

SHORTCUT

FADE IN:

EXT. PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA - DAY

A desert valley oasis nestled inside mile high mountains.
Avenues lined with palm trees and named after movie celebs.

SUPER: PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA - 1993

EXT. THE SPA HOTEL AND CASINO - DAY

Luxury cars stop long enough outside the revolving doors for
their owners to toss the keys to an eager parking attendant.

INT. THE SPA HOTEL AND CASINO - DAY

A high-end gambling hall, teeming with action. Patrons play
at a variety of machines and table games.

Occasionally, a shout rings out.

CASINO, RUG LEVEL

Cole Haans, Nikes and Jimmy Choos glide over the plush
carpet, heading for the tables.

We follow one pair of high heels as they sweep by a Keds
tennis shoe parked under a blackjack table.

CLOSE ON THE TENNIS SHOE

The view pauses, then PENETRATES the shoe.

INSIDE THE SHOE

The big toe in a sock with the toes cut off TAPS a switch
inside the shoe, sending a signal up a wire on the leg.

INSIDE A PANT LEG, INNER THIGH

The electronic signal races up the wire to a small black box
taped to the skin of an inner thigh. Wires from this box
disappear into the crotch area.

The box vibrates silently against the skin. The leg jumps
ever so slightly in response.

INT. THE CASINO, BLACKJACK TABLES

WILL ANDERS, one of four players seated at a 25 dollar Blackjack table, straightens his left leg, then grins.

He recovers from his reaction, forces himself to look disinterested in the play.

Will, thirties, good looking, smooth - the kind of guy that could talk a Christian Scientist into mainlining Vicodin.

He commands third base, next to his buddy JOHN MASTERS, the rugged outdoor type. Both Will and John sip coffee.

The other players to John's right, a fat SALESMAN wearing cowboy boots and hat, and a black RAPPER type, sip cocktails.

The Salesman is a loud, blackjack know-it-all. He offers advice to the Rapper, who has just stayed with two eights.

SALESMAN

Split - chance to get two good hands, instead of one bad one.

The Rapper calmly looks at the Salesman, then stubs out his cigarette in the Salesman's still full cocktail glass.

The Salesman shrugs, plays, draws 22 and breaks.

After a long deliberation, Will stands on 13, with the Dealer showing a ten. The other players MOAN - not a textbook move.

The Dealer turns over his hole card - a four. He draws a seven and ends with 21. Everyone loses. Will seems unfazed.

The Salesman glowers at Will, since the Dealer took the card that Will should have taken.

SALESMAN (CONT'D)

(to Will)

That was your card, asshole! Even if you could go over 21, draw when the Dealer shows a 10.

The heavysset DEALER collects the spent cards, buries them.

DEALER

(to Salesman)

Sir, watch your language.

The PIT BOSS, a hatchet-faced middle aged woman, waddles over to the table. She stays as play continues.

WILL
 (to Salesman)
 Lots of tens in the deck - it was a
 good move. Just play your own hand.

John stands, stretches.

JOHN
 I gotta complete the nitrogen
 cycle.

WILL
 Hope everything comes out OK.

Heading to the rest room, John greets JJ, thirties, a
 cocktail waitress, as she approaches Will's table.

JJ collects empty glasses from the felt, smiles at Will.

JJ
 How's it hangin' lover boy?

Will turns to acknowledge JJ.

WILL
 Any longer and I'd trip over it.

JJ
 Need anything?

WILL
 Freshen up the coffee.

JJ leans over, whispers in Will's ear as she collects his
 cup.

JJ
 I'm off at eight. Join me for a
 drink?

Will smiles, shakes his head "yes."

THE TABLE, LATER

After a hand is dealt, Will slowly scans the face-up cards on
 the table, including the Dealer's Up Card.

The Pit Boss, behind the Dealer, looks across to the far
 wall, where a CASINO MAN is watching a hand held electronic
 device.

THE CASINO MAN'S ELECTRONIC DEVICE

A digital display starts to flash red.

THE BLACKJACK TABLE

Grinning, Will splits a pair of jacks, with the Dealer showing an eight. The Pit Boss frowns at this move.

DEALER

Sir, you sure you want to do that?

WILL

Just hit me.

After receiving his hits, an ace and a ten, Will now has two good hands. When the deal is over, Will wins on both.

After a nod from the Pit Boss, two huge SECURITY GUARDS materialize at the table, stand behind Will.

PIT BOSS

Sir, would you please stand up?

Will stands, looks like he's prepared to flee. But he stays and allows the guards to frisk him.

One of the Guards pauses, looks up, after discovering a lump in Will's inside left pant leg, near his crotch.

The other Guard, lifting Will's sweater, has unearthed a cigarette pack sized box taped to his back. Wires run from the box down into his pants leg.

The Pit Boss motions for Will to unbuckle his pants. She then kneels down in front of him, undoes his pants and slides them down to his knees, revealing his electronic gadgets and boxer shorts stenciled with playing cards.

Will looks down at the woman kneeling in front of him.

WILL

Say, while you're down there...

The Pit Boss stands, glares at Will.

PIT BOSS

Sir, you'll have to come with us.

WILL

How 'bout my chips.

The Pit Boss motions for Will to pull up his pants.

PIT BOSS
I'll take care of that.

WILL
Yeah, like that's gonna happen...

Will pauses, then with a cat quick move grabs for his chips and makes a break for it - difficult with his pants down.

Tables rock, chips fly, players SHOUT as Will stumbles through the Blackjack area, pulling up his pants en route, with the Guards in hot pursuit.

Finally, the two Guards catch Will, wrestle him to the ground, restrain him, stand him up, pull up his pants.

After his brief struggle, Will calls back to John, who is standing, watching the action.

WILL (CONT'D)
Get Richard - bail me out.

JOHN
(to no one in particular)
Fighting, the notorious figure known only as The Accountant is dragged away.

Will and the Guards approach the end of the table area, where two armed POLICEMEN are waiting to join the party.

John smiles, returns his attention to the game.

EXT. HIGHWAY 111, PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA - DAY

A silver SUV swerves in and out of heavy tourist traffic.

INT. THE SUV

John is driving with Will riding shotgun. Will, looking outside, is shuffling a deck of cards with one hand.

KIM, thirties - think sexy high school teacher in a teenager's fantasy - is in the back seat.

John turns back to speak to Kim, motions to Will.

JOHN
He just couldn't play fair. Got caught with his pants down - literally.

WILL

Just wanted to level the playing field.

JOHN

They own the playing field doofus.

(beat)

Good thing this ain't Vegas - we'd find vultures picking over your remains in the desert.

Will reaches down to the floor of the SUV, returns with a copy of the local newspaper.

Will shuffles through the less important front pages and opens to a story buried deep inside.

CLOSE ON THE PAPER

A photo shows a confused looking Will exiting a Police Station, accompanied by a well-dressed, dapper lawyer type.

The headlines under the picture shout "Local Accountant Arrested in Casino." Will thrusts the paper at John.

John, driving, graciously rejects the paper, motions for Kim to read it. She takes the paper, reads to herself.

Will looks out the window, zones out.

INT. AN UPSCALE CONDO - DAY

A nicely furnished study, overlooking a golf course.

Will is seated in front of a large old fashion TV monitor, wired to an elaborate personal computer.

CLOSE ON THE TV SCREEN

Numbers dance on the screen, in boxes titled "Total Number of Hands" and "Winning Hands," blurring as they're updated.

The simulation finishes, and the screen freezes, with the final numbers etched in their boxes.

THE STUDY

Will notes the numbers on a tablet under the heading "Counting Eights Only," types in some changes and reboots the simulation. He then adds a new heading, "Eights and Aces."

WILL (V.O.)

I put in a lotta time just to use
Casey - my little blackjack
computer - hours doing simulations
of different betting and hitting
strategies - millions of runs -
data to use in Casey.

WILL'S CONDO, LATER

Will, a deck of playing cards in his hand, is turning over one card at a time, face up, as fast as he can. His facial expression shows he's trying to count the cards.

WILL (V.O.)

Hours of practice counting cards...

THE CONDO, LATER STILL

Will is seated in a chair, wearing shorts, flip-flops on both bare feet. There are tiny electronic switches on the sole of each flip-flop, with wires leading to the computer he had taped to his back in the casino.

Will is tapping the switches with his big toes as he turns cards over.

WILL (V.O.)

...entering that data into Casey
using switches in my shoes. I
think of it as a shortcut, not
cheating.

RETURN TO SCENE - THE SUV

Will returns to the Here and Now, addresses John.

WILL

I'm just trying to catch up. Lots
of us seek the greatest reward for
the least amount of effort.

As the SUV enters Indio from Palm Desert, Will whips his head around as they pass the Red Dog liquor store.

A sign advertising the California Lotto is posted outside.

WILL (CONT'D)

Pull over!

John parks at the curb outside the liquor store. Will bolts from the SUV and enters the store.

John and Kim follow Will in.

INT. THE LIQUOR STORE

Will turns from the counter with a fist full of Lotto coupons. John is standing behind him with a bottle of Jack Daniels. Kim is at the magazine rack reading Men's Health.

WILL

Big jackpot tonight.

John and Kim look at each other, share a frown.

JOHN

The lottery's bullshit. The odds are over 18 million to one...

ROSA (O.S.)

18,009,460 to be exact.

The boys and Kim look around for the source of that voice - with just a hint of a New York/Puerto Rican accent.

And they discover ROSA RUIZ, standing at a nearby beverage cooler holding a bottle of Gatorade and a bike helmet.

Rosa is Latina, smooth brown skin, cute with a kick-ass lean body - dressed like a serious recreational bicycle rider.

Will and Rosa lock eyes. There's an immediate animalistic sensual connection. They both sense it.

WILL

Speaking of numbers - want mine?

Rosa's sly smile doesn't discourage Will. But John butts in.

JOHN

And you know that number how...?

Rosa turns to face John.

ROSA

It's 51 factorial divided by 51 minus six factorial, and that divided by six factorial. That is - for six unique numbers out of 51.

JOHN

What's a "factorial?"

KIM

It's a whole number multiplied by every number less than it. Four factorial would be four times three times two times one. And so on.

Both John and Will look askance at Kim, who shouldn't know that kind of thing. Kim shrugs "I'm no dummy."

Rosa reaches to shake Will's hand. He gently holds on to it.

WILL

I'm Will. This is John and Kim.

ROSA

I'm Rosa. I'm visiting my sister here for a few weeks.

WILL

I'd be happy to show you some of the finer parts of our valley.

Rosa extracts her hand and avoids responding to the offer.

ROSA

You know the Lotto's got poor odds.

WILL

Yeah, I know. But, with just a few dollars invested, I could gain millions. And, sooner or later, I'll find a system to beat it.

JOHN

I can see playing blackjack, where with some skill you can change the odds slightly. But the lottery...

KIM

I agree. It's a major waste of money. And, in my situation, I don't have much to waste.

(beat)

Now, if I had some nice guy to look after me...

John smiles, doesn't take the bait.

ROSA

Knowing what I know about the mathematics of the game there is no "system" to beat it.

WILL

And how do you know about "the mathematics of the game?"

ROSA

I teach math at a college in LA.

WILL

Say... why don't we get together while you're here. You can explain the math to me over a nice California Chardonnay.

Rosa considers the offer.

ROSA

Tell you what. Give me your cell number. I'll have my sister check you out - she's a local cop - to make sure you're not some kind of weirdo.

WILL

Yeah, you do that. I'm a local accountant - I love numbers. I do taxes. I could do yours to return the favor. I could massage your bottom - line.

Rosa offers a smile in response. John changes the subject.

JOHN

You a serious biker?

ROSA

Getting ready for The Death Ride, in Lake Tahoe.

KIM

Hope you survive.

ROSA

Lots of climbing, out-of-the-saddle stuff.

Will turns to John.

WILL

Hey, we should try that.

KIM

This is another one of your half-assed ideas Will. You should just grow up before you hurt yourself.

JOHN

Ya know, Will, you pick the damndest hobbies - playing the lottery and blackjack - now you want to bike up a mountain. You fantasize and set impossible goals, then have to find shortcuts.

ROSA

Yeah, you don't want to do it without training. They'll scrape you off the road like doggie do-do.

Rosa pays for her Gatorade and starts for the door. Will stops her, hands her a business card and makes the telephone sign, right thumb and little finger to his head, and mouths "call me" to her.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - EVENING

A neighborhood topless bar, close enough to the Palm Springs Airport to suck in an occasional traveler.

Waitresses shuttle about, pushing drinks, while The Sultans of Swing BLARES on the high tech speaker system.

Two young women, in various stages of undress, gyrate on a large stage. Patrons show their appreciation by draping dollar bills over the stage railing.

THE BAR

JOE BONDS, fifties, is talking to Kim, dressed as a dancer at the club. Kim, in a serious mood, is taking a break, trying to avoid Joe.

Joe is pleasant looking but, wearing an ancient leisure suit, looks more like a loser.

Joe is selling, but Kim's not buying.

JOE

So, we could have dinner, you could come over to my house, I could show you some of my costumes...

KIM

I'd love to Joe, but I can't leave my sick mom now. Why don't you just bring them by the club?

ANDY
(to Suzie)
Will's got a new honey.

Suzie lights up a cigarette, gently blows the smoke at Will.

SUZIE
Not savin' it for me anymore?

WILL
Andy would not take it kindly if I
hit on you.

Andy grins and whispers to Suzie. She heads toward the bar.

Mandy grabs at the halter gracing Doctor Don. He makes an insincere attempt to retain possession.

MANDY
Will's savin' it for Jello.

They all look toward the stage where a new dancer, JELLO, has just completed her set. She looks Italian, long black hair and a thin, wasp-like midsection and long shapely legs.

Will sidles up to the stage and lays a 20 dollar bill on the railing for Jello. She smiles down at him in acknowledgment.

When Will rejoins the table Suzie has just delivered two shots for her and Andy. They clink glasses and throw back the shots.

EXT. THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL TRAMWAY BOTTOM STATION - DAY

As Will and Rosa enter the station they watch a tram car head up to the Mount San Jacinto peak at over 10,000 feet.

INT. A TRAM CAR

Will has his nose pressed against the glass wall, checking out the valley below. Rosa watches him, smiles to herself.

