D)

... and probably impervious to virtually any spilled substance!

CHINA (CONT'D)

(to Roger)

All the better for your future in-laws to kill chickens on and for easy clean up afterwards... right Roger, my hopelessly devoted fiancé?

Roger exhales and his eyes slowly roll upward.

ROGER

(to Realtor)

Compared to this Santeria thing, good-old Catholic guilt is starting to look like a legitimate option.

China ignores Roger's dissenting body language and curmudgeonly commentary. She smiles at Realtor, completely immersed in her own fantasy world.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

Roger holds China's hand as they exit the mansion from the front door and walk past a sign which reads "OPEN HOUSE".

ROGER
(smiling)
Okay... reset coordinates to original course already. Continue morning walk with beautiful, impetuous, troublemaking girlfriend.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/CONSERVATION AREA LICENSING OFFICE - DAY

LICENSING OFFICER motions to Ezekiel to come back behind the customer service counter. Ezekiel follows Licensing Officer.

IN BACK OFFICE

Licensing Officer and Ezekiel are seated on opposite sides of a desk. Licensing Officer finishes counting the last few notes in a thick stack of United States currency.

EZEKIEL
Repita, por favor.

LICENSING OFFICER
El segundo de julio. Cuidado.

EZEKIEL
Muy cuidado.
(standing up)
Buenos dias.

INT. WASHINGTON, D.C./HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

A mixture of business people and vacationers move about the lobby of a grand hotel which has been brilliantly restored to its original art deco opulence.

The lobby level of the hotel also includes discretely tucked away pockets of modernity, such as a small convenience store.

INSIDE CONVENIENCE STORE

Larry is standing at the counter about to purchase a tin of the small cigars that he fancies so. With a fresh haircut, a proper shave, and some stylish well-tailored clothes, Larry's appearance has undergone a dramatic transformation.

Monica hurriedly approaches the counter while talking on her mobile telephone.

MONICA

(exasperated)

Yes, I'm on my way to the
International Longhair Cat Show.

(pause)

Two letters for you, "L.A."... send
me there and give me some money!

Larry turns just in time to SEE her abrupt arrival and a beautiful jet-black mass of hair sweeping around Monica's neck and shoulders. She grabs a small plastic container of breath mints and throws two dollars onto the counter. Her eyes meet with Larry's for a friendly instant.

MONICA (CONT'D)

(to Larry)

Thank you so much.

Larry watches her as she quickly makes her exit.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY - INSIDE STALL

Larry is seated on the toilet reading a section of newspaper.

OUTSIDE STALL

GOON #1 and GOON #2, thick-necked gentlemen with gorilla-like silhouettes, enter the men's room. They both step up to urinals.

GOON #1

What's her name?

GOON #2

Monica Raven. She's a reporter
with The Washington Post.

GOON #1

With a name like that, she sounds
like a movie star. I hear she's a
real babe.

GOON #2

Yeah, we might need to conduct a
full-on cavity search before
sending her up.

They both laugh.

BACK TO LARRY

GOON #2

Can you imagine you and me and Anya
and this Monica chick? Man, we are
dogged... stuck having to meet with
Mr. Daemon while those two --

GOON #1

Yeah! Fuck that asshole Flurry.
He's doesn't pay us enough for this
blue-balls hazard duty!

EXT. LARRY'S CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK SEQUENCE)

Larry drives as Roger finishes pressing several buttons in
rapid succession on Larry's car telephone. Over the speaker
we hear:

MONICA

Hello, Mr. Trapp. This is Monica
Raven from...

Roger quickly hangs up.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Larry, standing at the counter, turns just in time to SEE
Monica's abrupt arrival and a beautiful jet-black mass of
hair sweeping around her neck and shoulders.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

Larry and Roger are seated at a table.

ROGER

About face, Larry.

Amazingly Attractive Brunette and her long luscious legs pass
by.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Now there's some uber baby
procreative material.

(beat)

I thought women like that only
existed at night.

Her hair rolls and breaks in waves, shimmering anew with each
of her steps (like in the Pantene® commercials).

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Larry snaps out of it and lunges forward off the toilet seat. Through the gap along the edge of the stall door, he SEES Goon #1 and Goon #2 leaving the men's room.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY/BAR

Larry discretely slips into the bar. Dark wood and expensive Italian marble are everywhere. An apparently random arrangement of yellowish, orb-shaped lamps lessens the corporate feel somewhat.

He SEES Monica seated at a table with Goon #1 and Goon #2 and quickly turns away toward the bar to order a drink.

ON LARRY

who is seated at the bar. He hunches over a glass of scotch (neat). On the surface of the liquid, Larry SEES the reflection of one of the orb-shaped lamps.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARCTIC SKY - NIGHT

Back lit by a full moon, a seemingly endless veil of cloud parades through the night sky.

ON WOLF

HOWLING at the moon.

BACK TO LARRY

Larry looks toward Goon #1 and Goon #2 and notices that Monica is no longer at their table. He quickly looks the other way toward the lobby and SEES Monica walking toward an elevator. He drains the rest of his drink and gets up to follow her.

ANGLE ON LARRY

as he quickens his pace. Too late. Monica steps into the elevator and its doors close behind her.

Larry frantically looks around. Above the elevator door, a pointer is rotating clockwise around a hemispherical dial spanning from "L" to "9".

LARRY

Nine fucking floors. Oh, Christ.

Larry bolts toward a door leading to a stairwell and begins running up the stairs.

INT. ELEVATOR

The elevator comes to a stop at the fifth floor. The door opens. Monica steps aside as MAID pushes a cart full of towels, toiletries, etc. into the elevator. Maid pushes a button for the sixth floor.

INT. NINTH FLOOR OF HOTEL/HALLWAY

Larry emerges from the stairwell coughing and gasping, but Monica is nowhere to be seen. He SEES the pointer (of the elevator floor indicator) moving counterclockwise. Larry starts back toward the stairwell, but then sniffs the air and abruptly turns to continue searching for Monica on the ninth floor.

DIFFERENT PART OF THE HALLWAY

Monica is about to knock on a door to one of the rooms.

Larry puts his hand on her shoulder. Without hesitation, Monica grabs Larry's arm and flips him over her shoulder and onto the ground.

Monica sets her bag down and steps into a self-defense pose.

LARRY

Why the hell did you have to do that?

