

Speak English

By

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FADE IN:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - A WOMAN'S HANDS

They're young, firm, with nails perfectly polished. Pull back to reveal:

INT. HARRY WINSTON, RODEO DRIVE - DAY

NICOLE SIMONE, 22, gazes into a jewelry case. Cool, calm, and calculating, Nicole is French and speaks English with an accent.

Near her, a FASHION-FORWARD SALESWOMAN shows wedding rings to a YOUNG COUPLE.

YOUNG WOMAN

They're all so beautiful. How much is this one?

SALESWOMAN

Just forty-five thousand.

The YOUNG MAN manages a puny smile. The YOUNG WOMAN throws her arms around him.

SALESWOMAN

Wonderful! I'll get a case.

The Saleswoman turns her back to the counter. Nicole palms one of the other rings and heads for the door.

SALESWOMAN

Excuse me, ma'am. Would you like to see something?

Nicole turns, a ghost of a smile on her face.

NICOLE

Non, non, madame, merci.

Nicole spins, saunters to the door. But as soon as she hits the sidewalk, a pair of shiny silver handcuffs SNAP around her wrist. The STORE DETECTIVE smiles cynically at her. Nicole rolls her icy-blue eyes as she mutters...

NICOLE

Merde!

As soon as she speaks, the subtitle SHIT! pops onscreen.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - A SECOND PAIR OF WOMAN'S HANDS

No polish on these nails. Instead, dabs of acrylic paint smear her chipped fingernails. On her left hand, a scratched, well-worn wedding ring. Pull back to reveal:

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, GIA'S ART STUDIO - DAY

GIA CARDENZA, 30, works feverishly on a sculpture of a nude male. With her fiery red hair, she looks like a match about to ignite. She is from Mexico City and speaks English with a Mexican accent.

Gia steps back and examines the sculpture. She cocks her head one way, then another, then sneers in disgust. She takes the hammer and chisel and lops off the penis.

A pair of man's hands slip around her throat, startling her. The hands move down to caress her shoulders.

They belong to RENALDO CARDENZA, 42, Gia's husband. He is from Peru and speaks English with a Peruvian accent. Unlike Gia, Renaldo is impeccably dressed, decked out in an elegant bespoke silk suit.

RENALDO

Mi amor eres hermosa.

Gia's bee-stung lips curl in disdain.

GIA

Not now!

Gia shoves Renaldo away, STORMS out of the studio.

RENALDO

¡Mierda!

As soon as he speaks, the subtitle SHIT! pops onscreen.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP - A SECOND PAIR OF MAN'S HANDS

The fingers are long, soft, almost feminine. These hands have never held a shovel or known a callous.

The hands shuffle a deck of cards with an unnatural grace and fluidity. Pull back to reveal:

INT. VAN NUYS BARBER SHOP, BACK ROOM - NIGHT

The hands belong to MALCOLM SEASONS, 32, master cardsharp. He sits at a rickety table and deals cards to four scary-looking, true-blue AMERICAN MEN. Their eyes focus enviously on the mountain of chips before Mal.

As Mal deals, we catch him in the middle of a discourse.

MAL

But that's the age-old question, isn't it, gentlemen? Which is better: pork dumplings or chicken dumplings? When I was a lad, I preferred pork--

AMERICAN MAN #1  
I'm trying to concentrate!

MAL  
But now it makes me gassy--

AMERICAN MAN #2  
Shut the fuck up and deal!

MAL  
Am I rambling? So sorry. How many?

AMERICAN MAN #1  
Two.

AMERICAN MAN #2  
Three.

American Man #3 and #4 grumble, drop out.

MAL  
And one for me.

The men look at their cards.

MAL  
Nowadays, I prefer vegetable dumplings. I'm leaning vegan.

AMERICAN MAN #1  
Somebody shut this guy up!

MAL  
Your bet.

AMERICAN MAN #2  
Forty.

MAL  
Forty more.

American Man #1 and #2 flip in their chips, calling Mal.

MAL  
I doubt this is good enough to win, but I have an ace high flush.

American Man #1 and #2 slam down their cards as Mal rakes in his winnings.

MAL  
Well, gentlemen, it's been a pleasure. And I hope we can do this again soon. But I really have to leave. All of a sudden I have a hankering for a soup dumpling.

American Man #1 turns a suspicious eye on Malcolm.

WHITE MAN #1

Pretty lucky, aren't you--what's your name again?

A beat. Then Mal bears false witness with a remarkable truthfulness.

MAL

Unkworth. Bob Unkworth.

AMERICAN MAN #1

Pretty lucky, huh, Bob Unkworth?

MAL

Just my night.

AMERICAN MAN #2

Seems like you won every hand you dealt.

AMERICAN MAN #3

Quite the coincidence.

AMERICAN MAN #1

Here's another coincidence. You had an ace high flush in spades. But I folded the ace of spades.

Malcolm nervously displays the ace to the men.

MAL

Impossible. It's right here.

American Man #1 slides a card from the discards, ominously taps it with his finger.

AMERICAN MAN #1

Let's have a side bet. If this card isn't the ace of spades, you keep your winnings. But if it is--

American Man #2 leans across the table, growls at Mal.

AMERICAN MAN #2

You lose a testicle.

Mal breathes hard. And fast.

MAL

Shit.

As soon as Mal speaks, the subtitle SHIT! pops onscreen.

As American Man #1 flips over the card, Mal flips over the table. Mal makes a mad dash for the door as the men scramble after him.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

A terrified ALFONSE DEFE0, 36, sits in a chair, hands tied behind his back, duct tape stretched over his mouth.

Renaldo and TURK, 52, his bearish, dim-bulb bodyguard, stand over Alfonse. Renaldo RIPS the buttons off Alfonse's shirt, exposing a wire taped to his heaving, sweating, hairy chest.

RENALDO

Alfonse, Alfonse, Alfonse,  
you've been a very bad boy. And do  
you know what happens to very bad  
boys? Very bad things.

Renaldo TEARS the wire--and hair--from Alfonse's chest.

EXT. CARDENZA MANSION, STREET - NIGHT

A Chevy Express Cargo van sits quietly in the dark.

INT. CHEVY EXPRESS CARGO VAN - NIGHT

FRANK ENGLISH, 45, FBI agent extraordinaire, takes off his headset, taps the monitors. He turns to his fellow FBI agent, WALLY ANKA, 36, who does the same. Something's wrong, but they know not what.

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The front door groans opens. Malcolm slips in. It's dark. He squints, tries to get his bearings.

In the corner, a shadow moves. Mal stiffens. An intruder?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Another night. Alone.

The lights flip on. Sitting in an armchair, legs curled beneath her, is Mal's girlfriend, CAROLINE BLAIR, 28. In her hand, a glass of blood-red wine. On her face, fury writ large.

CAROLINE

Where have you been?

MAL

Working.

CAROLINE

Gambling?

MAL  
Not the way I play--

CAROLINE  
You cheat--

MAL  
I'd be cheating myself if I  
neglected my gift--

Caroline gulps down her wine, locks a stern gaze on him.

CAROLINE  
Mal, do you love me?

MAL  
How can you even ask?

CAROLINE  
Do you want to spend the rest of  
your life with me?

MAL  
Yes.

CAROLINE  
Then why are you never here?

MAL  
After we're married.

CAROLINE  
It's been three years.

MAL  
Caroline, there are high-stakes  
games all over this city. And when  
I get the call to deal, I promise  
you, the money will pour in.

CAROLINE  
Mal, I make enough money to  
support us both. Plus my parents--

MAL  
Caroline--

Caroline wraps her arms around him, trapping him.

CAROLINE  
Mal, I know you're not perfect.  
You're flawed. Deeply flawed. But  
that's what I love about you. To  
me, your flaws are perfect. And I  
know, with my help, I can make you  
a better man. Do you want to be a  
better man?

MAL

Well, yeah. Am I that bad?

Caroline steps back, casts an accusing glare.

CAROLINE

You live in fear, Malcolm. Of the future. Of commitment. Of me.

MAL

You know I love you--

CAROLINE

You say you love me but you treat me like this? You think I'm dumb?

MAL

No, I--

CAROLINE

I have an MBA from USC! I'm a Senior Program Manager at SplatBrat! SplatBrat doesn't hire dumb people!

An uncomfortable beat.

CAROLINE

Malcolm, I don't think we should see each other any more.

MAL

Caroline--

Caroline hurls the bottle of wine at Mal. He ducks. It EXPLODES against the wall.

Caroline storms into the bedroom. Mal heaves a sigh, ducks out.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Renaldo holds up the wire and closely examines it. He then hands it to Turk.

RENALDO

Turk, my friend, if you please--

Turk takes the wire and carefully positions it directly behind his butt.

INT. CHEVY EXPRESS CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Frank and Wally continue to fiddle with their monitors. Then they hear following over their headsets:

PHRAT!!! PHRIBBIT!!!

Frank and Wally exchange looks of disgust. And worry: their snitch may be in danger.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

A rundown, comfortable watering hole in North Hollywood. A jukebox blasts CLASSIC ROCK.

Two OLD HIPPIES with long white hair play gin at the bar.

Standing over them is EDDIE SEASONS, 70. He is Malcolm's father and owner of the Bar American. He is a gung-ho ex-Marine/Vietnam vet. A red scarf is tied around his neck. He clenches an unlit cigar between his teeth. Eddie GROWLS at the Old Hippies.

EDDIE

Listen to me, you long-haired,  
hippie cocksuckers--you don't like  
this country, go back to fucking  
Woodstock--

Malcolm strolls through the front door.

MAL

What's going on?

EDDIE

These draft-dodging hippie  
cocksuckers said the USA today  
sucks.

OLD HIPPIE #1

USA Today, the newspaper--

OLD HIPPIE #2

Not the country--

Mal pulls Eddie aside.

MAL

Mind if I stay here tonight?

EDDIE

Caroline throw you out again?

The front door opens. Turk trudges in. He looks around, crosses to Mal.

TURK

You Malcolm Seasons?

MAL

Yeah.

Turk hands him an envelope. Mal opens it, reads, suppresses a smile. He looks up at Turk.

MAL

I'll be there.

Turk nods, turns, stumps out. Eddie eyes Mal suspiciously.

EDDIE

What's that about?

MAL

Nothing.

Eddie plucks the letter from Mal, fends him off as he reads it. He stops short.

EDDIE

You're dealing for Renaldo Cardenza? He's a dope dealer, a homicidal whack job. What have I told you about Mexicans?

MAL

I think he's from Peru--

EDDIE

They'll stab you in the back faster than you can say Mama Mia--

MAL

Isn't that Italian?--

Eddie tears the scarf from his neck, revealing a deep red scar. Eddie points to it.

EDDIE

See that? Fucking Mexican gave me that. Keep away from them. They're ungrateful. They have no loyalty. Forget about dealing for this guy. Go home to Caroline. Get married.

MAL

I want to. But I need money. And Renaldo has the biggest game in town. I'll make some serious bread fast.

Mal points to the two Old Hippies.

MAL

Give them a drink. My treat.

EDDIE

You don't have any money.

MAL

I will after tonight.

Mal spins, scoots out the door.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, BACKYARD, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Gia swims laps in the Olympic-sized pool. She emerges wearing an eyelash of a bathing suit. Standing at the edge of the pool is CHARLES MATHERS III, 38, a blond-haired, blue-blooded trustifarian.

CHARLES  
Mrs. Cardenza.

GIA  
Charles.

Charles offers Gia a towel.

CHARLES  
Lovely evening.

GIA  
Isn't it?

CHARLES  
It pales compared to you.

Gia smiles coquettishly as she runs the towel over her taut body.

CHARLES  
May I?

Charles takes the towel, dries Gia's curvaceous back.

FROM THE LIVING ROOM

Renaldo watches Charles and Gia through the floor-to-ceiling windows. His lips twitch, his eyes flare.

EXT. CARDENZA MANSION, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

A beat-up Ford Taurus chugs up. Malcolm hops out and tosses the keys to the VALET.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, FRONT FOYER - NIGHT

There's a knock at the door. It pushes open. Mal enters. He looks around the labyrinthine house, then wanders down a hall looking for the game.

GUEST ROOM

Renaldo dangles a serrated knife with a leather handle before Alphonse, who shakes with fear.

RENALDO

My friend, I think it is time for  
you to slip the surly bonds of  
Earth and kiss the ass of God.

Renaldo offers the knife to Turk.

HALLWAY

Mal stops before a door. He peeks in. He sees Renaldo.  
The quaking Alphonse. Then Mal watches, mouth agape, as  
Turk plunges the knife into Alphonse.

Mal slips away from the door and skims down the hall,  
desperately looking for a way out.

He creeps down one hall, then another--only to find  
another hall leading nowhere. He's trapped, lost.

GUEST ROOM

Renaldo and Turk look down at Alfonse's lifeless body.

RENALDO

Turk, my friend, immediately after  
the game, chop him up, bag him up,  
and spread him around town.

TURK

You betcha, boss.

Turk empties a variety of knives and saws from a duffle  
bag.

ANOTHER HALLWAY

Mal wheels right, wheels left, is impossibly lost.

Suddenly, Gia turns a corner. She's a vision in a white  
robe with a towel wrapped turban-like around her head.

Gia stops before Mal, peers at him. Mal catches his  
breath, focuses on this woman who somehow speaks to his  
soul.

MAL

Hi. I think I'm lost. At least I  
was until I met you.

Gia suppresses a smile. Mal teases her.

MAL

What's the matter, don't speak  
English?

GIA

¡Esta usted loco!

Mal freezes.

LIVING ROOM

It's grand and spacious, exquisitely furnished with expensive antiques and Italian-made furniture. Renaldo stands with Turk.

Across the room, Charles Mathers III engages in small talk with the other WASP guests. Renaldo locks a murderous glare onto Charles as he snarls to Turk.