ROSA
You surprised I called?

WILL
Actually, I was thrilled.

Will turns to face Rosa.

WILL (CONT'D)
Thought your sister might find a
skeleton in my closet.

ROSA
She did find out that you were a
bad boy in the casino.

A knowing grin sweeps Will's face.

WILL
Just needed that edge.
(beat)
The interesting thing is that I
invested a tremendous amount of
time to perfect my so-called
shortcut.

ROSA
So - what's that tell ya'?

Will turns back to gazing out the tram window.

INT. THE PEAKS RESTAURANT, TOP OF THE TRAM - DAY

Will and Rosa enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail, seated at a table
next to a window. Day is ending and the view is spectacular.

ROSA
This is beautiful. Good choice.

WILL
I've lived in the valley for years
but never made it up here.

Will sets aside his drink, looks at his date.

WILL (CONT'D)
The view is beautiful.

Rosa blushes - like a coy little teenager.

EXT. A MODEST HOME - NIGHT

Will has escorted Rosa to the door. A light suddenly
illuminates the porch.

ROSA
My big sister lookin' after me.

WILL
She thinks I'm a jerk.

ROSA

No. She only wants me to be careful. I just got out of an abusive relationship, and I don't intend to rush into anything.

Rosa reaches up to Will and delivers a non-committal kiss.

WILL

I'll call you.

ROSA

I have to go back to LA soon.

Will smiles and departs.

EXT. WILL'S SUV - DAY

The SUV heads out of Palm Springs on the 10 freeway. A sign announces that it's 100 miles to Los Angeles.

A huge windmill farm with towers that jut of the otherwise barren desert cover both sides of the freeway.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AND SUNSET BLVD.

With the Pacific Ocean to its left, the SUV turns right off PCH and heads up Sunset.

INT. A CONDO IN PACIFIC PALISADES

Rosa hands Will a cocktail. He stirs it with his finger, carries it to a window and looks out.

WILL'S POV

A shrub covered slope rises to about 3,000 feet. Fire breaks and trails snake up the hill.

ROSA

Good mountain biking trails.

WILL

Very cozy - protected. Nice.

Rosa sits on the couch. Will locates a recliner and looks up to the vaulted, beamed ceiling of the condo.

WILL (CONT'D)

I like your condo.

ROSA
It's just right for two people.

WILL
Two?

Rosa sets her wine glass on the coffee table.

ROSA
I have a 16 year old daughter.
Will looks surprised. No - disappointed.

WILL
Sixteen?

ROSA
I'm older than you may think.

WILL
You are well preserved.

ROSA
Carmela. She's off with friends.
Blind-sided you, hey?

WILL
No. It's fine.
(beat)
I don't have any kids.
(beat)
That I know of.

Rosa stands.

ROSA
So - are we goin' to dinner or
what?

INT. GLADSTONES RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will and Rosa are at an ocean-side table. Peanut shells are sprinkled randomly around the old wooden planked floor.

The sound of the waves washing up on the shore outside the window covers some of the interior noise.

Will extracts a sheet of paper folded up and stored inside his pants pocket. He unfolds it, repositions two cocktail glasses and straightens it out on the table.

CLOSE ON THE PAPER

It's an Excel bar plot. Numbers 1 through 51 are on the horizontal axis and increments of 10 on the vertical axis, to a maximum of 100.

Bars dance up and down the plot in no discernible pattern.

RETURN TO SCENE - THE RESTAURANT

Will arranges the plot so Rosa can view it. He wrings his hands, speaks like a mad scientist.

WILL

So - here's my plan.

Will's disclosure is interrupted by a waiter delivering their salads. Will pushes them aside so he can continue.

WILL (CONT'D)

I've pulled the last several hundred winning Lotto numbers off the internet and put them on this plot.

Rosa points to the horizontal scale.

ROSA

So - the highest bars show that those numbers have appeared often...

WILL

And the low bars not so often.

ROSA

What do you intend to do with your data?

WILL

I'm not sure yet. Should I play the numbers that showed up often or those not so often?

ROSA

All the bars should be at about the same level. No number is more likely to be picked than any other number. If you have enough data.

WILL

So - pick scarce numbers.

ROSA
It's what mathematicians call a
white noise distribution.

Rosa picks at her salad, buying time - how to let him down.

ROSA (CONT'D)
I don't think your plot is gonna
help you pick winning numbers.

Will looks crestfallen. Rosa senses his disappointment.

ROSA (CONT'D)
I guess you could get lucky.

Will smiles, reaches across the table to hold her hand.

WILL
I'm hoping to get lucky.

EXT. GLADSTONES RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will receives the keys to his SUV from the parking attendant.

LATER

The SUV pulls out of the lot, crosses PCH and heads up
Sunset.

A dirty Ford pickup, parked on Sunset, pulls out and follows
Will's SUV up the road.

EXT. PALISADES DRIVE

Will's SUV navigates the gentle curves climbing to the
Palisades Highlands.

INT. THE SUV

High beams from a vehicle following the SUV quickly grow
larger in Will's rear view mirror. He feels the danger.

WILL
What the ...

Will turns sharply to the right, off the road and onto the
berm to avoid a collision as the Ford pickup zooms by.

WILL (CONT'D)
That jerk almost ran us over.

Rosa doesn't look concerned.

ROSA
That was my caca-for-brains ex.

Will eases his car back onto the road.

INT. ROSA'S CONDO

Will nurses a cup of coffee. He's shaking a little.

ROSA
My ex - Roberto - he's a little nutty.

WILL
Get a restraining order.

ROSA
Not to worry. He's harmless.

Rosa jumps up from the couch.

ROSA (CONT'D)
Come into my bedroom. I want to show you something.

Will almost spills his coffee in his haste to comply.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Rosa enters a walk-in closet in the bedroom and returns with a scale model of a waterwheel. She sets it on the bed.

ROSA
I use this in my classes to demonstrate chaotic behavior.

Will looks completely befuddled. Not what he expected.

WILL
You are the senorita of segue.

Rosa tilts her head toward the en suite bathroom.

THE BATHROOM

Rosa sets the waterwheel in the bathtub and hooks up a hose from the wheel to the faucet. She turns on the water and makes minor adjustments.

Will leans against a bathroom wall.

The wheel has twelve buckets, arranged like seats on a Ferris Wheel. The buckets have holes in their bottoms.

Water from the hose on top of the wheel flows into a near bucket, then drips slowly out of the bottom hole.

When the bucket gets partially full, the water weight rotates the wheel so the next bucket is in position.

The water flow is tuned so the wheel rotates smoothly in one direction.

ROSA

The water flow rate is the initial condition for the experiment.

Rosa then slows down the flow until the wheel rotates in one direction, pauses, changes direction, and starts to rotate in the other direction.

After a few rotations, the wheel slows, stops, and reverses rotation again.

WILL

This is chaotic behavior?

ROSA

Yes. You can write three nonlinear differential equations that approximate the behavior of the water wheel.

Rosa turns off the water and the wheel slowly comes to rest.

ROSA (CONT'D)

You can solve them numerically to predict the wheel motion.

Rosa goes into the living room and returns with a textbook and a box containing a computer CD. She opens to a page in the textbook with a waterwheel, points.

ROSA (CONT'D)

These equations. I'll show you a computer program I'd use for that.

(beat)

But did you notice how the wheel behavior changed when I changed the water flow - the so-call initial conditions. If you change these initial conditions even slightly you'll get a different result.

Rosa then turns the page, and a plot showing the variation of the velocity of the wheel can be seen.

ROSA (CONT'D)

The computer program's called
Mathematica - put together by some
genius studying bacteria
populations in biology.

Rosa holds up the CD box, with the title "Mathematica" and a red starburst symbol on the front.

Will is still trying to make sense out of the demo.

WILL

I have no idea where you're going
with this.

ROSA

A weatherman named Lornez developed
a set of equations to predict
weather patterns. When he solved
them, they behaved just like the
weather - chaotic - thus Chaos
Theory.

WILL

And so?

ROSA

Lots of physical phenomena behave
like this - the weather, stock,
commodity values, some games of
chance...

The last observation gets Will's full attention.

WILL

Games of chance?

ROSA

Like Keno in the casinos.

WILL

Or the Lottery.

ROSA

You need to be able to formulate
mathematical equations that
describe the physics of the
phenomena. Or math representations
based on past behavior.

Will locates the john, shuts the top cover, sits.

WILL

What you're trying to tell me is that I could have a better chance of beating the Lotto using this Chaos stuff than my simple-minded statistical method.

ROSA

I don't think you can do it no matter what approach you use.

Will decides to redirect the conversation.

WILL

Why don't we reconvene to the bedroom and discuss - chaos.

ROSA

My daughter will be home soon.

Will stands, prepares to depart.

WILL

Carmela. Then I should go.

ROSA

You could stay and meet her.

WILL

Some other time.

(beat)

I gotta drive home tonight.

The two look at each other, not sure where this is going.

EXT. TURTLE ROCK PARK - MORNING

In the California Alps, just south of Lake Tahoe, hundreds of serious looking bikers nervously mill around, making last minute adjustments to their bicycles and clothing.

Rosa and Will are there, Rosa with an expensive road bike, and Will dusting off an ancient mountain bike.

Rosa inspects Will's bike, resting against his SUV.

ROSA

You sure about this?

WILL

I'm gonna kick your pretty little butt.

Rosa smirks, snaps into her bike pedals and takes off.

EXT. MONITOR PASS

Rosa and Will climb the first pass. Rosa looks strong, but Will struggles. Other bikers pass the two slowly.

Across the road early starters zip down the road in the other direction at 40 mph.

EXT. TOP OF MONITOR PASS

Rosa waits at the top, staring at the elevation sign that says 8314 feet. Will finally arrives, exhausted.

As they look down the road, toward Route 395, they can see bikers going down their side and coming up the other.

ROSA

You OK?

Will doesn't answer. He just glares at Rosa.

Rosa fidgets, seems anxious, then jumps on the back of a small pack just passing them.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Catch you later.

Will grimaces as Rosa pulls away, looks down toward 395.

Waiting for car traffic to clear, Will crosses the road and starts down the way he rode up, cutting the course.

EXT. TURTLE ROCK PARK

Will is lying, spent, next to his bike as Rosa arrives.

ROSA

My, aren't we the little Speedy Gonzales.

WILL

I hate to admit it, but you were right.

ROSA

I'm starting to see a pattern of behavior here...

Rosa, disgusted, walks away, pushing her bike.

EXT. HARRAH'S CASINO, SOUTH LAKE TAHOE - NIGHT

Will's SUV pulls into the valet parking lane outside the casino entrance.

Will and Rosa, still in their biking attire, remove their suitcases from the vehicle. Will accepts a parking stub from the valet and they enter the hotel/casino.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Will and Rosa open their respective suitcases on the bed.

ROSA
I'm gonna take a shower.

WILL
Can I join you?

Rosa kisses Will lightly on the cheek.

ROSA
I'm too tired for any of that kinda stuff now.

WILL
Later?

Rosa smiles and heads into the bathroom.

INT. A RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rosa and Will quietly eat dinner. They look out over Lake Tahoe. The lights of the homes surrounding the lake dance as they are reflected off the calm waters.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM

Will and Rosa climb into a king sized bed. She's wearing a sheer nighty and panties and he has on PJ bottoms.

She reaches over and kisses Will - another non-sexual cheek one.

ROSA
Sleep tight.

Will reaches across the big bed and caresses Rosa.

WILL
About "tight"...

Rosa gentle pushes his hand away.

ROSA
Behave yourself. Go to sleep.

She reaches up and turns off the room light.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Rosa enters the bedroom from the bathroom. She seems refreshed. Her nighty barely covers her butt - her legs look beautiful - firm, tempting.

ROSA
Mornin'.

Will looks hung over, grumpy.

WILL
Yeah. Mornin'.

Rosa bounces over to the bed, sits on the edge.

ROSA
How you feel?

Will sits up, bends over, reaches out to his toes, still covered by a sheet, stretching his calfs.

WILL
(broken English)
I feel don't good. Vous?

ROSA
My quads are tight, a little sore.

Will pats Rosa's side of the bed.

WILL
Come. Lay down. I'll massage your legs.

Rosa hesitates to move. Will seems a little pissed.

WILL (CONT'D)
Gees, gimme a break. I'm not some kind of mad rapist.

Rosa complies, lies face down on her side of the bed. Will relocates to the foot of that side, straddles her.

Will starts to gently massage Rosa's calf muscles.

ROSA

Oh. That feels soo good.

Will slowly moves up to Rosa's thigh area, keeps rubbing.

WILL

Just relax. Let Doctor William
take away all your pain.

Will slides his hands up under Rosa's panties, starts to
massage her butt.

Rosa is purring, doesn't seem to mind the incursion.

WILL (CONT'D)

Turn over.

Rosa gives in to the request. In a while, she's on her back,
looking up at Will. He returns to her lower leg area.

Will slowly moves up to Rosa's knees, then to her quads.

Rosa jerks when Will's hands slide under her panties. But -
she doesn't move his hands away.

Rosa arches her back, responding to the pleasure. Will then
slides his hand under her nighty and attempts to push it up.

Rosa reacts, pulls her nighty down.

ROSA

No. Leave it on.

(beat)

But don't stop - the other stuff.

Will continues his massage.

INT. THE HOTEL ROOM

Will and Rosa lie in bed, him naked but covered, on his back
and her cradled in his arm, cuddling.

She still has on her nighty top.

ROSA

That was wonderful. Thanks.

WILL

So. Why did you stop me, you
know...

Will reaches over, runs his hand over her nighty.

WILL (CONT'D)

I just wanted to see those rock
hard abs.

Rosa uncuddles, sits upright, faces Will. She raises her
nighty top, slides it up, but leaves her bust covered.

ON ROSA

Rosa's midsection is crisscrossed with surgery scars. Most
are healed, from older operations.

But some are still red, from recent surgery.

And no belly button.

Will moves over, caresses her scars, then gently starts to
kiss her tummy.

WILL

You're beautiful.

Will continues to run his hand over Rosa's midsection.

ROSA

You should be happy. At least you
got to massage my bottom.

Rosa gently removes Will's hand.

WILL

But. We could have gone further.

ROSA

I need to know you better. And
longer. Much longer.