He stands up slowly so as not to provoke her. Monica moves through a sequence of additional "martial arts" poses which at times suspiciously resemble the fluid hand and arm movements typically seen at a Hawaiian luau.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Are you nuts?!? Agreeing to an interview in a hotel room?

MONICA

Get the hell out of my way.

LARRY

(whispering)

Don't go in there -- they'll kill you!

Monica laughs.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 (still whispering)
 Listen! You're about to screw up a
 federal investigation.

Larry quickly shows her an identification card in his wallet.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 (taking a page out of
 Ezekiel's playbook)
 I know who you are, ace reporter,
 Monica Raven; and I genuinely want
 to help you get this story.
 (beat)
 But you have to trust me and work
 with me -- right now!

Monica is torn.

LARRY (CONT'D)
 The International Longhair Cat
 Convention? How many more of these
 feeble fucking human interest
 stories are you going to let them
 dump on you? Show some pride.
 Take control of your life and make
 a name for yourself by getting a
 real story.
 (beat)
 Your instincts are right on. There
 are crooked things going on with
 both MGI and The Brotherhood.
 (pause)
 Come on. Are you going to give up
 on your dream?
 (beat)
 I don't think so.

Larry motions for her to follow him. Monica follows Larry as
 he walks toward the stairwell.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Larry and Monica emerge from an alley adjacent the hotel.

MONICA
 Lincoln Memorial. Two o'clock.
 (beat)
 I'm trusting you, Larry.

She turns and walks away without looking back. Larry watches
 her for a moment and then walks back toward the main entrance
 of the hotel.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/GARAGE - DAY

Ezekiel and MOTORCYCLE THUGS #1-3 (unsavory, felonious-looking, malevolent, grease-monkey urban-barbarian types) stand around a table in the garage. Ezekiel looks over at a pack of gleaming high-performance motorcycles.

MOTORCYCLE THUG #3
Of course we can ride Braulio
Carrillo!

Motorcycle Thug #2 looks down at a photograph on the table.

MOTORCYCLE THUG #2
Americano won't be the first.

Motorcycle Thug #1 slams a thick knife through the photograph and looks up at Ezekiel.

MOTORCYCLE THUG #1
You just make sure you call us
before he gets to Alto Palma, Señor
Negro.

INT. LOS ANGELES/ROGER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

China is lying on the bed reading a copy of "Architectural Digest" magazine (or something similar). She turns a page and giggles to herself.

Roger is sitting at his desk and facing a computer monitor.

ON COMPUTER MONITOR

Roger has just finished typing the following e-mail message:
"Larry, I'm glad to hear that you've sorted things out. It will be fun to get together again, solve all of the world's problems, etc., etc. China and I will see you next week in San Jose. Regards, Roger."

BACK TO SCENE

Roger looks over his shoulder at China. Turning back to the monitor, he moves a screen cursor over a "SEND" icon and clicks the mouse.

EXT. - WASHINGTON D.C./LINCOLN MEMORIAL - DAY

Larry and Monica sit next to each other on the steps leading up to the great statue of Honest Abe.

LARRY

Do you remember when you fell in love for the first time?

MONICA

Yes, I do.

Monica smiles and reminisces.

LARRY

Years from now, when you're walking through the Capital City on a beautiful day like today, you'll look back and remember that today... you fall in love with me, the day that changed your life.

Monica pulls out a cigarette. Before she can find her lighter, Larry holds up his (newly-acquired) high-tech cigar lighter. She allows Larry to light her cigarette.

MONICA

I thought that guys like you had all gone the way of T.Rex and the three-martini lunch.

LARRY

Most of us live in isolation in a secret valley in the Rocky Mountains. I've been sprung for a good behavior conjugal visit.

Larry lights a small cigar for himself.

MONICA

I think you've got a bit of James Taggart in you, myself.

LARRY

Well I will concede that this working and producing thing is vastly overrated.

MONICA

(laughing and shaking her head)

I don't know why I'm doing this, but I've decided that you and I are going to blow off work and spend the day together!"

She takes his hand.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Come on, my car's over here. I'll drive.

CUT TO:

INT. MONICA'S CAR - DAY

Larry and Monica are vigorously having sex in the back seat of Monica's tiny car. Monica (Girl Racer On Top) is doing the best she can in this embarrassingly constricted operating environment.

Monica bumps her head.

MONICA

Ouch! Fuck!

Larry groans. Unabated, she continues her pelvic attack.

LARRY

I've figured out...

Larry takes a gulp of air.

LARRY (CONT'D)

... how to get you your story.

Monica collapses onto Larry's chest.

MONICA

Will you please just shut the fuck up.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

A long black limousine flashes by, northward bound on Sepulveda Boulevard, entering the four-lane tunnel just south of LAX (Los Angeles International Airport).

INSIDE THE LIMOUSINE

Roger and China sit next to each other.

Roger presses the "SCOTCH" button and an ounce of the liquid is dispensed into a fine crystal drinking glass. He looks down into the glass and presses the button again.

ROGER

(picking up the glass)

After we get settled in San José, I'll probably meet up with Larry and see what he's up to.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

He sent me a couple of e-mails recently... something about being attacked by giant turtles.

This gets her attention.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(laughing)

... it sounds like he's living out some sort of Indiana Jones environmentalist fantasy...

(beat)

... and by now, it could probably stand another round of funding.

CHINA

Be careful, Roger. The last time I saw him, he was having some serious problems.

(beat)

We don't want to catch his bad luck.

ROGER

Bad luck, haah!!! With all of the stupid shit he's tried to pull over the years, it's bad karma that's more likely starting to set up camp in his back yard.

(pause)

He once even tried to move in on a girl I was seeing behind my back... as if I wasn't going to find out.

CHINA

But you're still friends anyway, aren't you?

ROGER

I never confronted him about it.

China begins to carefully inspect her fingernails.

EXT. SAN JOSÉ/SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

Roger and Larry are seated at a table. Roger takes a sip from his cup of coffee.

ROGER

Man, I love the coffee in this country. Where you staying?

LARRY

I've got this bungalow I'm renting by the week. Dude, I had no idea you were setting up shop down here.

ROGER

Just because you've been AWOL for six months doesn't mean the world stops turning...

(pause)

... well, maybe it would if I had the power to create a world more to your liking.