RENALDO

You see him, Turk? He has no cock. Only men have cocks. And he is not a man. He's whitebread. The worst kind of pig this country has to offer. He thinks because he is privileged he can make advances toward my wife. He disrespects me, Turk. Me, a man of my stature. Why do you think that is?

Turk snaps to attention, clears his throat, and answers like a dope who tries really hard to sound smart.

TURK

Knowing his type as well as I do, since I too am a certified Caucasian, I'd say he thinks you're just a salsa-sucking, grape-picking, burrito-eating greaser.

RENALDO

But we will taste revenge, no?  
(looks around)  
Where's Fletch?

TURK

It is my unfortunate fortune to report that Fletch's appearance tonight will be severely strained.

RENALDO

Turk--speak English! Where's Fletch?

TURK

In the hospital. He got his hand broke in a game downtown.

RENALDO

But what about my game?

TURK

Don't worry, boss. After an exhausted investigation to identify a stellarly sterling dealer, herewith and forsooth I hereby present--

Turk points to Mal, who has found his way to the foyer, thanks to Gia's help.

TURK

Malcolm Seasons. Supposed to be the best of the best.

RENALDO

He'd better be.

Renaldo strides toward Malcolm with an outstretched hand and a fluorescent smile.

RENALDO

Malcolm Seasons? Renaldo Cardenza. I have heard so much about you. I see you've met Gia, my wife.

Gia graciously intercedes before Mal entirely swallows his tongue. He glances around, intimidated by Renaldo, wondering if he can somehow escape.

GIA

(to Mal)  
Muy contento de conocerle.

RENALDO

Remember, my dear, English--

Gia snorts. Renaldo indicates the paintings on the walls.

RENALDO

My wife is an artist. She did many of these pieces. It's her hobby.

Gia bristles at Renaldo's condescending compliment.

RENALDO

The game is about to begin. Will you excuse us, my dear?

Gia offers Mal a demure smile.

GIA

Buenas noches, Mr. Seasons.

Gia steals a look at Mal as she departs.

Renaldo slips his arm around Mal like an anaconda enfolding its prey.

RENALDO

Well, my friend, you're dealing  
for me tonight, eh?

MAL

Indeed. Who's the pigeon?

RENALDO

The whitebread, Charles Mathers  
the third--

MAL

And hopefully the last--

RENALDO

Here's the plan. We play honest  
all night. I may even lose. That  
way no one gets suspicious--

MAL

Very cagey--

RENALDO

The cheat comes at the end of the  
night. I want to bleed this  
bastard. Can you do this for me?

MAL

In my sleep and on one foot.

Renaldo lowers his voice; the threat is unmistakable.

RENALDO

For your sake I hope so.

Renaldo slips Mal a wad of cash.

RENALDO

Your stake.

MAL

What's my cover?

RENALDO

Follow my lead.

Renaldo ushers Mal into the card room.

RENALDO

Gentlemen, we have a new player  
tonight: Dr. Malcolm Seasons.

WASPS

Welcome, Doc!

The WASPS raise their drinks to Mal.

CARD ROOM - FIVE HOURS LATER

The room is smokey, the table littered with drinks.

THOR JOHNSON, 48, a dour, depressed WASP, turns to Malcolm.

THOR

I don't know why I do this to myself. I come here week after week, month after month, and I lose, lose, lose. Is that crazy?

MAL

Yes.

THOR

I know, it is. I'd give anything to win. Just once. But that will never happen. Know why?

MAL

You're a loser?

THOR

It shows?

Charles Mathers glances at his diamond-encrusted Rolex.

CHARLES

Maybe we ought to call it a night.

RENALDO

One more hand, what do you say?

THOR

Whose deal is it?

CHARLES

Dr. Seasons's, I believe.

MAL

Five card hold 'em.

Mal shuffles the cards, then accidentally on purpose fumbles them. Renaldo looks on with concern. Mal awkwardly gathers the cards and deals. The betting commences.

THOR

Twenty grand.

WASP #1

Another twenty.

WASP #2

Raise it twenty.

CHARLES

And forty more. That's one-hundred grand to you, Renaldo.

Thor and the WASPs fold in disgust.

Renaldo looks at his hand: a full house. He steals a look at Mal, who nonchalantly sips his drink.

RENALDO

Your forty and another fifty.

CHARLES

You're bluffing.

RENALDO

You're right. Call me.

Charles shoves a tower of chips into the pot. Renaldo fans out his cards. Mal watches with a quiet confidence.

RENALDO

Full house, kings.

CHARLES

Two pair--

Renaldo squeals triumphantly, starts to rake in the cash, but then Charles spreads his cards on the table.

CHARLES

Sixes and sixes.

Mal is stunned, Renaldo is speechless.

CHARLES

Just not your night, eh, old man?

RENALDO

Well, my friend, it is only money.

CHARLES

Yeah--your money.

Charles and the WASPs laugh. Renaldo shoots Mal a savage look. Mal swallows hard, scoops up the cards.

MAL

Well played, Charles! Perhaps we should engage in one more hand. I'll be more than happy to assume the responsibility of dealing, thus allowing everyone else to concentrate on what I believe will be the most profitable and exciting hand of the evening. Gentlemen, ante is ten thousand!

THOR

Sorry, I have a quota on how much  
I can lose--

CHARLES

I have a quota on how much I can  
win.

Renaldo conceals his fury with a smile.

RENALDO

Muy bueno, Charles. Anyway,  
gentlemen, thank you for coming.  
Turk will show you out.

Turk herds the men out.

RENALDO

Oh Dr. Seasons, may we have a  
word?

Suddenly, Mal is alone with Renaldo, and the silence is  
deadly. Renaldo's face is sheer white and venomous. Mal  
tenses. He starts edging toward the door.

MAL

You seem upset. I don't blame you.

Renaldo stalks Malcolm.

RENALDO

Estupido.

MAL

This Mathers guy, he's a cheat.

RENALDO

Incompetente.

MAL

He must've been palming sixes.

RENALDO

¡Bastardo!

Renaldo grabs Mal's neck, THROTTLES him.

RENALDO

You owe me four-hundred and twenty  
thousand dollars!

The phone RINGS, RINGS, RINGS.

MAL

The phone!

RENALDO

Fuck the phone! You owe me four-hundred and twenty thousand dollars!

Turk rushes in, answers the phone.

TURK

Boss--it's for you.

RENALDO

Take a message!!!

TURK

I think it's important.

Renaldo tosses Mal aside, grabs the phone.

RENALDO

(into phone)

Hello?! Nicole?! I told you never to call me here! Where are you? Again? ¡Jesus Cristo! I'll be right there.

Renaldo SNAPS off the phone, turns to Turk.

RENALDO

I have to go to the police station. Meet me at the office.

(points at Mal)

And take him with you!

INT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - MORNING

Renaldo slumps in a leather couch. Next to him sits Nicole, calmly smoking a cigarette.

Pacing excitedly before them is STAN HOPKINS, 42, Renaldo's legal mascot.

RENALDO

So she shoplifted a ring--

STAN

A forty-five thousand dollar ring! Give your girlfriend a kiss goodbye because this time they're going to deport her.

The door BANGS opens. Turk drags a squirming Mal into the room. Mal's mouth is duct-taped, his hands bound before him. Turk shoves him into a chair.

RENALDO

(to Nicole)

Why shoplift, my angel? They're going to send you back to France.

NICOLE

You'll be better off. You can spend more time with your wife.

RENALDO

Please, Nicole--

NICOLE

You don't care about me.

RENALDO

How can you say that? I've loved you since the moment we met. Do you remember?

Renaldo takes Nicole in his arms, fondly reminisces.

RENALDO

In Paris--

NICOLE

In July--

RENALDO

On the metro--

NICOLE

Chatelet--

RENALDO

It was hot--

NICOLE

Humid--

RENALDO

The car was packed--

NICOLE

With smelly foreigners--

RENALDO

You were pressed against me--

NICOLE

I could barely breathe--

RENALDO

You tried to steal my wallet--

NICOLE

I was trying to get your  
attention--

RENALDO

And when our eyes met, I knew: I  
had just met the love of my life.

Renaldo starts to kiss Nicole. She takes a drag off her  
cigarette, blows smoke in his face.

NICOLE

You talk of love. But you do  
nothing. Don't let them deport me.

RENALDO

(to Stan)  
Stan, what can I do?

STAN

Move to Paris. Because that's  
where she's going.

A stifling oppressiveness engulfs the room. Then Mal  
raises his bound hands, garbles incoherently through the  
duct tape.

RENALDO

You have something to say, my  
friend?

Mal nods yes. Renaldo motions to Turk, who RIPS the duct  
tape from Mal's mouth, SLASHES the rope that binds his  
hands. Mal stands, rubs his wrists, reclaims his  
composure.

MAL

Please forgive me if I'm speaking  
out of turn, but I may have a  
solution. Perhaps we can get  
Nicole to marry an American. That  
way, she becomes an American. And  
as we all know, in America, you  
cannot deport a fellow American.

Renaldo turns to Stan.

RENALDO

What do you think?

STAN

Could work. We just have to put up  
a believable front for the Feds  
for a few months.

NICOLE

But who would marry me?

Renaldo crosses to Mal, looks him squarely in the eye.

RINALDO

Any suggestions, my friend?

MAL

I do. And even though I am not worthy of such a gracious and charming person as Nicole, I would gladly volunteer my services to help the both of you out.

RINALDO

Volunteer? You would do this for free?

MAL

Absolutely. With the hope that there would be some sort of honorarium attached.

RINALDO

To the tune of--

MAL

Four-hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

RINALDO

A bit high, is it not?

MAL

Not for someone as lovely as Nicole. Wouldn't you agree?

Rinaldo smiles, nods. He clearly enjoys the back and forth. He turns to Nicole.

RENALDO

What do you think, my love?

Nicole parades around Mal, coolly examines him.

NICOLE

He'll do.

Nicole plops back down on the couch.

RENALDO

It looks to me like we have a deal. Marry Nicole and your debt will be forgiven. And your life spared. Agreed?

MAL

Agreed.

Renaldo wraps his arm around Mal's shoulders.

RENALDO

So, my friend, do you think you  
have what it takes to be a good  
husband?

EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF MAL

A glimmer of dread flashes in his eyes.

MAL

I do.

Pull back to reveal...

INT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DAY

Mal and Nicole stand before a geriatric JUSTICE OF THE  
PEACE. Renaldo and Turk witness the sacred event.

JUSTICE

Then I now pronounce you man and  
wife.

Mal and Nicole turn awkwardly to each other.

TURK

Ain't you gonna say you may now  
kiss the bride?

JUSTICE

Not in a civil service.

RENALDO

But you may--

Renaldo pushes Mal out of the way and kisses Nicole. The  
Justice looks on, completely baffled.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - NIGHT

A posh development in Marina del Rey. A black limo pulls  
up. Renaldo, Turk, Mal, and Nicole pile out.

INT. ASIAN CONDO - NIGHT

Every inch is crammed with Asian furnishings: shoji  
screens, tatami mats, jade carvings of Buddha--and the  
color red. Everywhere, red.

On the inside/outside deck is a koi fish pond, complete  
with fish, footbridge, and lily pads.

Renaldo, Turk, and Mal watch as Nicole waltzes excitedly  
around the room.

NICOLE

Oh Renaldo, it is magnifique!

RENALDO

Ven aca mi querida. Malcolm, Turk,  
you too.

Renaldo leads them to a door and opens it.

RENALDO

Nicole, my sweet, this is your  
room.

(opens a second door)

Mal, this is your room.

(opens a third door)

And Turk, this is your room.

TURK

My room?

RENALDO

You'll be chaperoning the  
newlyweds.

TURK

But what'll I tell my wife?

RENALDO

Tell her to text.

NICOLE

A chaperon? You don't trust me?

RENALDO

You, I trust.

(indicating Mal)

Him, not so much.

Renaldo opens a fourth door, which leads to another  
spectacularly furnished apartment.

RENALDO

For the convenience of all, I've  
taken the apartment next door.

(kisses Nicole)

I must be going. Buona notte, my  
child.

(to Mal)

Buenas noches, neighbor.

Renaldo exits. Nicole gives Mal a playful cheek peck.

NICOLE

Happy honeymoon, darling.

Nicole and Turk disappear into their bedrooms, stranding  
Mal. He sighs deeply, and drifts into his room.

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Mal hastily stuffs his clothes into a suitcase. Caroline paces behind him, dumbstruck, angry, and hurt.

CAROLINE

You're really leaving? I only threw you out because I was angry!

MAL

It's not that. I told you, this is an emergency. My uncle had an accident.

CAROLINE

What kind of accident?

Mal launches into his prefabricated lie.

MAL

He was working around the house. Fell off the roof. Landed on a rake. Punctured his left lung. Six times. I've got to get back to New York to help him.

CAROLINE

But how long will you be gone?

MAL

Just a few months.

CAROLINE

A few months?! We'll never get married!

Mal embraces Caroline, comforts her.

MAL

We will, Caroline, I promise. I got this new gig. The guy loves me. When I get back, he's making me his permanent dealer. And the money--forget it, we'll be rolling.

CAROLINE

Who is he?

MAL

Name's Renaldo Cardenza.

CAROLINE

The drug lord!--

MAL

Is he a drug lord?--

CAROLINE

Are you trying to sabotage this relationship, Malcolm?

MAL

I'm trying to save it. Trust me, Caroline.

Mal leans in to kiss Caroline, but she turns her head.

INT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - DAY

Renaldo sits at his desk, Turk stands behind him.

Before them are FBI agents Frank English and Wally Anka. Frank tosses an 8 x 10 of Alphonse DeFeo on the desk.

FRANK

He was here last night. Now he's gone. Any idea where he is?

RENALDO

How would I know? And why do you continue to hound me? I've retired. I am a man of leisure.

FRANK

(to Turk)  
How about you, lunkhead?

TURK

His abouts of which I know not where.

Renaldo flashes a fake smile.

RENALDO

I'm so sorry, gentlemen.