(beat)

Please - don't push it.

Rosa gets up and enters the bathroom. Will looks perplexed.

EXT. CALIFORNIA ROUTE 395 - DAY

Will's SUV, with two bikes on the top, travels south with the
Sierras to his right and Owens Valley to his left.

INT. THE SUV

Will and Rosa laugh, talk, enjoy each other, check out the
mountain scenery.

ROUTE 395

Will's SUV passes a sign, "Convict Lake", on the right.

INSIDE THE SUV

Rosa touches Will's arm. She points to a road heading west, into the Sierras.

ROSA

Turn here.

Will complies, and his car turns right off Route 395.

EXT. CONVICT LAKE

The SUV pulls into a parking lot at the end of the road. A pristine mountain lake spreads out before them.

Will and Rosa exit the SUV and look at the lake. Then she reaches back inside a rear door and grabs a small backpack.

Will and Rosa locate a log that serves as a seat beside the lake. She removes a bike bottle and two Powerbars from her backpack, hands one bar to Will.

ROSA

Lunch.

Will takes the bar and removes the wrapping.

WILL

You sure know how to treat a guy.

The two munch their lunch and ponder the lake. The towering mountain peaks reflect off the calm clear water.

ROSA

Legend has it that some convicts escaped from a prison in Carson City in the eighteen hundreds and hunkered down here.

Rosa takes a hit from the bike bottle.

ROSA (CONT'D)

So - where did this shortcut philosophy come from?

WILL

Man, you love to come up with these non-sequiturs.

ROSA
Keeps you on your toes.

Will locates a twig, uses it to poke at the ground - buying time.

WILL
I don't know. Probably from when I was a teenybopper.
(beat)
Lotsa stuff that happen back then tends to stick with you, shape your attitudes, even though you know better now.

ROSA
Like what?

WILL
Organized religion for one thing. At least one brand.

ROSA
Go on.

WILL
Most of the kids in my neighborhood went to parochial schools. They'd tell me that my soul was doomed, that I'd go to hell, that kinda BS.
(beat)
They said my public education sucked and their school sports teams could beat mine.

ROSA
What else? Shortcuts?

Will stands, selects a smooth rock and skips it over the surface of the lake.

WILL
Linda Allen.

ROSA
Who?

WILL
My high school sweetheart. She was a cheerleader. Blond. Smart. Athletic. Perfect.
(beat)
And Catholic.

ROSA

I'm waiting for a connection here.

WILL

That bitch! I invested my junior and senior years in her. Helped her with her homework, obeyed her like a puppy dog, went to all her games. But she would never go out with me.

ROSA

Sounds like she got what she wanted without that.

WILL

Then after spending two years catering to her, I invited her to the Senior Prom. She told me she couldn't go out with someone who wasn't Catholic.

ROSA

So that did it for long term relationships.

WILL

I guess so.

ROSA

I was raised Catholic.

Will returns to the log seat, looks at Rosa.

WILL

Another obstacle for me - us.

Then Will reaches into his back pants pocket and removes his wallet.

WILL (CONT'D)

If you think that's silly, check this out.

Will extracts a small photo from his wallet and shows it to Rosa.

ON THE PHOTO

It's the kind you get in high school for the yearbook, but folded, wrinkled and dirty now. It's of a fair complexioned blond teenage girl with long hair in a cheerleaders outfit.

RETURN TO SCENE - LAKESIDE

ROSA

The infamous Linda Allen.

WILL

The same.

ROSA

It's really weird that you held onto the photo all these years.

WILL

Sick, hun?

ROSA

But - did you enjoy the ride?

WILL

Ride?

ROSA

The ride. The journey you took on the way to your goal. The ride.

This causes Will to reflect.

WILL

Yeah, I guess so. It had it's moments.

ROSA

It's like this event we just did. That was the goal. I trained for a year, up and down those canyons in the Santa Monica mountains. Beautiful vistas, painful climbs and exhilarating downhills. That was the ride. Some call it smelling the roses. And I loved it.

WILL

So I should enjoy "the ride" with you?

ROSA

If you want this - you and me - to go anywhere, that's what it's gonna take.

Will stands, pulls Rosa up, hugs and kisses her. Then he walks slowly to his SUV.

EXT. LONE PINE

They enter the small city and pass a sign that points up a road to the west - "Whitney Portal - 15 miles."

The SUV pulls up next to a cafe and parks.

INT. THE CAFE

The two love birds order from a bored waitress.

EXT. PALISADES HIGHLANDS - NIGHT

As the SUV turns onto Rosa's street, flashing lights illuminate the condos.

A police car and an ambulance assume odd angles in Rosa's driveway. Paramedics wheel a stretcher toward the ambulance.

Excited teens huddle outside the garage, talking to cops.

The SUV parks, Rosa bursts out and rushes to an officer. Will follows shortly, joins her.

INT. ROSA'S CONDO

Rosa enters and finds her daughter, CARMELA, on the couch, feet up, attached to a Walkman, drinking a coke.

The place is a mess - empty beer cans, furniture askew, food sprinkled randomly on the rug, kitchen a shambles.

Carmela's in her own little world, doesn't acknowledge her mom. So mom walks to the couch, stands in front of Carmela.

Anger ignites Rosa's New York/Puerto Rican dialect.

ROSA

Hey! Earth to kid. What the hell happened?

Carmela looks up, frowns, removes her ear buds.

CARMELA

We had a party. It kinda got outta control. Some creeps showed up who weren't invited. Somebody got stabbed.

Just then Will enters. Carmela checks him out.

CARMELA (CONT'D)

(to Rosa)
Who's the dude?

WILL

I'm Will. A friend of your mom.

ROSA

Forget him. Who got stabbed? What the fuck were you thinkin', having a party when I'm away?

CARMELA

It's no biggie. We woulda had it cleaned up before you got home.

ROSA

Jesus, kid. We could get sued, lose everything. Somebody coulda got killed.

Carmela stands, prepares to flee.

CARMELA

Yeah. So it OK for you to go away, shack up with your "friend", and I'm just supposta stay at home, sit around with my finger up my ass?

ROSA

Don't you talk to me like that.

CARMELA

Whatever.

Rosa gets in her daughter's face.

ROSA

You're grounded.

CARMELA

Good luck with that.

ROSA

Go to your room young lady. I'll deal with you later.

Carmela heads out of the living room but shouts back.

CARMELA

I should live with dad.

ROSA
I'm sure he'd welcome you with open
arms.

Rosa stands there, furious. Will approaches, hugs her.

WILL
I should go. I got a long drive.
(beat)
But I'll stay if you want me to.

ROSA
No, it's OK. I can deal with this
mess.

Will kisses Rosa, turns to leave.

WILL
I had a really great time. I'll
call. Sorry about this.

ROSA
Me too.

Rosa starts to clean up as Will closes the door.

INT. WILL'S CONDO, STUDY - NIGHT

Will is at his computer workstation. The box for the program
Mathematica, with its red starburst, rests on the desk.

His concentration is interrupted by a knock on the door.

WILL
Come.

John enters the study and notices the Mathematica box.

JOHN
New program?

WILL
Yeah. Rosa recommended it. It's
way over my head.

Will carelessly tosses the Mathematica box in a desk drawer.

John motions with his head - let's go.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

Will and John are seated in their favorite booth.

JOHN

So - how was your weekend?

WILL

Rosa kicked my butt on the ride.

JOHN

Do anything to her butt?

WILL

Let's just say I - we - had a wonderful time.

JOHN

So, you gonna see her again?

WILL

Yeah. There's something about her.

(beat)

But that chick has some serious baggage I'll have to work around.

Jello approaches their booth, sets her tray down, addresses Will.

JELLO

What's up studmuffin?

WILL

Same old, same old.

Jello scoots in beside Will, lights up a cigarette.

JELLO

Big party tonight - my place.

Jello has Will's full attention, looks him dead in the eyes.

JELLO (CONT'D)

Just you and me.

Will's big chance, what he's been waiting for.

WILL

Ah, I can't make it.

Jello looks unhappy, blows smoke in Will's face.

EXT. MALIBU, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Pacific Ocean waves lap sandy beaches, sand crabs scurry for cover. Gulls ride the gentle updraft.

EXT. PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY, MALIBU - DAY

The university sits on a hill, off PCH and Malibu Canyon Road, overlooking the ocean.

INT. A LECTURE HALL - DAY

Rosa is at the front of the room - the class has just ended. Students are already out of their seats, heading for freedom.

Except JESS WASHINGTON. Jess is twenties, Afro-American, bald, with tattoos. Looks like an escapee from gang life.

Jess waits until the class room has cleared, staring at his professor the whole time. Then he stands, takes his time and saunters to the front.

Jess stops in front of the lab bench that separates him from Rosa. She looks up from collecting her notes.

ROSA

Yes, Mister Washington?

JESS

Just call me Jess.

ROSA

What can I do for you - Jess?

Jess moves to the side of the bench, closer to Rosa.

JESS

You like basketball Doctor Ruiz?

ROSA

I'm not really into team sports.

JESS

Whatever. Still, you could come to the game tonight, watch my moves. After, well, maybe we could go out with the team, get some brews.

JAN, twenties, a beautiful blond California Girl - the kind young men go to college to meet - has been standing off to the side, watching the interplay.

Jan makes her move, sneaks up behind Jess.

JAN

Is my man bothering you Professor Ruiz?

Jess, caught off guard, turns to Jan.

JESS

Hey, baby.

Jan hooks her arm into Jess, leans toward the door. Jess smiles back at Rosa as he is being lead away.

On the way out, Jess and Jan pass JIM ARNOLD standing in the door way. Jim is an average forty year old guy, thinning hair, thickening mid section.

Rosa sees Jim, does not look thrilled. He approaches her.

JIM

Students hitting on you again?

ROSA

I guess I should be flattered. After all, Jess is an attractive young man. If I were 20 years younger...

JIM

Not a good idea to be foolin' around with students.

ROSA

But it's OK to "fool around with" another faculty member?

JIM

Only if it's me.

Rosa heads for the door, Jim following like a Saint Bernard in heat.

JIM (CONT'D)

I thought we could have dinner together next week.

ROSA

I'd love to, but I'm still trying to deal with my ex. He follows me everywhere.

JIM

Everywhere?

ROSA

He'll be waiting for me as I leave today. He'll pick me up just after I leave the parking structure, keep tailing me until I'm home.

JIM
Can't you get a restraining order?

ROSA
Got one.

Jim seems to be losing his enthusiasm for the chase.

JIM
Well...

ROSA
Court orders don't mean much to
former gang members.
(beat)
Now - about dinner...

JIM
Let me check my schedule and get
back to you.

As lover boy makes a hasty retreat, Rosa smiles. Mission accomplished.

EXT. THE COLLEGE CAMPUS

Rosa strides across the Quad, canyon peaks in the background.

INT. A CAMPUS OFFICE

Rosa pauses outside the office. The open door identifies the occupant as SHERRI LANG, College Auditor.

Rosa enters to find Sherri busy on her computer. Rosa makes herself comfortable in a chair across from Sherri.

Sherri is Afro-American, about forty - a serious type. She looks up over her glasses at her guest.

SHERRI
Mornin' Professor Ruiz. What's up?

Rosa rearranges some of the memorabilia cluttering up Sherri's desk, nervous like.

ROSA
I got a hot student in rut and a
nerdy professor sniffin' around me
today.

SHERRI

Lucky you.

(beat)

I'd go with the student.

ROSA

I should be like you - married to a great guy, no problemo.

Sherri puts aside her work.

SHERRI

You have no idea. Jamal can be a real pain-in-the-ass. But he loves me, puts up with me.

ROSA

My daughter had a party when I was away this weekend. Paramedics, cops, the works.

SHERRI

Other than that, how was your weekend with your new guy - Bill.

ROSA

Will. It was great. We really hit it off. I like him. He may be a keeper.

SHERRI

Hot sex?

Rosa wiggles in her seat, remembering.

ROSA

You know me. I not ready for that right now. Maybe - if he shows some persistence.

SHERRI

Let's see. He's in Palm Springs, you're on the coast. If you're gonna keep up with this dude he better have a 150 mile long dick.

ROSA

Or tongue.

The gals giggle at their unladylike discussion.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

The usual suspects - Doctor Don, Joe, Andy and Will - are settled into their favorite booth. Jello is cuddled up next to Will on the end.

Jello and Will seem to be getting on famously, talking, laughing. Tips and booze flow freely.

Then Will's cell phone, in his pocket, buzzes. He takes it out, checks the callers ID and answers.

The noise in the bar makes it difficult to hear the caller.

WILL
(on cell)
Hey. Wait. Hold on.

Will rushes to the door, exits to the bar parking lot.

EXT. GREEN DOOR PARKING LOT

Will finds a quiet spot around the side of the bar, away from street traffic. He returns to his cell phone.

WILL
This is better. What's up?

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM

Rosa is in a hospital bed. IVs run from her arm to a hanging bag. A blood pressure cuff is coiled around her left arm.

She looks ill and unhappy as she talks on her cell phone.

ROSA
Will. Hi. Sorry to bother you.
(beat)
Where the heck are you?

PARKING LOT

Will holds his other hand up to his ear to cut out the ambient outside noise.

WILL
Sorry. Just had my stereo up too loud.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Rosa's not buying it.

ROSA

Sounds like a party to me.

(beat)

Anyway. I'm gonna have to cancel our weekend plans. Something's come up I have to deal with. I'll see you next week - if that fits in with your party plans.

PARKING LOT

A hot rod with a loud exhaust starts up. Will winces, moves around to find a quieter spot.

WILL

Hey - there's no party without you. Can I help in any way with - whatever?

HOSPITAL ROOM

A nurse enters the room to check a bedside monitor. She reviews the data on the screen, smiles at Rosa, leaves.

ROSA

No. I'm fine. It's no biggie. Just time consuming. I'll talk to you later.

(beat)

Better return to your party. Bye.

Rosa clicks off her cell. She looks dejected.

PARKING LOT

Will looks at his cell phone. Closes it, returns to the bar.

INT. THE HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Rosa is in bed, having lunch from a tray over the bed.

Will hurries into the room. Rosa looks up, surprised.

ROSA

Will. What are you doin' here?