LARRY

It's great that you've been kicking ass on this new plant. Bitch slap those union punks.

(pause)

But I haven't been completely wasting my time out here. Through the volunteer work, I've learned about the ACT's, land use permits... that sort of thing.

ROGER

Oh, really?

LARRY

(lighting a small cigar)

Yeah, and I don't even miss television anymore.

(beat)

But try as I might, it's probably impossible for me to escape from my working class lineage. Even hiding as I am from gainful employment, it would not surprise me at all if you too reared up and suddenly offered me a job...

(laughing)

... help me add a few more bullet points to my C.V.

ROGER

I am going to need some help. We'll talk about that back at my office.

Roger looks at his mobile telephone.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Shit, we're running late. Where's the nearest grocery store? I need to pick up a few things for China back at the hotel.

Larry pushes his chair back and stands up.

LARRY

Follow me, errand boy.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Roger and Larry enter a grocery store bustling with shoppers.

LARRY

It's just like home, except everything's smaller.

ROGER

Or maybe it's the largeness of Americans that's an inverse function of our distance from the equator.

LARRY

You seriously need a bong hit... or a lobotomy.

Roger grabs a shopping cart and begins pushing it through the store. Larry follows behind.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Roger sweeps his arm across a shelf, pushing at least a dozen one pound bags of coffee into the shopping cart.

B) Larry tosses a tube of toothpaste to Roger who catches it behind his back.

C) Roger speeds down the liquor aisle; Larry jogs alongside Roger, placing several bottles of booze into the shopping cart.

D) Roger peels a banana and takes a bite.

E) Holding a box of condoms between his teeth, Larry grabs as many bottles of fancy European mineral water as he can carry and runs after Roger and the cart.

INT. LARRY'S BUNGALOW - DAY - A WEEK LATER

Larry is lying on a bed and beginning to wake up. As he gets up out of bed, a woman's arm reaches out to touch him. Her fingers brush across his back.

Walking across the room, Larry lights a small cigar and sits down on a couch. He grabs a stack of documents sitting on a table in front of him and quickly looks through them. He sets one document aside and then places the remaining three documents across the table in a row.

Larry sets his cigar on an ashtray, and locates an ink stamp and pad. He stamps "Approved" on the face sheet of each of the three documents.

MONICA

Hard at work already...

ON MONICA

who is sitting up in the bed.

MONICA

I'm impressed.

(lighting a cigarette)

Mighty dedicated you are... being a government worker and all.

Monica grabs both pillows and puts them behind her back.

MONICA (CONT'D)

(dryly)

As much as I might like fucking you, Larry, I'm not getting any younger waiting for this story to fall into my lap.

Larry gathers up the stamped documents and puts them into a folder. He then picks up the document that he had set aside and turns to face Monica who is now looking at a magazine.

LARRY

(to document)

You have been sent to me from heaven.

Monica looks over at Larry who, in a very timely way, blows a kiss in her general direction.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Guys like me normally don't have this sort of luck.

He puts the document into a separate folder and returns to bed. Monica tosses her cigarette into a nearby glass of water; they fall into each others arms and begin kissing.

EXT./INT. ROGER'S SAN JOSÉ OFFICE - DAY

Larry and Monica step out of a taxicab. They make their way to the front door of Roger's office and go inside.

ON ROGER

ROGER

Hey, Larry!
 (shaking Larry's hand)
 About time you showed up.

LARRY

Roger...
 (motioning toward Monica)
 ... my grade school pal, she used
 to kick my ass every day. I give
 you... Nico, ...

Monica and Roger shake hands, neither in any hurry to end their contact.

FLASHCUT TO:

EXT. LUSH TROPICAL RAIN FOREST (ROGER'S FANTASY)

Roger is wearing a short brown leather jacket, a flapped holster, and a brimmed hat with a feather in the band.

He faces Monica who is sitting on the thick root of a strangler fig that has encircled its host tree in a deadly embrace. Slender white arms snake around Roger's neck. Off goes the hat, as blood-red lips draw him in. He tastes the forbidden fruit.

BACK TO SCENE

Roger cannot look away from Monica's sparkling blue eyes.

EXTREME CLOSE ON LARRY

He closes his eyes.

LARRY'S BUNGALOW

Monica and Larry are back in bed. A shirtless Larry lies on his back. Monica is kneeling upright on the bed, straddling one of Larry's thighs. A ceiling fan slowly circles overhead.

MONICA

Nico...

(pause)

... you just had to turn me into a blonde, didn't you?

Monica yawns and begins to slowly stretch her arms upward. Just before her arms are fully extended, she strikes with blinding speed digging her fingernails into Larry's chest.

INT./EXT. SAN JOSÉ/ROGER'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

A large map of Costa Rica is opened up across the top of Roger's desk. Roger and Monica huddle close together over the map; Roger is pointing to something on the map.

ROGER

The Tabacón Hot Springs are right here next to...

Larry walks into Roger's office with a concerned look on his face.

LARRY

Roger! I just got off the phone with the Conservation Area Licensing Office. The deadline for foreign corporations to submit applications for Central Valley business licenses has been moved up to July second.

MONICA

That's today.

LARRY

And you won't believe this... yesterday, there was a fire that wrecked their entire computer system. The guy told me that their office is completely shut down for the next few days.

ROGER

We'll see about that. These Third World countries. One God-damn scam after another.

Roger grabs a floppy brimmed hat and a leather satchel from the top of a filing cabinet.

ROGER (CONT'D)

I'm going over there to straighten this shit out.

LARRY

Hey, Nico... why don't you go with Roger and you guys can grab some sandwiches on the way back. I'll stay here and cover the phones.

Monica and Roger quickly walk toward the front door.

MONICA

I know a little Spanish if things get weird.

ROGER

Good.

China appears outside the glass front door. Like a waiter balancing a tray of drinks, she holds up a cake box with one hand while pulling open the door with the other. LITTLE BOY is tagging along behind her.

CHINA

Surprise! I bought cake for you and Larry.

China notices Monica.

ROGER

China, meet Nico. She's Larry's friend from "back East".

MONICA

(shaking China's hand)
China? What a cool name!

China acknowledges Monica's comment with a cordial smile. Roger takes the cake box from China and sets it on a nearby desk. In b.g., Little Boy is spinning around in circles on one of the office chairs.

ROGER

(to China)
Something really important's come up and I need you to come with us.