INT. FBI AGENT FRANK ENGLISH'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank and Wally examine a pyramid of photographs taped to the wall. On top is Renaldo. Beneath him, Gia and Turk. Beneath them, Nicole and Mal, plus other gangsters.

Wally points to the photos of Gia and Nicole.

WALLY

So this is Gia--

FRANK

Renaldo's hot tamale wife--

WALLY

And this is Nicole--

FRANK  
His French tickler--

WALLY  
She wants him to leave his wife--

FRANK  
Which he won't, which pisses off  
his girlfriend--

WALLY  
So she gets busted for  
shoplifting. Why?

FRANK  
To piss off her boyfriend--

Frank points to the picture of Mal.

FRANK  
So who's this Bozo?

WALLY  
Name's Malcolm Seasons. He's  
married to Nicole.

FRANK  
He's married to her?

WALLY  
As of two days ago. And exactly  
one day after she was busted.

FRANK  
This cocksucker sold his soul for  
her green card.

Frank yanks Mal's photo off the board, shoves it under  
Wally's nose.

FRANK  
Time we ICE this motherfucker!

INT. U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT (ICE)  
OFFICE - DAY

Frank and Wally enter. They look around, then step up to  
ICE Officer JONNY ZHANG, 38. Jonny is Chinese by birth,  
rabid nationalized American by choice. He wears an  
American flag pin in his lapel. He has a slight Chinese  
accent, which he tries mightily to conceal--not always  
successfully.

FRANK  
You agent Jonny Zhang?

JONNY

I am.

Frank whips out his FBI badge. Jonny snaps to attention.

FRANK

Uncle Sam needs you, Zhang.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mal and Nicole sit on the couch. Across from them is Jonny. A manila folder is on his lap, a skeptical look on his face. Mal's nervous. Nicole: the picture of cool.

JONNY

This marriage is fishy.

NICOLE

So's your breath--

MAL

She didn't mean it--

JONNY

(to Nicole)

I know you're Renaldo Cardenza's girlfriend.

NICOLE

He's just a friend--

Nicole cozies next to Mal.

NICOLE

Mal and I are deeply, helplessly, hopelessly in love. Isn't that right, mon amour?

MAL

Indeed, lamb of my loin.

The happy couple smooch.

JONNY

(to Nicole)

You're a criminal. You shoplift. You're a candidate for deportation.

(to Mal)

You're hard up for money. So you marry her so she can stay here.

MAL

Ridiculous.

Jonny shoots Mal a threatening look.

JONNY

Marriage fraud is a federal crime. You can be fined two hundred fifty grand. And do five years. You know what happens to a she-boy like you in prison? Lots of ding-dong up the butthole. You want ding-dong up your butthole?

Mal conceals his concern with a wan smile.

JONNY

I'm watching you both.

Jonny SNICKERS as he drops a couple of business cards on the table and snaps his manila folder shut.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, MAL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mal stands at the sink brushing his teeth. Turk leans against the door cleaning his teeth with a toothpick.

TURK

So, how's married life?

Mal answers by spitting out toothpaste into the sink.

TURK

I been married twenty years.  
(he stops,  
recalculates)  
No, wait. Two.

Turk points to Mal's toiletries case.

TURK

You got plenty of toothpaste and floss in there?

MAL

What do you care?

TURK

I'm of the opinion that teeth should be dentally hygiened at all times. It's critical to survival. Because teeth are the food of life, with which you cannot eat without.

Turk spits out the toothpick into the wastebasket.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - DAY

Mal steps outside and collides with Gia Cardenza.

MAL

Mrs. Cardenza! Are you all right?

Gia's rattled. She grabs Mal's arm, nearly tears it from its socket.

GIA

Mr. Seasons, I'm sorry to tell you this, but my husband and your wife are having an affair!

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caroline sits, dazed, at the kitchen table. Across from her is Jonny Zhang. Before him, his manila folder--and photographs of Mal and Nicole.

CAROLINE

This must be a mistake. He's in New York.

JONNY

There's no mistake. He's here. He's married. To her.

CAROLINE

But he loves me! We're getting married! We're spending our life together!

JONNY

Maybe you should tell that to his wife.

Caroline leaps to her feet.

CAROLINE

Where do you get off coming to my country--

JONNY

Your country?--

CAROLINE

And calling my fiance a liar?! Go back to your own goddamned country!

As soon as the words leave her mouth, Caroline instantly regrets them. A stunned Jonny stands, musters his dignity, heads for the door. He steps past a speechless Caroline.

EXT. RODEO DRIVE - DAY

Renaldo's black limo stops at a light, then continues on its way. A moment later, Gia's Jaguar XJ trails behind.

INT. JAGUAR XJ - MOVING - DAY

Gia drives, every ounce of her concentration locked on Renaldo's limo. Mal sits in the passenger seat, wipes the sweat from his palms.

GIA

But she is your wife--

MAL

Of course. But how do you know they're having an affair?

GIA

I smelled her on him. The perfume. I don't wear perfume. Then I checked his texts. And I followed him. That's how I found you. You didn't know?

MAL

No--

EXT. MR. RENE'S HOUSE OF BEAUTY - DAY

The black limo pulls up. The Jaguar XJ creeps into a parking spot a short distance away.

INT. MR. RENE'S HOUSE OF BEAUTY - DAY

Nicole sits in the chair as MR. RENE, 32, sculpts her hair. Renaldo marches in. Nicole leaps from the chair and kisses Renaldo passionately.

INT. JAGUAR XJ - DAY

Gia and Malcolm watch as Renaldo and Nicole kiss.

GIA

Look what he's doing to your wife.

Mal assumes the role of the outraged husband.

MAL

Unfuckingforgiveable--

GIA

Put>--

MAL

Pardon me?

GIA

¡No mas deja que llegue a casa con este hijo de puta!

Gia's eyes BLAZE. She throws the car in gear. It rockets off, tires screaming into a turn.

INT. BONFIGLIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The dominant colors here: red and green. Salami, mortadella, and prosciutto hang from the rafters.

Mal and Gia sit in a booth. Gia downs her wine, desperately waves to the WAITER for another.

GIA

I've been such a fool. All these years I've trusted him. And all along...I wonder how many other sluts he has enjoyed?

A tiny pause. Then...

GIA

Not that your wife is a slut.

Mal waves it off.

GIA

I don't know. Maybe if Renaldo and I had had a child, maybe our bond would have been stronger.

A tear seeps from Gia's left eye.

GIA

But how awful for you. How long have you been married?

MAL

Two days.

GIA

Only two days? You poor man.

Gia gives Mal a comforting hug. Their eyes lock--a frozen, awkward gaze. An undeniable attraction. The two separate posthaste.

GIA

I'm sorry--

MAL

No, I'm sorry--

GIA

Mr. Seasons...we cannot do this--

MAL

We can't. You're married. I'm engaged--

GIA  
Engaged?

MAL  
I mean married--

GIA  
If we did this, we would be as bad  
as them--

MAL  
We would--

GIA  
I don't want to be like them--

MAL  
Me neither--

GIA  
So we can't.

MAL  
And we won't.

They stand, make their way out of the restaurant.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Eddie stands behind the bar reading the newspaper.

Caroline storms in and up to him.

CAROLINE  
Is Mal in New York?

EDDIE  
New York?

CAROLINE  
With the uncle who fell on a rake--

EDDIE  
What uncle?! What rake?!

Caroline fumes.

CAROLINE  
Zhang was right! Your son's a  
fucking liar!

Eddie, dazed, watches as Caroline storms out of the bar.

INT. JAG - NIGHT

It sits in front of the Asian condo. Gia appeals to Mal  
about their situation.

GIA  
So what are we to do?

MAL  
What can we do?

GIA  
Maybe we should have...what do you  
call...an inquisition.

MAL  
An intervention?

GIA  
Confront them--

MAL  
Let's be patient.

GIA  
I'm sorry about this, Mr. Seasons.

Mal takes her hand, offers her the reassurance and sympathy she so desperately needs.

MAL  
Call me Mal. And don't worry, this  
will all work out. Goodnight, Mrs.  
Cardenza.

Gia's mood instantly softens.

GIA  
Gia. Call me Gia.

An embarrassed, adolescent moment passes between the two. Mal hops out of the car and disappears into the condominiums.

Gia swerves away from the curb, turns a corner--and spots Renaldo's black limo in a corner of the parking lot.

Gia JUMPS on the brakes. The Jaguar XJ GRINDS to a stop.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Malcolm inserts his key in the front door. As he opens it, Gia races feverishly down the hall.

MAL  
Gia!

GIA  
They're in there!

MAL  
Who?

GIA  
Who do you think?!

Mal starts to object. Gia puts her finger to his lips, then grabs his arm and drags him into the condo.

LIVING ROOM

It's dark, except for a sliver of light spilling from Nicole's bedroom door. Renaldo and Nicole's GROANS are heard from behind it.

GIA  
They must be in there.

Offscreen, the groans get louder.

NICOLE (O.S.)  
Oh mon dieu!!!

RENALDO (O.S.)  
Nicole, oh Nicole!!!

The groans turn to SHRIEKS. Gia turns to Mal.

GIA  
Animals.

MAL  
Maybe we should go.

GIA  
Go where? This is your apartment.

Mal and Gia place their ears to the door and listen with a ferocious concentration. Both are positively aghast. Oh, and really aroused.

MAL  
This is embarrassing.

GIA  
It is.

MAL  
What should we do?

A moment of confusion and desire. They draw closer and closer together.

GIA  
Malcolm, we can't--

MAL  
We can't--

GIA  
We're not like them--

MAL  
We're not--

GIA  
We must resist these primitive  
desires--

MAL  
We must. It's just so hot in here--

The desire is too great. They grab each others, kiss hungrily as they sink to the floor.

NICOLE'S BEDROOM

Renaldo straddles Nicole. From their grunts and groans, it's hard to tell if they're making love or war.

Suddenly, strange noises come from the living room.

RENALDO  
Did you hear that?

NICOLE  
What?

RENALDO  
That noise?

Renaldo and Nicole listen for a moment, then go at it again. As soon as they do, more noises are heard.

RENALDO  
There it is again.

NICOLE  
It's your imagination.

RENALDO  
No--I heard something.

Renaldo springs out of bed and slips on a robe.

NICOLE  
What are you doing?

RENALDO  
I'm going to check.

NICOLE  
But I haven't finished!

RENALDO  
¡Suficiente! I'll be right back!

Renaldo takes a pistol from his jacket, exits.

LIVING ROOM

Renaldo enters, pistol drawn. The lights flip on. He spins, aims, and cocks his pistol.

RENALDO

Don't move, motherfucker!!!

Renaldo sees Turk, both hands trembling above his head.

TURK

Don't shoot, don't shoot!

RENALDO

What the fuck are you doing?!

TURK

I thought I heard something!

RENALDO

That was me!!!

Turk sprints to his bedroom. Renaldo surveys the room, flips off the lights, and slips back into Nicole's room.

INDOOR/OUTDOOR DECK

Mal and Gia poke their heads out of the fish pond. They wipe water from their eyes and exchange a look of relief.

INT. ASIAN CONDO - THE NEXT MORNING

Nicole's antsy--she wanders around the condominium. Renaldo sits on the couch, leafs through the Peruvian newspaper *El Comercio*.

The front door opens. Turk STUMPS in lugging a package.

TURK

Something from the office, boss.

Renaldo opens the package and removes an ornate vase. He reads the note that accompanies the gift.

RENALDO

Gia, my thanks to you for being such a gracious hostess--and to your husband for being such a gracious loser. I look forward to our next meeting. Fondly--

Renaldo spits out the following.

RENALDO

Charles Mathers the third.

Nicole admires the vase.

NICOLE  
It's beautiful.

Renaldo hurls the vase against the wall. It explodes.

RENALDO  
That cockless cunt of a man! Does he think I do not have eyes?

NICOLE  
What are you talking about?

TURK  
This Mathers guy is sweet on Gia.

RENALDO  
Sweet? He wants to schtup her!

NICOLE  
Schtup? What is this schtup?

TURK  
Schtup. It's...whattaya call...Hebraic for zonce.

RENALDO  
He may already have. Repeatedly.

NICOLE  
Then leave her.

RENALDO  
I can't!

NICOLE  
Why? Your "faith?" You fucking Catholics! I have news for you: God doesn't give a shit if you divorce your wife or not!

Mal enters. Nicole sidles over to him.

NICOLE  
Mal, you're my husband. Take me away from these cruel people.

Mal's cellphone RINGS. He CLICKS it on.

MAL  
(into phone)  
Hello?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

On the other end is Gia, who caresses the phone with her paint-flecked hands.

GIA  
Hola, Mr Seasons.

Mal instantly stiffens.

MAL  
Oh...hi.

GIA  
Are you okay? You sound nervous.  
Is Nicole there?

Mal glances at Renaldo and Nicole, manufactures a limp, nervous grin.

MAL  
Yes indeed.

GIA  
We need to talk.

MAL  
About what?

GIA  
About what happened. Come and see  
me.

Renaldo and Nicole crane their necks, try to eavesdrop. Mal turns his back to them, whispers into the phone.

MAL  
Where?

GIA  
La Naranja on Fourth.

MAL  
I don't know--

GIA  
Please, Malcolm--

MAL  
Okay.

Malcolm clicks off his phone.

NICOLE  
Who was that, Mal?

MAL

Just a friend.

NICOLE

Sounded to me like it was a woman friend, no?

RENALDO

I think maybe your husband is cheating on you.

Renaldo and Nicole share a laugh at a sheepish Mal.

INT. LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - DAY

Mal glances around--the place is deserted.

From behind, an arthritic hand taps him on the shoulder. Mal spins and faces an OLD MAN, who points to a door.

Mal opens it, climbs a few stairs to a second door. He knocks--no answer. He opens the door, steps in.

BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT

It's pitch black. Mal squints, can't see a thing. His heart POUNDS in the eerie quiet.