WILL

Shit, Rosa. Why didn't you say you were in the hospital?

ROSA

I didn't want to bother you. Anyway, how did you find out I was here?

Will pulls a chair up to the side of the bed. He takes Rosa's hand, caresses it.

WILL

Your daughter called me.

ROSA

Carmela? That little shit.

WILL

No, no. It's all good. We've only known each other for a few weeks, but I care about you. You should have told me.

ROSA

You don't need to see me like this.

WILL

So - what's the problem.

Rosa pushes aside the food tray, concentrates on Will.

ROSA

I have internal - plumbing - problems.

WILL

Your "plumbing" seemed to work fine last week.

ROSA

Yeah. Anyway. It sometimes causes kidney infection. If that happens I end up in the emergency room, then they put me in here and pump me full of antibiotics.

WILL

What brings it on? Did I have anything to do with it?

ROSA

No. It just happens. Something I have to cope with.

A doctor enters, forcing a break in the conversation. He checks Rosa's chart, smiles, pats her on her arm, leaves.

ROSA (CONT'D)

The doc there, my Nephrologist - kidney guy - tells me someday my lone kidney will completely fail and I'll have to go on dialysis.

WILL

Dialysis?

ROSA

It could take years til it gets to that point.

Rosa looks Will straight in the eyeballs.

ROSA (CONT'D)

You ready to deal with this?

Will looks down, continues to rub Rosa's hand.

INT. WILLS CONDO, STUDY - DAY

Will stands at the window, looking out at the mountains, where the summer sun bakes the sparse vegetation.

EXT. THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Summer gives way and the snow level slowly falls to about 3,000 feet. It extends from there to the 10,000 foot peaks.

Then the snow gradually recedes up the mountain as time passes, until it's all gone.

EXT. SADDLE PEAK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A Honda Accord pulls out of the parking lot, turns onto a narrow canyon road, heads down hill.

INT. THE HONDA

Rosa drives while Will relaxes in the passenger seat. He reaches over, gives Rosa a loving rub on the neck.

EXT. ROSA'S CONDO, GARAGE - NIGHT

The Honda stops in the driveway, turns off the headlights.

INT. THE HONDA

Will scoots toward Rosa, delivers a passionate kiss. She responds in kind. Then pushes him away suddenly.

ROSA
Carmela's car is here. She's probably inside, raiding my food and clothes.

WILL
Too bad she dropped out of school.

ROSA
I guess I wasn't a very good mother. She moved out, got her own place, found some menial job.

WILL
But this gives you more freedom.

ROSA
To do what?

Will reaches up to the garage door opener attached to the sun visor over Rosa's head, activates it.

The garage door opens. Will motions to drive in.

The Honda enters the garage. The door closes behind it.

INT. THE HONDA INSIDE THE GARAGE

Rosa turns off the engine, and the interior garage light slowly goes out.

It's dark. Will reaches over, nuzzles kisses on Rosa's neck.

Suddenly, the garage light comes on.

Carmela stands at the open door into the condo, hand on the light switch. She gets an eye full.

CARMELA
Yuk!

And rushes out of the garage toward the street.

INT. THE HONDA

Rosa and Will recover from their aborted makeout session.

INT. ROSA'S CONDO

Will and Rosa look flustered. They're both drinking wine.

WILL

That was kinda a buzz kill.

Rosa stands, sets down her wine glass, starts to pace.

ROSA

When I visited my sister I checked out the Palm Desert campus of U.C. Riverside. There's an opening in their math department.

WILL

Really?

ROSA

They'd put me on a track to be tenured in two years.

(beat)

They must be desperate.

Will looks down at his Merlot, swirls it.

WILL

Kinda like me.

Rosa ignores the sarcasm, continues.

ROSA

Shit. I may never get tenure at Pepperdine.

WILL

Tenure. You're big on this long-lasting commitment thing.

ROSA

I could get a nice profit if I sold my condo in the Palisades now.

Then she sits, across from Will, stares at him.

ROSA (CONT'D)

If this, we, are going to continue, somebody's got to make a move.

Will's not sure how to respond.

WILL

I can't really leave the desert, start a new practice in LA.

ROSA
So - what do you think?

WILL
Yeah. I like it. Driving back and forth every weekend sucks.
(beat)
You could move in with me.

ROSA
Nah. I have to get my own place, in case my little girl decides to crawl back to mommy.

WILL
Makes sense. For now.

ROSA
You better be sure about this. I don't want to be, like, stalking you.

Will gets up, takes Rosa's hand, gently pulls her up, hugs.

WILL
You can stalk me any time.

The two kiss. But - there's not much passion in it.

INT. ROSA'S CONDO, KITCHEN - DAY

Rosa opens, closes cabinet doors. She roots around inside the refrigerator, moving items. Taking inventory.

Will enters, seats himself at a bar that separates the kitchen from the living area.

Rosa gets Will a cup, pours him some coffee. Then leans over the bar for a morning kiss.

WILL
Mornin'. How did you sleep?

ROSA
Fine. Except someone kept stabbing me in the back all night with a blunt object.

WILL
Blunt?

Rosa pours herself a cup of coffee, joins Will.

ROSA

Think anymore about my - proposal?

Will, shy, looks down, then at Rosa.

WILL

We've only known each other a few month, and we haven't been, ah...

ROSA

Intimate?

WILL

Yeah - intimate. But - I want to be with you. I want the ride.

Rosa's face lights up.

ROSA

Oh Will - I feel the same way.

A passionate kiss over the bar spills one cup of coffee.

MONTAGE

INT. ROSA'S CONDO - DAY

Rosa shows a real estate sales lady her condo, going through each room. Both appear enthusiastic.

EXT. U.C. RIVERSIDE, PALM DESERT CAMPUS - DAY

Rosa drives into the parking lot off Frank Sinatra Drive, passing a sign that identifies the campus.

INT. AN OFFICE - DAY

A college administrator interviews Rosa. They review her resume. Then they tour the campus.

EXT. AN APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Rosa and Will park outside the complex. There's a sign that advertises "Rooms for Rent."

They check out the pool and recreation area of the complex.

END MONTAGE

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

Will and the gang in their booth, with Jello forming a sandwich between Will and John. Andy's watching Suzie on stage while Doctor Don engages Mandy in conversation.

Then Jello leaves to do her dance set. John turns to Will.

JOHN

So - what's with Rosa?

WILL

Her condo's on the market. Got two offers already. Job out here looks good, apartments are available.

JOHN

And you're OK with this?

WILL

Well, yeah. I think.

JOHN

You think?

WILL

Yeah, we're good.

JOHN

You damn well better know.

WILL

Anyway, nothin' will happen until the fall school year starts.

Will turns to watch the stage. The last two dancers collect their tips and discarded clothing, and disappear back stage.

The lights dim - a slow, sexy tune starts up.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Lets give a big Green Door welcome to our newest dancer, from the sunny state of Arizona - Crystal!

A tall, willowy woman with long blond hair takes the stage.

CRYSTAL is a dead ringer for Will's high school sweetie Linda Allen. Crystal starts to move sensually to the BEAT.

Background noise fades - a spotlight magically captures Crystal as all else around her goes black. She's a vision - a vision that leads into...

WILL'S FANTASY

INT. WILL'S CONDO - EVENING

Will enters, looking spent, as the music fades.

CRYSTAL (O.S.)
Tough day at the plant, dear?

Crystal enters the room, wearing an enticing French Maid's uniform and carrying a feather duster.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Relax. I'll be right back...

Will collapses onto the couch as Crystal departs.

Will picks up the paper resting on a coffee table, starts to read as Crystal returns with an iced cocktail. She hands him the drink, removes the paper, kneels down, removes his shoes.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
Now, isn't that better?

Will sips, starts to relax, loosens his top shirt button.

The Green Door music SWELLS. Crystal stands, goes to the center of the room where a brass pole magically awaits. She strikes a pose, then starts to move slowly to the music.

After fifteen seconds of suggestive gyration around the pole, Crystal pauses, smiles at Will. She then comes to him, takes his hand, and leads him into the bedroom.

END OF WILL'S FANTASY, AND BACK TO THE BOOTH

Will sits, captivated. When the number is over, Will still doesn't move. He's gone! Crystal smiles down on him.

Mandy roots through her small purse, produces a mirror. She hands it to John who holds it up to Will's face.

MANDY
He's been hit by the thunderbolt.

THE BOOTH, LATER

Will, at the edge of the booth, talks to Crystal. She smiles, touches him lightly as he tells a funny story.

John sits across from the action, watches a real pro at work on a poor sucker - his buddy Will.

Drinks arrive and Will leaves an extravagant tip for Crystal.

EXT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

A Bouncer escorts Crystal to her car in the parking lot. She carries a small case and costumes are draped over her arm.

Crystal stows her clothes in the trunk of a small sports car and bids the Bouncer good-by.

PARKING LOT BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR BAR

Crystal's little car is the only one left in the lot. Lights that illuminated the lot slowly fade.

INT. CRYSTAL'S CAR - NIGHT

Crystal is curled up in the passenger seat with a coat over her, asleep.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Crystal is moving her clothes into the second bedroom. Her friend WINDY, late twenties, helps. Windy is beautiful, firm, muscular in a feminine way.

Will and John stand by, giving occasional recommendations. The two girls tend to ignore the advice, too busy rearranging furniture and clearing out the closet.

JOHN

You sure about this? This is not gonna go over well with your new squeeze.

WILL

I'm just doin' a friend a favor. There's no hanky-panky involved. Just til she finds her own place.
(beat)
Rosa really doesn't need to know about this.

JOHN

Man, you skipped right over the second and third stages of a romance.

WILL

What?

JOHN

First stage is infatuation, then disillusionment, followed by the waning of passion. Finally, the lure of temptation. You went from stage one with Rosa to stage four with Crystal.

(beat)

Another shortcut?

WILL

Nah. Not gonna happen.

But, Will's facial expression reveals a trace of doubt about this invasion.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - EVENING

The usual suspects - John, Will, Doctor Don, Joe - are assembled in a corner booth with a new guy - TONY.

Tony wears a Super Shuttle jacket. If brains were dynamite, Tony wouldn't have enough to blow his nose.

Tony motions to the stage, where Crystal has just completed her set and is collecting her tips.

TONY

(to Will)

You porkin' her? She looks like a great piece of ass.

The booth reacts to this indiscreet probe like Tony just pissed in their drinks. They look at Will.

WILL

No way. She's just staying with me until she finds a permanent place to live. Anyway, I got a girl.

Crystal leaves the stage and hurries to the bar entrance.

TONY

And she's OK with your roommate?

Will looks at Tony like he's going to deliver the answer to one of life's Great Questions.

WILL

The relative propinquity of the two women is irrelevant.

TONY

What the hell does that mean?

DOCTOR DON

It means it's none of your business.

Will's attention is drawn toward the front door, where Crystal is engaged in a heated conversation with GREG, twenties, the door man. Greg is big, handsome, friendly.

She leaves Greg, makes the rounds. She spends time with some of her REGULARS - middle aged guys who look rich. She looks toward Will as she cruises the bar - but avoids his table.

Anxiety spreads over Will's usually upbeat countenance, as Mandy and Windy join the booth people.

EXT. THE SOUTH BAY BIKE PATH, VENICE - DAY

Will and Rosa sit on a bench, watch the eclectic collection of bikers, walkers and skaters crowd the path.

The Pacific Ocean in front of them, vendors hawking wares and musicians behind them, bikes beside them - it's all good.

Rosa looks at Will's old mountain bike.

ROSA

You should upgrade to a road bike - or a hybrid. Keep up with me.

WILL

Don't think I'll ever be able to keep up with you. It's not about the bike - I mean the equipment.

Rosa hugs Will.

ROSA

I love your equipment.

WILL

So. Condo's in escrow, teaching position secured.

ROSA

Yeah. Time to head east.

An overzealous skater collides with a biker. Both go down. Heated words are exchanged. Will uses the incident to avoid responding.

Rosa notices this, repeats her itinerary. With more passion.

ROSA (CONT'D)
East. Palm Springs. You know,
Palms - fuckin' - Springs.

WILL
Got it. But...

ROSA
But what?

WILL
It's over 110 degrees every day
this summer. Hotter than hell.
Can't do much bikin'.

Rosa's Puerto Rican heritage also starts to simmer.

ROSA
So?

WILL
It's just - you would be more
comfortable if you stayed here, on
the coast. I don't mind driving
out to be with you.

Rosa, a little pissed, stands, faces Will.

ROSA
Don't go all hissy-wissy on me.

WILL
Say what?

ROSA
Remember? We're gonna be a couple.
I'm changing my whole life for
this.

(beat)
Do not mess with me.

Will stands, tries to embrace Rosa. She fights it.

WILL
Just for the summer.

Finally Rosa relaxes in Will's embrace.

ROSA

Well, my condo escrow is not over until the fall. I could stay here.

(beat)

Or I could stay with you until my apartment is ready.

Will holds Rosa, but looks off to the ocean.

WILL

Well...

Tough, no nonsense New York attitude bubbles to the top.

ROSA

Now what? You were all come-live-with-me. Now? What the fuck?

Rosa escapes Will's hug.

WILL

I have a temporary - roommate. Tony. One of my bar buddies, down on his luck. Let him move in with me. Just til he gets on his feet.

ROSA

And so?

Will's hemming and hawing. Tit in the wringer.

WILL

You would have to share a bed with moi - Tony's using the other room. How's that gonna work with your no intimacy guideline?

Rosa disengages Will's hug. She takes her bike, snaps into the pedals and heads north.

Will stands there, dejected. What to do.

INT. WILL'S CONDO, DEN - EVENING

Will is seated at his computer workstation, staring at the monitor. The workstation desk is covered by bar plots.

Crystal enters the den, multiplexing a cigarette and a cocktail. A revealing short nightie just covers her ass.

CRYSTAL

Puttin' together the pieces there, Euclid?

Will is agitated that she interrupted his work. He shuffles some of the printouts to cover them up.

But - Will makes note of Crystal's scant attire.

WILL

Just doin' some accounting.

Crystal slinks over to Will, slides her butt up on his desk. She adjusts her nightie - showing she has no bottoms on.

CRYSTAL

I want to have my breasts enhanced.

WILL

A boob job? I don't think that's a good idea.