China gives him a look. Monica heads toward the door.

Roger follows Monica. Little Boy follows Roger like his shadow.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 (bellowing as he walks)
 Larry, China brought cake. It's on
 the desk.

ON DOORWAY

Roger and Monica stand there waiting for China (O.S.).

ROGER
 (to China)
 What... are you doing?

EXT. CONSERVATION AREA LICENSING OFFICE - DAY

A small, four-wheel drive Jeep is parked in a haphazard way in front of a building. China sits in the passenger's seat holding a piece of cake on a paper plate. With deliberate ladylike precision, she slides a plastic fork through creamy chocolate frosting and then into the cake.

Roger and Monica burst out of the front door of the building.

MONICA
 He said that the change in the
 deadline came without warning from
 the Minister of...

ROGER
 It doesn't matter.

Roger and Monica get into the Jeep. Roger fires it up. He puts on the floppy brimmed hat.

ROGER (CONT'D)
 (to China)
 We have an hour to get to the
 licensing office in Guápiles before
 it closes.
 (beat)
 And, of course, they can only
 accept original signatures.

China carefully finishes wiping her fingers with a napkin. Roger takes off down the road.

BACK AT ROGER'S SAN JOSÉ OFFICE

Larry is sitting behind a desk and leafing randomly through the pages of a pornographic magazine. Without looking away from the magazine, he slides open a desk drawer and pulls out a small bottle of booze.

Little Boy runs into the office. Surprised, Larry quickly finishes spiking his coffee and stashes the magazine.

LITTLE BOY
(excitedly)
Teléfono, por favor?

Larry studies the lad for a moment while taking a sip of his enhanced coffee.

LARRY
No problema, compadre.
(reassuringly)
Si, claro.

Little Boy runs toward an adjacent office.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Keep it local, hombre.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The Jeep carrying Roger, China and Monica approaches a formidable looking mountain range. A light rain has started to fall.

A road-side bar can be seen a short distance ahead. As they pass the bar, Roger SEES Motorcycle Thugs #1-3, in full riding leathers, loitering outside by their black, exotic-looking motorcycles (e.g., Ducati Monsters) -- eye-catching machines, even to a non-enthusiast. Motorcycle Thugs #1-3 intently watch the Jeep as it passes by.

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

It is raining harder now. Roger navigates the Jeep through increasingly treacherous switchbacks.

The SOUND of high-performance motorcycles can now be heard. Roger steps on the accelerator.

He rounds a sharp corner and SEES, a short distance in front of his vehicle, SHEPHERD, SHEPHERD'S DAUGHTER and SHEPHERD'S SON moving a herd of sheep off the main road. Roger slams on the breaks bringing the Jeep to a stop just a few meters away from the animals. Shepherd, Shepherd's Daughter and Shepherd's Son smile and wave. Roger smiles and waves back.

Roger hops out and walks over to the edge of the road. He looks down at the switchbacks and SEES Motorcycle Thugs #1-3 rapidly gaining ground.

Roger returns to the driver's side of the Jeep and climbs back in.

ROGER
(calmly)
Ladies, those guys on the black superbikes are chasing us.

He reaches toward the backseat, grabs a rain poncho and hat, and hands them to China.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Put this on so you stay dry and follow that shepherd and his kids up the side road. I'll be back to get you soon.

CHINA
No! I don't want you doing anything crazy by yourself!

ROGER
They've seen this Jeep. There's no other way!

Roger gets out of the Jeep and walks around to the back of the vehicle.

Monica gets out of the Jeep and grabs China's hand, almost pulling her out of the vehicle.

MONICA
China, he's right. We have to do this.

Roger opens up a large tool box and quickly pulls something (O.S.) out of the toolbox.

China is now wearing the poncho. Checking her look in the side mirror of the Jeep, she fusses for a few seconds positioning the matching rain hat just right, and then scurries after the flock of sheep as it disappears down the narrow side road.

BACK AT THE JEEP

Roger is standing next to Monica. He holds out a poncho for her to take.

ROGER
Here's one for you, Nico. I want you to go with --

MONICA

-- cut the chauvinist crap. You're only making the odds worse.

(beat)

Do we have any weapons?

ROGER

(grinning)

Nothing conventional.

(heading back toward the driver's side door)

Get in.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD/FURTHER ALONG

Motorcycle Thugs #1-3 tear around a corner blasting mud in their wake. They SEE the Jeep parked about 100 meters ahead on the side of the road. A person wearing the floppy brimmed hat is leaning out the driver's side window and waving to them.

Motorcycle Thug #1 pulls a gun and fires SEVERAL SHOTS at the Jeep.

ON JEEP

A bullet flies past Monica's head and through the front windshield.

MONICA

Fuck!

She steps on the accelerator. In b.g, Motorcycle Thugs #1-3 are closing in on the Jeep as it struggles to gain speed.

Monica is approaching a corner in the road. A failure to properly negotiate this particular corner would most assuredly result in human flight... for a few seconds anyway.

Monica rounds the corner. Motorcycle Thugs #1-3 are gaining on her.

CUT TO:

ROGER ON THE ROADSIDE

Motorcycle Thug #1 roars by. Roger pulls on a length of rope with all of his might, raising it across the road. The other end of the rope is tied around a sign post on the opposite side of the road. A split second later, Motorcycle Thugs #2 and #3 are clothes-lined by the rope and their motorcycles slide out from beneath them skidding down the road.

AROUND THE CORNER

Leaning hard to the left as he takes the corner, Motorcycle Thug #1 suddenly SEES the Jeep parked sideways across the middle of the road. He swerves to the right and miraculously avoids hitting the Jeep, but the corner is too sharp. From behind the Jeep, Monica watches Motorcycle Thug #1 (still clinging to his motorcycle) fly off the road and disappear over the edge of a cliff.

Monica smells something. She looks down and SEES a puddle of gasoline spreading outward from beneath the Jeep. Raindrops continue to patter down causing bands of prismatic color in the expanding puddle to dance wildly.

EXT. WOODEN SHACK - DAY

China playfully models a furry sheepskin coat while walking along a "catwalk" made from old crates turned upside down. Shepherd's Daughter and Shepherd's Son jump up and down, laughing and clapping their hands. LATIN MUSIC blares from a cheap portable sound system.