He's grabbed from behind and hurled onto a bed. A bright light flips on. He blinks, half-blinded as his eyes adjust to the light. As they do, he sees Gia sitting on top of him, laughing.

MAL

You trying to give me a stroke?

GIA

¡Tienes cara de haber visto a un fantasma!

MAL

I thought you wanted to talk?

Gia gently pulls Mal to her.

GIA

I do. Later.

Gia kisses Malcolm. He succumbs.

INT. JONNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonny is at his desk. A sheepish Caroline sits across from him.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry I told you to go back to your own country.

JONNY

I was born in Beijing. But I was raised in Toledo.

CAROLINE

I was upset. Please forgive me.

Jonny looks down at his manila folder. Caroline leans over the desk, sympathizes with him.

CAROLINE

You've probably had run ins with other people like me.

JONNY

People are prejudiced. They make assumptions.

Caroline stands, crosses behind the desk.

CAROLINE

They do--

JONNY

They judge looks. Not the content of a person's character.

CAROLINE

It's true--

JONNY

I'm not perfect--

CAROLINE

I hate perfect--

JONNY

Sometimes I use inappropriate language. Sometimes I brown-nose the boss. I go to church but I don't believe in God. I'm weak. But I try to be strong.

Caroline places a comforting hand on Jonny's shoulder.

CAROLINE

Maybe I can help you.

JONNY

Help me? How?

CAROLINE

Maybe I can help you be the man  
you've always wanted to be.

Caroline smiles sweetly at Jonny. He's at first taken  
aback, but then responds in kind.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - DAY

The bed is a tangle of sheets, blankets, and clothes. Mal  
and Gia lie in bed, look up at the ceiling.

GIA

Mal, do you feel guilty about  
being unfaithful? I thought I  
would, but I don't. It's  
liberating. It's been so long  
since I've been with anyone.

MAL

Even Renaldo?

GIA

Anyone. He's distant.

MAL

Why'd you marry him?

GIA

I was young. He was handsome,  
charming, powerful. I fell. I'm  
like my mother: I have terrible  
taste in men. My father, I adored  
him, but he was a dick.

MAL

My father's dickish--

GIA

I don't remember my mother. She  
died when I was a baby.

MAL

So did mine--

GIA

So we understand what it's like to  
be lonely.

Gia rolls over, looks intently at Mal.

GIA

Mal, do you like me?

MAL

Of course.

GIA  
Do you think you might love me?

MAL  
Gia--

GIA  
It's okay not to know. I don't know either. Just promise me one thing: never lie to me.

MAL  
Never?

Gia sits up, slides her legs over the edge of the bed.

GIA  
Tengo hambre. ¿Y tu?

Mal scrunches up his face. She translates.

GIA  
I'm hungry. You?

MAL  
Gia, how come you're always speaking Spanish? You're in America. You really should speak English.

GIA  
How many languages do you speak? Because I speak English, Italian, and Spanish.

Mal sits up, slides on his socks. Gia rolls onto her side, watches Mal with interest.

GIA  
Malcolm, what is Nicole like?

MAL  
You know. Very...French.

Mal hikes up his pants.

GIA  
I think I would like to meet her.

MAL  
And why would you want to do that?

GIA  
I want to meet the woman who's sleeping with the men in my life.

MAL

Gia, please--

GIA

It could happen, you know.

MAL

I'll meet you downstairs.

Mal slips on his jacket and heads out the door. Gia rolls over on her back, looks up at the ceiling, smiles.

INT. LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Malcolm sits at the bar. He nurses a margarita and nibbles on chips and pico de gallo. From behind, he feels a hand on his shoulder. He swivels around and sees Renaldo and Nicole, arm in arm.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia checks herself in the mirror, smiles mischievously. She opens the door, slips down a short flight of stairs, and steps out a second door into the night.

INT. LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Renaldo and Nicole watch as Malcolm waves desperately to the bartender to get his bill.

RENALDO

Malcolm, what are you doing here?

MAL

Me? Nothing. Drink.

Gia strolls past the restaurant. She glances in the window, does a double-take. A moment of recognition. She raps on the window, waves excitedly to Renaldo.

Renaldo abruptly unlocks his arm from Nicole's. Gia breezes into the restaurant and up to Renaldo and, in front of Nicole, gives him a long, lustful kiss.

RENALDO

Gia, what are you doing here?

GIA

I was shopping, walked by, saw you. What are you doing here?

RENALDO

Me? Nothing. Drink. Bumped into these two.

The happy couple wave limply to Gia. Gia looks closely at Mal, acts as if she's never seen him before. But then--

GIA

I remember you. We met at the card game. Mr. Seasons, Malcolm Seasons, isn't that right?

MAL

That's right. Good memory.

Gia takes Mal's hand, shakes it.

GIA

Oh, Mr. Seasons, I see a lot has happened to you since we last met.

Gia points to Mal's wedding ring.

GIA

Se ha casado. You have married.

MAL

Uh...yeah, got hitched.

Mal slips his arm around Nicole's waist.

MAL

To this little lady. Just about to have dinner is all.

Gia gazes fake-adoringly at the newlyweds.

GIA

Newlyweds. How romantic. Just like we once were, eh, Renaldo?

Renaldo giggles nervously. Gia takes Nicole's hand, introduces herself.

GIA

Gia Cardenza.

NICOLE

Nicole...uh--

MAL

Seasons--

NICOLE

Yes, Nicole Seasons--

MAL

She's not used to her name yet.

GIA

This is so lovely. You must let us treat you to dinner!

Renaldo and Mal exchange a fearful look.

MAL  
Dinner?

RENALDO  
With them?

GIA  
To celebrate their marriage.

RENALDO  
But we have plans.

GIA  
Nonsense. Nicole, please, join us.

Nicole smiles vindictively at Renaldo.

NICOLE  
We'd love to. You are too kind.

Gia snaps her fingers for the WAITER.

GIA  
¡Una mesa para cuatro, por favor!  
(to the three)  
Isn't this just a happy  
coincidence?

Gia takes Nicole's arm and escorts her to the table.  
Renaldo and Mal schlepp behind.

A FAST-PACED MONTAGE IN THE RESTAURANT

The MAÎTRE D' leads Mal, Nicole, Gia, and Renaldo to a  
crescent-shaped booth.

Gia and Nicole take seats on the ends, trapping Mal and  
Renaldo.

The four look at menus, the WAITER takes their orders,  
serves their drinks and meals.

We then resume in real time. Gia is animated and talks  
excitedly to Nicole, who listens with interest.

Renaldo and Mal fidget at the table, hoping the dinner  
ends quickly.

GIA  
(to Nicole)  
So we were in a restaurant, not  
unlike this one, and Renaldo  
looked at me from across the room  
and it was love at first sight.  
Isn't that right, darling?

Gia squeezes Renaldo's arm. He GRUNTS in agreement, then quickly resumes eating.

NICOLE

That's so romantic, isn't it,  
Malcolm?

Nicole squeezes Mal's arm. He GRUNTS in agreement, then quickly resumes eating. Renaldo pushes his plate forward.

RENALDO

Well, my dear, that was wonderful.  
Shall we call it a night?

MAL

Yes, a night!

GIA

¡Absurdo! There's still dessert.  
But first, if you will excuse me--

Gia touches her napkin to her mouth and stands.

MAL

Think I'll join you.

Gia heads for the restrooms. Mal crawls out of the booth and follows her.

BY THE RESTROOMS

Gia looks into her compact and artfully applies lipstick. Mal peers around the corner to keep track of Renaldo.

MAL

You knew they'd be here. This was  
all a set-up.

GIA

Was it?

MAL

How did you know?

GIA

A little bird told me.

The Waiter strolls by and offers Gia a knowing glance.

MAL

A Mexican bird.

GIA

He's from Ecuador.

Mal does an eye-roll.

GIA  
I must admit, I'm surprised.

MAL  
About what?

GIA  
About Nicole. She seems very nice.  
And she's pretty. But what else?  
Any talent? Can she paint? I doubt  
it. So what do you both see in  
her? Is it because she's French?

MAL  
Gia--

GIA  
I know how you Americans are. You  
love the French and Italians. You  
go gaa-gaa over the Greeks. And  
you adore the Spanish--as long as  
they're from Spain. But if they  
speak Spanish and are from south  
of the border--

MAL  
That's not why, Gia--

GIA  
Then what is it? Of course, she's  
young. What, are you afraid of a  
mature woman?

MAL  
Can we just order dessert and go?

Mal starts for the table. Gia steps in front of him.

GIA  
Malcolm, I think we should go out  
there right now and tell them the  
truth.

MAL  
Which truth would that be?

GIA  
About them. About us.

MAL  
Gia--

GIA  
Why can't we all act like adults?

MAL

We are acting like adults--we're sneaking around. Now please, let's get this night over with.

Gia angrily SNAPS her compact shut.

BACK AT THE TABLE

Renaldo nervously sips his scotch. Nicole squeezes next to him, invading his precious space.

NICOLE

I've finally met Saint Gia. And I'm surprised--she's nice. Maybe a bit talkative. And her outfit. Very bohemian. At least it was in my grandmother's day.

RENALDO

I'm getting the bill.

NICOLE

You seem nervous. But it's exciting, isn't it, cherie?

Nicole places her hand on Renaldo's. He yanks it away.

RENALDO

Not now!

NICOLE

I embarrass you?

RENALDO

You don't embarrass me--

NICOLE

Well this situation embarrasses me, and I'm tired of it. Maybe I'll tell Gia what's going on--

RENALDO

Keep quiet--they're coming!

Gia and Mal return to the table.

GIA

Please forgive me, but I've taken the liberty of ordering dessert.

NICOLE

Lovely. But first, I must pay a visit to the lady's room.

(to Gia)

Maybe you would like to join me?

GIA

I'd love to.

RENALDO

But you just went.

GIA

So maybe I have to go again--

Nicole flashes Renaldo a spiteful look, then accompanies Gia to the restroom.

Renaldo scrambles next to Mal.

RENALDO

Nicole's gone insane. She's going to tell Gia the truth. You've got to get her out of here!

MAL

What can I do?

RENALDO

How do I know--she's your wife. Just get her out!

Mal recognizes an opportunity. He pounces.

MAL

One condition: make me your permanent dealer. Fifty grand per game plus ten percent of your winnings.

RENALDO

Are you blackmailing me?

MAL

I'm bargaining.

RENALDO

Never!

MAL

Either I deal for you, or you deal with them.

Mal points to Gia and Nicole, who are deep in conversation by the restrooms.

MAL

Looks to me like Nicole's getting pretty chummy with Gia. I wonder who she's talking about?

Nicole points to Renaldo. Gia turns to look at him. Renaldo's face flushes.

RENALDO

Okay, okay--you can deal for me!  
Just get her out of here!

MAL

Okay. Act dazed.

RENALDO

Dazed?--

Mal hauls off and BUSTS Renaldo in the chops. Renaldo THUMPS to the floor, skids a few humiliating feet.

The women rush back, see Renaldo splayed on the floor.

GIA

What happened?

Renaldo looks up, dazed and more than a little surprised.

RENALDO

He hit me!

NICOLE

I don't believe it.

GIA

Why did you hit him?

MAL

He...insulted my wife.

NICOLE

What did he say about me?

MAL

Never mind. Come on, we're going.

Mal grabs Nicole's hand and drags her out of the restaurant.

Gia looks off at Mal, a hint of a smile on her face. Renaldo massages his chin, mutters.

RENALDO

Americanos.

IN A CORNER BOOTH ACROSS THE RESTAURANT

A man and woman sit, their faces hidden behind the menu. Slowly, the menu is lowered--and we see Jonny and Caroline. Jonny's eyebrows arch--based on what he's seen, he smells blood. He glances at Caroline, who is devastated by Mal's infidelity. Jonny's demeanor softens. He rubs her shoulders sympathetically. She turns. Their eyes meet. Their lips touch. Their tongues entangle.

INT. ASIAN CONDO - NIGHT

A harried Malcolm enters, followed by Nicole, who harangues him.

NICOLE  
Why won't you tell me?

MAL  
There's nothing to tell.

NICOLE  
Did he compare me to Saint Gia?  
Because she's no saint.

MAL  
What are you talking about?

NICOLE  
She's having an affair with that  
rich white boy.

MAL  
Mathers?

NICOLE  
Saint Gia the whore.

MAL  
Who told you that?

NICOLE  
Renaldo. So why did you hit him?

Mal's taken aback by the news of Gia's affair.

MAL  
It doesn't matter.

NICOLE  
What did he say?!

MAL  
Nicole--he said you were out of  
control, insane. He wanted you  
gone. I'm sorry.

A beat. Then Nicole turns an admiring eye toward Mal.

NICOLE  
So you hit him? You stood up for  
me? You protected my honor? That  
was very gallant of you, Mal.

MAL  
I'm a gallant guy. Are you sure  
about Gia and Mathers?

NICOLE

But of course.

Mal steps into his bedroom. Nicole tracks him.

NICOLE

I never realized what an attractive man you are, Mal. Strong face. Nice build.

Nicole moves close to Mal. Too close.

NICOLE

Do you find me attractive?

MAL

Well, yeah--sure. But I'm attracted to all women. I'm a pig.

NICOLE

I like that in a man.

Nicole unbuttons Mal's shirt.

MAL

What are you doing?

NICOLE

Me? Rien.

MAL

But what about Renaldo?

NICOLE

Who?

MAL

Nicole, Turk is in the next room.

NICOLE

He sleeps like an elephant.

Nicole takes off Mal's shirt.

MAL

Nicole--

NICOLE

You Americans, you are so immature when it comes to sex.

Nicole slips her arms around Mal--he's weakening.

GIA

Let's enjoy each other. Where is the harm?

Nicole runs her hands over Mal's chest, nuzzles his neck. He can't feel his legs.

GIA  
And we are husband and wife.