Will is now completely distracted, staring at his roommate.

CRYSTAL

I'd make a lot more money. Guys love big tits. I could move out.

WILL

You look fine. Plus, you don't know what effect it could have on your health - putting a foreign substance in your body.

Crystal turns up the sex appeal.

CRYSTAL

I don't mind putting strange things in my body.

(beat)

Sometimes it even feels good.

Then Crystal turns on that hurt, little girl look.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

But... I need to borrow some cash to pay for the operation.

This gets a rise out of Will.

WILL

Shit. How much?

CRYSTAL

If you can't afford it, I can get Andy to pay for it.

WILL

No, I can do it. I just think it's
a shitty idea.

(beat)

You must be holding in your farts.

CRYSTAL

What the hell does that mean?

WILL

When you hold in your farts, the
gas seeps up your spinal column,
into your brain, and you get shitty
ideas, like a boob job.

CRYSTAL

You gonna do this or not?

Will reluctantly shakes his head "yes".

Crystal jumps up, hugs Will. The embrace buries his head in
her nightie, crotch area. She looks down at him.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Let's talk about putting a big old
"foreign substance" in my bod.

Crystal takes Will's hand and leads him into her bedroom.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - NIGHT

Crystal is dancing her first number of a set on the stage.
The gown she wears highlights her new bosom.

Will and John sit in their favorite booth watching.

JOHN

Crystal looks - different.

WILL

Living with me has enhanced her.

JOHN

Well, something has enhanced her.

THE GREEN DOOR, LATER

Crystal is making the rounds of her regulars, laughing and
doing shots. As she walks from table to table, her new
breasts bounce proudly - showing off.

Crystal finally approaches Will's booth, but pauses at the next booth when a YOUNG MAN calls her name.

Crystal starts to flirt with the young men in the booth, occasionally smiling over at Will. She does shots with the guys.

YOUNG MAN

You're lookin' good, sweets.

CRYSTAL

It's my new tits. Check 'em out.

Crystal takes the Young Man's hand and places it on her left breast. Holds it there.

In the next booth, Will looks unset by her behavior.

JOHN

You gotta get rid of this broad
before she wrecks you.

Will glares at John, orders another shot.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Will is working at his computer. He gets up, goes to a closed bedroom door. Knocks.

WILL

You alive?

CRYSTAL (O.S.)

Buzz off!

Will opens the door, enters the bedroom. Clothes are scattered randomly about the room. Very messy.

Some serious partying went on here last night.

INT. CRYSTAL'S BEDROOM

WILL

You going to work today?

CRYSTAL

Nah. Don't feel good.

WILL

You party too hard.

Crystal curls up in her bed, covers her head.

CRYSTAL

Leave me alone. Go fry me a big,
juicy steak. Work on your numbers.

Will shrugs, departs the bedroom.

LATER

Crystal is lying on a couch in the living room when Will enters carrying groceries. She looks like death warmed over.

WILL

You look like death warmed over.

CRYSTAL

That your theorem, Pythagoras?

Will walks to her, feels her forehead.

WILL

You're burning up. You should see
a doctor.

CRYSTAL

Yeah, well, my doctor's out on that
boat he bought with my boob job.

Will sets the groceries aside in the kitchen.

WILL

We'll go to the emergency room.

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Crystal is resting in a bed. Multiple tubes run from her body to monitoring devices and IV fluids. She still looks like death warmed over.

Will sits nearby in a folding chair, looking concerned.

A dapper DOCTOR enters, checks her patient file.

DOCTOR

Your tests have come back. You
have traces of silicone in your
blood stream. It's affecting your
organs. It's all slipping and
sliding inside your body.

Will and Crystal react to the Doc's unconventional bedside manner.

CRYSTAL

Silicone!

(looks at Will)

You musta sprayed too much Pam on
the skillet, asshole!

DOCTOR

No, it's probably leakage from your
breast implants. It's not
uncommon. I'll put you on some
antibiotics and you should feel
better. But...

CRYSTAL/WILL

But what?

DOCTOR

Some of the damage to your organs
may be permanent. You'll be prone
to infections. You'll have to stay
on antibiotics for a while.

Will and Crystal both look stunned.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'll be back tomorrow. You know,
this is what you get when you put
strange chemicals in your body.

The Doctor departs, leaving Will and Crystal to think about
the future.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - EVENING

John and Will are in a booth with Andy. Suzie is showing
them her picture in the 1994 Green Door calendar.

ANDY

Where's Crystal?

WILL

She's here - organizing her big get-
rich-quick class action law suit.

NADIA is on stage, performing an athletic routine - like when
she was an Olympics gymnast years ago.

BACKSTAGE, LATER

Crystal has cornered Jello and Mandy when Nadia enters. She
is brandishing a legal looking folder of papers.

CRYSTAL

Even if you had no trouble, we got a doctor who will say you did. He has some way he can make up medical evidence of damage to your body.

JELLO

I'd never put that shit in my tits!

CRYSTAL

So I messed up! But we can get back at the plastic surgeons. Brad says we could each get \$100,000.

Mandy grabs her modest breast, massages them.

MANDY

Does it look like I got a boob job?

CRYSTAL

Don't worry about it. Sign here...

Crystal thrusts the legal paper at Mandy.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

... I'll take care of the details.

BACK TO THE BOOTH

Will shoots tequila with Suzie, checks the calendar.

WILL

Her lawyer friend Brad talked her into the idea.

(beat)

Didn't take much talkin'.

Suzie heads out into the club - there are more suckers out there just waiting to be shown a little attention.

EXT. PALM DESERT APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

A mid-sized U-Haul truck rests outside the complex, tail gate down. John, Will and Andy move furniture from the truck into the building.

INT. AN APARTMENT

Good size two bedroom, high ceilings, modern stainless steel kitchen appliances, granite counter tops.

Rosa directs the guys as to furniture placement.

ROSA

Put the couch against this wall.

Will and John follow her directions, take a break.

WILL

You sure got heavy furniture.

ROSA

Hopefully, someday soon, we'll move it again.

Will is his old noncommittal self.

WILL

Yeah. Sure.

ROSA

Say. How come your roommate, is it Tony, isn't here to help?

WILL

Tony. He's out lookin' for a job, so he can get the heck outta my place.

Rosa goes to the kitchen, returns with a can of Bud Lite, takes a swig then hands it to Will.

ROSA

When can I meet this elusive roomie?

WILL

You don't want to meet Tony. He's messed up. Take my word for it.

Rosa doesn't respond. But, her streets-of-New York background says that all is not right.

EXT. OUTSIDE WILL'S CONDO COMPLEX - DAY

Rosa is in her Honda across the street from Will's condo. She's sipping a Starbucks Latte, waiting.

When Will's SUV exits his development, Rosa ducks down in her car to avoid being spotted.

EXT. WILL'S CONDO

Rosa knocks on Will's front door, waits, jiggles her coffee.
The door opens and there stands - Crystal.

ROSA

Hi. I'm Will's girl friend, Rosa.

CRYSTAL

I'm Crystal, Will's roommate.

Stalemate. Daggers from both sets of female eyes.

Crystal stands aside, opens the door further.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Will's not here. You can come in
and wait if you want.

Rosa smiles, her worst fears confirmed.

ROSA

No. Thanks. I'll deal with him
later.

Rosa spins on her heels, leaves the condo.

INT. SPA HOTEL AND CASINO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rosa is seated at a pool side table, nursing a cocktail, when Will appears. When he attempts to plant a kiss on her lips, Rosa turns so he hits her cheek instead.

Trouble in paradise?

Will orders a cocktail from the female waitress, turns to Rosa.

WILL

So. What's up? Why did you want
to meet here?

Rosa takes a shot from her drink, steadies herself.

ROSA

I met your roommate today.

WILL

Oh.

ROSA

Your roommate is beautiful. You must be so happy.

WILL

Please. It's a nightmare! She drinks and parties like a crazy woman. I can't get any work done. Now she's sick.

Now Will turns a little shy.

WILL (CONT'D)

You know, I'm just helpin' out a friend.

ROSA

You fuckin' her?

Will squirms, tries to avoid the question.

WILL

I'm just helping her until she can get some cash together, pay off some bills, move out.

Rosa's Latin temperament erupts.

ROSA

Will - !ay caramba! Why didn't you just tell me?

WILL

I didn't think you'd understand.

Rosa stands, bangs down her cocktail glass, slopping the contents over the sides.

ROSA

Well, you were right. Call me when you can pull yourself away from your new little friend.

Will watches his girl turn and clip-clop from the restaurant patio.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - DAY

Will enters to the sound of rock blaring from a radio. The noise is accompanied by the sound of running water in Crystal's shower.

As he approaches her bedroom, he can hear Crystal rocking to the beat, singing at the top of her lungs.

Will goes to his study and boots up his computer.

WILL'S DEN

Will, at his desk, sorts what looks like credit card statements - three of them. He looks frustrated.

Crystal walks from her bedroom toward the kitchen, clad only in a damp towel, smoking a cigarette, humming.

She notices Will at his computer as she returns from the kitchen carrying a glass of vodka.

CRYSTAL

Lookin' for gold, Archimedes?

Will looks up, notices her almost naked, still damp, body.

WILL

Working on our credit card debts.

(beat)

Shouldn't you be getting ready to go to work?

CRYSTAL

You heard the doc. He said I should take it easy for a while.

(beat)

Anyway, when my lawsuit comes in, I ain't gonna have to work no more. I can do like you - sit around on my ass all day and look busy.

Will frowns - he knows he's not going to win this one.

WILL

You know, that dipshit Brad is just using you. There's no way you guys are gonna rake in millions.

CRYSTAL

As soon as we get our settlement, he's gonna dump his loser wife and head out with me.

WILL

Yeah, in the meantime, you just plan to keep paying off your credit cards with mine? That's gonna catch up with us sooner or later.

Crystal smiles, turns her back on Will and lets the towel accidentally fall to the floor on her way to her bedroom.

She looks over her shoulder at Will, drooling on his desk.

CRYSTAL

Dry my back? And front.

Will's out of his chair like it's on fire.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND WILL'S CONDO - MORNING

Crystal is attempting to fit three large suitcases in the trunk of a 300 Z-car. Will stands in the alley, watching.

WILL

You don't have to leave...

CRYSTAL

I can live with my mom while I wait for my settlement. I can't stay with you after you talked me into that operation that made me sick.

Will reacts to that observation like he just got hit with a sack of wet concrete.

WILL

You're gonna find another sucker with credit cards after you maxed out mine.

(beat)

About the credit card debt...

Crystal cuts Will off mid-sentence. She continues to try to force 100 pounds of junk in a 80 pounds of junk trunk.

CRYSTAL

I'll cover that when my lawsuit comes in. Brad says just a few more weeks.

Finally, Crystal manages to close the trunk. She hugs Will, then a quick peck on the cheek, and she's off.

Will stands in the alley, watching the quickly departing sports car.

Will notices a bag of her belongings sitting on a nearby curb. He picks up the bag, rolls it around in his hands.

Looking around, Will locates a nearby trash bin, tosses the bag into the can and returns to his condo.

EXT. INTERSECTION OF 1000 PALMS CANYON AND DILLON ROAD - DAY

A lone biker on 1000 Palms Canyon Road approaches the intersection with Dillon Road after the two mile climb.

Waiting off to the side of 1000 Palms stands Will, leaning against his SUV, drinking from a bike bottle.

The biker stops at Will, removes her helmet. It's Rosa.

Will offers Rosa a hit from his bottle. She refuses, grabs her own bike bottle, glares at Will.

WILL

How are you Rosa?

ROSA

Will. What are you doin' here?

WILL

Just wanted to see you, maybe get together again.

ROSA

I don't think so.

WILL

And to tell you I, ah, evicted my tenant.

ROSA

Congratulations.

Will gets a little more assertive.

WILL

You need to give me another chance. So I made a mistake. Forgive me.

(beat)

Remember - the ride. Please?

Rosa snaps her bottle back into its cage, puts on her helmet.

ROSA

I don't know about you but I still have 20 miles left on my ride.

Rosa clips into one pedal. Back to New York Puerto Rican.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I'm no good with this on-again-off-again business. You need to commit to someone or something and stay with it.

WILL

I have committed to something, too much I think. It's eatin' into my accounting practice.

Then Will turns into a shy little boy.

WILL (CONT'D)

And - I really want to be with you.

Rosa starts off, stops, calls back.

ROSA

Too bad you didn't act like it.

And she turns left on Dillon, heads downhill.

INT. WILL'S CONDO, THE STUDY - DAY

Will, in briefs, is at his computer workstation. Bar plots are spread around randomly on the top of the desk.

A Users Manual for Mathematics is next to the monitor. Will is frantically paging through it, looking for something.

An anxious knock on his front door diverts his attention. He carefully stows the Users Manual and plots in a desk drawer.

CONDO FRONT DOOR

Will opens the door and greets an agitated John.

JOHN

Jesus Will!

Will stands aside and signals for his buddy to enter.

WILL

And good morning to you.

John enters the condo, casts a questioning glance at Will.

JOHN

Why don't you answer your phone?

The two walk toward the kitchen.

WILL

Coffee?

JOHN

A shot of JD would be better.

WILL

So - what can I do for you?

JOHN

How about finishing my 1995 income taxes on time?

WILL

Oops.

John locates the coffee pot and a mug in the kitchen and pours himself a cup.

JOHN

Ever since both of your women dumped you, you just disappeared.

WILL

I've been busy.

JOHN

With what? Certainly not my tax return.

WILL

Can't tell you yet. It's a surprise.

John looks at Will, not satisfied with the answer. He then heads into the study.

THE CONDO STUDY

John stands in front of the workstation. He notices the bare desk, but the computer is turned on. He turns to Will.

JOHN

Don't look busy to me.

Will plops onto a small couch in the study.

WILL

I'm overwhelmed with "The Ride."

Will makes the quotation sign with two fingers on each hand.

JOHN

What the hell does that mean?

WILL

It's Rosa's term for the passage of time while you're striving for a goal. You should enjoy the ride.

JOHN

Well, I wish you could enjoy
finishing my taxes before I have to
pay a fine.

WILL

Sorry. I'll get on it.

John finally notices his friends scant attire.