BACK TO MONICA

who jams a large, wedge-shaped rock against one of the front tires of the Jeep. She climbs into the vehicle, throws the transmission into neutral, and releases the emergency brake. She jumps out and runs around to the front of the Jeep.

Somehow, perhaps through sheer force of will, Monica pushes the Jeep to the left side of the road and away from the edge of the cliff.

BACK TO ROGER

At the side of the road, Motorcycle Thugs #2 and #3 are tied up. Roger is pulling their motorcycles to the roadside.

Running up to Roger, Monica arrives with the satchel slung over her shoulder.

MONICA

(breathlessly)

The Jeep's fucked. One of those bullets ripped a huge hole in the gas tank. It all drained out after I stopped.

ROGER

We need to go back and get China before she freaks out.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

(checking his watch)
There's not enough time anyway.

MONICA

Fuck quitting now!
(beat)
Roger, ... there's two of us.

Monica pulls a helmet off of Motorcycle Thug #2 and puts it on. She opens up the visor and looks at Roger with fearless eyes. Monica rights one of the bikes, jumps on, and fires it up.

Roger watches Monica roar off at speed down the muddy road, disappearing around the fatal corner.

Roger closes his eyes for a few moments. Raindrops continue to hit his face. He reaches into his pocket and takes out his mobile telephone. He dials a number.

ROGER

Larry, I need you to get a vehicle
and come pick us up.
(long pause)
Everything's cool... don't worry.
We're on the road to Guápiles,
Highway 32, about ten miles past
the Alto Palma turn off.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C./EZEKIEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Ezekiel sits in the high back leather chair. Across the desk from him sits ANYA (no lawyer should be this attractive, mid-20's, very blonde). It is unlikely that Ezekiel at anytime in his legal career has seen a greater miscarriage of justice than the concealment of Anya's obvious physical perfection behind her conservative business attire. But, then again, this is business.

EZEKIEL

(soliloquizing)
The law... is a vessel through
which all of life's true
transactions... must inevitably
pass. Speaking less allegorically,
MGI is about to be slapped with the
prospect of fighting civil suits on
multiple fronts and, gods willing,
defending against one or more
federal criminal indictments.

Ezekiel springs up from his chair and begins to move (slowly and deliberately) about the office.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

I'm envisioning an agent orange-like carpet bombing of MGI... discovery requests... interrogatories... subpoenas. Panic ensues! Officers and staff alike are pulled away from their ores on the slave ship...

(sotto)

... to deal with said shit storm.

(long pause)

Even a mouth-breathing Neanderthal like Trapp is capable of appreciating... that a highly-adversarial and ulcer-inducing existence would indeed present a formidable obstacle to doing business as usual.

Ezekiel returns to his chair.

EZEKIEL (CONT'D)

I do not believe that he has the stomach for it.

(leaning across the desk toward Anya)

And how are we to effect this beautiful surgery?

(beat)

Enlighten me.

ANYA

MGI has breached its express or implied obligation, under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, to bargain in good faith to renew the collective bargaining agreement. Additionally, or alternatively, we assert that an implied-in-fact obligation effecting a modification of the agreement arose under the circumstances.

LOUD NECK-CRACKING SOUND as Anya slowly bends her head to the right, almost touching her right ear to her shoulder. With a similarly slow and oddly mechanical motion, she returns her head to its upright position.

ANYA (CONT'D)

When I was interviewing a group of MGI employees, they uniformly had nothing but praise for how well their employer, and Mr. Trapp in particular, has always treated them. At first this troubled me, but then I remembered the bromidic expression, "No good deed goes unpunished."

(beat)

Count number one: Breach of implied-in-fact agreement. Mr. Trapp's exemplary treatment of his employees raised the quality of the work conditions far in excess of the literal terms of the collective agreement and, therefore, a modified agreement, as well as a commitment to in good faith negotiate renewal terms for this agreement, had arisen under the circumstances. The paper trail is probably good enough to assert that the statutorily required grievance procedures were exhausted.

EZEKIEL

That doesn't matter. We're in Federal Court no matter what. Go on.

ANYA

Yes, Mr. Flurry, you're right. The falsified environmental impact report and MGI's thus necessarily fraudulent procurement of Carbon Bonds clearly establish violation of both Costa Rican environmental laws as well as U.S. Federal Law.

(beat)

If Costa Rica declines to enforce its environmental laws, we eventually initiate a submission in Montréal, to the Secretariat of the newly-expanded Commission for Environmental Cooperation, asserting that Costa Rica, as a party to the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, is failing to effectively enforce its environmental laws.

EZEKIEL

And eventually, there will be significant international repercussions and embarrassment for the United States... which will have to be dealt with by MGI when the affected parties start looking for a scapegoat.

(pause)

Anya, you are far too good to be my right-hand man... I need to put you to my left.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is jumping with activity. Well-heeled San José socialites mingle in the dining room, visiting friends and acquaintances at adjacent tables -- a very clubby atmosphere. Waiters and other servers attempt to strike an almost impossible balance between providing five-star service and minimally interrupting the pleasure of their guests.

A band plays jazz-infused, but very danceable, INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, drawing several young couples onto the dance floor.

Roger, Monica, Larry and China (in this clockwise order) are seated around a table. They are all dressed in formal evening attire. WAITER is fastidiously clearing away some plates from their table.

Smiling, Monica turns to look at Roger.

ROGER

(to the group)

... she totally stepped up to the plate. Talk about your courage under fire! And then she pulls off the minor miracle of getting over the pass to Guápiles... just in time to get our local business license.

(beat)

We need to get the Pope out here to perform a little canonization duty.

Larry laughs. Roger laughs and looks at China. She smiles back at him.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Then other administrative hoops still have to be dealt with back home.

(to Monica)

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

If you read the papers, you probably know that the governments in this hemisphere have recently decided to give the already industrialized nations an excuse to continue polluting... so long as we're willing to pay countries like Costa Rica for the carbon sequestration "services" that their rainforests are supposedly providing to the world.

(to the group)

One of these days, some genius is going to explain to the legions of cowering politically correct idiots that it's the oceans, not the stinking rainforests, that generate most of the oxygen on this planet.

CHINA

Roger! This isn't just about administrative hurdles and politics... and... and scientists being dumb.

(beat)

They tried to kill us! How can --

LARRY

Holy fuck!

Larry smacks himself on the forehead as if he just remembered something.

LARRY (CONT'D)

About half an hour after you all took off... some character called the office. Didn't say who he was. Just sang a few verses of "Happy Trails" and then hung up.

(beat)

He sounded black, but not Barry White.

China laughs.

MONICA

(to Larry)

You, are too fucking weird.

Monica grabs Roger by the arm.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Come dance with me.

They head off to the dance floor.

Larry and China remain seated. China scoots her chair closer to Larry.

CHINA

It's been so long since we've done something like this.

She reaches out and gently grabs one of Larry's biceps.

CHINA (CONT'D)

So how have you been?

LARRY

Apart from depression, loneliness, insanity and alcoholism, I'm really doing quite well.

CHINA

Oh, Larry... that sounds like the Four Food Groups of Doom.

LARRY

Well, with Roger having given me a job, ...
 (smiling)
 ... things are getting better all the time.

ON MONICA AND ROGER

MONICA

... "Saint Nico". Oh Roger... stop, you devil. You're making my knees tingle.

She pulls her body against his.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Wait, I was wrong...
 (beat)
 ... my knees are lower.

BACK TO THE TABLE

Larry is leaning toward China, emulating the highly-dramatic, smoldering movie idol gaze once fashionable several decades ago. Larry appears richer (in a Technicolor® way) and more surreal than usual.

CHINA

You should teach Roger how to do that. Sometime's he's no fun.

POV INSIDE GLASS OF SCOTCH (THROUGH THE LIQUID)

Larry's hand reaches toward the camera growing gigantic as it wraps around us. As he picks up the glass, everything is jostling about. We are suddenly turned upside down, and the brown liquid surrounding us rapidly falls downward O.S. We are flipped upright again and SLAMMED back down onto the table.

BACK TO SCENE

Larry leans toward China.

LARRY

Let's have lunch tomorrow... twelve-thirty...

(beat)

... just tell Roger that you need to go shopping tomorrow. You know... to get ready for your upcoming weekend at The Villa.

PHOTOGRAPHER approaches the table. He smiles, raising his camera, signaling an offer to photograph China and Larry. They each throw an arm over the other's shoulder and turn toward Photographer. With the opening of his camera shutter and a flash of light, Photographer captures this image.

BACK TO THE DANCE FLOOR

Larry and China make their debut and gradually dance their way across the floor to Roger and Monica.

Upon arrival, Larry spins China around and turns away from her to face Roger and Monica. He cuts in, whisking Monica away from Roger. China finishes twirling about and glides into Roger's arms without missing a beat.

Larry and Monica dance close to each other. His mouth is within whispering distance of her ear.

LARRY

Convince Roger to meet you for lunch... tomorrow at twelve.

(long pause)

Do you remember in D.C. when the Brotherhood was setting you up at the hotel?

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

(beat)

I made the whole thing up.

BACK TO THE TABLE

Larry and Monica are seated next to each other.

LARRY

If we were destined to have more time together, perhaps I would get to see that inartfully and desperately cobbled together belief system of yours collapse into something higher and finer.

(picking up his drink)

Trust your senses. Ask the second question. And then pose it again to yourself.

MONICA

It's one thing to be so self-absorbed, Larry, ...

(beat)

... but having enough charm to actually pull it off is another.

LATER

China and Roger are walking back toward the table. Monica storms past them without saying a word.

LARRY

(shouting after Monica)

... and I remain... standing proud... erect... inviolate!

Roger and China arrive at the table. Roger gently slaps Larry on the shoulder.

CHINA

Oh my, ...

(clinging to Roger)

... lucky Violet.

LATER STILL

Roger, China and Monica are all laughing. Larry is holding court.

LARRY

Next... when we get back to The States, we form a garage band -- Nico on the skins, China up front, Roger on base, and I'll take lead base and groupie recon.

(to himself)

What... should the name of the band be?

MONICA

How about... "Larry, You're Sleeping on the Couch Tonight".

LARRY

I think I'd go with... "Not One of Your Jackie-O Moments".

ROGER

Let's stick with the basics... something like "Nine-Dimensional Sphincter" or "Beaver Tooth".

LARRY

Or "Breaking Off Mother Wood in the Oedipal Forest".

CHINA

(ebulliently)

"China and the Smart Pills"!

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Monica is looking out the window. Larry takes a sip from a small shiny metal flask.

LARRY

The noose draws tighter around his neck... the audience... at the edge of their seats wondering how the sorry excuse for a hero is going to save the day.

Monica looks uncomfortable.

MONICA

Why do you hate him so much?

LARRY

Monica... sometimes I don't think you know me at all.

MONICA

I don't want to know you.

She settles in for the ride home.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/BAR - DAY

Larry stands up from his bar stool to greet Geoffrey. After shaking hands, they both sit down. Geoffrey discretely places a thick envelope next to Larry's beer.

EXT. SAN JOSÉ/SIDEWALK CAFÉ - DAY

China approaches the sidewalk café and SEES Roger and Monica seated at a table eating lunch together.

China stops dead in her tracks. She turns around to face the direction that she had come from.

Without turning back, she walks away.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/ROGER'S OFFICE - MORNING (NEXT DAY)

China stands in front of the desk that Larry is seated behind. Little Boy is attempting to use Larry as a punching bag. Larry holds Little Boy back with his right hand and grinds a nearly spent cigar into an ashtray with his left hand. A horn sounds, HONK, HONK, HONK.

CHINA

Roger's in a hurry to get to "The Villa".

(to Little Boy)

Stop that! Go tell Roger that I'll be out in a minute.

Little Boy makes a face at her and runs outside.

China pulls up a chair next to Larry and sits down.

CHINA (CONT'D)

Story time.

(beat)

A promising young chieftain was out in the bush playing a game with his loyal dog. For hour after hour, the two would play a game where the young chieftain would throw a magic stick for the loyal dog to find and bring back.

(MORE)

CHINA (CONT'D)

The young chieftain wanted to test the determination of the loyal dog, so he threw the magic stick further and further each time and to places that were increasing difficult for the loyal dog to get to. One time, the loyal dog returned with a beautiful young maiden instead of the magic stick. The dog wagged his tail happily as if he had properly served his master. But the young chieftain told the loyal dog that he had failed his master and to go back into the jungle and learn to live again with wild dogs. The loyal dog begged the young chieftain to throw the stick one more time and that this time he would surely succeed in properly serving his master. So the young chieftain picked up the beautiful young maiden and threw her deep into the jungle, far further than the loyal dog had ever gone before. The loyal dog ran into this deepest part of the jungle and finally emerged many days later with the magic stick. In the young chieftain's hands, the magic stick turned into the most beautiful woman that the young chieftain had ever seen. That very night, when the young chieftain and this most beautiful woman were lying in his tent, she turned into a deadly viper. But the young chieftain was ready and he crushed her head with a rock. Now that they could no longer play the game, the loyal dog ran back into the jungle and never returned.

LARRY

(lighting another small
cigar)

That's the best one I've heard yet.
I always did like your...
grandmother's stories.

The horn sounds again, HONK, HONK, HONK, HONK, HONK.

Smiling at Larry, China gets up and walks across the room and out the door.

Larry picks up the telephone receiver and dials a number.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Monica, it's okay for you to come in now. They're gone and I have the evidence in hand.

EXT. ROGER'S VILLA/PATIO - DAY

The patio area behind Roger's villa ("The Villa") overlooks a lush valley. Roger and China are seated across from each other at a small table. SOUNDS OF BIRDS. Roger puts some sugar into his coffee and stirs it with a small silver spoon.

ROGER

Almost everyone outlives their usefulness eventually. As you continue along your path in life -- because it's unique -- those around you diverge. And they need to be replaced... with others who are more closely tracking your trajectory at that particular point in time.

CHINA

You sound like you're talking about some stupid rocket launch.

(beat)

The people in your life are human beings, not condoms to be used and thrown out by some expiration date that the condom doesn't know.

ROGER

Look at Larry,... for example. He freaks out and shit-cans his entire career for no apparent reason. What good is someone who's become that unstable? He can't seriously be trusted with anything important.

China stands up and takes a few steps around the table toward Roger.

CHINA

You sit there behind your titles and your pile of money, and you laugh at the poor damaged people who are mesmerized by you... so expert at giving them little doses of whatever they need...

(MORE)

CHINA(CONT'D)

at least until a more desirable
junkie comes along.

(beat)

Yes, everything was perfectly above-
board... all those carefully chosen
words.

ROGER

I never promised you anything.

CHINA

When you allow yourself to benefit
from a situation, it's the same
thing as a promise. All of the
blessings you've collected before
throwing people out of your
spaceship will add up to nothing
but a curse.

ROGER

Thank you for the legal and
spiritual advice.

(long pause; slowly)

Have you taken a look at your own
life lately? You're more than
familiar with the transitory nature
of friendship.

China turns and gracefully walks away with her head held
high.

CLOSE ON CHINA

Tears are rolling down her face; her eyes float into space,
not searching for anything in particular... just something to
remind her that life isn't completely pointless.

INT. SAN JOSÉ/ROGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Monica stands in front of the desk that Larry is seated
behind.

LARRY

Here's your scoop, Monica:
"Destruction of rain forest
prevented by Trapp of MGI." Or try
this: "Trapp scraps plans for new
factory; saves last surviving grove
of manú trees in Costa Rica's
Central Valley; MGI employees in
Los Angeles get reprieve."

Monica looks confused.

LARRY (CONT'D)

This is the story that I want you to write. If you refuse to write it, I will be forced to do my job -- as a good government worker -- and process MGI's application to purchase Carbon Bonds.

(holding up paperwork)

This application was submitted with an environmental impact study which says... that the waste products from MGI's proposed manufacturing facility are completely harmless to nearby rain forests.

Larry puts down the paperwork and picks up a different document.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Interestingly, the conclusions in this earlier environmental impact study prepared by Dr. Geoffrey Maitland are in direct contradiction.

(beat)

You see, Roger didn't like how the first doctor's opinion was shaping up... so he fired Maitland, hired some other scientists to provide a second opinion, and then held his breath hoping that Maitland's report would just go away along with the good doctor.

(beat)

But they didn't.

Larry gathers up all of the paperwork and stuffs it into his shirt.

LARRY (CONT'D)

If you choose not to run the story that I'm suggesting, the application gets supplemented and processed with Maitland's report... and, as a result, it will be denied. This means no manufacturing facility in Costa Rica as well as lots of ugly and scary legal problems for MGI... and for Roger, personally.

(beat)

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

You have until the day after tomorrow to get a story about Roger's eco-heroism onto the front page of The Washington Post.

(beat)

You might be the new girl of my dreams... and please don't ask about the other one... but this deadline is nonnegotiable.

(beat)

And perhaps most importantly, you'll also need to make Roger understand what he needs to do on his end.

MONICA

What if I say, "Fuck you, Larry," and take a pass on being your marionette?

(beat)

I don't need to write your story. I'll report that Dr. Maitland's study was buried. You can't stop me, ... you silly drunk.

LARRY

Brilliant. Then you get sued for libel because Dr. Maitland's report was...

Larry slaps his chest where the paperwork is hidden.

LARRY (CONT'D)

... part of the application. And Roger still gets screwed because this shuts his factory down before operations even begin.

(beat)

Oh... you're disappointing me. I though you liked Roger.

MONICA

Okay... what if I report that Dr. Maitland's study was part of the application?

Larry jumps up out of his chair and walks around the desk to face her.

LARRY

You have no fucking idea what MGI submitted! This ought to be a big problem for you, ... you still are a journalist aren't you?

Monica glares back at Larry in response.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Given enough time, you'd probably outthink me, but you don't have that luxury and you're dealing with a moving target.

(pause)

Go ahead. Dr. Maitland will deny the existence of his report, the only existing copy -- which I'm holding onto -- will disappear, and you will single-handedly destroy Roger's reputation and prevent MGI from getting permission to purchase the bonds that it needs as a prerequisite to starting up its business operations in Costa Rica... that is until the conclusions in the second scientific study are ultimately verified, which they will be, with you once again saying "hello" to libel suit and "good-bye" to career. Scientific mistakes? Roger doesn't make those kinds of mistakes.

Monica has a cigarette in her mouth and is now rummaging through her purse.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Allow me... one last time.

Monica allows Larry to light her cigarette.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(gently)

You should choose the lesser evil of helping Roger to clean up his mess. This way you get the exclusive...

(pause)

The story's chock full of juicy issues... international, environmental, labor... much better than the recklessly speculative and potentially career debilitating alternative of defaming Mr. Trapp and his organization. Please don't make me give this story to someone else.

Larry walks back around behind the desk and pulls a bottle of booze and a drinking glass out of a desk drawer.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Actually, Roger's only misstep was attempting to short-cut the procedure for properly challenging the findings in Maitland's report... among the pantheon of possible deceptions, a white lie at best.

(pouring himself a drink)
Should a man who never intended to do wrong go to the gallows? It's up to you, Monica. If nothing else, think of yourself. You're not going to walk away without a story.

(beat)

And "yes", Monica darling... I am a silly drunk.

EXT. TORTUGUERO VILLAGE BAR - NIGHT

Larry walks into the bar.

INSIDE THE BAR

Larry sits at a table in a quiet corner. A glass of brown liquid is keeping him company. He appears calm... at peace with himself and the world around him.

Prostitute walks into the bar. Their eyes meet. She stops. Both frozen, they hold each others gaze (like in a Spaghetti Western) for several very long seconds.

She turns and walks across a centrally situated dance floor toward the bar.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Prostitute returns from the bar. She slams a bottle of booze onto Larry's table.

PROSTITUTE

Tonight, you will have three allies.

LARRY

All I see is you... and that friendly fellow who's standing on the table.

PROSTITUTE

No, stop thinking and pay attention.

(pause)

How does that song go?

(singing)

"You and me and the bottle makes three tonight."

ON LARRY

A little grin escapes.

LATER

FLAMENCO MUSIC plays. Larry dances slowly and skillfully with Prostitute. They have the dance floor to themselves.

OTHER BAR PATRONS look on.

Stunned.

Disgusted.

Envious.

Delighted.

Awe-struck.

Various combinations of the above.

INT. ROGER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Roger and Monica are cozy in bed together enjoying a late news nightcap. NEWSCASTER appears on Roger's impressive big-screen television.

NEWSCASTER

Roger Trapp, the President and CEO of Maintenance Gaming, Incorporated of Los Angeles, is being hailed today as an environmental hero for his decision not to go forward with plans to open an integrated circuit manufacturing facility that would have been in a dangerously close proximity to the last surviving grove of manú trees in --

Roger presses the "MUTE" button on his remote control.

ROGER

Environmental hero... what a hoot!
That streamflow theory is pure
bullshit; streamflow only strips
nutrients from trees... it doesn't
provide nutrients, or PCBs, or
anything else.

(beat)

Half an hour of surfing the
Internet... that's all the
education you need to understand
that rain forest nutrients come
primarily from rain...

(qualifying his statement)

... and, in the case of hillside
forests, from crumbling rocks.

MONICA

(grabbing the remote
control from Roger)

I wanna hear this!

She presses the "MUTE" button again. Roger and Monica resume
watching the news.

NEWSCASTER

... negotiations between MGI and
the American Brotherhood of
Electronics Assemblers union are
still at an early stage according
to the union's Chief Corporate
Counsel, Ezekiel Flurry, who --
seemingly out of nowhere -- has
emerged as one of the most
influential American union
activists in decades.

Ezekiel appears on the television screen.

EZEKIEL

This union is at the table in good
faith, offering Mr. Trapp our
commitment to an unprecedented
level of productivity.

INT. CHINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

China is sitting on her bed, cross-legged, with her hands in
her lap watching the same news show. Ezekiel appears on her
much smaller and less impressive television.

EZEKIEL

MGI already has a dedicated and highly skilled work force here in Los Angeles --good working people who clearly can deliver our end of the bargain. In sharp contrast with our prior negotiating efforts, we have now succeeded in providing MGI with ample evidence of the direct linkage between keeping these jobs here in Southern California and maximizing MGI's productivity and profitability. We are confident... and trust that Mr. Trapp will carefully consider everything that we have brought to the table.

BACK TO ROGER'S BEDROOM

Roger and Monica continue to watch Ezekiel on the television.

EZEKIEL

The Free Trade Area of the Americas is not the downfall of the American worker... properly implemented, it will be the foundation of his and her empowerment throughout the entire Western Hemisphere.

Roger turns off the television.

ROGER

American unions can't succeed at organizing workers in other countries. If they narrow the wage differential, they screw over the same working slob who are paying the dues. It's an inherent conflict of interest. And if we have to pay these foreign workers more, what's the point of manufacturing outside the U.S. anyway?

MONICA

(staring at the ceiling)
Do you stay in touch with China?

ROGER

(clearing his throat)
A clean break is best. We were starting to grow apart anyway.

Monica looks vaguely dissatisfied with his response, but mostly contemplative. She gets out of bed and heads toward the bathroom.

ROGER (CONT'D)
While you're up, Nico, can you get me a glass of water please?

BACK TO CHINA'S BEDROOM

CLICK. The hammer drops to an empty chamber. She briefly savors the moment and then turns off the television with the remote control in her other hand.

She lowers the gun from her temple and looks at its stock which is monogrammed with the initials "R.T." She cradles the gun in her hands like a baby.

CHINA
(to gun)
Poor little assassin... left behind to finish the job all by yourself.

China shakes her head as if she didn't do what she just did. She carefully places the gun on the nightstand.

CHINA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
It was all just a dream.

China reaches over to the lamp on her nightstand and turns off the light.

EXT. TORTUGUERO/PARK - MORNING

Larry sits on the ground, his back leaning against the side of a park bench. LAZY DOG sleeps on Larry's leg.

Larry is looking at a photograph of him and China.

LARRY
And I woke up today... free from the burden of hoping and believing... that anything I had to offer... could be traded for something that would fill the hole inside me.
(beat)
For the hole is a part of me... without which I would not be complete.

Larry puts the photograph into his shirt pocket, looks down and SEES Lazy Dog.

In b.g., a soccer ball rolls by, followed by the running feet and accompanying yells of pursuing children.

Lazy Dog opens one eye.

LARRY (CONT'D)
My dear old friends are all gone
now.

(beat)
But my love for them and those
moments in time remain.

Lazy Dog bares its teeth and GROWLS.

FADE OUT.

THE END

ROLL CREDITS.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY - AERIAL SHOT (SLOW MOTION)

Motorcycle Thug #1 and his machine sail off the edge of the cliff. As they continue to fall, they grow smaller and smaller. Port of call: the steaming jungle below.

END CREDITS.