Nicole kisses Malcolm ravenously.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - THE NEXT MORNING

As Malcolm heads for his car, the Jaguar XJ zooms up. Gia powers down the passenger window.

GIA  
Get in!

INT. JAGUAR XJ - MOVING - DAY

Gia drives excitedly.

GIA  
When I saw Renaldo on the floor, I was shocked. No one hits him and walks away. But you did. I'm so proud of you.

MAL  
Prouder of me than, say, Charles Mathers the third? Your lover?

Gia hits the brakes, hurling Mal against the dashboard.

GIA  
What are you talking about?!

MAL  
Please, don't lie. I know you're sleeping with Mathers.

GIA  
He's not my lover. I have never cheated on Renaldo.

MAL  
Except with me.

GIA  
You're different. Or didn't you know that? Who told you Charles was my lover??

MAL  
It doesn't matter.

GIA  
It does to me. I want to know who has been smearing me.

MAL

Nicole.

GIA

And you believed her? What a horrible person. How could you marry someone like that?

MAL

I never wanted to get married.

GIA

Then why did you?

Mal scrambles for an untruth to retain his honor.

MAL

Gia, the reason we got married was because...Nicole was pregnant.

GIA

Malcolm, you're cheating on your wife--and she's pregnant?

Gia covers her face with her hands.

GIA

Oh my god! I'm having an affair with a man who's about to become a father!

MAL

Gia--

GIA

This has to end. Now.

Gia leans over Mal, flips open the passenger door.

GIA

Goodbye, Malcolm. Go home to your pregnant wife.

Mal crawls out of the Jaguar XJ. He watches helplessly as it disappears down the road.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

Eddie stands behind the bar, a scowl stamped on his face. Before him is Malcolm, who half-heartedly sips a beer.

EDDIE

So who's this broad?

MAL

She's not a broad, Dad.

EDDIE  
Do you love her?

MAL  
I don't know.

EDDIE  
If you don't know, then you don't.

MAL  
I don't think I've ever been in  
love.

EDDIE  
What about Caroline?

MAL  
I thought I loved her. Now I'm not  
so sure.

EDDIE  
But you're getting married--

MAL  
Dad, I don't think I'm even  
capable of loving someone.

EDDIE  
That's ridiculous--

MAL  
So how do you know if you're in  
love?

EDDIE  
You just know, that's all.

MAL  
You and Mom were in love, right?

EDDIE  
Of course.

MAL  
And she loved me?

EDDIE  
She adored you.

MAL  
I don't even remember her. Maybe  
that's why I can't love. Because I  
never knew my mother's love.

EDDIE  
She left too soon.

MAL

So how do you know if you're in love?

EDDIE

I dunno. For me, before your mother, everything was about me. After I met her, everything was about her. When you came along, everything was about you. The people you love come first.

MAL

It's so complicated.

EDDIE

The fuck it is. Caroline's got it all. She's tall, smart, gorgeous, rich. Her father drives a Tesla, for chrissakes. Does she know about the other broad?

MAL

No.

EDDIE

Then no harm, no foul. Go back to Caroline. She loves you. You love her--even though you're too stupid to know it.

MAL

You're probably right.

EDDIE

Go to Caroline. Promise me.

Mal heaves a sigh.

MAL

I promise.

EDDIE

On your mother's soul?

MAL

On Mom's soul.

Eddie pats his son's shoulder.

INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Offscreen, we hear a key in the door. Mal enters. He looks around. From the bedroom, Jonny saunters in wearing Caroline's fluffy pink bathrobe. He sees Mal, calls off.

JONNY

Oh darling--

Caroline waltzes in wearing an oversized Sonny & Cher t-shirt.

JONNY

We have a guest.

Caroline folds her arms into Jonny's. She casts a withering gaze at Malcolm.

CAROLINE

Welcome back. How was New York?

JONNY

How's your uncle?

Jonny GIGGLES. Mal turns to Caroline.

MAL

What's he doing here?

JONNY

I'm with her.

MAL

(to Caroline)

I thought you loved me.

CAROLINE

I thought you loved me.

MAL

I got involved with Renaldo Cardenza so we'd have the money to get married.

CAROLINE

But you married his girlfriend instead--

JONNY

For money--

CAROLINE

Malcolm, you don't love me. You never loved me. How could you? You're incapable of love.

Caroline spins, coldly steps into the bedroom. Jonny turns to Mal.

JONNY

Night, ding-dong boy.

Jonny smirks, glides into the bedroom. Mal yanks the key from his keychain, leaves it on the coffee table, exits.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, BREAKFAST NOOK - MORNING

Gia and Renaldo sit quietly in their cozy breakfast nook. Renaldo sips his coffee, engrossed in his *El Comercio*. Gia, achingly aware of her loneliness, tries to jump-start a conversation.

GIA

How are your eggs this morning?  
Not too runny?

RENALDO

Congealed to perfection, my love.

Gia tries a different tack.

GIA

By the way, the other night at dinner, Mr. Seasons mentioned something very interesting. He told me his wife is pregnant.

Renaldo lowers the paper. He's suddenly very interested.

RENALDO

Nicole? Pregnant?

GIA

You seem happy.

RENALDO

For her, of course. But for him, I have nothing but contempt.

Renaldo drags a freshly laundered napkin across his mouth.

RENALDO

Please excuse me, my dear, but I must start my day.

GIA

But your eggs--

RENALDO

Yes, delicioso. Adiós mi amor.

Renaldo sails from the room, leaving Gia alone with her loneliness.

INT. O'SHEA/XU GALLERY - DAY

Gia is in the process of hanging her show. She confers with the gallery assistant, DOROTHEA, a tattooed, pierced art school grad.

GIA  
The ceiling?

DOROTHEA  
Imagine. People walk in. They expect to see your work. But all the walls are bare. How can this be? Then they look up...

Dorothea looks up at the ceiling, gasps.

GIA  
So you want to hang my show on the ceiling?

DOROTHEA  
Epic.

Mal enters and steps behind Gia. He admires the paintings--and Gia.

MAL  
Lovely.

Gia recognizes Mal's voice but doesn't budge. She continues to confer with Dorothea.

GIA  
Let me think about it.

Dorothea retires to another part of the gallery.

MAL  
Congratulations. I'm sure the show will be a big success.

Gia turns to Mal, looks at him blankly.

MAL  
Gia, I have a confession.

GIA  
Go to church.

MAL  
Gia, I'll be honest: I'm a liar. Nicole's not really my wife.

GIA  
So you aren't married?

MAL

Well, yes, we are, but--

GIA

Malcolm, I don't have time--

MAL

Gia, it was all arranged. By Renaldo. To keep Nicole from being deported.

GIA

So Renaldo paid you? You married for money?

MAL

I didn't marry for money, Gia. I married for four-hundred and twenty thousand dollars. That's what I owed Renaldo.

GIA

And did you lie about Nicole being pregnant?

MAL

Yes.

GIA

What else have you lied about?

Mal moves to her, take her hands in his.

MAL

Nothing, Gia, I swear. Please, forgive me.

Malcolm takes Gia in his arms, kisses her. She resists at first, then goes all in.

FROM BEHIND A SCULPTURE OF AN INFANT SMOKING A CIGAR

Jonny peeks out. He uses his phone to take a series of photos of Mal and Gia kissing.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, NICOLE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Nicole sits on the toilet, her thong shackling her ankles. Offscreen we hear...

RENALDO (O.S.)

Nicole! My child!

NICOLE

Renaldo?

The bathroom door BANGS open. Renaldo dashes in, falls to his knees, and buries his face in Nicole's breasts.

RENALDO

Oh mi amor, is it true? Are you pregnant?

NICOLE

Pregnant?--

RENALDO

Because if you are, you will make me the happiest man in the world. And I will do anything--anything--for you. The world is yours, my angel.

And without a beat--

NICOLE

Yes, Renaldo--I am pregnant!

Renaldo cradles a Nicole in his arms, then pulls away.

RENALDO

And the child, he is mine?

NICOLE

Oh Renaldo, how can you even ask?

Nicole pulls Renaldo into her arms.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Eddie stands behind the bar polishing glasses. Nicole enters, strides up to him.

NICOLE

Excusez-moi. Is Malcolm here?

Eddie gives Nicole the once over twice.

EDDIE

And you are...?

NICOLE

His wife.

Eddie drops the glass. It SMASHES. Mal steps from the office.

EDDIE

(to Mal)  
You're married?!

Mal scoots Nicole out the door.

EXT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Malcolm leads Nicole quickly away from the bar.

NICOLE

You told Renaldo I was pregnant?

MAL

No I didn't.

NICOLE

You told Gia.

MAL

She was asking questions.

Nicole plants a kiss of gratitude on Mal's cheek.

NICOLE

You are a genius! Because Renaldo desires me more than Saint Gia. But now, we must make the most of the situation. You must help impregnate me so Renaldo will leave Gia for me.

MAL

Nicole, we made love once. And it was lovely. But it was a mistake. We can't do it again.

NICOLE

I don't want to make love to you! I want to get pregnant!

MAL

Let Renaldo impregnate you.

NICOLE

I don't have time. I need to get pregnant. Now. And two men double my chances.

MAL

I won't do it.

Nicole folds her arms across her chest, aims a cold stare at him.

NICOLE

If you don't help me, I will tell Renaldo that you--how do you Americans say?--that you tried to schtup me.

MAL

You're using me.

Nicole strokes his cheek with her satiny palm.

NICOLE

Cherie, that's what men are for.

INT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Renaldo pops open a bottle of champagne. He pours a glass for Mal and Turk, who sit on the couch.

RENALDO

This is a great day, my friends!

Renaldo gazes out the window, muses grandly.

RENALDO

Imagine, after all these years, I have finally been blessed with a child. A son!

MAL

How do you know it's a boy?

RENALDO

Because I'm Peruvian. I have no female sperm.

MAL

So you'll be leaving Gia?

RENALDO

How can I do that? Gia and I have a sacred bond. Our marriage was forged in the furnace of the church. To break that vow would be a sin. No, I think it's better if I keep both Gia and Nicole.

TURK

Don't forget the kid, boss.

RENALDO

Turk, you have how many children?

TURK

I am blessed with none, boss.

RENALDO

Same as Malcolm here--

TURK

His sperm ain't muscular like yours.

RENALDO

I have the sperm of ten thousand men.

(MORE)

RENALDO (CONT'D)

I'll tell you, if I were the last man alive, I could repopulate the earth myself. I am a species unto myself, am I not?

Renaldo squeezes himself between Mal and Turk on the couch. He confides in them.

RENALDO

I will be honest with you, my friends. When Gia and I first married, we tried to have a child, but without success. We went to a doctor, who said the problem resided with me.

TURK

No!

RENALDO

Yes, my friend. I, of course, did not believe him. But somewhere inside, I was afraid he might be right. So I have never felt fully complete as a man. I have been a half-man, a ghost.

TURK

You're a ghost no more, boss.

RENALDO

You are right, my friend. Now that Nicole is pregnant with my son, I have completed my evolution as a man. And to my great relief, I now know that it is Gia who is barren.  
¡Salud!

Renaldo laughs, clicks his glass against Mal's, knocking its contents into his lap.

MONTAGE

A) INT. CARDENZA MANSION, CARD ROOM - NIGHT - Mal deals a winning hand to Renaldo, who squeals with delight. Charles Mathers III throws his hand down in disgust. Thor Johnson holds his aching head in dismay.

B) INT. JONNY'S OFFICE - DAY - FBI agents Frank English and Wally Anka barge into the office and look around for Jonny, who's nowhere in sight. They are furious.

C) INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY - Caroline pops her head up from under the covers, followed by Jonny. They smile, look slyly at each other.

D) INT. ASIAN CONDO, NICOLE'S BEDROOM - DAY - Nicole pops her head up from under the covers, followed by a breathless Mal.

E) INT. CARDENZA MANSION, CARD ROOM - NIGHT - Renaldo hands Mal an envelope stuffed with cash.

F) INT. ASIAN CONDO, NICOLE'S BEDROOM - DAY - Renaldo pops his head up from under the covers, followed by a breathless Nicole.

G) INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT - Mal and Gia simultaneously pop their heads up from under the covers. Both are breathless.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, BATHROOM - DAY

Gia, wearing a nightgown, sits on the toilet and performs a pregnancy test. She stands, flushes, fortifies herself. She looks anxiously at the stick and sees two solid pink lines: she's pregnant. A look of dread washes over her face.

INT. O'SHEA/XU GALLERY - EARLY EVENING

It's the opening of Gia's show. It's mobbed.

Even though she is the star of the show, Gia stands alone in a corner. She seems distant, vulnerable.

She feels a tap on her shoulder. She turns and sees Charles Mathers III. He holds two glasses of wine.

CHARLES

Congratulations.

Charles hands her a glass of wine.

CHARLES

You look like you could use this.

GIA

I could. But I can't.

Gia places the glass on a table.

CHARLES

You should be happy. Your show is a great success.

GIA

These people are here for Renaldo, not me.

Charles places a comforting hand on Gia's shoulder.

CHARLES

I am, Mrs. Cardenza.

Charles feels a tap on his shoulder. He turns. Before him is Renaldo, who wears an icy smile.

RENALDO

Charles, my friend, how nice of you to attend the opening.

CHARLES

I wouldn't miss it. I even bought a painting.

RENALDO

You hear that, mi amor? Mr. Mathers is an admirer.  
(to Charles)  
Which one?

Charles cranes his neck, looks up. Renaldo follows suit.

RENALDO

Darling, why is one of your paintings on the ceiling?

CHARLES

I suppose I'll mingle.  
(to Gia)  
Congratulations again, Mrs. Cardenza.

Charles ambles off into the crowd. Renaldo turns on Gia with a hushed fury.

RENALDO

You flirt with that man in front of my friends and colleagues?

Gia heads for the bathroom. Renaldo's on her heels.