JOHN

Just get up?

WILL

Busy, busy. No time to change.

JOHN

Shit Will. You need to get out,
get back in the game. You need to
hit the club with me. I wouldn't
take no for an answer.

Will signals his agreement with a nod.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

Will and John are alone in their favorite booth. Jello
approaches, sets her tray on the table. Will greets her.

WILL

Hey toots.

JELLO

Hey big spender. We still on?

WILL

We will party till we drop.

Will leaves Jello an extravagant tip before she leaves. John
watches her weave her way through the club.

JOHN

Well that didn't take long.
Thought you wanted to get back
together with Rosa.

WILL

I tried. Tried and failed.

JOHN

Maybe you should try harder.

Will tops off his beer from the table pitcher.

WILL

The thing with these girls - you don't have to try hard - you just have to stay hard.

JOHN

You're a dirty middle-aged man.

WILL

I mean you don't have to romance 'em, get to know 'em, meets their parents, do that dance.

JOHN

Still lookin' for your shortcut.

WILL

Like, who's got the time?

JOHN

I must remind you that I'm with "one of those girls."

WILL

Yeah, but Kim's just here workin' her way through college.

JOHN

I still think you should not give up on Rosa. She's worth it.

WILL

Yeah, we did have a good thing goin'. I'll ping her every now and then. In the mean time...

Will turns his attention to the stage, where Jello has just removed her halter top.

INT. THE SPA HOTEL AND CASINO - NIGHT

Will is at the bar, flirting with JJ the waitress, when his cell phone rings. He excuses himself, answers.

WILL

Hey, Rosa. How the hell are you?

As Will listens his sunny demeanor turns anxious.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hold on. I'll be right there.

Will hurries out of the casino.

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Will is seated beside a bed. In the bed Rosa is out cold, tubes snaking from under the sheets to IV bottles. Her head tilts, eyes closed, mouth open as if gasping for air.

Will holds Rosa's inert hand, strokes her arm. He then goes to a window, looks out. As he watches, day turns to night.

LATER

Rosa is barely awake. She senses Will's presence, looks his way, smiles. Then goes out again.

LATER STILL

Rosa is conscious, sitting up. Will holds a glass of fruit juice with a straw from which she is sipping.

A FEMALE DOCTOR, fifties, stands at the foot of the bed, checking charts. A group of Medical Interns crowd behind her, paying attention to their mentor.

The Female Doctor looks at Rosa and Will.

FEMALE DOCTOR

The infection will clear up in a few days. The operation we just performed - repairing the plumbing so to speak - will prevent a reoccurrence.

WILL

But what about her kidney?

FEMALE DOCTOR

Well, it's been compromised one time too many, but it could hold in there for years. Hard to predict.

WILL

Then what?

FEMALE DOCTOR

Transplant - or dialysis. Not a death sentence.

The Doctor rubs Rosa's leg - reassuring - but speaks to Will.

FEMALE DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Just glad you got our little lady here to us on time.

The group of doctors follow their mentor out of the room like a gaggle of little ducks following mama duck.

Will and Rosa watch them depart.

ROSA

Thanks. You saved my ass.

WILL

It's such a pretty ass.

Will walks to the window, looks out, back to Rosa.

WILL (CONT'D)

Why didn't you call your new boy friend?

ROSA

That didn't work out. I guess I couldn't get you out of my mind.

Will returns to her bed, takes her hand.

WILL

Maybe we can make it work this time.

ROSA

We can try.

Rosa motions over to the container of juice on the tray attached to the bed. Will hands it to her.

WILL

Thing is, I would think that given your delicate condition you'd want to accelerate life rather than slow it down.

ROSA

That's the way I started out.

WILL

So - what am I missing here?

Rosa looks out the window, lost in thought.

ROSA

I've had my unique condition since I was a baby. Had my first operation when I was less than a year old. Scared the crap outta my parents. Had several operations since then, as a teenager.

Rosa pauses for a sip of water.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I lived life to the max. I was not waiting for anything. Goin' full speed, all the time. I was a big time party girl in college.

WILL

And then?

Rosa snaps out of her introspection.

ROSA

Then I jumped into my marriage with that dipshit Roberto. When that didn't work out...

WILL

But you have a beautiful daughter.

ROSA

There is that.

(beat)

Anyway, that experience made me look at my life, reconsider. I slowed way down, decided to hold onto every moment, not rush it.

WILL

Enjoy the ride. Smell the roses.

ROSA

That my philosophy now. And you're the beneficiary.

WILL

Lucky me.

(beat)

But, when you get out here it better be time for us to consummate this frigen' relationship.

Will separates the fingers on both hands into a V-sign, like Spock from Star Trek. He mates the V's and slides them in and out - his symbol for intercourse.

Rosa gets it. Giggling, she stops Will's obscene gesture.

ROSA

We'll see how it goes.

Will doesn't look thrilled.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Will and Rosa are on the couch, her with a glass of wine and him with a cocktail. They're watching TV.

The apartment door bursts open and Rosa's daughter Carmela rushes in. She sweeps past her mom with nary a peep.

Carmela is followed by a 80 pound Pit Bull. The dog stops in front of Will and checks him out. And GROWLS.

A husky male, TERRELL, Afro-American, twenties, brings up the rear. He grabs at the dog's collar, disciplines him.

TERRELL

Jake! Stop that.

Terrell smiles at Will, who looks concerned.

TERRELL (CONT'D)

Hey, man. Sorry. Jake takes some time to warm up to a new dude.

Jake sits down at Will's feet, then lets out a loud BARK. Both Will and Rosa jump at little at this single woof.

TERRELL (CONT'D)

He wants you to scratch his back.

WILL

Maybe after I warm up to him.

TERRELL

Yeah. That's cool. Let's go Jake.

Terrell and Jake disappear into the second bedroom, following Carmela, and that door closes. Will turns to Rosa.

WILL

What was that all about?

ROSA

Carmela needs to stay with me for a while. And Terrell. And Jake.

WILL

Shit.

ROSA

What's the problem?

Will's getting a little testy.

WILL

We don't need complications in our relationship now. This big ass ride better not get more bumpy.

ROSA

Well, she is my daughter. I'm hoping for some understanding here.

Carmela's bedroom door opens and the trio emerge.

CARMELA

Keep an eye on Jake mom.

Carmela and Terrell hurry out. Jake sits in front of Will, looks at him. And GROWLS.

WILL

And this ride better have some brass rings for me to grab.

(beat)

And soon.

Will, pissed, stares at Rosa, then Jake. Ignoring the dog he stands, grabs his car keys from a table and leaves.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - NIGHT

Will is seated at the bar talking to LARRY, forties, behind the bar. Larry looks more like the typical guy next door, not the owner of a topless bar.

Rosa enters carrying a book sized paper bag. She moseys over to Will, glares quickly at him then greets Larry.

ROSA

Larry.

LARRY

Rosa. What'll you have?

ROSA

Shot ah JD. Make it a double.

Larry prepares the drink, slides the glass across to Rosa.

LARRY

Enjoy.

Will picks up on Rosa's attitude.

WILL

Hey babe. How be yah?

Both Will and Rosa restrain themselves, not touching.

ROSA

Will. What the fuck. This the way
you gonna address our relationship
when we have a little disagreement?

Will doesn't respond, but takes another hit of his beer.

ROSA (CONT'D)

You're just gonna disappear, hide
in your favorite watering hole?

Jello comes to the bar for an order. She looks at Will and Rosa, assesses the situation then leaves with her drinks.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I don't like you hanging out in
this place anyway.

WILL

I don't give a fuzzy rat's ass that
you don't like it.

Rosa's eyes follow the departing Jello. Then she shoots the remainder of her drink, slams the glass down on the bar.

WILL (CONT'D)

I knew you'd come alookin' for me.

Rosa removes the contents of the paper bag. It's a huge cut of sirloin steak. Steak juices drip onto the floor.

Rosa tosses the steak on the bar in front of Will. He jerks in reaction as it SMACKS down, spraying juices.

ROSA

Here's the dinner we were gonna
have two weeks ago.

(beat)

Speakin' of rat's asses, you know
where can shove it.

Rosa turns and hurries out of the club.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - MORNING

Will is at his desk, writing a check to Bank of America for more than ten thousand dollars. He crams this check into an envelope along with a credit card bill from B of A, seals it.

Will crosses off a line on a sheet of paper titled "Action Items - 1995" - "pay off Crystal's credit card bill."

SUPER: PHOENIX, ARIZONA - 1996

EXT. A BANK OF AMERICA - MORNING

Desert landscape dresses up the building. Painted on the front of the bank is "B of A, Phoenix, Arizona".

INT. THE BANK

A refined, modestly dressed Crystal is at a tellers window. She writes a number on a slip of paper and pushes it to the TELLER.

CRYSTAL

What's the balance on this account?

The Teller looks askance at Crystal.

TELLER

Could I see some identification?

Crystal shuffles through her purse, extracts a billfold, removes a drivers license. Two lipsticks and an eye pencil drip out of her oversized purse and bang on the counter.

Crystal shoves the license at the Teller.

The Teller disappears then returns with the slip of paper. Pushes it across to Crystal, who looks at the slip, smiles.

EXT. DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

Crystal and Will are standing outside a modest house in a Palm Springs suburb. There is a For Sale sign out front.

Crystal has aged well - shorter hair, more business like, and no evidence of enhanced breasts. Will looks like he's been through the wringer in the years since she left.

CRYSTAL

... So I thought, together, we could buy this house, start to build equity.

Will looks confused, and a little upset.

WILL

I don't hear from you for over two years, now all of a sudden we're buying a house?

Crystal turns on the charm, smiles at Will.

CRYSTAL

We did get along well when I lived with you. Remember?

WILL

I have a house. Why would I buy another?

Will looks at Crystal, a little disgusted.

WILL (CONT'D)

Two bloody years!

Crystal switches gears. She asks a question she thinks she knows the answer to.

CRYSTAL

So - how's it goin' with your lady friend? In the last two years? Gettin' any sweet lovin'?

WILL

Shit.

Crystal talks fast - apparently so the other person wouldn't have time to develop a convincing objection.

CRYSTAL

I could get my job back at the bar, it's not far from my mom...

Will paces nervously in front of the For Sale sign, trying to make up his mind.

INT. A BANK - DAY

Will and Crystal are seated in front of an impressive wooden desk, ruled over by a well dressed male BANKER.

The Banker is shuffling papers as he addresses them, not looking directly at his potential customers.

BANKER

Well, you see, Miss Smith, you have no income history, and your credit report has some, shall we say, issues.

CRYSTAL

Issues?

The Banker is now actually squirming in his seat, trying to avoid any details of the credit report.

BANKER

Three credit card companies have indicated that you defaulted on payments - you owe...

The Banker looks through the credit report in front of him.

BANKER (CONT'D)

... over \$16,000.

(beat)

You may want to settle up with these card companies before you incur any additional debt.

Crystal looks hurt by this suggestion. How dare he...

CRYSTAL

Well, they're full of shit! My cards were stolen, and the thief ran up all those charges. I've been fighting for a year to adjudicate this matter.

And now, a pout. This is a good acting job!

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

Anyway, I've got a legal settlement coming in any day now.

For the Coup de Gras, Crystal stands, gathers up her papers and purse.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

You can take your loan and stick it up your ass. Come on honey, they don't want our business.

Crystal leaves, Will stands. He and the Banker each wear a puzzled expression - they look, knowingly, at each other.

EXT. THE LUCKY WINNER WEDDING CHAPEL, LAS VEGAS - MORNING

One of those quick-before-you-have-time-to-think-about-it instant wedding chapels just off the Strip.

INT. THE CHAPEL

Crystal and Will are standing in front of a PREACHER, holding a Bible. Windy and John stand by.

Recorded organ music PLAYS SOFTLY in the background. Will still looks puzzled, but Crystal appears radiant.

EXT. THE CHAPEL

The bride and groom exit the chapel. Crystal quickly kisses Will on the cheek, and she and Windy take off.

John looks after them, throws rice on Will.

JOHN

Well, that was cute.

WILL

This is just a marriage of convenience, so she can get a loan. Nobody needs to know about it.

John walks away, leaving Will to ponder his fate.

INT. A DIFFERENT BANK - MORNING

A well dressed, efficient looking WOMAN BANKER sits behind an old metal desk. The newlyweds sit across from her.

WOMAN BANKER

Mister and Misses Anders, your loan application has been approved. With your large down payment and Mister Ander's income, you should be able to cover the principle, interest and taxes.

Will frowns and Crystal hugs him, happy for now.

EXT. THE HOUSE, DESERT HOT SPRINGS - DAY

A bunch of high school age looking young men unload cheap furniture from a van with "Starving Students" painted on the outside. They carry the stuff into the house.

Will is there, monitoring the operation. He walks over the badly maintained front yard, inspecting it, kicking dust.

INT. WILL'S CONDO - MORNING

Will is standing beside a nicely dressed middle aged woman, LYNN, looking out the living room window.

LYNN
Beautiful view.

WILL
I've enjoyed it.

Lynn returns her attention to the interior of the home. She runs her hand over an old leather couch.

LYNN
Furniture is included in the price?

WILL
Yes - all of it. I'm moving in with a friend. Don't need it.

Lynn goes to the dining room table where a small briefcase is resting. She takes some forms from the briefcase.

LYNN
I'll need a six month listing.
I'll post your property on the Multiple Listing Service, make up flyers, and we can arrange for open house showings. I'm sure we can get a buyer in less than two months. It's a sellers market now.

Will takes a sad look around his condo - gonna miss it.

EXT. CRYSTAL'S HOME - MORNING

Will is moving clothes from his car into the house.

INT. THE HOME

Will is arranging his clothes around junk stored in a small closet in a small bedroom.

A mattress, resting on the floor, occupies a corner.

Crystal's black cat sits in the middle of the bed, staring at Will with ill intent.

THE GUEST BATHROOM

Will notices the cat's litter box next to the commode hasn't been scooped lately. The sink is dirty and the shower stall has fungus on the tile and hair in the drain.

THE KITCHEN

Will removes the bottle of vodka from the freezer and pours himself a shot. He looks around at the dismal interior.

So this is what my life's gonna be like!

MONTAGE

THE FRONT YARD

Will is tilling the yard with a hand rake. The desert style plants that cover the yard are sick, dying.

THE FRONT ROOM

Will is cleaning up the residue from a party - buckled beer cans, empty glasses, spilled popcorn. On the way to the kitchen, he passes by a large bedroom.

Inside the bedroom, Crystal is passed out on her bed.

THE KITCHEN

Will has several pots going on the stove. Crystal and Windy sit at a small table, drinking vodka shooters.

THE GUEST BEDROOM

Will, scratching his head, is writing checks and drinking.

He pages through stacks of bills - setting priorities.

THE BATHROOM

Will is sifting the sand in a cat litter box. The cat, a beautiful black tom, rubs against his leg.

END MONTAGE

INT. THE HOME, CRYSTAL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Will has just roused a sleeping Crystal from a deep sleep. It takes several incursions into her bedroom before she remains conscious.

Will looks pissed.

WILL

Don't you have an interview this morning?

CRYSTAL

He'll wait for me. After all, I'm doing him a favor by coming back to that sorry dive.

Crystal slips on a robe, goes to the refrigerator and extracts a bottle of vodka from the freezer. She pours herself a healthy shot and returns. Will's concerned.

WILL

Coffee would be better.

CRYSTAL

You're my husband, not my mom.

WILL

Yeah. About being "your husband" - shouldn't we be sharing the bed?

The newly weds stare at each other - not on the same page.

INT. CRYSTAL'S HOUSE, WILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Will is at his computer, referring to notes as he types in symbols to an equation on the monitor.

Will saves his computer work and turns off the machine. He then searches under the stack of plots. Finally, he unearths his checkbook.

Will pages through the checkbook, shakes his head, heads out of his bedroom.

INT. CRYSTAL'S HOME - EVENING

As Will enters the living room, he is surprised to find a large, long haired, tattooed, ear-ring-wearing male, about forty, resting on the couch.

Crystal enters the room, carrying two bottles of beer. She hands one to the male.

CRYSTAL

Hi, Will. This is Roger. He lives down the street.

ROGER stands, shakes Will's hand. This guy looks like he could tear your head off, shit down your neck, and not bat an eye in the process.

ROGER

Yo.

CRYSTAL

Roger owns a house just like this one. We were thinking - we could sell both houses and buy one larger place, in a nicer neighborhood. We could all live in the new house.

WILL

Really.

CRYSTAL

Oh, and Roger's gonna stay here tonight. His house is having some work done on it - plumbing stuff. Water's off.

ROGER

Yeah - I can't even take a shit there.

Crystal and her new best friend laugh and laugh. Will just looks aghast.

INT. CRYSTAL'S HOME - MORNING

Will is running the vacuum cleaner - fulfilling his role as house husband. A loud grumble comes from Crystal's bedroom.

ROGER (O.S.)

Shut that fuckin' thing off! I'm tryin' to get some sleep.

Will complies with the request. He puts the vacuum away.

Crystal plods into the kitchen, to the refrigerator, to the freezer. She pours a healthy shot into a coffee cup.

WILL

Tough night?

CRYSTAL

Fuck off!

Will pours himself a cup of coffee. He looks at Crystal.

WILL
I'm moving out. This sucks.

CRYSTAL
Fine!

WILL
I'll need my money ...

CRYSTAL
When I sell the house.

WILL
What about your lawsuit?

CRYSTAL
Fuckin' lawyers! Brad wants more
up front money. The original
settlement was in the billions, but
that got knocked way back. And
Brad is bitchin' about some of the
claims my girls made - they looked
"questionable."

WILL
I don't know how that could be.

Crystal gives Will another one of those fuck-off-and-die
looks, fueled by a big swig of booze.

EXT. DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA - MORNING

The Coachella Valley, mountains in the background.

SUPER: DESERT HOT SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, 2000

EXT. THE DESERT SPRINGS RV PARK

A modest RV park on the outskirts of nowhere. Old trailers
and fifth-wheels - it doesn't get any better than this.

Will stands outside his 1970 Airstream aluminum trailer,
drinking his morning coffee.

INT. AN INDIAN CASINO - EVENING

A neighborhood gambling hall, away from the action. A club
avoided by High Rollers and vacationing families with kids.

Will plays at the dollar blackjack table. He seems to know all the dealers, pit bosses and waitresses here.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - NIGHT

It's closing time. Larry is behind the bar, counting cash, closing out the registers.

Kim and some of the other dancers/waitresses are collecting glasses, cleaning tables.

All the customers are gone, except Will and John. Will goes to the now empty stage and jumps up on it. He calls out.

WILL

Can I have your attention.

All the worker bees stop what their doing, look at the stage.

WILL (CONT'D)

Gather around. Get closer.

Larry shouts at Will from the bar area.

LARRY

Will. Get the hell off there.

WILL

Larry. Humor me.

Soon all those present are near the stage, some seated.

WILL (CONT'D)

So. Every now and then I'm presented with an opportunity...

Heckles from the crowd, laughter.

WILL (CONT'D)

... an opportunity to make a shit load of money.

Better crowd response this time.

WILL (CONT'D)

And I'd like to share these opportunities with all of you - my dear and closest friends.

JOHN

This is not another one of your get rich quick schemes, like the penny stocks you talked me into?

WILL
No - well yes, maybe.

The crowd mumbles, starts to disperse.

WILL (CONT'D)
Wait! Hear me out.
(beat)
You all know I'm kinda down on my
luck lately. Before, BC...

LARRY
BC - Before Crystal?

This gets a rise out of the group.

WILL
Yeah, before Crystal. Anyway, BC,
I had the resources to scrape up
the minimum investment myself.

Moans from the gang.

JOHN
Here it comes. Hold onto your
wallets and purses.

WILL
No, no. I don't need much, just a
few bucks, and only a couple of
times a year. And if we're lucky
we could all get stinkin' rich.

Will kneels down on the stage to get closer to his marks.
It's back to the mad scientist persona.

WILL (CONT'D)
Now here's my plan...

Ears perk up, as the gang focuses on Will.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER - DAY

Will is at his computer, transcribing data from the newspaper
to an Excel file. When he is done he raises both arms -
touchdown!

LATER

Will watches as his printer spews out sheets of paper. When
it finishes, he assembles the printout.

The printout seems to consist of many rows of numbers, but the exact format is not discernible as he handles it.

Will then cuts the printout into smaller sheets, about 10 of them. He then writes a name on each sheet, and records the same names on a separate sheet of paper.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR BAR - EVENING

Will is handing out the slips of paper to his bar buddies.

He hands one to Andy, his heavy Latino friend.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER - EVENING

Will is on the phone. He's drinking and upset.

WILL
(phone)
So no sale yet? How about the lawsuit?

He listens to the response, makes faces.

WILL (CONT'D)
(phone)
Look, I really need my money. I can't wait here forever while you and Roger try to sell your homes. It's been three years since I left. I was fair with you - big down payment, made all the mortgage payments, the utilities.

He listens, then slams the phone down.

EXT. OUTSIDE WILL'S TRAILER - MORNING

The mail has just arrived, and Will is reading a legal looking document. He reacts with disbelief.

Over his shoulder, we can see the title on top of the document - "Real Estate Quit Claim".

INT. A LAWYERS OFFICE - DAY

Will, Crystal and her MOTHER, frumpy older trailer trash personified, are meeting with a FEMALE LAWYER in a legal aid office.

FEMALE LAWYER

So, by signing this document, you give up all claims to ownership, mister Anders. Do you understand?

WILL

No, not really. I put up the down payment, paid all the monthly expenses, and now you're telling me I should give up ownership?

CRYSTAL

Well, dear, I've made all the tax payments for the last three years - you abandoned the property. You forfeited your right of ownership. If you would have been there, taking care of me, like a good husband should, it wouldn't have come to this. But, a girl has to survive.

The mother and lawyer nod to signify their agreement. Will is outnumbered three-to-one.

WILL

Well, when you sell, at least you can pay me back the down payment money.

CRYSTAL

Well, my mother loaned me money for the down payment. I have a note for the loan right here...

Crystal produces a hand written note that she waves briefly in front of Will. He is not able to review the note before she stows it in her briefcase.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)

... and I don't think you have a note, that I signed, that says I owe you anything.

Will stands, looks at the women in the room, and leaves.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - EVENING

The dancers have changed, but the clientele hasn't - still the same gang of losers sniffing around young girls.

John, Will and Doctor Don are sharing a corner booth.

DOCTOR DON

So, you got screwed, but you didn't
get laid...?

WILL

I could have stayed, fought it. I
had documentation - bills I paid.
But, I didn't have a signed note
for the down payment loan. Legal
fees would have killed me. So,
forget it. Then she divorced me.

John responds to the comment with a questioning look.

JOHN

Wiped you out?

WILL

Yeah. That's why I'm living in
that dump. I've become trailer
trash.

DOCTOR DON

How about your accounting practice?

Will looks away, ashamed.

WILL

Lost most of my clients. Spent too
much time chasing another of my
famous shortcuts - the one I roped
you and my buddies here...

Will waves his arm around, indicating the bar interior.

WILL (CONT'D)

...into. So far, no big payoff.

JOHN

Well - maybe someday.

John clinks his beer glass to Will's, smiles.

EXT. THE RED DOG LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Rosa enters. A California Lottery poster is in the window.

INT. THE RED DOG

Rosa is surprised to find a line of patrons waiting to buy
Lotto tickets.

As the line moves, Andy, lottery tickets in hand, passes Rosa as he heads to the store exit. Rosa recognizes him.

ROSA

Andy!

Andy stops, sees Rosa. He approaches Rosa, hugs her.

ANDY

Hey Rosa - save your money. I just bought the winnin' ticket.

Andy shuffles through three five dollar tickets.

ANDY (CONT'D)

It's somewhere in here. Got a sure-fire system, can't lose.

Andy, smiling, heads out, waving his tickets, calls back.

ANDY (CONT'D)

People flock to this place since it had three winning tickets. They think history will repeat itself.

LATER

Rosa is at the counter, staring across at an ancient Korean CLERK, partially obscured by thick bullet proof glass.

As Rosa pays for a bottle of wine, she spots the photos of the three past Lotto winners on a wall behind the counter.

Rosa stares at one of the pictures as if she recognizes the woman. It is in fact a photo of Kim, John's lady friend.

Rosa points to the photos, questions the clerk.

ROSA

These people bought winning tickets here?

CLERK

Buy tickets with five out of six - no six for six, no big jackpot. Win \$15,000 - \$20,000.

(beat)

Maybe you win big jackpot.

Rosa continues to stare at the three photos. The second one is also of a young, attractive woman.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Will opens the door - surprised to see Rosa waiting.

WILL

Rosa.

Will invites Rosa into his modest unit - quite a come-down from a condo in a country club.

ROSA

Hola.

Rosa checks out the trailer.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Nice digs.

Will laughs at the sarcastic remark.

WILL

Yeah. Livin' the dream.

(beat)

Come in. Sit.

Rosa enters, locates a make-shift couch. Sits.

WILL (CONT'D)

Nice to see you. How you been?

Rosa relocates clutter on the couch, gets comfortable.

ROSA

Fine. You?

WILL

Busy, busy.

(beat)

Like a drink? California Chard?

Rosa smiles, nods OK. Will locates a bottle of wine, pours them both a drink. He hands her a glass, clinks it with his.

WILL (CONT'D)

To good friends.

They both sip. Rosa then sets her glass aside.

WILL (CONT'D)

What brings you here? Miss me?

ROSA

What are the chances that one store could sell three winning Lotto tickets in one year?

Will, on the chair at his desk, reacts with surprise.

WILL

Where the hell did that come from? And how should I know? You're the mathematician.

Will slowly rotates to face his desk, hides the printouts on top of the desk, sneaky-like, rotates the chair to face Rosa.

WILL (CONT'D)

You love to hit me with these out-of-the-blue situations. Like your famous waterwheel and where did my shortcut lifestyle come from.

ROSA

Well, you're a numbers guy. You've probably been playing with that math program I put you onto.

WILL

Mathematica? No way - too complicated. I'd have to learn a new programming language just to do something simple.

ROSA

Your friend Kim was one of the winners.

WILL

Kim? John's Kim?

ROSA

One other winner looked like someone you may know - a cute young gal, maybe a dancer.

WILL

Wow.

ROSA

And I came to this information at the place where we first met.

WILL

The Red Dog Liquor store?

Will goes to his fridge, extracts a bag of party ice cubes, clinks them in a glass, anoints then with JD. Stronger medicine.

ROSA

The place where I learned about your obsession to win the lottery.

WILL

My shortcut to fame and fortune.

ROSA

The very same.

Will takes a healthy shot of his booze, sits facing Rosa.

WILL

So you concluded that I found my shortcut.

Rosa taps her wine glass - more please.

ROSA

That possibility crossed my mind.

Will fills Rosa's glass, then tops off his cocktail.

WILL

Given my efforts, I'd say it's not possible, with the current state-of-the-art in computing power, to calculate winning Lotto numbers.

Will waits a beat to sense Rosa's reaction.

WILL (CONT'D)

You would think if someone were that smart, they would also be smart enough to use different places to buy tickets.

ROSA

So, what have you been working on?

Will goes to his computer, turns it on. In the process he carefully removes a stack of computer plots and printouts from the desk and stows them in a drawer.

WILL

Here - check out my feeble attempt.

Will boots up a computer program and creates two virtual balls on the computer screen.

WILL (CONT'D)

An engineer friend put together
this simulation.

Will then uses the simulation to drop the balls on a make-believe floor from five feet.

The first ball hits the make believe floor, bounces up and contacts the second ball on its way down. The two balls then rebound away from each other. Eventually, virtual gravity pulls both balls down and they bounce off the floor several times before coming to rest.

WILL (CONT'D)

This programs solves the equations
of motion for a body, or bodies.

Will pauses to let the implications of that sink in.

WILL (CONT'D)

A lot of number crunching went into
this demo. And this is just two
balls. And only two dimensions.

(beat)

You know, it was you who told me to
replicate the physics of the
behavior I was interested in.

INT. THE CALIFORNIA LOTTERY DRAWING FISH BOWL

Numbered ping-pong balls bounce randomly inside the bowl.

WILL (V.O.)