INT. ASIAN CONDO - EARLY EVENING

Mal enters. He looks around, sees all's clear. He creeps across the living room toward his bedroom.

Nicole marches from her room, blocking his path.

NICOLE

Where have you been? We must have sex.

MAL

Now?

NICOLE

Renaldo is asking questions.  
"Where is the baby bump?" he says.

MAL

String him along.

NICOLE

What do you think I've been doing?  
He's driving me crazy. Am I sick?  
Am I well? Am I thirsty? Am I  
hungry--which is always followed  
by, "Remember, we're eating for  
two now." I swear, if he puts his  
ear to my belly one more time--

The doorbell CHIMES. Nicole answers it. On the other side  
is a YOUNG DELIVERY MAN.

DELIVERY MAN

Nicole Simone?

NICOLE

Yes.

DELIVERY MAN

Delivery from Renaldo Cardenza.

The Delivery Man drags in a crib.

NICOLE

(to Mal)  
He's buying fucking baby  
furniture!

INT. O'SHEA/XU GALLERY, WOMAN'S BATHROOM - EARLY EVENING

Gia gazes at her reflection in the mirror as if expecting  
something to change. Offscreen we hear Renaldo knocking  
and calling for her.

RENALDO (O.S.)

Gia! Gia! You can't hide in there!

Gia opens her purse, removes her cell phone, and places  
it on the sink. She rummages through her purse.

The door crashes open. Renaldo charges in.

GIA

Are you crazy? Get out of here!

RENALDO

You let that man, that weasel,  
touch you? Why don't you let him  
fondle your breasts, stick his  
tongue in your behind!

Gia grabs her purse, storms out of the bathroom.

Renaldo inspects his face in the mirror, sighs heavily. He turns on the faucet, splashes his face with water.

On the sink, Gia's cellphone RINGS. Renaldo mutters. The phone continues to ring, irritating him. He scoops it up.

RENALDO

(into phone)

¡Hola! Yes, who's calling?  
Appointment for what? Monday? Yes,  
I'll tell her. Yes, I'm her  
husband. Congratulations? Why are  
you congratulating me?

(beat)

She's what?! Yes, gracias.

Renaldo's face turns a venomous red.

EXT. LAKE CASTAIC - DAY

A white-haired GRANDFATHER gives his GRANDDAUGHTER, 10, fishing lessons.

GRANDDAUGHTER

I hope I catch something, grandpa!

GRANDFATHER

It's just your first time, honey.

The Granddaughter's line goes taut.

GRANDDAUGHTER

I feel something, grandpa!

The girl pulls the line from the water. Dangling from the hook is a dismembered, water-logged hand. The Grandfather is horrified. The Granddaughter: delighted.

GRANDDAUGHTER

Look, Grandpa! Dinner!

INT. FRANK ENGLISH'S OFFICE - DAY

On the desk is the dismembered hand. Frank and Wally look down at it.

WALLY

That's our snitch, Alphonse DeFeo.  
Or what's left of him.

Frank's face hardens.

FRANK

So where's our ICE guy? Why hasn't  
that fucker given us anything?

INT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - DAY

Renaldo paces back and forth before Mal and Turk. He rubs his stomach, stifles a belch--a bad case of agita.

RENALDO

My wife! The woman who vowed  
before God to obey me and, yes,  
love me. And now this. Pregnant.  
And not by my penis.

Mal reacts with surprise to the news.

MAL

Gia's pregnant?

TURK

But boss, you have the sperm of  
ten thousand men.

RENALDO

I'm ashamed to admit this, but my  
wife has not slept with me in  
months. She can't bear my touch,  
my smell, my breath--

MAL

So who's the father?

RENALDO

It can be only one person: the  
whitebread pig of a weasel,  
Charles Mathers the third. He will  
pay dearly. And so will my wife.

Renaldo turns to Mal and Turk.

RENALDO

Turk, I think it is time for  
another card game. Please pay a  
visit to our friend Mr. Mathers  
and ask him to join us tonight.

(to Mal)

And Dr. Seasons, I expect to win.  
Big.

INT. JONNY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jonny and Caroline lie on the couch ferociously making  
out. The door flies open. Frank and Wally barge in.

Jonny and Caroline leap to their feet, embarrassed.

FRANK

(to Wally)

Will you look at this?

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

We got a dead snitch, we know Renaldo did it--and the Chinese dorkmeister here is playing kissy face with this little tart.

CAROLINE

Hey!

JONNY

I'm more American than you!

FRANK

Then act like one! Did you get anything on this Seasons guy?

Jonny pulls out his manila folder, flings photos at Frank. Frank glances at them, smiles.

INT. CHARLES MATHERS III HOME - DAY

A deafening knock rattles the front door. Charles opens it. On the other side is a grim-faced Turk.

TURK

Buenas journo, which in case you're unfamiliar is Spanish for how d'ya do. My boss, one Renaldo Cardenza, requests your personal presence at a poker gala to be transpired in his abode this very evening at eight o'clock pacific ocean time.

CHARLES

With pleasure.

Turk bows awkwardly, then lumbers down the driveway toward his Cadillac Escalade.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Mal sits slumped at the bar, an empty shot glass before him. Eddie stands behind the bar scratching his head.

EDDIE

So Caroline dumped you for some other guy? Did she know you married the French broad?

MAL

Yes--

EDDIE

And now you're telling me you knocked her up?

MAL

Not her. Someone else.

EDDIE

There's someone else?

MAL

Gia.

EDDIE

Gia? She one of them Eye-talians?

Mal takes a breath, looks up at his father.

MAL

Dad, she's Mexican.

Eddie takes a breath, then SMASHES a glass on the bar.

MAL

Dad, I think I'm in love--

EDDIE

What the fuck do you know about love? After all these years, after all the times I've warned you about Mexicans, and you go knock one up?

Eddie yanks the scarf from his throat, points to his scar.

EDDIE

See this?

MAL

Yes, Dad. A Mexican gave that to you.

Eddie leans in face to face with Malcolm.

EDDIE

Not just any Mexican, Malcolm.  
Your mother.

Mal blinks. Hard. Twice.

Eddie removes his wallet, takes out a crumpled, faded photo of a smiling, dark-eyed woman, and shows it to Mal.

EDDIE

This is your mother.

Mal looks at it, dazed. He removes his wallet, takes out a crumpled, faded photo of a blond, blue-eyed woman.

MAL

I thought this was my mother?

EDDIE

That came with the wallet.

Eddie looks wistfully at his wife's picture.

EDDIE

Her name was Dulce de la Castillo. Beautiful name. Beautiful girl. And sweet. An angel. She was from Mexico. She was here illegally. Came in a car trunk. We met not long after I came back from Nam. She needed a green card. I married her. Then we fell in love. We had you. We were happy. For a time.

MAL

So where is she?

EDDIE

After she gave birth to you, she went a little funny in the head.

MAL

Funny in the head?

EDDIE

She kinda went crazy. They call it post party depression--

MAL

Post party depression?

EDDIE

Happens all the time. You know when you hear about a mother who drives the car into a lake and leaves the kids inside? That's post party depression. Your mother tried to hurt you.

Eddie runs his fingers over the scar on his neck.

EDDIE

And me. It wasn't her fault. We saw doctors. She took medicine. She prayed. Nothing helped. She was terrified she'd do something bad to you. So one day, she left.

MAL

Left? Where?

EDDIE

I don't know. I spent a fortune on detectives. They traced her to Mexico, then lost track of her. To this day, I don't know what happened to her.

MAL

But you told me my mother died.

EDDIE

Well, she did. In a way.

MAL

So if my mother's Mexican, does that make me Mexican?

EDDIE

I hadn't thought of that--

MAL

And you're telling me this now?

EDDIE

I'm sorry, son. I never told you because I didn't want to hurt you. And the only reason I'm telling you now is because you knocked up this Mexican broad. And I don't want her to hurt you like your mother hurt me. It still hurts.

Eddie pours them both a shot.

EDDIE

So who is this broad? Her name's...Gia?--

MAL

Gia Cardenza.

Eddie searches his memory.

EDDIE

Cardenza, Cardenza...she's not related to Renaldo Cardenza?

MAL

No. She's his wife.

A beat. Then...

EDDIE

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST, MALCOLM!!!

EXT. SAN VICENTE AND BARRINGTON, BRENTWOOD - DAY

Gia, holding a shopping bag, stands at the intersection waiting to cross. The light changes. She looks left. She looks right. She proceeds.

From out of nowhere, a Cadillac Escalade barrels toward her. Gia makes a valiant leap. The Escalade barely misses her. She hits the sidewalk hard.

Alarmed witnesses run to Gia, help her up. She looks after the retreating car, shaken and angry.

EXT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Mal steps out the front door and walks down the sidewalk. The Chevy Express Cargo Van screeches to a halt. The doors fly open, arms reach out and drag Mal inside. The van hurtles off down the road.

INT. CHEVY EXPRESS CARGO VAN - DAY

Frank, Wally, and Jonny look down at a stunned Mal, who lies sprawled on the floor.

FRANK

Uncle Sam needs your help.

WALLY

We want Renaldo Cardenza.

Jonny dangles a wire before Mal.

JONNY

You will wear a wire.

MAL

No way.

Jonny opens his manila folder, hands Mal a photograph.

JONNY

You will wear a wire, or we will give this to Renaldo.

Mal looks at the picture. It is of him passionately kissing Gia in the art gallery.

EXT. CHEVY EXPRESS CARGO VAN - DAY

Moments later. The van skids to a stop and the door slides open. Mal flies out, hitting the ground hard. The van peels off.

Mal stands, brushes himself off. He pulls the wire from his pocket, looks at it, tosses it into a trash can.

EXT. CARDENZA MANSION - DAY

Gia's Jaguar XJ starts to turn into the driveway. Mal's Ford Taurus RATTLES up next to her. Mal motions Gia to follow him.

EXT. MARINA DEL REY PARK - DAY

Gia sits on a bench gazing at the yachts as they bob in the marina. Mal paces before her.

MAL

Why didn't you tell me you were pregnant?

GIA

I just found out.

MAL

And it is mine, right?

GIA

Of course it's yours. Whose else could it be?

MAL

Renaldo's.

GIA

A sperm whale has more sperm.

Mal sits on the bench next to Gia. He takes her hand.

MAL

Gia, do you want to be a mother?

GIA

More than anything.

MAL

And you'd never hurt the baby?

GIA

Why would I hurt the baby?

MAL

Post party depression.

GIA

Men! It's post partum depression. And I'd never hurt the baby. Ever. The real question is, do you want this child? Because if you don't, that's fine. I will raise our child by myself.

MAL

No, I want the child.

GIA

It's a lot of responsibility. And you can be very immature.

MAL

Immature?--

GIA

I don't want a part-time father who runs out on us because he can't take the pressure. I don't want to be hurt. I've been hurt enough.

MAL

Gia, I promise, I won't hurt you. I never knew what love was until I met you. I'll be with you and the baby. Forever.

Mal tenderly kisses Gia.

MAL

Gia, we have a problem. Actually, we have two problems.

Mal shows Gia the photos the FBI gave him.

MAL

Problem number one: the FBI wants me to wear a wire. If I don't, they're going to show these to Renaldo.

GIA

That's blackmail. If you wear a wire and Renaldo finds out, he'll kill you.

MAL

That leads us to problem number two: Renaldo knows you're pregnant. The good news: he thinks the father is Mathers, not me. The bad news: he's going to kill Mathers. And you.

Gia's eyes narrow, her nostrils flare.

GIA

He already tried! I was almost hit by a car an hour ago.

Gia's eyes suddenly match her flaming red hair.

GIA

That son of a bitch! He tried to kill me?! His own wife?

MAL

Gia, we have only one choice: we run away and raise our child.

GIA

How? You don't have any money.

MAL

Gia, there's a game tonight. I'm dealing. I'll get the money. We'll leave after the game. Meet me at La Naranja at midnight.

Mal kisses her. He takes out his phone, trains it on Gia.

MAL

Okay. Now, smile.

Gia smiles uncertainly. Mal takes her picture with his cell phone. Hold on a close-up of Gia's photograph, and then pull back to reveal...

INT. DARK, DARK BASEMENT - DAY

And we see that Gia's photo--exquisitely photoshopped--is now on the inside front cover of a passport.

Beneath her picture, a fake name and address.

Mal stands next to an OLDER BALD MAN with ink-stained hands. The Man gives Mal two passports. Mal inspects them, pats the Bald Man appreciatively on the shoulder.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mal steps from his bedroom. Nicole emerges from her bedroom. She taps her watch, frantically motions for Mal to get into her bedroom.

The front door BANGS open. Renaldo and Turk enter.

MAL

Where've you been? The game's starting soon. We gotta go.

Renaldo spots the crib, shoves Mal aside.

RENALDO

The crib, it has arrived!  
(inspects it)  
She's a beauty, no? Just like the mother of my precious son.

Renaldo takes Nicole's hand and leads her to the couch.

RENALDO

How are you, my child? Getting  
enough sleep? Eating enough? You  
must be hungry.

Renaldo rubs her belly.

RENALDO

Remember, we're eating for two--

NICOLE

Not now!

Nicole shoves Renaldo away and storms into her bedroom.

Renaldo sighs, leans forward, stares straight ahead, sees  
nothing. Mal grows impatient.

MAL

Forget about it. She's pregnant.  
Let's get to the game.

Renaldo doesn't hear--he's lost in thought.

TURK

Maybe the egg lodged within her  
womb has triggered the release of  
estrogenic enzymes which  
negatively affect her deposition.

RENALDO

There's something wrong. She's  
changed lately. She seems...  
distant...occupied.

Renaldo turns to them, a look of urgency on his face.

RENALDO

I think she is having an affair.

MAL

No!

RENALDO

If she's cheating on me, she's  
cheating on you, too. How could  
you let her do this?

MAL

Me?--

RENALDO

First Gia, and now the mother of  
my son? How could this happen?

(MORE)

RENALDO (CONT'D)

A man of my virility being  
cuckolded? Twice? ¡Impossible!

Renaldo sits on the couch between Turk and a Mal.

RENALDO

I want you two to do me a favor.  
Keep an eye on her. Tell me if you  
see another man.

TURK

Sure, boss.

RENALDO

Will you do this for me, Mal?

MAL

Of course--

RENALDO

You're a good friend.

Mal checks his watch, motions to Renaldo.

MAL

I am. And that's why I'm telling  
you, it's time we get to the game.

RENALDO

I don't know, my friend. I just  
don't think I have it in me.

MAL

Are you forgetting? Charles  
Mathers the third will be there.  
The man who schtupped your wife.  
Who impregnated her.

Renaldo comes alive, leaps to his feet.

RENALDO

Let's eat some whitebread!

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, CARD ROOM - NIGHT

The WASPs sit at the table, bleary-eyed. It's the last  
hand.

Charles peels back his cards: two queens. In the blink of  
an eye and the sleight of a hand, he adds another: three  
queens.

Only Mal notices. But only he would.

CHARLES

Last hand, right? Fifty thousand.

Renaldo cracks his cards: nine, jack, ace, and two kings.

RENALDO

Call.

Renaldo throws his money in the pot. Thor Johnson looks at his hand. He sighs, reluctantly tosses in his money.

MAL

I'm out.

Mal folds his hand.

CHARLES

Two.

THOR

One.

Mal deals their cards to them. He turns to Renaldo.

MAL

How many?

RENALDO

Two.

MAL

Two?

RENALDO

Two, two!

Mal deals Renaldo two cards. The betting resumes.

MAL

Your bet.

CHARLES

One hundred thousand.

Renaldo cracks his cards.

RENALDO

One hundred and one hundred more.

CHARLES

Trying to recoup your losses,  
Renaldo?

RENALDO

Some of it, my friend, some of it.

Thor Johnson pushes stacks of chips into the pot.

THOR

Two hundred more.

The players can't believe Thor is actually betting.

CHARLES

This is too good to be true. One hundred more.

Renaldo and Thor call him. Mal turns to Charles.

MAL

Show 'em.

Mathers fans his cards on the table.

CHARLES

Three queens.

Renaldo's eyes narrow, his lips curl. He lays down his hand: two pair, aces over kings. A loser.

Charles squeals, starts to rake in the money. Then Thor lays his cards on the table: four deuces.

Nobody can believe their eyes. Especially Thor.

THOR

Oh my God! Did I win? No! Wait!  
Yes! I did! I won! I really won!  
Oh my God! I FINALLY FUCKING  
WON!!!

INT. ASIAN CONDO, NICOLE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nicole, wearing a nightgown, sits on the toilet and performs a pregnancy test. She stands, flushes, fortifies herself. She looks anxiously at the stick and sees two solid pink lines: she's pregnant. A look of glee washes over her face.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia sits on the bed. Before her, a pile of luggage. She taps her foot impatiently, checks her watch.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Renaldo wishes his guests good night.

Mal stands with Thor in a quiet corner of the room.

THOR

I still can't believe it. I won.

MAL

You didn't just win. You won one mil, three-hundred and fifty Gs. Of which you owe me half for services rendered.

THOR

Fuck that. I won. I'm a winner.  
You can have all of it.

MAL

PayPal me, pal.

Thor holds up his phone.

THOR

Already have. Thank you, "doctor."

Thor recedes. Renaldo approaches Mal and whispers vehemently.

RENALDO

What happened?

MAL

You took two cards. You were supposed to take three. I had a full house waiting for you.

RENALDO

But I kept an ace kicker.

MAL

A kicker? What are you, a fucking toddler? Jesus Christ, Renaldo.

Renaldo pouts a bit.

RENALDO

Well, at least Mathers didn't win.

MAL

I made sure of that. So?

RENALDO

What?

MAL

My fee for services rendered.

Renaldo grumbles, slips Mal a thick envelope.

MAL

Thanks. And good night.

RENALDO

No, we're not finished yet.

MAL

But I have plans--

RENALDO

You do. With me.

Mal takes out his phone.

RENALDO  
No time for calls. And no  
interruptions.

Renaldo snatches Mal's phone and drops it in his pocket.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia checks her watch one last time.

GIA  
Liar! ¡Que la mentira hijo de  
puta!

Gia leaps to her feet and flies out the door.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, FOYER - NIGHT

Mathers chats with the other WASPs. Renaldo steps up to him, followed by Mal.

RENALDO  
Charles, where are you going?  
Please, join me for a nightcap. I  
have something of importance I  
would like to discuss with you.

Renaldo firmly wraps his arm around Mal's and Charles' shoulders and escorts them from the room.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

Gia marches in, looks around, crosses to Eddie.

GIA  
Where's Malcolm?

EDDIE  
And you are...?

Gia leans over the bar and grabs Eddie's red scarf.

GIA  
Where the fuck is Malcolm?!

Nicole traipses into the bar. She addresses Eddie.

NICOLE  
Eddie, where's Mal--

Nicole stops, spots Gia.

NICOLE  
Gia.

GIA

Nicole.

There's a momentary uneasiness between them. Then Nicole throws her arms around Gia, who's eyes widen.

NICOLE

Gia, I have some wonderful news. I am pregnant!

GIA

Pregnant? But Mal said--

NICOLE

Oh Gia--I am so happy!

Gia's face turns a lovely crimson.

EXT. CARDENZA MANSION, BACKYARD, POOLSIDE - NIGHT

Renaldo, Charles, and Mal stand by the pool and look out over the glittering lights of Los Angeles.

RENALDO

What do you think, Charles?

CHARLES

Pool's nice.

RENALDO

Not quite as nice without my wife, though, isn't that right?

Renaldo gives Charles' shoulder a playful slap.

RENALDO

Let's sit, talk.

The men take seats at a table by the pool.

RENALDO

So Charles, I would like to discuss something of great importance with you.

CHARLES

What?

RENALDO

Your penis.

CHARLES

Excuse me?

RENALDO

Your penis, Charles. You see, I know where it has been.

CHARLES

What are you talking about?

RENALDO

Charles, we're both men. I understand the urges we have. And I know that you've been having an affair with my wife, and that you have impregnated her.

CHARLES

I'm not sleeping with your wife.

RENALDO

Don't be coy, Charles. It's effeminate.

Charles stands abruptly.

CHARLES

Good evening.

RENALDO

But you haven't had your drink.

Renaldo shoves Charles back into his chair. Turk enters carrying a tray of drinks.

RENALDO

Ahhh, here we go.

Renaldo places a bottle of beer before Mal.

RENALDO

Una cerveza para el médico.

Renaldo places a drink before himself.

RENALDO

A scotch for me.

Finally, Renaldo removes a bottle of Best Foods Real Mayonnaise from the tray.

CHARLES

What's with the mayonnaise?

RENALDO

Charles, Charles, Charles... everyone knows that mayonnaise goes perfectly with white bread.

Renaldo gives the mayonnaise bottle to Turk.

RENALDO

Turk, if you would do the honors--

Turk rears back and smashes the mayonnaise bottle over Charles' head. Charles' chair topples over, spilling him into the pool.

Renaldo, Mal, and Turk look down at Charles' body as it floats languidly in the pool.

Renaldo turns to a speechless Mal.

RENALDO

You wanted to work for me. I consented. But the question is, can you be trusted?

Renaldo grabs the front of Mal's shirt, rips it open. But there is no wire taped to his chest.

RENALDO

Consider this your initiation.

Mal's eyes stray to the lifeless body of Charles Mathers III. Renaldo offers Mal his phone. He numbly accepts it.

INT. CHEVY EXPRESS CARGO VAN - NIGHT

Frank and Wally fiddle with their monitors.

WALLY

I'm getting nothing. You?

FRANK

Nothing. Fucker's betrayed us. Took our wire, shoved it up our ass. I'm going to bury this motherfucker. He's a dead man.

WALLY

Maybe he's already dead. Maybe Renaldo killed him too.

Frank seethes.

FRANK

He should be so lucky.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia gathers her luggage in a frenzy. Mal dashes in. Gia absolutely unleashes on him.

GIA

Liar!

MAL

Liar?

GIA

You're a liar! I know the truth  
about Nicole!

MAL

What are you talking about?

Gia grabs her luggage, pushes Mal aside. He follows her  
down the darkened stairs to the restaurant.

EXT. LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia throws her luggage into the Jag. Malcolm tries to  
reason with her.

MAL

Will you listen to me?

GIA

I don't listen to liars! You tell  
me you'll take me away, then you  
don't show up. You tell me Nicole  
isn't pregnant, and then she is!

MAL

Nicole's pregnant?

GIA

Like you don't know? Liar!

Gia climbs in the Jag.

MAL

Gia, please, just listen to me. I  
love you.

Gia slams the door, hits the accelerator, and peels off.  
Mal watches numbly as the Jag zooms away.

Mal feels a heavy hand on his shoulder. He turns and sees  
Turk with his WIFE, a short, humorless woman.

MAL

Turk!

TURK

Who was that?

Mal attempts to derail Turk's train of thought.

MAL

Who's this?

TURK

This is the woman to which I am  
ensnared in marriage.

Turk's Wife bats the back of his head with her purse.

MAL

So, you two lovebirds on a date?

TURK

No. Dinner.

Turk's Wife bats his head again--this time harder.

MAL

Good. Well, look...I gotta go.  
Catch you later.

Mal beats a fast retreat. Turk calls after him.

TURK

Renaldo ain't gonna like this.

Mal keeps walking. He feels a headache coming on.

INT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Renaldo hunkers over his desk at his computer. He looks up and sees Malcolm standing before him. By Mal's expression, Renaldo senses something is wrong.

RENALDO

¿Qué es, Malcolm?

Mal leans across the desk.

MAL

I hate to tell you this, Renaldo.

RENALDO

You hate to tell me what? You have  
some information about Nicole?  
You've seen the man?

MAL

Yes, I have.

Renaldo races around the desk, grabs Mal's shoulders, shakes him.

RENALDO

Who is it? Tell me, who?!

Mal looks Renaldo squarely in the eyes.

MAL

It's Turk.

Renaldo's face turns a bright, noxious red.

EXT. RENALDO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Renaldo steps from the office and crosses the street.

From out of nowhere, Gia's Jaguar XJ barrels toward him. He leaps--but the Jag clips him, sending him flying into a row of recycling bins.

The Jag screeches to a stop a short distance ahead. A red-faced Gia hops out, screams to Renaldo.

GIA

You son of a bitch! That's what you get for trying to kill me!

Renaldo stands unsteadily, wavers--only his anger keeps him on his feet.

RENALDO

¡Putá! Yes, I tried to kill you. And I will try again. Because you have betrayed me, our marriage, your family, God, and Catholics the world over--and you will roast in the eternal fires of hell!

GIA

I betrayed you? You betrayed me! You've been sleeping with Nicole!

Renaldo instantly transforms from a raging bull into a sheepish lamb.

RENALDO

Nicole who?

GIA

Liar!

RENALDO

Okay--we've been having an affair. But you are no innocent. I know about you and that pig Charles Mathers the third. And I know that it was he who impregnated you!

GIA

Well I'm glad someone did. Because you sure the fuck couldn't!

Gia jumps back in the Jag and screeches away.

EXT. CONDOMINIUM COMPLEX - NIGHT

Renaldo steps out of the black limo accompanied by two of his Bodyguards.

Turk BARRELS up the street toward them. He's panting, out of breath, but excited.

TURK  
Boss, boss, I got news!!!

Renaldo sees Turk, pulls out his pistol, and takes a shot at him. Turk can't believe it. He turns, bolts.

TURK  
Boss--whattaya doin'? I got news!

RENALDO  
(to the Bodyguards)  
Get him!

The two Bodyguards charge down the street after Turk.

INT. ASIAN CONDO - NIGHT

Renaldo busts in. He looks around angrily.

RENALDO  
Nicole! Nicole!

Renaldo runs into Nicole's bedroom. He hears a sound from her bathroom. He draws his gun.

RENALDO  
Who's there? Nicole? Come out.

Nicole steps out of the bathroom wearing a robe.

RENALDO  
¡Putá!

NICOLE  
Putá? Putá?!

Nicole chases a backpedaling Renaldo around the room.

NICOLE  
Don't you call me a slut!

RENALDO  
You are a slut! You permit a stranger's penis to invade the sacred province in which my child resides? How could you sleep with him?

NICOLE  
You drove me to it. You don't pay attention to me! You think only of your wife!

RENALDO  
How can you say that! I do  
everything for you!

NICOLE  
Everything except love me!

RENALDO  
I love you!

NICOLE  
You say you love me, but you stay  
with your wife!

RENALDO  
You say you love me, yet you sleep  
with him!

NICOLE  
Who?

RENALDO  
Turk!

Nicole recoils.

NICOLE  
Turk? I never slept with Turk.

RENALDO  
You didn't?

NICOLE  
No. God no!

RENALDO  
Then who did you sleep with?

NICOLE  
Who else? My husband!

It takes a moment for this to sink in, but then the  
answer becomes crystal clear.

RENALDO  
Malcolm!!!

The blood DRAINS from Renaldo's face.

INT. CARDENZA MANSION, DINING ROOM - MORNING

Two Bodyguards lead a terrified Turk into the room.  
Renaldo jumps up from the table and greets Turk.

TURK  
Please, boss--I didn't do nuthin'!

RENALDO

Turk, my friend. I made a terrible mistake. Please, accept my apologies and join me for breakfast.

Turk inches to the table, sits hesitantly.

RENALDO

Coffee?

Turk nods yes. Renaldo pours him a cup. Turk adds cream, clanks his spoon around his cup, and sips nervously.

RENALDO

Have some fruit salad.

Turk starts to feel at home. He dishes out a big bowl of fruit salad and digs in.

RENALDO

I now know the truth, Turk, and I apologize for blaming you.

Turk answers with a mouthful of fruit salad.

TURK

Blamed me for what?

RENALDO

For sleeping with her.

TURK

Who?

RENALDO

Nicole.

TURK

I never slept with Nicole.

RENALDO

I know that now.

TURK

Who told you that?

RENALDO

Malcolm.

TURK

He lied on me. She and me, we never mastriculated.

RENALDO

I know that, Turk. And I also know that it was actually he who was sleeping with her.

TURK

He's sleeping with Nicole, too?

RENALDO

What do you mean 'too'? Who else has he been sleeping with?

Turk shovels a forkful of fruit salad into his mouth.

TURK

Your wife.

A black emptiness settles over Renaldo. He drops to his knees, appeals to the heavens, and let's forth a splenetic scream of rage.

RENALDO

Malcolm Seasons, I will kill you!!!

INT. ASIAN CONDO - DAY

Turk rushes in. Nicole stands helplessly amidst a sea of baby furniture.

TURK

Where's Mal?

NICOLE

How should I know?

TURK

It's of the utmost importance that I locate his location.

NICOLE

Why?

TURK

Nicole, Renaldo knows that Malcolm and Gia are having an affair.

NICOLE

They are?

TURK

You probably don't think that I am a man of deepness, but I'm worried, Nicole. Renaldo, his brain has gone crazy. He wants blood. He could do something stupid. Can you do something?

An icy calmness settles over Nicole.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - DAY

Malcolm sits in a booth, his head buried in his hands. Eddie stands over him, voice raised, arms flailing, cigar bobbing in his mouth.

EDDIE

I told you not to get mixed up with these fucking Mexicans! But do you ever listen to me? No! Why? Because you're a dunce! Because only a dunce would get involved with a fucking wetback!

Mal unleashes a furious punch to his father's jaw. Eddie stumbles backward, crashes to the floor. Mal looks down at his father, shakes his head.

MAL

See what you made me do?

Mal helps Eddie to his feet. Nicole enters. She greets Eddie with cold, dead eyes.

NICOLE

May we have a moment?

Eddie retreats into the kitchen.

NICOLE

You're in danger.

MAL

What are you talking about?

NICOLE

Renaldo knows about you and Gia. He's going to kill Gia. And then you.

MAL

Shit--

NICOLE

I know Renaldo is a jerk. But so am I. We fit. My child needs a father, Malcolm. But if Renaldo gets caught killing you, he'll spend the rest of his life in jail. You and Gia have to leave.

MAL

Nicole, she's pregnant. But she wants nothing to do with me.

(MORE)

MAL (CONT'D)

I've lost her. Again. This time forever.

Nicole takes Malcolm's hand.

NICOLE

You helped me. I will help you.

INT. FORD TAURUS - DAY

Mal sits at a red light. He dials his phone.

INT. JAGUAR XJ - DAY

Gia sits at a red light. Her phone rings. She sees it is Mal. She disconnects, then hits "Block This Caller."

INT. SILVER TESLA MODEL S - DAY

Nicole sits at a red light. She makes a call, talks over her hands-free bluetooth system.

NICOLE

Hi. It's Nicole. Can we talk?

EXT. HAMA SUSHI - NIGHT

The silver Tesla Model S parks. The door flips open. Nicole gets out, heads to the restaurant.

A moment later, a Cadillac Escalade rolls to a stop. The driver's window descends and we see a stone-faced Turk.

INT. HAMA SUSHI - NIGHT

Gia sits on the patio, rice bowl in her right hand, chopsticks clutching a shrimp dumpling in her left. She looks up--standing before her is Nicole.

NICOLE

Thank you for meeting me.

Gia motions for Nicole to sit.

NICOLE

Gia, Renaldo knows about you and Mal. You have to get away.

GIA

I want nothing to do with Mal.

NICOLE

But you're having his baby.

GIA

So are you.

NICOLE

How do you know?

GIA

Nicole, Renaldo is sterile.

NICOLE

Sterile? What is this sterile?

GIA

He is unable to father children.

NICOLE

You mean, Renaldo, he needs the Viagra?

GIA

No, no--that's for the hardness. Sterile is...how do you say...it is when the sperm cannot swim.

NICOLE

He never told me.

GIA

He never believed it.

NICOLE

Gia, I have a confession. I wanted to steal Renaldo from you. So I told him I was pregnant. And I blackmailed Mal to help get me pregnant.

GIA

How could you do something so awful?

NICOLE

Because sometimes I'm not a very nice person. But sometimes, I am.

Nicole takes Gia's hand.

NICOLE

Gia, Mal doesn't care about me. He only loves you. Go to him.

GIA

But what about the child? Does Renaldo know that it's Mal's?

NICOLE

He doesn't have to. And he never will. That is, if you can keep a secret.

Gia and Nicole share a knowing smile.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

Mal and Eddie sit at the bar. Bottles and shot glasses are before them.

EDDIE  
So where is she?

MAL  
I don't know.

EDDIE  
So call her.

MAL  
I've called. I've texted. She  
won't answer.

With one hand, Eddie pours a Johnny Walker Red. With the other, a Boodles Gin. They each drink in silence.

EXT. HAMA SUSHI - NIGHT

Nicole hugs Gia, climbs into her Tesla, and drives off.

Gia types a text on her phone to Mal: Meet me at La Naranja. I love you. She hits send, then jumps into her Jag and pulls away.

The Cadillac Escalade trails behind.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

Mal is sprawled top of the bar passed out. His phone vibrates on top of the bar. He sleeps through it.

EXT. LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gia's Jaguar XJ pulls up. A block away, Turk's Escalade slips into a parking spot. He pulls out his phone, punches numbers into the keypad.

INT. ASIAN CONDO, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Renaldo prowls around the room as he talks heatedly into his phone. The door opens--Nicole enters.

RENALDO  
(into phone)  
Turk, you are sure? She's at La  
Naranja? I'm leaving now.

Renaldo clicks off his phone.

NICOLE  
She? She who? Gia?

Renaldo pulls his Beretta from its holster, pops out the magazine, checks it. Nicole grabs his arm.

NICOLE  
Renaldo, you can't do this--

RENALDO  
This doesn't concern you--

NICOLE  
Let it go. Just divorce her.

RENALDO  
I plan to. Peruvian style.

Renaldo shoves the magazine back into the pistol, then flicks Nicole aside. He strides out the door.

Nicole grabs her purse, dumps out the contents, picks up a business card. She punches a number into her phone.

NICOLE  
(into phone)  
Hello? This is Nicole Simone. I'm  
looking for Jonny Zhang.

INT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

Eddie enters, sees Mal on the bar, hears the phone vibrating. Eddie checks Mal's message, then bats Mal on the back of his head.

EDDIE  
Wake up. It's your girl.

Mal sits up, reads Gia's text, then falls off the bar.

EXT. BAR AMERICAN - NIGHT

As Mal opens the door to his Ford Taurus, he feels the cold steel of a Glock 22's barrel pressed against the back of his neck. He slowly turns and sees Frank and Wally, who grin evilly.

FRANK  
Hi'ya, Mal.

WALLY  
You double-crossed us. Took off  
the wire.

FRANK  
Whattaya say, Wally, shall we do  
Renaldo a favor and kill him?

From behind, a bottle of Johnny Walker Red crashes over Frank's head, followed by a bottle of Boodles Gin over Wally's. They both topple to the ground.

Mal looks down at their bodies, then looks up at Eddie, who clutches the jagged necks of the broken bottles.

EDDIE

Who the fuck are they? Never mind,  
I don't wanna know. Go to your  
girlfriend. She's waiting.

Mal pats his father on the arm, then jumps in his car.

INT. BEDROOM ABOVE LA NARANJA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The room is empty. There's a light knock at the door. Gia enters, runs to the door, swings it open excitedly.

GIA

Mal!

Renaldo strolls in.

RENALDO

Buenas tarde, querida.

Renaldo strokes her cheek with the back of his hand.

RENALDO

So this is your love nest?

GIA

Renaldo, let's just end this.

RENALDO

I intend to. But for now, we wait.

GIA

For what?

RENALDO

For your lovebird to return to the  
nest.

Rinaldo glances at his watch. It's 8:07 pm. Suddenly, the hour and minute hands spin around and around and around until they stop at 9:07 pm.

The door creaks open. Mal pokes his head in, peers around.

MAL

Gia?

Mal sees Gia. Behind her is Renaldo, who points the Beretta at the back of her head.

RENALDO  
Buenas tardes, Dr. Seasons.

Renaldo shoves Gia toward Mal. He takes her in his arms. Renaldo crosses to Mal, points the gun squarely between his eyes.

RENALDO  
Let me ask you: when you woke this morning, did you know that this would be the day you'd die?

MAL  
No. Bummer.

RENALDO  
You have betrayed me. Disrespected me. Disgraced me. So you must die.

GIA  
Why? Because he is with me? You should thank him. You don't want me. You only want Nicole.

RENALDO  
I don't want him to have you.

GIA  
Why?

RENALDO  
Because you are my wife. And I am your husband.

GIA  
We hate each other!

RENALDO  
Now, yes. But there was a time--

GIA  
When we first met. Yes, I loved you then.

RENALDO  
And I loved you.

GIA  
You never loved me. You loved the idea of loving me. Of being with a young woman, pretty, artistic, someone you could parade around--

RENALDO  
Not true--

GIA

But now that I'm old--

RENALDO

You're not old. You're only 40.

GIA

I'm 30!!!

RENALDO

Yes, yes, 30--

GIA

But even that's too old for you.  
You only date fetuses, women with  
hairless vaginas--

RENALDO

What man doesn't like young women?  
(to Mal)  
Do you?

MAL

Renaldo, I love Gia. She's the  
first person in my life I've ever  
really, truly loved.

GIA

You hear that? He loves me. I love  
him. I will bear his child. We  
will raise that child. And we will  
be happy. Renaldo, you can do the  
same. Go home to Nicole. Raise  
your child with the woman you  
love. And who loves you.

RENALDO

I will never let you go! You are  
mine. Now! Forever!

MAL

Gia will never be yours. You know  
why? Because you never put her  
first. That's what you do when you  
love someone.

RENALDO

You want me to put her first?  
Okay. Before I kill you, I will  
kill her.

Renaldo trains the Beretta at Gia.

RENALDO

Adiós, querida.

GIA  
Renaldo, don't!

At that moment, the door bursts open. Jonny charges in, his pistol drawn.

Renaldo pulls the trigger. The bullet SPEEDS toward Gia.

Mal jumps in front of Gia. The bullet lands squarely in his chest. He CRUMBLES.

Jonny points his pistol at Renaldo, screams.

JONNY  
Drop it, Cardenza!

Renaldo wavers, starts to turn. Jonny shoots Renaldo in the ass.

RENALDO  
¡Jesus Cristo! ¡Mi culo!

Gia kneels by Mal, cradles him in her arms.

GIA  
Malcolm. My darling, Malcolm--

Mal eyes widen at his looks at his wound.

MAL  
Shit.

As soon as Mal speaks, the subtitle SHIT! pops onscreen.

Mal smiles weakly at Gia, then loses consciousness.

TITLE: NINE MONTHS LATER

INT. LE SINO-FRANCO RESTAURANT - DAY

A French/Chinese fusion joint. Caroline and Jonny sit across from each other.

She plucks a snail from its shell with her fork and feeds it to Jonny. He snatches a soup dumpling with his chopsticks and feeds it to Caroline. They gaze lovingly at each other. These two are now one.

INT. CALIFORNIA MEN'S COLONY, VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

The room is ringed with PRISON GUARDS, both male and female. PRISONERS sit at tables with their FAMILIES.

Renaldo sits at a metal table. Across from him is Nicole and NICOLETTE, their newborn baby daughter.

RENALDO

And what of Malcolm and Gia and the child?

NICOLE

They've disappeared. No trace. Witness protection? No one knows.

RENALDO

The joke's on Mal, isn't it? Gia gave birth to Mathers' child--and he thinks it's his. Imagine raising another man's kid? Ha!

Renaldo glances at Nicolette uncertainly.

RENALDO

And you are sure Nicolette is mine?

NICOLE

How many times do I have to tell you? Yes! You don't believe me? Take a good, close look at her and tell me she isn't yours!

Renaldo looks closely at Nicolette. She responds gleefully--legs pumping, hands clapping, eyes lit with love. The child extends her arms to her father. Renaldo melts faster than an Arctic ice cap.

Renaldo looks to one of the male PRISON GUARDS, motions to his child. The Guard nods his head yes.

Renaldo picks up his daughter, cradles her, makes goo-goo eyes, which causes Nicolette to squeal with delight.

Renaldo puffs up his chest. He finally feels complete as a man.

Nicole watches happily. She whispers to Renaldo.

NICOLE

Je vous aime.

RENALDO

Speak English, mi amor.

NICOLE

I love you, Renaldo.

Renaldo kisses Nicole.

As he does, Renaldo glances over her shoulder and notices a SUMO-WRESTLER-SIZED ASIAN PRISONER staring at him.

The Prisoner licks his chops, blows Renaldo a kiss, mimes fellatio. Renaldo's eyes widen, his mouth drops. He holds his baby closer than ever before.

INT. MAL AND GIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Malcolm and Gia lie blissfully in bed. Between them is EDUARDO, their newborn baby boy. Gia pries her eyes from her child and directs them at Mal.

GIA  
Mr. Seasons, I love you.

MAL  
Gia, do me a favor--say it in Spanish.

GIA  
But Malcolm--

MAL  
Please. Speak Spanish.

Gia smiles.

GIA  
Te amo Señor Seasons.

MAL  
Te amo Señora Seasons.

Malcolm and Gia kiss. Mal stops, looks at Gia.

MAL  
Hey, did I ever mention: I'm half Mexican.

Gia blinks. Hard. Twice. Then they both place kisses on Eduardo's perfectly pink cheeks.

FADE OUT:

THE END