Consider having fifty-one balls,
all of which can impact each other
and the spherical container - in
three dimensions.

RETURN TO SCENE - WILL'S TRAILER

WILL

We don't know exactly the physical
properties of each unique ball, and
the properties of the container.
We don't know about the air blast,
its magnitude or duration, and we
don't know the initial conditions -
what position each ball was in
before we started the computer.

Rosa stares at the monitor as Will turns it off.

WILL (CONT'D)

Come on - fess up. You just wanted to see me.

ROSA

I have missed you. My life is not as - exciting - without you.

Will moves away from the computer, toward Rosa.

WILL

Let me show you the rest of the bat cave. The bedroom is back this way.

Will gestures toward the rear of the trailer. Rosa smiles.

EXT. WILL'S TRAILER

Blinking lights from the trailer park neon sign reflect off Will's trailer - now rocking and rolling.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER, LATER

Rosa and Will kiss passionately at the open door.

ROSA

I do love you.

WILL

I love you too.

It's still night as Rosa looks back at Will as she leaves.

EXT. THE DESERT

Desert plants gain and lose foliage as about two months pass.

EXT. WILL'S TRAILER - DAY

Will sits outside his Airstream at a bench reading the Sunday newspaper, enjoying a mug of coffee.

He pages through the newspaper until he finds the crossword. He tears it out of the section, folds it, sets it aside.

LATER

One of his neighbors walks by. They greet each other.

Will enters his trailer and returns to the bench with a fresh mug of coffee. The sections of the paper lie on the bench.

Will gets up, touches the various sections of the paper and roots through them, isolates a particular one.

He looks at the selected section for a beat, then wanders around in front of his unit - feigning interest.

Finally - he can wait no longer. He grabs the section, leafs through it, extracts a page and hurries into his trailer.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER

Will takes the newspaper page to his desk, sets it down. He bangs the desk drawers open and closed, searching.

Will's black tomcat scoots to a corner to escape the noise.

He eventually locates a computer printout. It has many rows consisting of six one or two digit numbers in each row - the same printout he had previously cut into pieces to hand out.

Will returns to the newspaper page and tears out a small block. The block is titled "California Lottery." It contains the winning numbers for the latest draw.

He sets this block next to the printout and scans through the rows of numbers, using a straight edge. He looks back and forth from the block to the printout, comparing.

Suddenly, Will pauses at one row of six numbers. He slides the block right next to it.

The lotto numbers in the paper match the numbers in the row.

Will lets out a yell, scaring the hell out of his black cat.

He follows the shout by an impromptu little dance.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - EVENING

Rosa enters the club. She sees Larry behind the bar.

Rosa approaches the bar, greets Larry.

ROSA
Seen Will lately?

LARRY
He's usually in here at seven like
clockwork. Must be sick.

ROSA
I called his home, but, no answer.

LARRY
Try his cell? Try John?

ROSA
Same result. I saw him a few month ago, and he seemed fine.

LARRY
He was just in here last week - to collect his tickets.

ROSA
Tickets? What tickets?

Larry looks surprised, avoids the query.

LARRY
Maybe you should check his trailer. Want me to go with you?

ROSA
Nah. I got this.

The two look at each other in silent agreement.

INT. WILL'S TRAILER - NIGHT

The door opens and Rosa enters, clicks on a light. The room is clean, and all of Will's personal effects are in place.

The black tom cat from Crystal's scoots in past Rosa's legs.

Rosa searches the room - no sign of Will. But, his elaborate computer system is still there, intact.

ROSA
Where are you lover boy?

Rosa's attention is drawn to the computer. She sits down, turns it on. The cat jumps on the desk looking for attention.

Rosa studies the Desktop, sees the starburst icon for Mathematica, the math program she told Will about.

Rosa gets comfortably seated in front of Will's computer. She searches through his file directory.

THE MONITOR SCREEN

The cursor pages its way through the directory, and pauses on a folder titled "LOTTO". Rosa double clicks on this.

When the "LOTTO" folder opens, Rosa sees it contains many individual files. One is titled "history". She opens it.

ROSA (O.S.)

This is an input file for the math program.

Rosa opens the "history" file, and lines of numbers fill the screen. Each line is started by a date, followed by six integer numbers, and ended with a decimal number.

When Rosa pages through this file, close to a thousand lines of data flash on the screen, each with the same format.

Rosa closes the "history" file, returning to the "LOTTO" folder. Most of the other files there have titles like "aug2199" - clearly a date.

THE TRAILER

Rosa points to one of these files. She addresses the tom.

ROSA

These were created by Mathematica.

She opens a dated file.

THE SCREEN

The lines of data in this file have no date, and only six integer numbers. There are two hundred lines in this file.

Rosa closes the file, and points to a file named "chaos.nb".

ROSA (O.S.)

This file gives instructions to the math program - what to do with the input file to generate the output.

Program execution instructions - looking like Egyptian Hieroglyphics - light up the screen.

THE TRAILER

The tom cat jumps off the desk, rubs against Rosa's legs - hey you! I want a drink of milk!

Rosa's finger traces over several lines of code as if she actually understands the gibberish.

ROSA

Really Will. Hit me with that bouncing ball crap to throw me off your trail? You're not using physics here...

Rosa swivels around, talks to the tom cat about his buddy.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Isn't he a smart little gringo? But what is he doing with two hundred sets of numbers each week?

Rosa swivels back, turns off the computer, stands and starts to walk slowly around the room.

She pauses at a crude bookshelf, studies the books there and then removes two books from a shelf, examines them.

CLOSE ON THE BOOKS

A thick paperback book is titled "The Predictors," and the other is a text book "Chaos Theory". She smiles as she scans the front cover of "The Predictors."

CLOSE ON THE BOOK "THE PREDICTORS"

Under the title is the subtitle - "How a Band of Maverick Physicists Used Chaos Theory to Trade Their Way to a Fortune on Wall Street."

RETURN TO SCENE - WILL'S TRAILER

Rosa replaces the books, looks at the cat.

ROSA

Your master's scheme is not gonna work for long. The Lotto is gonna change so they get more big jackpots. Increase the odds to about 80 million to one.

Rosa pours a saucer of milk from the fridge, sets it outside.

ROSA (CONT'D)

I haven't computed the exact odds.

Then she leaves the trailer, the tom close behind her.

EXT. HIGHWAY 111 - DAY

Rosa's Accord drives by the Red Dog Liquor store. A big banner out front shouts "180 MILLION DOLLAR LOTTO SOLD HERE".

Rosa, lost in thought, does not see the sign.

EXT. A MEDICAL BUILDING - DAY

Rosa carries a shopping bag-sized cloth bag and enters the facility. "Renal Advantage, Inc." is stenciled on the front glass door.

INT. A DIALYSIS TREATMENT CENTER

Large industrial looking single person couches line opposite walls of the center. A device the size of a vending machine, but with tubes, pumps and digital displays lurks next to each couch - the dialysis machine.

Each such station has a TV suspended from the ceiling.

Most couches are occupied, many with old or overweight - or both - people. A TECHNICIAN goes from couch to couch, checking on the progress of each treatment.

Rosa takes a couch, gets settled in, and is attended to by a NURSE. The Nurse wraps a blood pressure cuff on Rosa's right arm and punches some controls on the dialysis machine.

NURSE

What was your weight?

ROSA

Sixty-one kilos.

The Nurse records this data on computer on a portable stand.

NURSE

How are you feeling?

ROSA

(dejected)

Fine.

The Nurse notes the blood pressure readings and prepares to access the surgical implant in Rosa's left bicep.

LATER

Rosa relaxes in the couch. Two tubes go from her left arm, around her back, then into the machine. A pump on the front circulates her blood in these tubes through a cylindrical filter.

The Nurse approaches holding a DVD disc. She checks the digital readouts on the front of the machine.

NURSE

What's happen' with your boy friend Bill?

ROSA

Will.

Rosa sets aside a book she was reading.

ROSA (CONT'D)

He's a bit of an a-hole. One minute we're on, then we're off. He can't seem to make up his mind.

NURSE

But you said you really liked him.

ROSA

I do. If he knew I was in here, getting hemodialysis, four hours a day, three days a week, I'd never see him again.

NURSE

Maybe you don't really know him.

The Nurse turns on Rosa's personal TV and adjusts it so Rosa can watch. She inserts the DVD into the TV unit.

ROSA

What's this? Another pep talk about home dialysis?

The Nurse smiles, heads for the next patient as the TV starts.

CLOSE ON THE TV SCREEN

Will's image pops onto the screen, desert in the background.

WILL (ON TV)

Hi Rosa. Surprised to see me?

THE TREATMENT ROOM

Rosa is startled, but careful not to pull the tubes from her arm. She just stares at Will's image as he continues.

WILL (ON TV)
Sorry I disappeared so suddenly. I
had urgent business out of town.

Will takes a hit from a cocktail glass on a nearby table.

WILL (CONT'D)
I've been working on something for
seven years - that you - inspired.

Rosa looks over to the Nurse, watching with sly smile.

WILL (CONT'D)
See, I can make a commitment. And
I want to make a commitment to you.

The Nurse removes a ring box from her gown, hands it to Rosa.

WILL (CONT'D)
Rosa, I love you, and I want to
marry you. I know about your
medical condition, your daughter,
and I want to go on that ride.

Rosa opens the box and removes a three carat diamond solitaire ring. As she examines it, rays from the overhead lights bounce off the many facets.

WILL (CONT'D)
Please keep this ring even if you
don't want to see me anymore. It
should partly make up for all the
grief I've given you.

Rosa smiles, puts on the ring and rotates her hand around.

WILL (CONT'D)
If you want to be with me, meet me
at the Green Door this Sunday at
nine in the morning.

Rosa is captivated by the ring, studying how it fits.

WILL (CONT'D)
If you're not there, I'll
understand and stay out of your
life.

The TV screen goes blank. Rosa continues to stare at it.

ROSA
You had me at "keep this ring."

Rosa and the Nurse check out the ring.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR BAR - DAY

Most of the cars hiding here are high-end luxury brands.

INT. THE GREEN DOOR

Rosa enter the club - it's dark and no lights are on.

Then, suddenly, the lights blaze on and the gang's all there.

THE GANG
Surprise!

Will approaches, smiling, hugs and kisses Rosa.

ROSA
Si senior. I will marry you.

A SHOUT rises from the crowd - Kim and some of her dancer friends, plus John, Doctor Don, Andy, Tony, Joe Bonds, Carmela and Larry.

They all look as they've done very well lately, nicely dressed, expensive jewelry, well groomed.

Kim and John embrace Will and Rosa. Larry opens the bar and the party goes into full swing.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

FLASHBACK

INT. THE GREEN DOOR - NIGHT

It's closing time. Larry's behind the bar, closing out the registers. Kim and some of the other dancers/waitresses are collecting glasses, cleaning tables.

All the customers are gone, except Will and John. Will goes to the now empty stage and jumps up on it. He calls out.

WILL
Can I have your attention.

All the worker bees stop what their doing, look at the stage.

WILL (CONT'D)
Gather around. Get closer.

Larry shouts at Will from the bar area.

LARRY
Will. Get the hell off there.

WILL
Larry. Humor me.

Soon all those present are near the stage, some seated.

WILL (CONT'D)
So. Every now and then I'm
presented with an opportunity...

Heckles from the crowd, laughter.

WILL (CONT'D)
... an opportunity to make a shit
load of money.

Better crowd response this time.

WILL (CONT'D)
And I'd like to share these
opportunities with all of you - my
dear and closest friends.

JOHN
This is not another one of your get
rich quick schemes, like the penny
stocks you talked me into?

WILL
No - well yes, maybe.

The crowd mumbles, starts to disperse.

WILL (CONT'D)
Wait! Hear me out.
(beat)
You all know I'm kinda down on my
luck lately. Before, BC...

LARRY
BC - Before Crystal?

This gets a rise out of the group.

WILL

Yeah, before Crystal. Anyway, BC, I had the resources to scrape up the minimum investment myself.

Moans from the gang.

JOHN

Here it comes. Hold onto your wallets and purses.

WILL

No, no. I don't need much, just a few bucks, and only a couple of times a year. And if we're lucky we could all get stinkin' rich.

Will kneels down on the stage to get closer to his marks. It's back to the mad scientist persona.

WILL (CONT'D)

Now here's my plan...

Ears perk up, as the gang focuses on Will.

WILL (CONT'D)

Several times a year the Lotto gets really big, like, rich beyond the dreams of avarice big.

Excited shouts from the crowd.

WILL (CONT'D)

I think I got a way to compute the winning numbers, at least I'm getting closer. I can get three or four out of six on most drawings.

Will stands up now that he has their attention.

WILL (CONT'D)

See, the math is not good enough to predict just one set of numbers. The best I can do is to churn out about 100 sets of numbers that have a chance of hitting.

A collective MOAN rises from the multitude.

JELLO

You want us to help you buy your winning tickets.

WILL

You got it. My math is sensitive to the starting point of the simulation...

KIM

So you try lots of starting points.
(beat)
Sound like Chaos Theory.

WILL

Ah, your college education was not a waste.

Will smiles down on Kim before he continues.

WILL (CONT'D)

Look. All you need to invest is five bucks, plus or minus, several times a year, when the jackpot is, say, over 100 million dollars.

WHISTLES from the group before Nadia speaks up.

NADIA

So, what if I buy the winner then just head out, leave you suckers high and dry?

WILL

Here's how this could work. I pass out five or so sets of numbers to each of you. You buy the ticket. I collect your tickets before the drawing - not that I don't trust you guys...

Nervous LAUGHTER from crowd.

WILL (CONT'D)

After we win, I take a 20 percent cut...

MOANS and WHISTLES.

WILL (CONT'D)

Hey, it's my idea.
(beat)
Anyway. Then you split the rest, each of you getting an equal share.

NADIA

Assuming you wouldn't split.

Will brushes off that comment.

LARRY

So, if the jackpot's, say, 200 million...

WILL

That's about 60 million after taxes, minus my 20 percent, or 12 million. That leaves 48 big ones for you all to share.

Larry looks around, uses his finger to count heads.

LARRY

That's more than three million each - after taxes.

SUZIE

I can dig that.

The crowd starts a chant - Lotto, Lotto, Lotto.

FADE TO BLACK: