

Sunset & Fifth

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD - SUNSET STRIP - NIGHT

And it is a balmy summer evening. PARTYGOERS litter the bustling boulevard. A black limousine with darkened windows swishes past. We HEAR laughter as we push into...

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Lit by neon are three WOMEN downing champagne.

WOMAN #1 thirties, respectable and smart.

WOMAN #2 twenties; an (818) gal in a short skirt.

WOMAN #1

I was lunching at Fred Segal when
Leo waltzed in--

SABLE

I was with him the other night!

And parked between them is sultry, buxom, raven-haired SABLE MADDOX, forties with Stevie Nicks' scarf and Saint Laurent cowboy boots. Rifling through her purse, Sable withdraws a VIAL, depositing COCAINE onto a mirror balanced on her knees. A Sotheby's 'World Elite' Mastercard sorts powder into lines.

And now she's bent over the mirror with a straw in her hand.

EXT. SUNSET MARQUIS HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Nondescript hideaway. Palm trees twinkle with lights. The white-covered walkway is lined by ONLOOKERS AND PAPARAZZI.

And the limousine eases into frame. Sable leaps out with a half-drained bottle of champagne in her hand. With a direction always forward, Sable weaves under the awning and through the CROWD, sweeping us into...

INT. SUNSET MARQUIS - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

There's a swirling mass of cool PEOPLE. Sable's eyes sparkle; surrounded by musicians is where she is at home. We follow her, noting a small coke SPOON and diamond encrusted CRUCIFIX on her necklace, into...

INT. BAR 1200 - CONTINUOUS

The mahogany walls are adored with b/w photos of rock stars. Sable enters to hugs and kisses from PARTY-GOERS. She removes a Marlboro from a tortoise-shell case.

Then she spots him. We track Sable, threading determinedly through the crowd. She taps a wiry MAN on the shoulder. Sable's look could freeze lava.

SABLE

You have two seconds to give me my
five hundred dollars or I'll
squeeze your nuts off.

They stare at each other, neither wanting to blink first as a tattooed DUDE sidles up.

DUDE

When her smile fades she is scary
as hell, ain't she?

Man slaps five hundred-dollar BILLS into Sable's hand. Off Sable, grinning at the Dude...

INT. SUNSET MARQUIS - LOBBY/FRONT DESK - NEXT DAY - MORNING

The lobby is quiet. The front desk CLERK checks in a posh LADY. Sable breezing past, spots the lady's SUNGLASSES and smoothly PLUCKS them from the counter, waltzing out...

EXT. SUNSET MARQUIS - DAY

Stung like a vampire, Sable is hit by a dry, hot Southern California day. She slips on the shades. And grooving to some inner beat, she makes her way toward Sunset Boulevard, as we hear Harry Styles *Golden*...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET/JEREMY'S 280 - DAY

Behind the wheel of a banged-up '68 cabrio 280 Benz is JEREMY KENDEL, twenties, slim and good-looking with a rumped, reckless detachment.

EXT. BENNY'S - NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - DAY

As 280 eases to a stop, Jeremy hops out and strides inside.

INT. BENNY'S BAR - DAY

Dark. Stale. We see BLAIR, twenties, a knockout blonde, stocking the bar. Jeremy enters wearing jeans, western shirt and his trademark tattered cowboy BOOTS.

BLAIR
What are you doin' here?

JEREMY
Forgot my guitar last night.

Jeremy snatches his TIPS from a jar. Reads a NYC POSTCARD.

JEREMY
Sounds like Derrick's rocking.
(proffers Blair a TWENTY)
Thanks for covering my shift.

BLAIR
Add it to your Nashville fund.
What's the gig, anyway?

JEREMY
Some dude from Epic.

BLAIR
Good luck!

JEREMY
One day it's gotta hit, right?

BLAIR
You're gonna be a big star.

And he chuckles and is about to leave when Blair says:

BLAIR
Derrick called. She came to his
gig last night ... asked about you.
(smiles)
For what it's worth.

A SHRILLING phone startles us. Off Jeremy's intrigued expression, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ON THE ROX - SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT

Intimate affair with oversized club chairs and plush sofas. We hear music and see PEOPLE, drinking. In the corner, Jeremy plays his guitar for EPIC MAN parked on a sofa.

Meanwhile, Sable enters, looking gorgeous. She checks herself in the mirror getting admiring looks from men and women. Woman #1 and #2 are with her.

Right then, there's a smile of perverse joy to Sable's face, like she has remembered the punchline to a favorite joke.

SABLE

I got it! After I get the stuff I want you to ask Nathan (nods to bartender) to call this number.

Sable scribbles in pen a number on Woman #2's palm. Then, her eyes settle on Jeremy. There is something mystical, haunting about the cords, his voice. She pads over. Their eyes are on each other. Sable jots something on a MATCHBOOK and drops it into Jeremy's guitar case.

INT. WINSTON'S BAR - WEST HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

This upscale joint is packed with smartly-dressed girls and boys. A BEEFCAKE chats up Sable when suddenly, her eyes lock on -- Jeremy watching the answer to every man's fantasies moving like a jungle cat toward him.

SABLE

I knew you would come. I'm Sable.

JEREMY

Jeremy.

She stands with hands on her hips like a Roman emperor.

SABLE

I feel a strong connection to you.

JEREMY

That's a sweeping statement, considering we just met.

SABLE

It's the music. You got it.

(a beat)

I see it. I know.

JEREMY

Do you know you're sexy?

SABLE

(scoffs)

From the moment I was ten. And let me tell you it was hell waiting to do something about it. Come on.

And Sable snatches Jeremy's hand, leading him...

EXT. WINSTON'S BAR - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Sable has her arm around Jeremy's. She is laughing. She draws Jeremy toward her -- KISSES him. Softly at first, then harder. They're a few beats in when a HORN blares.

EXT. JEREMY'S CAR - STREET - NIGHT

And the 280 drives along surface streets. Many gas stations, traffic lights, bars. Jeremy is at the wheel while Sable has a coke vial out, casually hitting one nostril.

SABLE

How come I've never seen you out?

JEREMY

I work a lot and try to play gigs.

SABLE

You got any dreams you wanna sell?

JEREMY

Ya know a buyer?

SABLE

I know people.

JEREMY

Any in Nashville?

SABLE

Yeah. Phil Hagler. Give me a demo and I'll pass it on.

JEREMY

Thanks. Where we goin', anyway?

SABLE

(British accent)

Just drive, James.

EXT. BJ'S (WRECKING YARD) AFTER HOURS BAR/STREET - NIGHT

And the 280 eases to a stop. The lower-class neighborhood is quiet. Street is dark sans a pool of light from a street lamp. Jeremy and Sable walk along a chain-linked fence. They stop at the gate. Someone opens it a few inches, then swings it full.

A hulking BOUNCER leads Sable and Jeremy past rows of wrecked cars. At a concrete shed, the Bouncer knocks on a door. It opens. Sable and Jermey sweep down a flight of steps...

INT. BJ'S AFTER HOURS BAR - NIGHT

The tiny place is illuminated by bulbs of blue. We see a small bar with a few well-heeled CLIENTS, sipping cocktails.

JEREMY

We came all the way for this?

SABLE

No, baby. For this--

Sable sweeps aside a red velvet curtain to reveal --

A den of debauchery. It is a lavish mirrored room with twenty tables packed with PEOPLE. Topless WOMEN in cheerleading skirts float about with trays of drinks, cigarettes and drugs.

Sable splashes into the room, effortlessly charming all by touching an arm here and there. She is offered some blow at one table. Does a rail.

By now, Sable and Jeremy are tucked into a circular booth.

Jeremy's out of his element but plays it cool when a WAITRESS delivers a bottle of Jack Daniels, bowl of COCAINE, silver straws, ice bucket and glasses.

Sable prepares the drinks, lays out the lines. Jeremy hesitantly accepts the straw just as a topless waitress blocks the shot of him doing a line.

SABLE

This your first time?

JEREMY

Actually, third. First and second were disasters.

SABLE

Oh, do share.

JEREMY

First time was with a Kino waitress from Laughlin in a Reno motel. God, it was the chaos of a Roman orgy. I actually woke up in the bed of a dude's semi; fully dressed though.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

The second I was with this gal Jody I met that afternoon at Red Rock. She had a house under the Hollywood sign. We'd had too much vodka already and mixing this. I got the fabulous idea to climb up to the sign, midway I tumbled down, almost braking my leg.

And Jeremy's eyes are wide, his pupils dilated, watching Sable slug from the Jack Daniels bottle, and we fade to--

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - WEE HOURS

The place is sparse with attic furniture. Slash of light from a street lamp illuminates a wall of musician posters.

We hear giggles and whispers. On Sable and Jeremy looking involved at each other. They kiss. She fumbles with his belt. They take a break from undressing to kiss harder.

Sable opens her shirt, pulling Jeremy close to her breasts.

Thirty minutes later, they lie together for a long moment.

They don't take their eyes off each other. Sable lights a cigarette and takes a deep drag. Then, she SINGS softly.

SABLE

"Rhiannon rings like a bell through the night. And wouldn't you love to love her?"

JEREMY

You're a complex creature.

SABLE

The party-girl image is one I work constantly to curate. Music, though, it's my sanctuary. When you run with a fast-set sometimes the wheels come off, things get broken, it's a destructive path. But the music is something that's always constant and forever in my life. "And who will be her lover?"

And she straddles Jeremy, which sweeps us into the...

LATE MORNING

Sunlight drenches the room. The camera finds Jeremy and Sable in bed, eating DONUTS, drinking CHAMPAGNE in mugs.

SABLE

I was an orphan adopted by a family, who I never speak with. I adored my mother but she drank heavily and suffered from clinical depression. At sixteen, I quit school. My dad wanted me to learn data processing but I wanted rock 'n' roll. Had fabulous times touring with big acts until one day I got pregnant. Guy was in a band and didn't want the responsibility.

This hits Jeremy where he lives.

SABLE

I had a daughter, Rhiannon, I tried to raise. I wasn't a good mom so when she was two I gave her to the same orphanage my parents got me.

On the radio is *Love In Vain*.

SABLE

There was a time Ronny, Keith and Mick were like my family.

Right then, Sable digs inside her purse, proffers Jeremy a twenty-five dollar CHECK from Ronnie Wood. With a broken smile, she studies a wrinkled PHOTO of a young woman holding Sable as a happy, laughing toddler.

SABLE

That's me and mom.

Sable snatches Jeremy's red Martin GUITAR and strums a tune. In harmony they SING Coldplay's *Let Somebody Go*.

JEREMY/SABLE

"We talked around in circles, and we talked around and then I loved you to the moon and back again. You gave everything this golden glow now turn off all the stars..."

As Sable looks at Jeremy in the poignant moment, she catches herself falling and recoils. Sable leaps up!

JEREMY

Hey. What are you doing?

SABLE

I gotta go.

And like that -- she's out the door. As Jeremy struggles to process, he spots KYLE, twenties, in a WHAM tee and yoga pants, looming at the door.

KYLE

My goodness. She was a whirlwind.

JEREMY

What's up?

KYLE

Eh, nothing much. Same old, same old. I did get a callback for that phone commercial. But that's not the news. You're not going to believe who called last night. (shouts) Your dad!

This hits Jeremy like a freight train.

KYLE

Yeah, Cecil. And get this, he wants to come out and see you!

Jeremy stares out the window with a blank expression.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DANCE CLUB - TWO DAYS LATER - HOLLYWOOD - LATE NIGHT

The pulsing MUSIC is ear-splitting. It is dark, cavernous. There are a hundred people's arms in the air, waving glow-sticks. Lights flash across the dance floor.

We spy Sable. She takes Jeremy's face in her hands and gazes into his eyes.

SABLE

Have you ever dropped E? (he shakes his head) It's not like coke, it's long and slow. Open your mouth.

Placing a PILL on Jeremy's tongue.

SABLE

Now just be with me in the moment.

They dance. Jeremy soaks it in. People are rubbing, bumping into him. His eyes lock on Sable's, who cups his chin.

SABLE

I've never had anyone look at me
the way you do.

JEREMY

You're like a movie star.

SABLE

Thanks for not saying you love me.

JEREMY

I could.

SABLE

Don't. It's disastrous.

She smiles, but underneath the smile we sense she is serious.

SABLE

I've loved two men: Ron Wood and
Gordon Croft and if they were here
they would say run like hell.

Jeremy places his hands on Sable's hips and draws her close. Their movements tighter, hotter. Sable is melting into him now, KISSING him, their bodies pressed into each other.

The dancing is now SLOW MOTION, carnal and intimate. Jeremy is sky high and loving every minute of it. Then bizarrely, Sable begins to CRY. But she doesn't stop dancing. She weeps with the pulsating beat. Jeremy watches the whirlwind of anarchy inside. Her emotions are genuine as she gyrates her pelvis against his.

FADE TO:

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

The sun spills into the room. Jeremy awakens to find Sable gone. He is in a blank, drunken daze with an aching head. He rises and studies himself in the mirror, not liking what he sees. His phone dings. He reads the MESSAGE and sinks.

EXT. READY MOTEL - VAN NUYS/405 - DAY

The sun bakes. 280 pulls up to a run-down, hourly rental motel. Jeremy sits behind the wheel staring at room 17. He gets out of the car and pads to the door, pushing it open.

INT. READY MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark save a slice of sunlight. Jeremy switches on light. Foil covers the windows. On the table is drug PARAPHERNALIA, cocaine. Jeremy eyes Sable strewn on the bed. He is overwhelmed with many emotions, fear topping the list. Jeremy notices Sable has been SMACKED around. She is pale, lips cracked, eye bruised.

Wearing only a man's shirt, she regains her lucidity. She smiles when she sees Jeremy and forces herself to sit up. Jeremy's eyes TRACK marks on her legs. Sable is embarrassed.

SABLE

This is why I never let anyone love me. I can't get off the train. When I heard you the other night you reminded me of Gordon, my one true.

(a beat)

Couple years ago he landed a gig in Toronto. I followed him. We always got wild, wound-up. He was never into speed. Anyway, a big record company signed him. His first big success. I bought party-favors. One led to many and to me talking him into trying a jab. He did. I, uh, noticed after the last injection him turning blue and pale. He said he was tired. He went to the bedroom. Next morning I awoke with him dead in my arms.

Jeremy studies her. His face is stone. He is saddened.

SABLE

I had put too much heroine in our mix. I served eighteen months, moved back here to, ah, (laughs) get my life in order. (a beat) I wanted you to see me this way.

She kisses her finger and places it on his lips.

SABLE

Now get out. Leave me alone.

Hold on Jeremy's misty eyes, then--

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. JEREMY'S APARTMENT - WEEKS LATER - MORNING

The door snaps open to Jeremy. By the looks of it, he slept in his clothes. He finds Kyle twisted like a yoga pretzel.

KYLE
Morning, sunshine! Care to join?

JEREMY
That'll be the day.

Jeremy snatches his guitar case.

KYLE
Listen, Toby's been calling. I haven't answered. Left two messages! He's gonna kick us--

JEREMY
--No, he's not.

KYLE
You have to get a phone. That works! Becky called again about the pilot--

JEREMY
--Already told her it sucks.

KYLE
Who cares? Your face is out there!

JEREMY
I want gigs I can be proud of.

KYLE
Like the last three months. Your mom called. Call her!

On that, Jeremy snatches a POP-TART and breezes out the door.

INT. BENNY'S BAR - MORNING

We find Blair setting up the bar. Jeremy breezes in. BUCK, sixty, professional smoker and saloon manager, cuts a penetrating glare. It's late. He's late.

JEREMY
Hey. Sorry.

BLAIR
Heard you closed the Marmont.

Jeremy eases past Buck and begins restocking bottles. Blair spots JermeY's hickey and sees red.

BLAIR

One would think being bound to a bed and left in a dodgy motel--
What are you doing?

JEREMY

Getting ice.

BLAIR

Don't you see it? You're pissing away your talent! J, you can do anything. But this toxic behavior of yours pushing away your friends...

Jeremy doesn't like where this line of questioning is headed.

BLAIR

Derrick said she's moving to Paris on Monday. Instead of sticking around here digging your own grave. Maybe that's an option.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

BAM. A bird's-eye view of the Hudson. Zipping over Fifth Avenue, we descend onto...

E/I. SHERRY-NETHERLAND - 57TH/FIFTH AVENUE - AFTERNOON

It is a stunning Neo-Romanesque high-rise. We push inside to a lavish, grand abode where robots live. Gliding along a hall with polished wooden floors, Jacquard wallpaper, we enter...

INT. MARGARET'S BEDROOM

It is in keeping with the rest of the flat. There's a four-poster bed and works of art. Shelves of BOOKS; ones by Margaret Waters, barricade the windows of this sanctuary/cell.

We see a woman in a Dior dress sitting at a desk littered with prescription medication BOTTLES. She is holding a pristine child's DOLL.

This is MARGARET WATERS, fifties, serene and dignified; a shell of a once vibrant creature. A KNOCK sounds on the door. She cringes. The door opens. She never looks at...

TOM WATERS. He is fifties, ruggedly handsome. We like him. Peering inside, his face is marked by guilt and agony. A moment elapses, highlighting a TICKING clock. Then;

TOM

I'm off. As I, I mentioned have meetings in San Fran but, uh, keen to meet you in LA.

Tom deposits a Los Angeles airline TICKET onto the dresser.

TOM

Call it a crazy maybe, a hopeful plea. I can't continue this. Contrary to your beliefs I do want us to survive. I, uh, booked the Marmont for old-time sakes.

MARGARET

Our locale isn't the issue.

TOM

If I don't hear from you by day's end, I will assume -- Margaret. We had something. Something special. I'm not certain how much longer I can hang onto the ropes. Good-bye.

Tom closes the door. Margaret looks tired, the kind of fatigue a good night's rest won't cure. She closes her eyes.

BACK TO:

INT. BENNY'S BAR - EVENING

The joint is half-full. A COWBOY is singing on stage. At the bar is Jeremy. He is inebriated. BARTENDER (40s), pours a whisky. Jeremy downs the shot, sweeping us to MEMORIES--

INT. JEREMY'S FATHER'S HOUSE - PAST - DAY

We see a turntable. The needle is placed on an album. *Sunday Morning Coming Down* crackles. A figure of a MAN (CECIL) admires a five-year-old Jeremy work the cords of a red Martin guitar. He repositions his son's fingers. Jeremy proudly smiles, as we return to--

INT. BENNY'S BAR - PRESENT - EVENING

BARTENDER

As you say, it's strikes and gutters and clearly you can't hit a strike. Yeah you're old man stood you up, girlfriend left town, life's tough, yada, yada. But get on with it. If I were you, I'd hit Nashville.

JEREMY

Fuck you.

BARTENDER

Then go see Derrick or stop Ms. Right. Anything beats watching you rot in the valley sun.

This stings. Jeremy's face contorts. He downs another shot. Meanwhile, over his shoulder, Buck takes the stage.

BUCK

Thanks J.J. Now let's give a...
(spots Jeremy; frowns)
Actually, we're going to take a quick break. Be right back.

Buck crosses to Jeremy, looks at him, disheartened.

BUCK

I said last week I can't do it no more.

JEREMY

I'm having a couple of drinks.

BUCK

Grow up. It's more than that and you know it.

JEREMY

You're still on the other night.

BUCK

You broke a customer's jaw!

JEREMY

He was manhandling Blair!

BUCK

I've told you I see the same talent
your daddy had but don't have the
stomach to watch you piss it away,
too. Watchin' a train wreck ain't
entertainment. When you clean
yourself up that door is open until
then...(motions Bartender)

Jeremy's eyes glaze and blink slowly. Bartender slips a
HUNDRED-dollar bill from the register and a TWENTY from his
pocket. Buck strides off. Jeremy consults his WATCH on a
tattered leather strap. Pounds a shot.

BARTENDER

Give it up, man. You're chasing a
ghost you'll never catch.

Jeremy eyes a GIRL across the bar who sweeps us to...

INT. GIRL'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremy slips his arm from under the sleeping girl's neck and
rises from the bed.

EXT. GIRL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jeremy's face goes British pale. His car has been towed.

EXT. CARLOS' JUNK YARD/280 - NIGHT

Jeremy ascends the chain-linked fence. He drops behind the
280s wheel, inserting his key. 280 peels out...

EXT. JEREMY'S 280/APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

280 comes into frame and jolts to a stop. Jeremy is behind
the wheel. He sinks at the sight of an EVICTION NOTICE taped
to his door. Collecting his belongings by the rubbish bin,
knowing he's on the verge of hell, Jeremy sobs a little.

Meanwhile...

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAWN

A vibrant golden sunrise caresses the killer skyline.

EXT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND/SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

Prada luggage is deposited into a SEDAN'S trunk. Margaret, perfectly coiffed and couture-clad, climbs inside the sedan with a vague feeling of happiness. Withdrawing a small leather BOX, she caresses a pink RIBBON between her fingers.

We must note Margaret's apprehension leaving her 'sanctuary.'

EXT. LOS ANGELES - AIRPORT - MORNING

On Margaret disappearing into a Lincoln sedan.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT/SEDAN - STREET - MORNING

Margaret steps from the sedan awash with found memories.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

The hotel MANAGER (60s) languishes behind the desk. A smiling Margaret enters frame.

HOTEL MANAGER

Well. Good afternoon, Mrs. Waters.
How lovely to have you back.

MARGARET

It's splendid to be back. Were you
able to arrange a minister?

HOTEL MANAGER

Yes, I was. Unfortunately, though,
Mr. Waters canceled your room
reservation this morning.

Margaret's bliss transforms into disappointment.

MARGARET

Did he now?

HOTEL MANAGER

I tried to ring you.

MARGARET

My plane was delayed and perhaps he
thought I wasn't coming. I was
hoping to surprise him.

Margaret sighs, noticing a sullen Jeremy shuffle past.

HOTEL MANAGER
Shall I give him a ring?

MARGARET
No. That's not necessary.

HOTEL MANAGER
Fortunately, your room is open.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - POOL/GARDENER'S HUT - LATE MORNING

It is deserted. Jeremy tosses his guitar case atop a lounge chair and parks himself. Inserting a pre-paid sim card into his PHONE, he dials. A woman answers.

JEREMY
(into phone)
Hey. It's me.

SUSAN VOICE (V/O)
Oh, thank God. I phoned work; Buck said you left. I'M COMING! We're rushing into an appointment. I know you're hurt. I don't know all the details but Fritz left a message something was wrong with him. I have to run. I'll call you after I speak with Fritz.

JEREMY
(into phone)
Ok. Love ya.

SUSAN VOICE (V/O)
I love you, too. Bye.

Off Jeremy in a disastrous state, as we fade to...

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - LOBBY BAR - EVENING

There is a smattering of GUESTS in the cozy bar. Jeremy is parked at a corner table when Margaret enters. She sits at the bar. Jeremy intently watches her. Something about her forlorn demeanor spikes his curiosity.

A young African American WAITRESS appears.

WAITRESS
What may I get you?

JEREMY

Granddad rocks and glass of top-shelf vino for that lady.

By now, the waitress is pointing Margaret to Jeremy, who grins. Margaret smirks. Jeremy rises and threads over; he's interrupted by WOMAN #3 holding Margaret's BOOK.

WOMAN #3

Margaret Waters! Gail Johnson with the Las Vegas book club. We met here three years ago. Oh. Would you mind signing this?

(Margaret signs book)

It's Gail with an 'i.' How's the new 'Connie' story?

MARGARET

Going well, thank you.

WOMAN #3

That's right! It's your anniversary. Where is Mr. Tom?

MARGARET

Funny, he takes longer dressing than me.

WOMAN #3

(giggles)

Are we seeing you tomorrow?

Jeremy eases into frame. Margaret's attention is drawn to his boots, then to his eyes.

WOMAN #3

Here's a flyer in case. I'll let you enjoy your wine. Bye, now.

Jeremy is caught in Margaret's bewitching eyes.

MARGARET

Thank you for the wine.

At the moment, a perky young AMBER bounces up to Jeremy.

AMBER

Hey, you! Heard you got fired.

JEREMY

Could you gemme one sec?

(then; to Margaret)

I'm Jeremy.

MARGARET

Margaret.

JEREMY

Not that it's my concern. But, ah, everything okay in there?

MARGARET

(laughs nervously)

Yes. Absolutely. Why wouldn't it be? It's my twentieth anniversary.

Jeremy sighs, knowing this doesn't jive with what he's seeing. A WAITER arrives and serves Margaret canapés.

JEREMY

Alright, then. I'll, uh, let you get on to your celebrating.

Hold a moment on their smiles -- then--

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - POOL - NIGHT

Some glasses; tequila is poured into them. The pool has been taken over by Marmont's occupants and local habitué. There's a small stage and a house BAND for 'open mic' night.

We find Jeremy and Amber, downing shots in a lounge chair.

AMBER

She was at Rudy's on Santa Monica drinking brandy and betting horses.

(Jeremy shrugs)

It was six in the morning!

JEREMY

Nobody puts Sable in a corner.

AMBER

Now I hear she's crashing in some waiter's living room. What you see in her... What, who you looking at?

On Jeremy. His razor-keen gaze is fixed on Margaret, looming by the pool. SOMEONE shouts, "Sing Jeremy." Jeremy snatches his guitar and takes the stage. He sings with a magnetically haunting voice -- mix of Chris Isaak/Tom Waits. Margaret is enraptured.

And right then, Sable splashes into frame with a half-drained bottle of Dom in her hand. People APPLAUD. Jeremy exits the stage, catching Margaret's gaze. He grins, then furrows his brow. Sable has noticed the object of Jeremy's attention.

Suddenly, she leaps into his arms, wrapping her legs around his waist, arms about his neck. Peeking through a thatch of brittle, broken black hair, Sable leers suspiciously at Margaret. Margaret sighs, pivots and stalks away.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - MARGARET'S ROOM - NIGHT

It is dark. Suddenly, light spills into the room. Margaret enters and deposits herself onto the bed. We begin to realize she is deeply troubled.

A burst of emotion overcomes her. She cries but does not seem to identify the emotion. Struggling to open a PILL BOTTLE, she swallow four pills, as WE HEAR A GIRL'S SHRILL from the hallway, followed by:

JEREMY (O/C)
Come on, I got mine off!

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - MARGARET'S ROOM - BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Margaret stalks onto the balcony. Gripping the pill bottle in one hand, the railing with the other, she steps onto the railing. Below is the pulsating beat of Sunset.

JEREMY (O/C)
Helluva anniversary celebration.

Margaret wobbles a bit, spying Jeremy on an adjacent balcony.

JEREMY
Don't let this joint's demons
getcha like they have many others.

GIRL (O/C)
Hey, where'd you go?

JEREMY
Look forward to seeing ya tomorra.

Suddenly, there is a deafening COMMOTION in the HALLWAY. We hear Sable yelling, "You bitch!"

Margaret opens her hotel door and peeks into the...

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT - HALLWAY

Sable jerks a GIRL by her hair. Jeremy is struggling to free her. He succeeds. The girl races off. Sable stares at Jeremy like she's going to deck him. Instead, she kisses him with naked lust, hard on the mouth.

At that moment, the Manager arrives.

HOTEL MANAGER

You. Get out! You're both banned.

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It is a balmy summer evening. Cars and PARTYGOERS litter the bustling boulevard. Sable is laughing. Jeremy is livid. Sable draws Jeremy toward her -- she could seduce the devil.

JEREMY

What the fuck is your problem?

SABLE

I need you to do something for me.

JEREMY

No. I'm tired of this!

SABLE

Stop being a boring fuss. I need a fav. Take this.

Sable shoves an ENVELOPE inside his coat pocket.

JEREMY

What, what is it?

SABLE

To Vegas. Outside town. Tomorrow.

JEREMY

No! I'm not driving to Vegas.

SABLE

I wrote where, when, who.

JEREMY

What is it? (catches himself) Who gave you this?

SABLE

It doesn't matter. What does is the Vegas boys have their money.

JEREMY

Why can't you do it?

SABLE

I don't have a car and one of the dudes wants to kill me.

(MORE)

SABLE (CONT'D)

Do this and tomorrow I'll come by
your apartment...

JEREMY

I don't have a fucking apartment!
(hit with realization)
Hell, I don't have anything.

Right then a car horn HONKS. Jeremy spots a vintage Rolls. A posh older LADY in the passenger seat waves at Sable, who removes the crucifix from around her neck. She places it into Jeremy's hand.

SABLE

Mwah. You're the best.

And then Sable disappears into the Rolls. And it's here we witness Jeremy arrive at a decision.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - POOL - MORNING

It's a glorious California morning. We discover Margaret on a lounge chair nuzzled in her robe. Her eyes settle poolside where she loses herself in a gaze of a young of DREAM.

JEREMY (O/C)

Pst. Pst.

...SNAPPING BACK, Margaret discovers Jeremy peeking through the shrubs. She gives a half-smile, masking her humiliation. He crawls through the shrubs and parks his hands on his hips.

JEREMY

Told you I'd see ya.

MARGARET

Hi. Are you okay? Last evening
was insane.

JEREMY

Just a Wednesday night.

Their eyes play on each other.

JEREMY

And how are you this fine morning?

MARGARET

I wanted to thank you.

JEREMY

How long you here for?

MARGARET

Honestly, I made a mistake coming and have decided to depart today. There's a book fair in--

JEREMY

--Vegas.

MARGARET

Correct. I haven't attended in years and thought since I was here it would be perhaps therapeutic.

JEREMY

Lady Luck is crafty. Thanks to some unfortunate turn-of-events I'm passing through there today.

MARGARET

Oh. Oh! I don't mean to be presumptuous but if that's an offer I must respectfully decline.

JEREMY

I read a road trip in a convertible is therapeutic.

MARGARET

The hotel has reserved a car. It is rather a kind and extremely sweet offer. Sorry.

JEREMY

I'll be honest with you. I see hundreds of gorgeous gals a day, but you ... you're absolutely the most stunning, elegant, intriguing dame I have ever laid eyes upon. I had to tell you even though it risks being jailed for trespassing.

MARGARET

Thank you. That is one of the most flattering comments someone as said to me in years.

JEREMY

Adios, Margaret. Take care.

With that, Jeremy disappears, leaving Margaret's mind racing.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT/JEREMY'S 280 - DAY

Margaret, perfectly coiffed, exits the hotel. She is about to enter her service sedan when she spots ... Jeremy leaning against the 280, grinning, seemingly reading her mind.

Temptation creeps over Margaret like a warm wind; sure it's absurd, but something about Jeremy makes the idea seem right.

JAM TO:

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY/JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - DAY

WHOOSH. The 280 zips below. The desert floor, bathed in sunlight, shimmers with stored heat. We find Margaret's LUGGAGE strapped to the trunk.

JEREMY'S 280

Two-lane blacktop stretching for miles. Jeremy is behind the wheel. He ignites a cigarette. Margaret is shotgun, struggling to keep the wind from snatching her HEADSCARF.

MARGARET

You certain my bags are secure?

JEREMY

Again. Yes.

MARGARET

Must we smoke?

Jeremy reluctantly flicks the cigarette out the window.

MARGARET

I suppose the air conditioner is not an option.

JEREMY

Here's an option: live in the moment. (smiles) Just relax. Take in the vast open space and fresh air.

(she forces a smile)

You know, you got one of those smiles that really work. Thrilled you tagged along.

MARGARET

As valiantly as I tried, I could find no reason not.

JEREMY

Tell me, where's this Tom chap?

Margaret's eyes slant into him with hard curiosity.

JEREMY

Easy with those daggers. I'm not trespassing simply getting perspective. Mean, one minute it's your anniversary and the next...

MARGARET

Mind the road.

JEREMY

Just saying you're tough to read.

MARGARET

As I precisely have crafted. Perhaps part of your perplexity is attributed to my not being some enamored groupie desiring to be part of your rodeo circus act.

JEREMY

That's a shame 'cause we're looking for someone with your talent.

MARGARET

Speaking of, who was the lady last night?

JEREMY

Now who's trespassing? You mean Sable. She's a spirited concoction of insanity and ecstasy; together we're two crazy hearts teetering on a razor blade.

MARGARET

(realization)

This a '68, isn't it?

JEREMY

That, my friend, she is.

Margaret feels something brush against her bare leg. It is Jeremy, reaching for the glove box. Withdrawing a flask, he pours whisky into a Dr. Pepper CAN. Margaret frowns.

JEREMY

So what kind of books do you write?

Jeremy tosses the flask atop *Rolling Stone* MAGAZINE and tattered PHOTO (young Jeremy/Cecil at the Grand Ole Opry).

MARGARET

Are you going to drink that?

JEREMY

Hold on. Margaret Waters. 'Connie Steele'! "A woman of mystery who journeys to exotic locales..." My girl was... Well, is a fan. She left three months ago. I'm gettin' her back; that's where I'm headed.

MARGARET

I wouldn't have pegged you a hopeless romantic.

JEREMY

Mainly 'hopeless.'

MARGARET

She must be special.

JEREMY

Sadly, I didn't realize that until she was gone. Anyway, she was numero uno at your signing in Long Beach. Drug me to the mall at ten A.M.

MARGARET

I would be happy to personalize a copy.

JEREMY

That would be platinum. I need all the help at this juncture just to persuade her to take my call.

MARGARET

Listen, I've been meaning to mention how much I enjoyed your singing. You are extremely gifted.

JEREMY

Sometimes I wonder. I used to be able to hear it better -- the music. As of late I always have another record playing, distracting me from the one on the turntable. Hence the sabbatical.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Thought getting away, starting afresh would help spark my creativeness and tweak my focus.

MARGARET

How long have you been playing?

JEREMY

Since I could walk.

MARGARET

Are you going to Nashville?

JEREMY

That'll be the day. I'm not ready for the big leagues yet. I decided last night I'd hit the Big Apple. (off Margaret's look) HA! I knew it. You have this class about you LA ladies lack. Where do you live?

MARGARET

57th and Fifth.

JEREMY

Seems Lady Luck is doing more than smiling. Roll those emerald eyes all you want but ya gotta face it: this was destined. (a beat) I have a good buddy who's letting me crash with him while I work on some music and try to win back the lost love.

MARGARET

If you have a CD or a site, I would love to hear some originals.

JEREMY

That's my plan to get back into the studio. My old demo sucks. Sable introduced me to a guy in Nashville who said he'd listen to something.

Jeremy is about to swig the drink when Margaret snatches the can and flings it out the window. Jeremy cuts a hard glare.

MARGARET

Regarding Tom. He's in New York and has never read one of my books.

On that, Margaret props her sunglasses atop her head, pushes her face toward the warm sun, savoring her newfound freedom.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

280 hauls ass into the horizon.

INT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - LATE AFTERNOON

Radio is cranked. Jeremy is at the wheel.

JEREMY

Phone's ringing.

As Margaret rummages in her purse, Jeremy steals a glimpse of her voluptuous abyss. She catches him, reading Tom's text: 'Not sure what happened to you. Hope you're well. Call me.' Margaret types a reply: 'I'm fine. I just need some time.'

JEREMY

Everything alright?

MARGARET

(a beat)

Yeah.

JEREMY

Doesn't sound too convincing.

MARGARET

You caught me. In the scheme of life things could be better -- currently though, disappointed.

JEREMY

Go on.

MARGARET

AHHHH. Long story short Tom and I have been trying to work out some marital issues and I decided, at the last moment, it would fun to renew our vows at the Marmont, that's sort of 'our' hotel. I wanted to surprise him. Unfortunately, he assumed I wasn't coming and decided to fly to Seattle for a meeting. It's silly.

JEREMY

Your feelings are hurt and you're disappointed, understandable. Did you tell him?

MARGARET

No! We're not on best terms and that it didn't work out I see no need of mentioning.

A silent beat as Margaret reflects

JEREMY

Gorgeous sunset.

MARGARET

Amazing.

EXT. DESERT - EVENING

The sun sinks behind rugged terrain. Dusk is established.

EXT. GAS STATION/BUS STOP - TEN MILES FROM VEGAS - EVENING

280 eases to a stop. Parking lot is littered with dodgy PEOPLE drinking beer, smoking weed that ratchets the tension. Margaret notices PASSENGERS debarking an idling BUS.

MARGARET

What's going on?

JEREMY

Have to pop in here and meet a couple guys.

MARGARET

What? Why?

JEREMY

And there's your ride into town.

Margaret looks at the bus and cringes.

MARGARET

You must be kidding.
(he's not)
I refuse to ride a bus.

JEREMY

To be honest, I'm sorta persona non grata past the city limit sign.

MARGARET

(irritated)
Then why did you bring me?

JEREMY

Why? I needed a road companion.
'Sides, you're here, aren't you?

MARGARET

Yes, ten miles out!

JEREMY

(reveals a SCAR on arm)
See that? Let's just say there's
some boys in town that don't find
me quite as charming.

On the radio is the SONG we heard at Cecil's house.

SONG

"Woke up Sunday Morning with no way
to hold my head that didn't hurt."

Margaret notes Jeremy's sentimental reaction to the song.

MARGARET

You're completely mad.

JEREMY

Maybe I'm off here but ya seem to
have this a, sadness behind those
killer eyes. I noticed it at the
bar. My dial is tuned.

MARGARET

Yes, to the incorrect channel.

JEREMY

That look on the balcony. I know
it. Desperate, gut-wrenching hurt.
That same thought has gotten me
through many of long nights. I'm
not the best listener, but I beat
nobody. Where's your book
festival?

MARGARET

Oh. Um. Caesars, I think.

JEREMY

Start today?

MARGARET

Until Saturday.

JEREMY

So, Thursday, Friday, Saturday...
Three days. Then back home?

MARGARET

I haven't given that much thought. To be honest, these last two days have been rather abnormal from my daily routine.

JEREMY

My granddaddy, T.J. always told me shoot for the moon but settle for a rainbow.

MARGARET

I'm not certain where you're heading, however, if you are hinting I drive to New York with you, it's a preposterous idea.

JEREMY

That's what makes it fabulous. Barkeep, shot of spontaneity for Miss Society here.

MARGARET

Barkeep, this woman is perfectly capable of ordering for herself.

JEREMY

When's the last time you laughed? I mean, really laughed. A gut-wrenching, belly-aching giggle.

MARGARET

I suppose last month when I cut my own hair.

JEREMY

(laughs)

I gotta pop inside and give this envelope to some guys. Think about it. Could be fun.

MARGARET

I'm not waiting here.

JEREMY

Please. I'll be back in a jif.

Jeremy exits the 280. From Margaret's viewpoint we watch through a large window Jeremy enter the gas station. He speaks with two edgy thugs (40s) in t-shirts. Jeremy proffers THUG #2 the envelope.

This is a deal gone bad. Jeremy jerks free. Thug #1 looks at Margaret and points. The men exit the station and stalk toward the 280. Margaret is absolutely terrified.

JEREMY

Goddamn it! That's not her!!!

Now all hell breaks loose. Thug #1 grabs Margaret's arm. Jeremy PUSHES him against the 280's hood. Thug #2 is attempting to extract Margaret from the car. She is screaming and HITTING him.

Jeremy DECKS Thug #1. He tumbles to the ground. Margaret is struggling with Thug #2. Now Jeremy elbows him in the back, then PUNCHES his nose. Thug #2 topples into the back seat. Jeremy drags him to the ground.

Full panic now. Like *Butch* and *Sundance*, Jeremy and Margaret haul themselves into the 280. Jeremy drops it into gear. 280 peels out narrowly missing a PEDESTRIAN and an oncoming group of cars--

E/I. 280 VEGAS HIGHWAY/DIRT ROAD - CHASE - NIGHT

Jeremy's eyes are frantic. He is driving around cars, braking, roaring ahead. The 280 bounces over the median. Margaret with fear ... but also a state of near-trance. She looks over her shoulder.

MARGARET

They're getting into a truck!

We move out through the windshield for a lurching, spinning view of the 280 barreling toward a dirt road. Margaret is thrown violently around.

280 bounces and bumps onto the dirt road, kicking up a dust. Jeremy is bolt upright, leaning forward. Suddenly, he hits the brakes. The car LURCHES to a stop. Headlights go dark.

All we hear is heavy BREATHING and feel the Goddamn tension. Jeremy and Margaret are looking behind them. Headlights are coming. Jeremy's eyes narrow. A beat.

On Jeremy and Margaret -- relieved. The truck turned onto the highway.

MARGARET

Oh, my God. We were almost killed.
(a beat)
What happened? What was all that?

JEREMY

You okay?

MARGARET

I think so. Who were they?

JEREMY

Dudes Sable knew. She asked I deliver an envelope; apparently they wanted her, too.

MARGARET

I can feel my heart pounding...
 (a smile spreads)
 I feel like I ran a marathon.
 (really smiling)
 It feels fantastic.

JEREMY

See. Ya wouldn't have gotten that with a car service.

MARGARET

What is it you are searching for?

He looks at her, and for some reason, they fall a little.

JEREMY

You.
 (Margaret scoffs)
 The handful of regrets I have are because I didn't have the balls to go for the other option.

MARGARET

I'll share something with you. I haven't left my neighborhood in two years. I rarely leave my bedroom, so the past twenty-four hours with you has been like an out-of-control carnival ride.

Margaret smiling sadly, then grins.MARGARET

How about this: dinner in the next town and let me think about it? But, if for some delusional reason I do decide it's contingent on no more dramatic incidences.

Off their smiles, we cut to--

INT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND/MARGARET'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom enters the apartment. He looms in the doorway; not that Margaret ever greets him but something is different. Viewing Margaret's closed bedroom door, he deposits his luggage.

As Tom opens Margaret's door, we get a sense of mystery about the room. Tom is flooded with memories. Significant time has lapsed since he was last inside. He views photos, prizes, and books. Then tears fill his eyes when he spies the child's doll from earlier.

Bitten by curiosity, Tom peeks behind a wooden privacy screen. He purses his lips, struggling with an on-slot of emotions seeing an eerie mud-coated child's SAILOR OUTFIT within a glass case.

Hold on Tom's tormented expression ... and now fade to...

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A few cars are on this four-lane stretch.

INT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - NIGHT

Passing beams of lights illuminate Jeremy behind the wheel. With Margaret's decision comes freedom. She is settled in the passenger seat. The radio plays Dua Lipa's *MWHA*.

JEREMY

Love this song.

MARGARET

I've never heard it.

JEREMY

Get out! Really?

MARGARET

I listen to mostly podcast and classical music.

JEREMY

BOR-ING. Sable and I partied with this girl, Dua, at the Rainbow Room. Actually, I was on stage singing this with her. "If we don't fuck this whole thing up guarantee I can blow your mind!"

MARGARET

She does have a great voice.
 (off RAVE FLYER)
 What's this? "Club Cherry presents
 Danny B. and Underworld."

JEREMY

Lemme tell ya that one was off-the-
 rails. Unfolded in the Burbank
 City Hall basement. Still baffled
 how they pulled that one off.

MARGARET

Rather adolescent, wouldn't you
 say?

JEREMY

Age is an illusion. 'Sides,
 Jacqueline reveled in it.

MARGARET

She on the pom-pom squad, too?

JEREMY

(fake laughs)
 You're dating yourself.

MARGARET

Honestly, you and your girlfriend's
 affairs are none of mine.

JEREMY

That is true. But Jackie and I
 were never an item.

MARGARET

So, this is not New York?

JEREMY

God, no she detested my lifestyle.

MARGARET

But it was four months ago...

He shrugs his shoulder. Margaret's eyes narrow. Hit with a
 spasm of pain, she cuts a diabolical glare and hisses. If
 she is slightly aggressive, it's because of her past.

MARGARET

I should have known. The always
 predictable innate characteristic
 of the masculine species --
 infidelity. What did she do to
 deserve such disrespect?

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Fall short of gratifying your whimsical desires? I imagine you never once considered her feelings while engaging in coitus with another woman!

JEREMY

Why are you yelling at me?

MARGARET

Now driven by pure egotistic impulse you stalk across country to guilt her into taking you--

JEREMY

--Hey! I never--

MARGARET

--I have a thought -- let her be! Or what, suddenly, you're convinced circumstances in another city will be otherwise? Are you that naïve to believe altering your locale will prodigiously change the interplay of the psyche and erase the fact you fucked another woman?

JEREMY

I didn't! Jesus! I don't know what your issues are, lady but I'm not looking to brawl or be your psychologist.

(a beat)

And FYI she's the only gal I didn't screw around on.

Suddenly a GUST sucks Margaret's scarf into the night sky. Jeremy laughs. Margaret swallows her venom.

JEREMY

She left for other reasons. Put it this way, I pretty much corner the market on problems.

MARGARET

(smirks a little)

I once chased a guy your type. Larry Picket. Gosh, I haven't thought of him in years. He was a loner who fancied himself the next Minnesota Fats. For three months all we did was play billiards and have sex.

JEREMY

You mean coitus?

MARGARET

Sadly, he ended up impregnating my girlfriend, who, as it happened, was dating Tom at the time.

JEREMY

Sounds like a perverse soap opera.

MARGARET

Last I heard, he had passed in an automobile accident and she had four children, twice divorced.

JEREMY

Least you learned to shoot stick and landed a husband.

MARGARET

Forgive my outburst. It was out of line and character for me.

JEREMY

Let's not let it happen again.

(a beat)

What?

(Margaret shakes her head)

Why are you looking at me that way?

MARGARET

You. Your spirit. Your music ...
I've never met anyone like you.

JEREMY

Thank God, right?

MARGARET

Tell me, have you sold anything?

JEREMY

Eh, my band did to this prick in Nashville who was busted for money laundering. They sandbagged the album, which is good 'cause my voice sounded weak.

MARGARET

So you have been to Nashville?

JEREMY

We recorded in LA, but yeah, once with my old man.

MARGARET
 (re: photo)
 Is this him?

JEREMY
 By the age of five, I'd been in-and-out of every honky-tonk on music-city row. He played backup for some prominent acts; Clint Black, Kristofferson. He was on the fringes of his own career launch when a higher power forced him to mothball the strings. He had a killer voice and loads of potential. We had planned to go back about eight years ago.

MARGARET
 So your talent's inherent?

JEREMY
 Let's get one thing straight: Cecil and I are nothing alike.

MARGARET
 You don't have to be snarky.

JEREMY
 I don't like being compared to him.

MARGARET
 I wasn't aware.

JEREMY
 Now you are.

MARGARET
 Maybe we stop. I need to pee.

The drive becomes silent, tense. On Margaret's look; appearances not matching reality.

EXT. CIRCLE J. TRUCK STOP/RED'S DINER - NIGHT

The place is ablaze with lights. 280 eases into a truck-filled parking lot. Margaret and Jeremy exit the 280. We see a MOTHER, FATHER, GIRL (5), padding toward our couple.

MARGARET
 What about my bags?

JEREMY
 They'll be fine.

MARGARET

They are a matching set.

JEREMY

We can watch 'em from the window.

Suddenly Margaret stops. She looks down. The Girl has bumped into Margaret's leg. Margaret's face lightens. She's about to speak to the child when her Mother swoops her into her arms. Jeremy catches Margaret's demeanor darken.

Margaret steals one last look at the Girl, before striding...

INT. RED'S DINER - NIGHT

Jukebox moans. TRUCKERS line the counter. WAITRESS breezes into frame, motions our couple to a booth.

MARGARET

Not quite Paris' L'Atelier Joël Robuchon.

In the booth, Margaret and Jeremy sit across from each other. A Waitress deposits two glasses of water.

MARGARET

Oh, I'll have sparkling, please.

WAITRESS

That's all we got.

MARGARET

Then I don't care for...

Waitress scoops up Margaret's glass...

WAITRESS

What'll it be, hon?

JEREMY

Chicken fry and Dr. Pepper.

MARGARET

Oh. I'll have a salad with no egg or tomatoes. Bacon extra crispy. What dressings do you have?

Waitress motions to the salad bar and pads away. Jeremy and Margaret rise and thread toward the lavatory.

INT. RED'S DINNER - MEN'S RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jeremy is at the urinal staring into the ladies' restroom through a peep HOLE.

JEREMY (O/C)

Margaret.

INT. RED'S DINNER - LADIES RESTROOM

Margaret, checking her reflection in the mirror, spots the hole and casually plugs it with tissue paper.

MARGARET

What is it?

JEREMY (O/C)

Means a lot you came along.

MARGARET

Great. Now let me pee in private.

Covering the toilet seat, Margaret slips down her trousers when suddenly her phone rings. Attempting to answer the call, the cell slips from Margaret's hand -- goes sailing -- pauses midair -- then plummets into the toilet -- PLOP!

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE BOOTH

Jeremy is at the table. The meals arrive. He has arranged DRESSINGS in ramekins beside Margaret's salad. Margaret returns.

MARGARET

What's all that?

JEREMY

Not sure which dressing you liked, so I got 'em all.

MARGARET

My phone dropped in the toilet!
(Jeremy laughs) I don't find it amusing.

JEREMY

Now, how will you update your Facebook page?

MARGARET

I'm serious. I need this.

JEREMY

Come on, why?

MARGARET

Thank you for all these dressings.

Jeremy and Margaret tuck into their meal.

JEREMY

You've been to Paris?

MARGARET

What? Oh, yes. Several times, years ago.

JEREMY

Personally, I'm not a Francophile.

MARGARET

Now Tom was no fan either when I mentioned we go. However, we ended up having the most thrilling time. We spent our seventh anniversary at the Ritz. There was this one evening we laughed so hard and drank so much we actually fell down in the middle of Place Vendome. God, I remember we made love all night and woke up in the morning cuddled in the foyer on a towel from the Hôtel Crillon.

Hold on Margaret's reverie, then;

EXT. CIRCLE J. TRUCK STOP - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Jeremy and Margaret stroll out the door. Margaret is obsessed with her inoperable phone.

MARGARET

What am I supposed to do? I can't use Uber or my Marriott app. Tom will call. Where are we, anyway?

JEREMY

'Bout three hours from Arizona. I say we crash at that motel (points across the highway). Tomorrow you can decide what you're gonna do.

She eyes Jeremy withdraw his watch from his pocket.

MARGARET
Why don't you wear that?

JEREMY
Strap's broken.

MARGARET
They make replacements.

JEREMY
It's exactly how T.J. gave it to me
and that's how it's gonna stay.

Back at the 280, we focus on Margaret. Her eyes widen and brow furrows. She whips her head around and bores her eyes into Jeremy's like hot daggers.

A horrible understanding dawns on Jeremy's face.

MARGARET
You asshole! My bag is gone!

Jeremy grows nauseas. He scampers about the parking lot, searching rubbish bins, asking truckers about the lost bag.

MARGARET
Why did I listen to you?

Off Jermeys's guilt-ridden expression--

EXT. OVERPASS MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

It's your typical roadside motel. Jeremy's 280 is wedged between parked cars.

INT. OVERPASS MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

There are two sagging beds in the wood-paneled room. The TV drones in bg. Margaret, in her sleeping gown, hair drawn back, peeks out the curtains.

Margaret's viewpoint is Jeremy in a phone booth. His face is emotionally twisted. He cradles the receiver and climbs into the 280, tucking his coat under his chin. Margaret opens the door and peers out.

JEREMY
I have seven hundred dollars to my
name. Gotta try an make it last.

Margaret swings open the door. Jeremy shuffles inside, plops onto the bed.

MARGARET

I am the one out a thousand dollars in Le Perla lingerie plus a Prada carryon, which was part of collector's edition they no longer produce, and you are sulking.

JEREMY

Maybe this was a mistake.

MARGARET

You look pale.

JEREMY

Eh, I talked to my mom. She wants me to go to North Carolina.

MARGARET

And why is that? Will you stop? I would like to know what's wrong.

JEREMY

It's Cecil. Apparently he's sick. His friend said it's something to do with his liver and, that he hasn't much time.

MARGARET

Oh, Jeremy. I am terribly sorry. Was he ill or is this something you only learned?

And Margaret begins collecting her belongings.

JEREMY

What, whatta ya doin'?

MARGARET

Surely you don't expect me to let you go alone.

JEREMY

Who said I'm going anywhere?

MARGARET

That is what you are processing, whether to see your ailing father? My word. Listen, I don't claim to understand your relationship or barriers which you two have erected but now is when you set aside all unresolved issues and ill feelings and see him.

JEREMY

I need to be in New York by Sunday.
She's leaving for Paris and--

MARGARET

--Let me get this straight. You
are perturbed about missing some
girl's party as opposed to visiting
your dying father.

JEREMY

It's easy for you to judge when you
don't know the entire story.

MARGARET

The background is irrelevant. What
is pertinent, and something I am
all too familiar with, is agony.
Which is precisely why I can state
with utter certainty this is the
one, if not the most consequential
decision you will ever make. By
you not going, by you not having
closure will be the most
regrettable moment of your life.
Trust me! Some people are not
afforded the luxury you are being
handed; don't waste it being a
disdainful adolescent. The pain
never wears off or dissipates --
you don't bounce back instead the
torment evolves into this agonizing
rue engraving your soul while the
lack of closure serves as a
pulsating daily reminder. There is
no discussion: you will see your
father.

Margaret throws a dutiful look to Jeremy, embarrassed. Now
we HEAR A TELEVISION NEWS REPORT: "A maid at the Ready Motel
discovered the 43-year-old woman..."

Jeremy is focused on the scene footage. "Sources state Sable
Maddox appears to have died from a lethal injection of
cocaine and heroin..."

On Jeremy. Like us, he's shocked at what he hears. Dropping
his head into his hands, Jeremy cries.

Struggling to digesting the blow herself, Margaret sits
beside him. Jeremy folds himself into Margaret's open arms.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. OVERPASS MOTEL - DAWN

We are greeted by a vibrant sky and find Jeremy organizing the 280. His brow furrows as he pushes his hand between the backseat. Jeremy shudders at the sight of what he discovers - Sable's envelope.

Jeremy rips open the envelope to reveal four-thousand DOLLARS. Jeremy staggers a bit, sagging against the 280 remorseful and besieged with questions.

MARGARET (O/C)

I thought you left me.

With his world privately falling to pieces, Jeremy remains stoic. Margaret strides up. Jeremy shoves the envelope inside his leather music NOTEBOOK.

MARGARET

Good morning.

JEREMY

Mornin'.

They stand there, eyes involved.

MARGARET

How are you?

JEREMY

Been better. I keep replaying if I could have done more to save her.

MARGARET

We can't rescue people from their demons.

JEREMY

You certain you want to do this? I mean, you're under no obligation.

Margaret climbs into the 280. Jeremy slides behind the wheel, hanging Sable's crucifix on the rearview mirror.

JEREMY

Ronnie Wood gave it to her. And since you lost yours...

(proffers a red BANDANA)

It's not silk but maybe it'll work.

Fastening the bandana around her hair, Margaret smiles a smile that really works.

JEREMY

You look like a Fifth Avenue Bobby
McGee. Okay. Let's do this.

Jeremy drops his wrist across the steering wheel and pulls
the 280 onto the highway--

EXT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) VARIOUS AERIAL SHOTS - MORNING

Jeremy drives in reverie while Margaret is deliriously
content with the open road.

EXT. ARIZONA STATE LINE SIGN - DAY

Jeremy positions Margaret beside the sign. Snaps a photo
with his KODAK INSTAMATIC.

EXT. HIGHWAY - 280 (MOVING) - DAY

Jeremy and Margaret ride in silence. We see in Jeremy's eyes
him struggling to cope while Margaret never wants to leave
this world.

GO TO:

INT. 7-11 STORE - DAY

The camera is panning paperback books. It stops on one of
Margaret's NOVELS, then to Jeremy, styling SUNGLASSES. After
several attempts to sway Margaret, she, too, slips on a pair.

JEREMY

Yawza! You look damn hot.

Jeremy is skimming one of Margaret's book.

JEREMY

Com'on! 'A missile launcher?'

MARGARET

Sold two million copies.

Right then, Margaret spots one of her first books and it
moves her. She spins to show Jeremy just as--

A portly WOMAN bumps into Margaret, sending her purse to the
floor. The contents scatter. Jeremy and Margaret, on their
knees, collect the spilt items. Their eyes lock. We hope
they may kiss -- but instead Jeremy scoops up a leather box
we saw earlier.

MARGARET
 (possessive)
 Let me have it.

Margaret snatches the box from Jeremy's hand.

JEREMY
 You don't have to snap my head off.

MARGARET
 It's very sentimental to me.

JEREMY
 Clearly.

Off Margaret tucking the box into her purse, we go to...

INT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

The room is in keeping with the rest of the house. Boxes are strewn about. We discover Tom sporting a sailing shirt and shorts. There is much on his mind.

He opens a drawer of an antique armoire stuffed with photos. He withdraws one. We cannot see it, but it clearly ignites a flood of emotions.

Tom exits the room. A moment passes. He returns with the doll from Margaret's room and places it into a box. The Spanish maid (40s), enters.

MAID
 I found these, Mr. Waters.

Tom takes a stack of papers from her. He cringes. They are LETTERS from Denise.

MAID
 They were under the glass case in Mrs. Waters' room.

Right then, the doorbell rings.

TOM
 That's probably Sam for the boxes.

As the Maid exits, Tom reads a letter. We catch a glimpse of "With Ronald's passing..."; My heart goes out to you and Margaret..."; "Thank you for being here for me." Tom reflects a moment, then begins to shred the letters.

Meanwhile...

INT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

The 280 ZIPS past frame. Jeremy and Margaret resemble rock stars in their new shades. They are singing to Dua Lipa...

JEREMY/MARGARET

"If you don't like the way I rock,
then finish your glass of wine. We
fight and we argue, you'll still
love me blind. If we don't fuck
this whole thing up..."

They pass an open field with two running STALLIONS.

JEREMY

Look at them! Beautiful, aren't
they? Makes me think of the Derby.
Ended up at this soirée with a
collection of people high on Mint
Juleps and victory. You a fan?

MARGARET

Proud to say I have never set foot
on a track.

JEREMY

"A bad day at the races is better
than a good day anywhere else."

MARGARET

So horses, women, and booze.

JEREMY

Winning tri-fecta. But seriously,
this particular day was one for the
books. There was this horse with
thirty-one-to-one odds -- think
about that -- and his jockey was a
notorious booze-hound dooper. They
had no chance of winning, right?
But get this -- the jockey
delivered this broken-down ole
stallion to a stunning victory!
The place went fucking wild...

MARGARET

Sorry. What were you saying?

JEREMY

Were you not listening?

MARGARET

My mind drifted.

JEREMY

Not about second thoughts, I hope.

MARGARET

What's that supposed to mean?

JEREMY

It means what are your stakes in this race? What would one be doing if they hadn't saddled up with a human train wreck?

MARGARET

Is that how you see yourself?

JEREMY

Look, it's obvious I've monopolized the conversations with crackerjack stories; y'know all about me and all I'm privy is you skipped a convention and Tom can't read.

MARGARET

There is slightly more to reveal and when I'm ready to share, I will. Meanwhile, I would kindly appreciate you not mentioning Tom.

JEREMY

No need to get your girdle in a wad.

MARGARET

Don't speak to me in that manner.

JEREMY

(leans toward Margaret)
Ah, lighten up, toots.

MARGARET

Watch the road!

JEREMY

You mean like this?

Jeremy's eyes dart around like a deranged lunatic.

MARGARET

Stop it!

Jeremy throws his hands in the air and wiggles his fingers.

MARGARET

You're in the other lane. Watch
the road!

Margaret reaches for the wheel. Jeremy slaps her hand.

JEREMY

My God, you're like a deranged boy.

Like that the car SHUTTERS. Screeches to a halt. Passing
CARS swerve, honk. Jeremy seethes with icy rage. Terror
races through Margaret, staring at him.

JEREMY

Let's get one thing straight, lady:
Nobody calls me, "boy!" Nobody!

Margaret is speechless. Jeremy grinds the gears in search of
first. 280 jolts forward and speeds down the highway.

MARGARET

I said you were behaving like one!

JEREMY

I see now why you're solo.

MARGARET

Stop the car. I said stop now!

JEREMY

Ya missed your chance.

MARGARET

I want out! STOP the car!

Suddenly brakes LOCK! Margaret lunges forward. She goes for
the door! Jeremy GRABS her! In reflex she SLAPS him!
Jeremy's demonic eyes bore into her. For a second, we think
he may hit her. There's a long, tension-filled beat. Then,
Jeremy guns the 280.

EXT. JEREMY'S 280 - DILAPIDATED DRIVE-IN - DAY

The sun is high and hot. Jeremy is alone in the 280, resting
his head on the wheel. He hears Margaret crunching gravel
underfoot. He catches his reflection in the mirror, hating
himself. Margaret stares a long beat.

MARGARET

You really scared me.

JEREMY

I'm-sorry-for grabbing you. I was out of line. It's the 'boy' thing. It's me being childish and stubborn. Something I'm struggling to get over.

(a beat)

Look, I, I find you the most incredible lady I have ever met. You make me want to be a better person. I wasn't meaning to trespass, just curious to know more about you, which is not the norm for a selfish SOB like myself.

MARGARET

Well. I take that as a compliment. I am a bit of an introvert. Some of that lends to my personality while a more significant part to my life as of late. I need time to open up... much like the Andean Queen flower.

Margaret grabs his leather notebook.

MARGARET

What is this? I've been seeing it peeking out.

Jeremy snatches it. A tug-a-war ensues. Margaret wins.

JEREMY

It's a bunch of half-written songs and broken dreams.

MARGARET

(reading a song)

You have some abstract material. *Tragedies, Broken Hearts and Liars.* I like this.

JEREMY

Started it after she left; kinda therapy slash tribute. So what hooked you?

MARGARET

I caught the bug at university by penning a letter to our school newspaper, which the editor actually ran. Later, he had me author a small column.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I always loved plants, so I chose horticulture and before long I had developed a cult status of students using my column as a guide for growing pot. I had planned to study law until the editor and I began dating. One thing lead to another and I ended up in New York with a book deal.

JEREMY

And that's how Connie was born?
Sorry. Ya hear that hissing?

Jeremy exits the 280. His viewpoint -- a flat tire. We pull back to the 280 beside a dilapidated movie screen.

As Jeremy unloads the trunk, Margaret gets a wild hair. She unfastens her top blouse button and frees her flowing locks.

Jeremy does a double-take. Margaret presses her body against his. Their eyes dig into each other. It's a tender moment. Margaret kisses Jeremy lightly on the lips. Then;

JEREMY

I've got bad news.

MARGARET

You can't get it up

JEREMY

There is no spare.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

There is farm land in every direction. We find Jeremy and Margaret strolling along a desolate two-lane blacktop.

MARGARET

(re: the notebook)
This could be my favorite. Hey.
Sing one for me. Come on.

JEREMY

No.

MARGARET

Why?

JEREMY

'Cause I don't sing without
'Trigger.'

MARGARET

So you're like a baby and his blanket.

JEREMY

You're a real riot. I do better with my guitar.

MARGARET

I'm going to let it go, this time, but you owe me a private concert, mister.

JEREMY

I'll think about it.

MARGARET

(poking him in the ribs)
With the risk of sounding like a teenage groupie, I must confess how much I enjoyed watching you the other evening. I felt more alive than I have in years. Oh, this, *Pardon the Jailer...*

JEREMY

That one I started perched atop an oil rig outside Norman, Oklahoma.

MARGARET

So he also writes?

JEREMY

Used to. Now he's a drunk who doesn't attend meetings.

A FARMER (60s) in a pickup stops, leans out the window.

FARMER

I give you a lift?

JEREMY

You could take her to a station.

(to Margaret)

I'll watch the car. You call a tow and ride back with him. K?

Margaret climbs into the truck. Jeremy watches it drive away. Then his eyes narrow and mind swirls with thoughts standing on the desolate blacktop.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

It is the only structure for miles. Margaret exits the store empty handed -- she left Jeremy's notebook. She is pacing about when a truck HORN startles her.

E/I. TOW TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

DRIVER waves. Margaret frowns. She climbs inside the truck, which rumbles off toward the drive-in.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD/280 - NIGHT

280 cruises into frame. Brake lights illuminate the darkness. 280 turns into...

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION/280 - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

280 stops under a rusted Texaco sign. The sound of summer insects in the air. Margaret is sleeping. Jeremy blows a strain of her hair out of her face and taps her cheek.

JEREMY

Anyone home in there?

Margaret awakens to Jeremy exiting the 280.

JEREMY

Eh, kid's running on empty. Wanna stretch my legs, wake up some.

MARGARET

Wow. I really crashed, didn't I?

JEREMY

Been snoring like a soused sailor.

MARGARET

I do not snore. Do I?

And an idea strikes Margaret. She deposits his guitar case at his feet.

MARGARET

Now. Here's Trigger. I have to pee. When I return, you sing.

On Jeremy perched atop an oil barrel. A moment passes. Margaret returns. She slips into Jeremy's coat, locating his flask, stealing a swig. Amused, Jeremy strums the guitar.

MARGARET

Since we met, I've been curious about those clodhoppers?

JEREMY

These (boots)? Got 'em from T.J.

MARGARET

Maybe he wants them back.

JEREMY

He was this old school man of the world. Ran a sprawling ranch in Lubbock where mom forced me to go work on one summer. When I arrived he was waitin' in his knee-high brown boots, Western shirt, grey Stetson contrasted to my shorts and Polo. At the ranch I found on my bed Western shirts, Wranglers and boots. The boots, though, were too big, so I stuffed 'em with socks and wobbled outside where Granddad put his hat on my head and went back to breaking stallions.

(a beat)

It was hard labor but the nights, well, ole cowhands would invite me up to the bunkhouse; they all called me 'Sidekick.'

FLASH TO:

EXT. RANCH - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

We see shadows of COWBOYS sitting around a CAMPFIRE. An African American COWBOY #1 strums a Fender guitar. A young Jeremy sits beside T.J. who has his arm draped across his shoulder.

BACK TO:

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION/280 - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy atop the oil drum with his guitar. Margaret is moved by his vulnerability.

JEREMY

That guitar was a Fender exactly like Cecil's, which I have never been allowed to touch. Anyway, Sundays were just for me and granddad. We'd go fishin' and play dominoes at the VFW talking about life -- things Cecil I never did. Before I knew it summer was gone and so was T.J. He shot himself the night I left.

Margaret's face drains.

JEREMY

He was, uh, suffering from a brain tumor and fed-up with the pain and people fussing over him. He opted to spend his last two months with me something, Cecil took personally, something he's never forgave.

(a beat)

Often wonder why such a strong man choose a cowardly curtain call.

MARGARET

You should be touched you were able to bring him solace in his last hours.

JEREMY

Don't let my bravado fool ya; thought of that one-way-ticket's gotten me through many a hurtin' nights.

(a beat)

"Pain in my heart, tears in my eyes proves you left me with just a sad country song."

Soothed by Jeremy's voice, Margaret blissfully digests the moment. Suddenly, a streak of lightning illuminates the darkness.

A crack of THUNDER startles Margaret. And the heavens open. It pours RAIN. Our couple laugh as they struggling to raise the 280's top. Soaked, they climb...

INSIDE THE 280

Heavy breathing and steamy windows. Jeremy and Margaret's eyes play on each other.

He runs his hands through her hair, cups her face, gently kissing her lips. Margaret savors her first intimacy in years.

As the rain on the windshield bleeds into...

INT. CECIL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Rain pelts against the windowpanes. This is an '80s time capsule. Formica countertops are lined with plastic bottles of GIN. Nascar clock is stuck at 12.

Enter a long-haired woman. She is pretty with anxious lines on her face. SUSAN is sixty and looks spent. Placing a tray of uneaten food on the counter, she exhales.

CECIL'S VOICE (O/C)
Nobody asked you to come!

Susan opens a cabinet door. She spots something that makes her pause. Pushing away bottles of gin she eyes old boxes of Pop-Tarts and Frosted Flakes. We see her go back to happier times.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/DINER/280 - MORNING

We are looking at a quaint town with a courthouse and shops.

On Jeremy and Margaret exiting a diner. He studies her, downing some pills. She cuts him a glare.

JEREMY
Your 'helpers' pique my curiosity.

MARGARET
They shouldn't.

JEREMY
I know. I get you're a private person, but this kid knows all too well 'bout chasing sobriety.

They arrive at the 280. Jermey searches for his notebook.

MARGARET

While I appreciate your concern,
may I remind you I am a responsible
woman perfectly capable of making
her own decisions and I would
kindly appreciate you respecting,
again, my privacy.

Church bells toll in the bg. Jeremy's search intensifies.

MARGARET

I merely take them --

JEREMY

-- Where's my notebook?

Tight on Margaret. She sinks and grows nauseous.

JEREMY

Th' leather one you took.

MARGARET

Oh, my God.

Margaret could literally die. Jeremy stops. He studies her.
His expression changes from bliss to angry frustration.

MARGARET

I left it in the store.

This stuns Jeremy. He lets this sink in, then grits his
teeth and as quick as a switchblade, GRABS Margaret's arm.
He looks threatening; it scares Margaret -- spooks us.

JEREMY

You WHAT! Fuck me!

MARGARET

(hisses)

Let-go-of-my-arm.

Jeremy realizes and releases his grip.

JEREMY

Sonuvabitch! Those songs were my
life! I don't have any copies.
There are no fucking backups -- no
CLOUD! How stupid are you?

Then it hits him. Jeremy's face crumbles like plaster.

MARGARET

I, I apologize. I feel terrible.

Jeremy sags against the car, walloped by another horrific
impact; Sable's envelope. He is almost in tears.

MARGARET
Jeremy. I'm sorry.

There's a long beat. Margaret touches Jeremy's shoulder. He recoils, repressing his desire to spit venom. She pleads.

Jeremy stalks off toward...

EXT. TG&Y (ALL-PURPOSE) STORE - CONTUNOUS

Jeremy paces in front of the store window displaying Mannequins dressed in western fashions. The man has a lasso around a woman's waist. Margaret pads up.

MARGARET
Listen to me. Please.

Jeremy scoffs and parks his hands on his hips.

MARGARET
I realize you are upset...

JEREMY
Livid is not close.

MARGARET
However, I still deserve a minimal amount of respect. I thought we made it clear you would you never grab me again. My heart is aching, too. Knowing I lost your songs, all your hard work...

JEREMY
It's not only the songs. In the notebook. I guess it dropped from that guy's jacket. There was the envelope from Sable. I found it the other morning between the seats.

In her eyes we suddenly see that Margaret is beginning to understand things...

JEREMY
It had four-thousand dollars inside.
(a beat)
They didn't get the money.

And it hangs there. Margaret is floored.

JEREMY

They were dealers. They threatened Sable. What if I'm the reason she died? What if they come looking for me?

MARGARET

Let's stop. Relax. My God.

Jeremy is pacing, distraught and emotional.

JEREMY

Margaret, what if I killed her?

MARGARET

Stop. Don't.

(exhales)

We are not privy to the details surrounding Sable's demise. A drug overdose seems possible. Agree?

(he nods)

Regarding the men. As far as I think they are unable to track you. Did you know them?

JEREMY

No.

MARGARET

You were a messenger delivering a product, which you did, and then they lost the product. I am not trying to make light of this tragic and concerning situation. It is serious, rather I want us to calm down and ... you are not responsible for Sable's death. Remove that from your mind. Please. Nor are you responsible for some crazy New York lady losing your songs. Well, since you did beg me to tag along.

(Jeremy smiles)

I was going to ring Tom and I placed it beside the phone and then the truck arrived. You must know I would never do anything to intentionally hurt you. If there is something, anything ... I know! How about we go inside buy a new notebook and as you drive, you dictate and I'll copy. That work?

(Jeremy shrugs)

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

As for the cash, I am more than
happy to give you that, too.

The ease of her words reaches Jeremy. He stares into her pleading eyes for a long beat, then embraces her.

JEREMY

Come on.

INT. TG&Y STORE - CONTINUOUS

A cowbell tinkles as the door closes behind Jeremy and Margaret. SMURF costumes dangle above overstocked aisles. The wooden floor creaks under-step of a big-haired saleslady with a permeant smile. ROBIN FLACHER is thirty-five and simple.

ROBIN

Howdy. How y'all doin'?

Right then, JIMMY RAE, forty, enters, adjusting his John Deere cap and overalls.

ROBIN

Howdy, Jimmy Rae.

JIMMY

Heya, Robin. Missed you at church.

ROBIN

Yes, momma wasn't well.

JIMMY

Sorry to hear that.

ROBIN

She has her days. Thankfully, her
last treatment's Friday.

(to Jeremy)

Can I he'p ya?

MARGARET

We are just looking.

ROBIN

Where you folks from?

JEREMY

LA.

MARGARET

New York.

JIMMY

Los Angeles! You ever met Chris
McDonald? "Shooter!"

ROBIN

I've always wanted to see Broadway!
I sing in the church choir. People
say I can dance like the Rockettes!

JIMMY

She can!

JEREMY

Actually, she needs some jeans.

Margaret shoots daggers at Jerney.

ROBIN

She's come to the right place. Let
me look at you. I'd say a size...

JEREMY

--Ten--

ROBIN

--No, six.

MARGARET

I'm a four!

JIMMY

Whatta you got under th' hood?

JEREMY

Come on, I'll give you a peek.

ROBIN

And you can tell me all about life
in the Big Apple.

Jeremy flashes a Cheshire grin to Margaret, who rolls her
eyes, following Robin to...

CLOTHING SECTION

Racks are crammed into the room. Robin is selecting garments
as Margaret tenderly eyes a child's sailor outfit.

ROBIN

You have kids, don't you? I have a
knack for picking out moms.

Margaret's expression darkens.

ROBIN

Isn't that precious? I could see a little kid running around the lake in that. I had a son once.

(Margaret studies Robin)

Sadly, though, I had to give him up. I was young and my folks made me. Can't say I blame 'em -- I did at the time, sure. The agency said he went to a really fine home. Then y'know what? Just when I found someone who I want to have a child with, you know what the doctors told me? Said my ovaries were barren and I can't have no children. Suppose the Lord has his reasons for interrupting our lives, least that's what I like to think. I still have other dreams that keep me going. Like one day spending Christmas in New York. I am. I'm gonna do it. I've been saving. Will you look at me? I'm supposed to be helping you find some jeans and I'm rambling about my past. Here. (re: jeans) You hop in the fitting room and try these. Everyone looks great in 'em. See mine?

MARGARET

To be honest, I haven't worn jeans in... I can't recall when.

ROBIN

Then now's the best time to start. Get in there. Try this dress, too. I'm running in the back.

Margaret enters the tiny room and draws the curtain. She is studying her reflection in the mirror when -- we barely make out Jeremy admiring Margaret through the curtain split. Her look holds on his as she methodically unbuttons her shirt. Jeremy swallows hard.

Margaret caresses her breasts. Jeremy is aroused. Then;

ROBIN (O/C)

Have you ever seen the Christmas tree in Times Square?

Margaret sighs softly. Catching her reflection again, she sees a more confident woman, as we sweep to--

EXT/INT. 280 (AERIAL SHOT) - AFTERNOON

280 keeps pace with us six hundred feet below. We follow it, winding through fantastic scenery. Pushing into the car, Margaret playfully hits Jeremy's arm.

MARGARET

It did not make me look fat.

JEREMY

Then why didn't you buy it?

MARGARET

Because it had pleats.

JEREMY

So pleats make you look fat?

MARGARET

Oh, shut up.

JEREMY

(a beat)

About earlier. I got a bad habit of lettin' my emotions get ahead of my smarts. It's an issue as of late I've been trying to break but goddamn changing is a bitch. I give you my word I won't ever grab you again. Swear.

MARGARET

Thank you. My heart still aches.

JEREMY

Life is strikes and gutters. Anyway, most of those tunes were written when I didn't comprehend what I was writing. Who knows, maybe it'll kick my ass into gettin' things on track.

MARGARET

For what it's worth, Hemingway's wife lost an entire manuscript of his and he seemed to have turned out alright.

JEREMY

Anybody ever tell you you're hotter than a two-dollar pistol?

MARGARET

Is that the reason you hit on me?

JEREMY

You do have a twisted way of
misreading situations.

MARGARET

So the wine, flirty smiles,
invitation to a road trip fling,
starting at my breast, those are
misjudged? Your honor, permission
to treat the witness as hostile.

Margaret pokes Jeremy in the ribs. Tickles Jeremy.

MARGARET

I ask again, are they?

Jeremy is laughing really hard. Car weaves on the road. He
is now tickling her. Then we see it. Margaret, LAUGHING.

JEREMY

Members of the jury, she laughs.
The lady can laugh!

INT. 280 (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

280 comes into frame. Passing beams of traffic. Jeremy is
singing to *Whole Lotta Love*. Playing an air guitar, he
steers the 280 with his knee.

MARGARET

(mocking)

Please. Watch the road, you
responsible adult.

Anxiously, Margaret leans over and takes the wheel.

JEREMY

Whoa, whoa...

MARGARET

You're scaring me.

JEREMY

Nobody drives this except me.

MARGARET

Trying to keep us from dying is not
me 'driving.'

JEREMY

Still, you could cause me to wreck
and this and Trigger are the only
gifts Cecil's ever given me.

MARGARET

I pictured Cecil more truck than Benz.

JEREMY

He won her in a poker game from Rita Coolidge. Gave it to me at my high school graduation.

MARGARET

He doesn't seem so horrible.

JEREMY

It was his chicken coop. Said only a girl or a gay would drive it. It cost me \$3,000 to get running and I still find chicken shit. So it's not about sentimentality.

MARGARET

How'd he and your mom meet?

JEREMY

Virginia Beach concert. She went to see him play, next thing she knew she was touring with him and next sixteen and pregnant. Last thing Cecil wanted was a snot-nosed brat sharing the spotlight. But T.J. made it clear I was priority numero uno. Th' stayin' home virtually killed him. After a few months he swapped us for booze and broads. We seldom saw him and when we did he was soused. Finally, mom had enough. Today they have a weird relationship where she believes she still needs to look after him, even though she's married to a fabulous doctor in Aspen.

MARGARET

Do you see her much?

JEREMY

More than him. Seventeenth will be eleven years. He was supposed to come see me and big surprise didn't keep his word. I called, wrote a letter but never heard back.

MARGARET

Why the gap?

JEREMY

Fucking long story I don't care to get into.

MARGARET

Forgive me.

JEREMY

No need to apologize, just don't wanna talk about it.

MARGARET

I was simply inquiring.

JEREMY

And I'm saying it's not important.

MARGARET

I get it.

JEREMY

Good. Glad that's clear.

MARGARET

Your bouts of moodiness are worse than any woman.

JEREMY

What did you say?

MARGARET

Here we go again. You know. Let's find a HOTEL for the evening. I've had enough for the day.

JEREMY

Yeah, and it's all about you.

MARGARET

Are you serious? (scoffs) You are such a hypocrite.

EXT. COZY COTTAGE INN - OFFICE - TENNESSEE - NIGHT

We're looking at your basic travel motel. Margaret enters. We observe through the window her speaking with an elderly CLERK. He shakes his head. Margaret frowns. Takes a key.

INT. COZY COTTAGE - ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings open to one double bed. Jeremy tosses his bag to the floor and stalks into the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Margaret flings herself onto the bed. Jeremy breezes in. He is struggling to unzip his bag.

JEREMY

This is becoming too complicated.

MARGARET

Oh, heavens. Why, because God forbid you have to answer a personal question? Grow up.

JEREMY

If you knew the history between Cecil and I you'd be more sympathetic.

MARGARET

It's impossible to have sympathy if I don't understand the problem.

JEREMY

You want to know? I moved back with him when I ten -- it devastated mom. Things kicked off fine until one day we decided to do a father and son activity -- paint the porch swing. Day started with us joking about him smoking weed with Eric Clapton; actually getting along up until I spilt the paint. By then, he was swimming in gin. He started yelling. I said something and accidentally kicked over his gin. He lost it. He pushed me to the ground and got on top of me, chokin' me. I couldn't get up -- couldn't breathe. But that wasn't the worse part. The worse part was his look, this stare of resentment in his demon eyes -- almost like hatred. I was beginning to lose consciousness so I did the only thing I could -- grabbed my pocketknife.

Margaret is drawn further into his orbit. Dressed, Jeremy snatches his keys, bolts out, SLAMMING the door with fury. On Margaret with the realization she, too blames Tom.

SLAM TO:

EXT. TOWN STREET/PAWNSHOP/LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

HOMELESS and HOOKERS loiter. 280 eases to the curb under a neon sign: 'Cletus' House of Strings and Pawn.' The store is wedged between a brightly-lit liquor store and dark church.

Jeremy breezes into the liquor store. A moment. He exits, totting a paper bag. However, something in the pawnshop window grabs his attention. As he enters, we return to...

INT. COZY COTTAGE INN - ROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT

The door snaps open to Jeremy like a wind-rush. He is totting box wine and a whisky bottle; evident he stole a swig. Instantly, his smile fades. The room is empty.

Jeremy cross to the bathroom. The door is slightly ajar. He opens it to find Margaret in the bath. She screams.

MARGARET

What are...? Close the door!

Jeremy drags closed the door and looms on the other side.

JEREMY

I grabbed us a little nightcap.

MARGARET (O/C)

Absolutely not. I'm going to bed.

JEREMY

Come on, cowgirl. It's a truce treaty to lettin' go of the past and forgetting lost possessions.

On the other side, Margaret cringes: her robe is on the bed.

MARGARET

Speaking of, would you, uh, could you kindly hand me my robe?

JEREMY

Only in exchange for a tippie.

Through the cracked door, he dangles her robe. She goes for it. He withdraws and giggles.

MARGARET

While I'm astonished by how effortlessly you administer...

JEREMY

Eh, you're spoiling my buzz.

Off Margaret, snatching the robe from Jeremy's hand.

EXT. COZY COTTAGE INN POOL - NIGHT

The pool lights dance across Margaret's face. Our couple sit on the pool's edge, feet dangling in the water. Jeremy is nursing a bottle of whisky while a robed Margaret nurses a cup of wine.

JEREMY

Now the first boy you smooched.

MARGARET

Chris Kruger. He was second grade,
I was third.

Margaret continues to speak but we cannot hear...

TIME DRIPS

And our duo is a little faded and seem comfortable together. Jeremy's shirt is unbuttoned. Margaret has shed her robe. In her pajamas, she leans her shoulder against Jeremy's.

MARGARET

We were cruising down Wilshire in
his convertible 450SL and me with
my head slumped over the side.

JEREMY

Poor guy.

MARGARET

Poor guy?! Poor me! Only thing I
recall is I crashed for two days
and have since not touched raw fish
nor spoken to Mr. Jack Lemmon.

JEREMY

Look at us. Who'd have guessed a
few days ago we'd be nursing
libations poolside? Hey, I been
meaning to ask the story behind
this mysterious 'Connie' character.

MARGARET

You know.

JEREMY

No, no, not the book-jacket jargon.
Know what I think? She is who you
want to be when you grow up.

When Jeremy laughs, he throws up his arms, spills his drink.

JEREMY

Whoopsy. Come on. Is Connie you?

Margaret takes a long pull of his whisky. She looks at Jeremy numbly and declares:

MARGARET

She was my daughter.

(a beat)

She died three years ago.

Margaret drops the bottle into Jeremy's hand. Stands and turns her back. Slipping from her pajamas, she dives into the pool. SPLASH!

Jeremy simply stares at the naked woman. Margaret smirks. Jeremy sheds his clothes, naked as the day he was born.

MARGARET

Oh, for Christ-sake! Jump in!

Jeremy dives into the pool.

JEREMY

Goddamn! It's cold!

MARGARET

The first few months after her passing were unmanageable. The pain was excruciating. Trying to find a way to accept the tragedy fate had bestowed on me, I created this character as an outlet for my grief. A solace. Today 'Connie' is such an integral part of my life I couldn't imagine living without her. Sadly, I know I need to let the series go, but saying good-bye is something I'm not ready to do.

JEREMY

(sans reaction)

I know where you're coming from. I feel lost without her--

MARGARET

--YOU SELFISH SON-OF-A-BITCH! You have the audacity to compare the death of my Connie to a loss of some two-bit lassie!

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You talk about this girl as if she is the love of your life and you haven't even once mentioned her name! Not once! I wonder if you even possess the slightest facility of emotions or are you completely void of feelings? What are you going to do when you see her? Throw her over your shoulder and drag her back to LA.

JEREMY

I do love NICOLE!

MARGARET

FINALLY! A name! I hate those people who act as if they live in a vacuum and nothing they do will affect anyone else, especially the ones they supposedly love!

JEREMY

Who are you to judge? You're the one with a failing marriage incapable of *loving* the man in your own damn bed.

On Margaret, hurt and surprised. Her mouth is stretched open in a cry of pain.

JEREMY

Only difference 'tween us I'm chasing and you're running.

MARGARET

You think you are so smart when in actually you're a child wanting so badly to be loved he'll force himself on any woman with a pulse.

JEREMY

Including a destitute one in a motel pool.

They have stripped each other raw. Margaret is crying. She exits the pool. Jeremy, realizing what he has done, stumbles into his jeans and pursues.

He catches Margaret as she is entering...

THE MOTEL ROOM

Clutching the doorknob, Margaret is a bundle of nerves.

MARGARET

I can't do this anymore. I can't.
I'm tired. Just so tired.

Margaret closes the door on Jeremy. He staggers a bit before sliding down the door, hating himself.

FADE TO BLACK:

E/I. COZY COTTAGE INN - ROOM - DAWN

The BANG of a rubbish bin awakens Jeremy asleep by the door. Taking stock of his surroundings, he knocks on the door. He rises and knocks harder.

Jeremy peeks through the window. There is a mounting sense of unease when he spies the still made bed. Using his POCKETKNIFE to slice the window screen, he jimmies the window lock and climbs into the room.

JEREMY

Margaret.

He crosses to the bathroom. The door is closed. Actually, locked. Jeremy knocks.

JEREMY

Margaret. Hey. You in there?

He bangs harder. Panic now. Instantly, Jeremy -- KICKS the door, hard -- it gives a little. He rears back -- kicks again -- it SPLINTERS -- almost flies off its damn hinges--

Jeremy's viewpoint Margaret coiled in the bathtub. Her mouth is blue and multi-hued PILLS are gripped in her palm.

Tragedy oils Jeremy's face. Cradling Margaret, he sweeps his fingers into her mouth, fishing out the tablets. Now he struggles to pull her from the bath. Laying her on the floor, Jeremy compresses her stomach. Pumps hard.

Jeremy is crying. He doesn't know if she is going to make it, neither do we. Finally, Margaret gags -- coughs -- Jeremy is dazed and staring at her. Margaret spits out three pills. She blinks. She heaves.

Their eyes lock a long beat before Margaret's avert.

INT. COZY COTTAGE INN - ROOM - HOUR LATER

Margaret is in bed. Jeremy comes through the door. He flings open the curtains; light spills into the room. Margaret blinks and comes full awake.

Jeremy parks on the bed with Saltines and 7-Up. Margaret is a wreck, and she knows it. She reaches for Jeremy's hand.

MARGARET

Now who's the 'train wreck?'

And Jermeey folds Margaret into his arms, as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. HUDSON RIVER - SAILBOAT - DAY

Suddenly it is bright, so bright it hurts our eyes. As our focus clears, we see a 33' Beneteau 323 sailboat skimming the water. The 'Connie' is an absolute beaut. Tom cranks the winch, trimming the mainsail. He looks up at the flapping sails and smiles. He makes his way around the deck; his sea legs are coming back.

With the boat now on course, Tom takes the wheel. He spots something that reveals the date last used (three years ago). He squints and kneels. His face pains, staring at the name 'Connie' written under the steering column in orange Crayon.

EXT. COUNTRY STORE - PAY PHONE - DAY

We find a BOY playing with a mangy DOG. Jeremy is on his phone. Margaret breezes from the store. Jeremy hangs up and scoffs.

MARGARET

What's the matter?

JEREMY

Stubborn old bastard wants to "die in his own house."

MARGARET

Go easy on him.

JEREMY

He should go to the hospital.

MARGARET

He's scared.

JEREMY

You scared me.

MARGARET

How much further?

JEREMY

Not far enough.

MARGARET

I bought some M&Ms.

EXT. 280 (MOVING)/ROADSIDE - DAY

- On Jeremy and Margaret. They drive in silence.
- 280 is stopped roadside. TROOPER issues Jeremy a citation. Margaret throws a delicious, "I told you so" smile.
- 280 zips past a North Carolina sign -

EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAY

280 turns at a 'City Park' sign.

EXT. CITY PARK/PLAYGROUND - AFTERNOON

We hear children's laughter. PARENTS and KIDS frolic. Margaret and Jeremy cross to the swings. They sit. Jeremy removes a smoke. Margaret proffers a plastic LIGHTER.

Margaret's eyes skim from Jeremy to playing children.

MARGARET

She would've been nine Tuesday. I had miscarried twice before I had her. But somehow I knew she was going to make it. After thirty-six hours of labor, I wasn't so certain I was. Tom and I were over the moon, and God, did he spoil her. Not to mention turning her into a tomboy. I wanted to dress her in cute little outfits but she wouldn't have it -- if she wasn't naked or in her sailor outfit; she wasn't happy. One day we were running late when she rounded the corner in nothing but a pink ribbon.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

That evening we made a deal: I dressed her during the week and weekends she chose. It was a good agreement since Saturdays we sailed. That was our haven. I'd read, but more often than not, watch Tom help Connie steer the vessel.

FLASH TO:

EXT. SAILBOAT - OCEAN - DAY

The sky is blue, sun is high, water pristine. The Beneteau skims into view. Margaret eyes CONNIE stir the vessel in mismatched clothing. Tom is at her side, smiling proudly as she scribbles her name on the boat. Life is bliss.

BACK TO:

EXT. CITY PARK/PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy and Margaret are in the swings.

JEREMY

Sounds amazing.

MARGARET

It was truly ... until one Saturday I awoke to a magazine page of a doll resting on my pillow instead of Tom. I had been up late with a deadline and he thought he was doing me a favor taking Connie. I was at Bergdoff's when the police called. They said the speedboat was doing sixty at the point of impact. When I arrived, Tom was being rushed to the hospital but they had yet to locate Connie. I waited on the shore for hours, holding that doll until finally they found her.

FLASH TO:

EXT. HARBOUR - NIGHT

We hear police radios and see reflecting blue lights. Margaret is on shore holding the DOLL. She is crying. A female police OFFICER comforts her.

OFFICER #1 enters frame with a STRETCHER holding a bodybag. He unzips it barley. On Margaret falling to her knees, weeping hysterically, clutching Connie's lifeless body.

BACK TO:

MARGARET

A part of me died seeing her pale little body in her sailor outfit and pink ribbon in her muddy hair. All I could think of was what the hell was I going to do with this doll?

(a beat)

I knew it wasn't Tom's fault but I couldn't make myself speak to him for days. The sight of him made me nauseous. Sure, I wanted to forgive him but I was too consumed with my own pain and guilt which eventually pushed him to find solace in the arms of a friend who lost her husband. Goes to prove when two desperate people are in a hopeless situation, a bond inevitably forms. The days rolled into three years and we've evolved into resentful, rotting monsters with me daily contemplating taking my life, unable to move past my daughter's death while knowing my husband has accepted her fate and moved on.

JEREMY

I don't think so. You don't, I mean, you honestly believe Tom doesn't still hurt for her. My guess he's struggling to survive best he knows how. If you ask me, he deserves a second chance. Besides, if I were him, I would never want to lose you.

And softly, confidently, Margaret arches her eyebrows. Jeremy takes her hand in his. They swing, as we hear...

EXT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - DAY

Wagner playing loudly. Margaret and Jeremy cruise along a two-lane blacktop. She flashes a mischievous smile to Jeremy behind the wheel, then climbs onto the back of the seat, savoring the freedom, as the concerto fades...

EXT. UNCLE NASTY'S HONKY-TONK - NIGHT

...into muffled country music. 280 parks in pickup-filled parking lot of an old wooden honky-tonk.

INT. UNCLE NASTY'S - MOMENTS LATER

Totting his guitar case, Jeremy swings open the door. Over his shoulder is Margaret, sporting her new jeans and shirt.

The joint is packed. A BAND is on stage. Nearby, MEN encircle a topless table DANCER while a heavy GIRL jumps atop a pool table.

GARRET
Get off there!

GARRET, fifties, creepy, draped in gold chains, swats the girl with his pool cue.

MARGARET
You sure know how to pick them.

Jeremy and Margaret cross to the bar. Jeremy slips his case to the BARTENDER, orders two Coronas.

JEREMY
Tons of killer acts have played that stage...

A COWBOY (40s), waltzes up.

COWBOY
Howdy. Like-to-dance?

MARGARET
Oh. Thank you. But no.

COWBOY
Come on, one dance.

MARGARET
I'm not very good.

JEREMY
Ace. Lady said no.

COWBOY
I'll lead.

MARGARET
Okay. But just one.

Cowboy leads Margaret to the dance floor under Jeremy's jealous gaze. Cowboy pulls Margaret close. After a few missed steps, Margaret follows like a pro. The song ends. Cowboy returns Margaret to a sulking Jeremy.

COWBOY

'Preciate it, little lady.

MARGARET

Anytime, Walt.

(to Jeremy, playfully)

Why the long mug? Is somebody a little jealous?

JEREMY

Bartender, dos mas Coronas and two Cuervo shots.

And when Jeremy turns -- he squints -- because Margaret is now at the pool tables encircled by admirers.

Jeremy downs both shots. Scooping up the beers, he stalks over. Margaret eyes Garrett sink the eight ball.

GARRETT

Howdy, foxy lady.

MARGARET

Mind if I have the next game?

Back to Jeremy, downing a beer. He eyes Margaret settle behind the cue ball. She steadies her stick -- breaks -- balls scatter; two fall in. Garret winces.

Jeremy notices a young cowboy, CASEY, flirt with Margret.

TIME DRIPS

Jeremy is now visibly faded and struggling with mounting anger. Margaret is running the table. Cowboys are grinning.

Craving a confrontation, Jeremy stalks forward. Margaret eyes the three ball -- it drops. Garrett throws a pained look. Nearby, Casey leans in and kisses Margaret's cheek.

Jeremy's eyes flare with sudden paranoia -- he snatches his guitar from the bar, staggering onto the stage. People snicker. Jeremy's fingers fumble, legs wobble.

JEREMY

"Mem-ori-es and... drinks... don't mix too well...."

GARRETT

Hey up there! You suck!

Casey whispers to Margaret. She looks at Jeremy and rolls her eyes -- then--

- Jeremy's guitar slams to the floor -
- Jeremy DIVES off stage -
- Full motion for Casey -
- Margaret looks up in horror - CRACK!
- Jeremy wallops Casey across the jaw -
- FRONT DOOR FLIES OPEN -

EXT. UNCLE NASTY'S - CONTINUOUS

Jeremy soars out. He SLAMS to the ground. Crowd gathers. Casey and Jeremy exchange PUNCHES. Margaret wades in. BIKER grabs her. Jeremy flies against the wall. Casey pummels Jeremy in the mouth. Biker restrains Casey.

BIKER

Come on, Case. He's done.

Jeremy slides down the wall. Margaret races to him. He looks at her with disdain.

MARGARET

Jeremy!

Jeremy staggers to his feet. Wiping his bloody mouth, he attempts to return inside. Margaret grabs him. He spits a mouthful of blood, stalking like a zombie toward the 280.

MARGARET

Jeremy. NO! I will drive.

JEREMY

NOBODY FUCKING DRIVES MY CAR!

MARGARET

Please!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Dropping behind the 280's wheel, Jeremy glares at Margaret.

JEREMY

Ya comin' or stayin' with lov-er?

Jeremy slams the car door. Margaret sobs and hears: "He's still out there." Margaret, with no choice, climbs into...

On 280: Jeremy mashes the accelerator flat. 280 spins out, kicking up a cloud of dust. Margaret SCREAMS.

INT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Blaring music. Pitch black, lonely road. Mounting panic. Margaret. She is uneasy with Jeremy behind the wheel, driving insanely reckless.

MARGARET

Jeremy! Stop the car! YOU ARE
GOING TO KILL US!

Suddenly blue LIGHTS ILLUMINATE the darkness.

JEREMY

Shit. Hold on!

280 takes a sharp right down a dirt road. SIREN yelps. POLICE car darts across the median. Margaret holds on for dear life. Jeremy floors the 280. He loses control for a brief second -- then overcorrects -- 280 almost flips.

Jeremy kills the HEADLIGHTS!

MARGARET

What are you doing?

Cold air whipping -- 280 brakes -- spins around. Margaret yells. 280 makes a quick right, sharp left, then Jeremy JAMS THE BRAKES! 280 LURCHES, nose DROPS, jolts to a sudden stop!

Police car screams past.

Quiet. Margaret's breathing is hard and fast. Jeremy's face is oiled with a demented grin. He's taking a swig from his flask when Margaret snatches it and hurls out the window.

Jeremy's manner is mean. He stumbles from the car and crawls across a field with his LIGHTER illuminating his bloodied, desperate face.

Staggering toward the 280, Jeremy discovers Margaret behind the wheel. He does not protest. Simply deposits himself into the passenger seat.

Margaret leans back, closing her eyes, taking us to...

E/I. JEREMY'S 280 - COUNTRY ROAD - DAWN

Glorious sunrise. The roar of a tractor awakens Margaret. It takes a beat to realize her coordinates. She gazes at Jeremy; head slumped against the door. Swats him.

He shoots up; face swollen, mouth bloodied. Jeremy feels silly and Margaret knows it, and he hates that she knows it. As Margaret exits to pee, Jeremy studies his reflection in the mirror, displeased. Margaret returns.

JEREMY

Knew this would morph into a bad deal. People always mess up my life when I let 'em in.

MARGARET

Stop blaming everyone and take ownership for once.

JEREMY

I'll drop you at...

MARGARET

You fucking selfish coward. You think you're getting rid of me that easily. Think again. Now you're going to stop feeling sorry for yourself, stop blaming everyone and take charge of your life. Because I see underneath the bravado a magnificent, loving man I would like to see find the happiness he deserves. So unless you're going to carry me through the terminal, you are stuck. Now where are we?

Instantly, Jeremy's face drains.

REVERSE TO

280's backseat. Shit. It's empty. Trigger is gone. Jeremy looks like he's been plowed by a freight train.

INT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - HIGHWAY - DAY

Margaret is now behind the wheel. Jeremy is shotgun. The drive becomes silent, tense. A nostalgic look oils Jeremy's face as we hear *Sunday Morning*, the song from the top of the story.

JEREMY

This song. Every Sunday Cecil and I'd lay by the record player and play this song over and over. Drove mom bonkers. She'd yell, "Play something else."

SONG

"...On a Sunday morning sidewalk, wishing Lord that I was stoned..."

A heavy quiet falls on Jeremy as we MOVE HIGH ABOVE...

EXT. WILMINGTON, NC - DAY

The Cape Fear River. 280 winds along quaint city streets, making its way to Wrightsville Beach and the Atlantic Ocean.

EXT. CECIL'S HOUSE/280 - MOMENTS LATER

The 280 eases to a stop behind a newer model Suburban and '90s Ford pickup. The house is in disrepair. We see the (half-painted) PORCH SWING dangling by one chain.

Jeremy's anxiety intensifies. He squeezes Margaret's hand. Then they exit. Jeremy and Margaret stalk toward the porch. Jeremy notes the tarnished brass DOOR KNOCKER: 'THE KENDELS.'

With Herculean effort, Jeremy pushes open the door to...

INT. CECIL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The shabby room holds your basic out-dated furniture. Jeremy's eyes take in: PHONOGRAPH, Fender guitar, 'Valentinos' neon sign.

Jeremy is flooded by an onslaught of memories. A delighted Susan enters. Her surprised eyes go at once to Margaret.

SUSAN

There you are! I was beginning to get worried. My Gosh. Your face! What happened?

Jeremy and Susan embrace as Margaret sizes her up.

SUSAN

You look awful. And you're so skinny. Oh, pumpkin, look at you. You are a complete mess.

JEREMY
 Mom, this is Margaret. Margaret,
 this is my mom, Susan.

MARGARET
 Pardon me, but I really need...

JEREMY
 Down the hall to the left.

Assuring Margaret is gone, Susan throws a questioning gaze.

JEREMY
 I told ya I was bringing a girl.

SUSAN
 A 'girl' is not someone my age.

JEREMY
 She's fantastic. How's Jim?

SUSAN
 He stayed in Aspen. Said to let
 him know if you need anything. I'm
 so glad you're here. I've been
 going crazy. I'm leaving tomorrow.

JEREMY
 I can't believe you came.

SUSAN
 Jim thinks I'm a nut-case.

JEREMY
 If he is one thing, he is astute.

SUSAN
 Ha-ha. Chalk it up to knowing
 someone since sixteen.

JUMP TO THE HALLWAY

Where Margaret stops. She tilts her head, hearing the moan of a HARMONICA. Bitten with curiosity, she peeks through a cracked door to a bed-ridden MAN with his back turned to us. He softly sings with a Merle Haggard voice.

CECIL
 "Memories and drinks don't mix too
 well. Jukebox records don't play."

He stops singing at the sight of Margaret. Right then, he picks up a BOOK and HURLS it toward the door.

MEANWHILE BACK TO LIVING ROOM

Jeremy and Susan are chatting when Margaret enters.

JEREMY

...Ended up being just a fan belt.

SUSAN

Jeremy's been telling me wonderful things about you.

MARGARET

As you are probably well aware, your son is keen to exaggeration.

SUSAN

Before I forget, I put you at Holiday Inn. Margaret, would you care for something to drink?

MARGARET

Coffee, if you have any.

SUSAN

Not made, but easy to fix.

JEREMY

Is he, uh...?

SUSAN

First, let's have some coffee and then I'll start your laundry.

JEREMY

I wanna get this over with.

SUSAN

Jeremy, please. You've come--

JEREMY

--You be all right?

And Margaret with an assured smile.

SUSAN

He's been asking about you.

JEREMY

Why can't he tell me that?

SUSAN

Prepare yourself, pumpkin. It has been sometime since you saw him. He doesn't look as you remember.

MARGARET

Go easy on him. Remember what I said.

Susan bristles at Jeremy winking at Margaret. He enters...

HALLWAY

The harmonica's haunting moan reshapes Jeremy's face. He sees a Mickey Mouse doorknob that he turns, entering...

JEREMY'S BEDROOM

Afternoon sun caresses a single bed. The room is bare. Jeremy runs his hand over the cartoon wallpaper, crushed by a wave of distant memories. He stares out the window at a dilapidated SWING SET. Meanwhile--

KITCHEN

Margaret is seated at the table. Susan proffers a coffee of coffee.

SUSAN

Milk?

MARGARET

No, thank you.

Susan deposits herself across from Margaret. She leans in, carefully, as if inserting a needle into a vein, and asks:

SUSAN

What are your intentions with my son?

Margaret recoils. She blinks, frowns.

SUSAN

I mean, you met in some motel--

MARGARET

--It was hardly a 'motel' and...

SUSAN

Perhaps I'm mistaken and if so, I apologize. However, it seems to me out of character for a woman of your apparent stature to jaunt across the country with a boy twice her age ...

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

or perhaps it's habitual. Anyway, Jeremy may appear like a man but inside he's an extremely fragile soul. And the last thing he...

Margaret rises and crosses to the window. She peers out.

MARGARET

I realize how it appears. A married woman keeping company with a charming young man. But the fact is I am happily married.

SUSAN

I doubt that. (a beat) I apologize if I was out of line. Jeremy and I have worked incredibly hard for the relationship we have. I tell you, it was hell being a single mom. He and I against the world. I suppose therein-lies the root of my overprotectiveness.

MARGARET

You owe me no explanation.

SUSAN

For the longest I blamed Cecil for everything. However, I soon noticed I not only was incriminating him but also my own son. It wasn't until I lost, until he moved in with Cecil, I realized how it was affecting our lives. I learned not only did I have to forgive myself and Cecil but also Jeremy. I wasted many years being a bitter young woman, only to discover it's impossible to nourish a resentful heart.

Margaret reflects on Susan's words while staring out the window to the swing set. As we hear the eerie harmonica...

HALLWAY

...growing louder. Jeremy is at Cecil's door. It takes a minute and blinks and swallows, hard. Chills course through him as he hesitantly pushes open the door to...

CECIL'S BEDROOM

Light filters through Venetian blinds. Jeremy scans stacks of Louis L'Amour BOOKS and walls plastered with music MEMORABILIA. One photo reads: 'Good jamming with you, Kris.' Jeremy eyes a Resistol hat and 'Carolina Power and Light' shirt draped on a nail.

THEN TO

CECIL. He is propped at the window in his khaki 'uniform.' His slouched frame quickly grows erect. Harmonica stops. Cecil turns to reveal a man in his sixties. His once handsome face is jaundiced and pained and chin marked with Tobacco stains. He wears a bleary look of a heavy drinker.

His lifeless eyes momentarily sparkle and then fade into an ice cold stare.

On Jeremy struggling to digest Cecil's anemic appearance.

CECIL

(re: Jeremy's bruises)
Hope the other guy's in a box.

JEREMY

Hey. I, I was expecting you to be in bed.

CECIL

I'll get enough reclining soon enough.

JEREMY

Good to see you.

CECIL

Turned out to be taller than I'd thought, boy.

JEREMY

Good genes. How ya feelin'?

CECIL

As good as dying can feel.

JEREMY

Mom said you won't go to the hospital. I think you should--

CECIL

--Why? There's nothing those quacks can do except take my hard-earned cash.

JEREMY

With today's medicine comes
miracles--

CECIL

--Only miracle is you standing in
that doorway there.

JEREMY

I wanted to come.

CECIL

See you're chasing another bird.

Cecil eyes Jeremy's boots and scoffs.

JEREMY

Look, let's start over. I didn't
come here to pick up where we left
off. I came because I wanted to
spend some time with you.

CECIL

That'll be the day.

Cecil motions to Jeremy for a glass on the dresser. Jeremy
notices a red guitar PICK beside a holstered .357 magnum
PISTOL under a *Popular Mechanics* magazine.

JEREMY

That's ole Merle's pick.

CECIL

Boy, it's my liver, not
Alzheimer's.

Jeremy glances a plastic bottle of gin atop a BIBLE.

JEREMY

There's your ole charm.

CECIL

Hand me that gin.

Jeremy proffers Cecil the glass. Cecil pours gin into the
glass. Bringing the glass to his mouth, he steadies his
shaking hand with the other. It's a painful to witness.

JEREMY

Y'know what's funny? I can chat
with any stranger on the street but
something about you always balls me
up. Did you get my letter?

CECIL

Yup.

JEREMY

I was surprised you wanted to come see me. Why didn't you? You never called me back, answered my letter. Looking forward to your visit.

CECIL

Dying wrinkled up my plans.

JEREMY

Would have been nice to catch up.

CECIL

'Bout what?

JEREMY

Everything. How somewhere along the way we lost something and how it would be nice if we could get it back.

CECIL

Boy, ya should know life is strikes and gutters.

JEREMY

Jesus! Can't you at least try and work with me?

CECIL

Whatta you want me to say?

JEREMY

What I want you to say? I don't know. All right. How about how are you? I missed you. I wish we spoke more. How's the music? I wish I hadn't checked out--

CECIL

--I knew there had to be a motive you came. More of that psycho-babble bullshit. Just like your momma. Awhhh -- fuck it! Let's get something straight, boy: I didn't go no place and I didn't leave anybody -- I haven't left my goddamn house in twenty years.

JEREMY

You're serious?

CECIL
You're damn right I am!

JEREMY
You're a real piece of work.

CECIL
You've always been the running
kind. If anyone left, it was you.

JEREMY
I was five!

CECIL
Still run with your momma.

JEREMY
Grow up! It was you who mentally
checked out. Or what, did you
expect me to join you and the
Mexican waitress you were screwing?

This comment surprises Cecil. He attempts to stand but
stumbles. Jeremy leans in, only to have Cecil motion him
back.

CECIL
Woman never could shut her mouth.

JEREMY
What? Wait. You don't... (laughs)
You don't remember? Suppose you
were too fucking sauced when I told
ya.

CECIL
Told me what?

JEREMY
I opened the door that night.

Cecil is struck by a damning revelation.

JEREMY
It was me who found you. Puts
things in a different perspective
knowing it was your five-year-old
son who caught ya in the act.

CECIL
Eh. Ya don't know what it's like
to be a father. To have this
responsibility. To give up your
life and your fucking dreams.

(MORE)

CECIL (CONT'D)

To have people dependin' on you and expectin' things from ya when you can't even deliver things for yourself. I mean, look at you living the kinda life most men dream about. Picking and playing, kickin' out the footlights. I'd give anything to have it.

JEREMY

An old drunk like you couldn't make one day in these boots.

CECIL

Ah, the hell with ya. I tried to do what was best for ya.

JEREMY

What kind of world are you living in? After we left, I never heard from ya. If it wasn't for T.J.--

CECIL

--Screw that old son-of-a-bitch!

JEREMY

Shut up! He's the reason I made it this far. Y'know, the first five years of my life I couldn't have asked for a better father. I worshiped you. God, I loved you-- there's few days go by I don't think of cruising the beach in your old truck listening to cassettes. Those songs... th' music... they're my blood, my soul, and for that I'll always be grateful.

Cecil is moved, but something about his stubborn DNA sends him retreating further into himself.

JEREMY

But that's where it stops.

CECIL

Boy, you don't know shit.

JEREMY

Then tell me what I'm missing. What made you so cold? Why if you're not blaming somebody, you're hating them?

CECIL

Goddamn it I lost my son! You'll never know what it's like to lose a child. Walk into an empty house strewn with toys and nothing but fucking silence. Knowing it's your fucking fault you'll never hear the sound of your boy's laughter down the hall and knowing you don't have the strength to fucking change. When you have a gap in your heart it never heals it just fills with nastiness people don't like to hear about and thoughts that there's only one way to end but you're too much of a coward to go through with it.

JEREMY

You didn't even want me!

Jeremy hits Cecil with a left hook. Cecil recoils and blinks, slowly.

JEREMY

I saw it in your eyes that day. You blame me for your fall and your misery. You have any idea how it feels to carry the burden that your own father holds you accountable for his failed success? Or worse...

Wait for it ... now--

JEREMY

...wishes you hadn't been born.

Bam. Cecil goes down for the count. There's a long tension-filled beat. Cecil hates this. We think he's about to let down his guard and embrace his son -- but instead...

CECIL

Sorry you came all the way to be let down again. That your old man turned out to be a one stringed banjo that's not how I intended but how the ole cards fell and I just never had the strength or courage to pick 'em and reshuffle.

An awkward moment slips by.

CECIL
I'm not feeling good.

With all his being, Jeremy forces his hand upon his father's shoulder. Cecil tenses, and if we look closely, we catch a glimpse of tenderness in his eyes. Then like that -- he recoils like a rattler and cuts Jeremy a cold stare.

Jeremy scoffs and stalks out.

INT. KITCHEN - SECONDS LATER

Margaret is at the table. Susan is drying dishes when Jeremy strides into frame and out the front door. Margaret rises. Susan stops her. Margaret eyes Jeremy climb into the 280 and peel out of the drive.

EXT. QUICK STOP CONVENIENCE STORE - DUSK

A gorgeous white sand beach is in the bg. 280 jolts to the curb. Visibly shaken, Jeremy exits and paces around, cogitating when hit with an idea. He takes his phone and dials. We hear:

TODD'S VOICE (O/C)
Hello.

JEREMY
(into phone)
Nic?

TODD VOICE (O/C)
Who is this?

JEREMY
(into phone)
Who the fuck is this?

TODD VOICE (O/C)
It's Nicole's fiancé.

With that, Jeremy sinks. He tosses the phone into the car and YELLS! He kicks his tire and is on the verge of an emotional breakdown when he spots across the street...

EXT. COLDWATER COUNTRY BAR - DUSK

Nondescript neighborhood bar.

INT. COLDWATER COUNTRY BAR - CONTINUOUS

It is a gloomy and depressive joint. A jukebox moans. The bartender, DANNY is fifty. He is arranging glasses. He looks up to Jeremy settling at the bar. Beside him is FRITZ BARNES, sixties, friendly in a "Carolina Power and Light" shirt.

Down the bar sits: JACK BROWN, elderly black gentleman. Beside him are Mousey WOMAN (40s) and STACY (20s).

FRITZ
...Harold was so plastered he told
the cop to screw off.

JACK
You talkin' 'bout the tall one?

HEADSHOTS of local 'celbs' line the wall.

FRITZ
No, no, no. That girl cop. She
laid Harold flat on his ass. (to
Jeremy) Whatcha drinkin'?

JEREMY
Wild Turkey neat.

FRITZ
Jeremy? Hey. Fritz Barnes.

DANNY
I thought that was you.

JEREMY
Hey, Jack.

FRITZ	DANNY
(re: shots)	Way ahead of you, Barnes.
Danny...!	

FRITZ
Jesus, I haven't seen you since you
was a teenager.

DANNY
You wore out that jukebox playin'
Haggard.

STACY
(mesmerized)
You're Cecil's son?

DANNY
She loves your picture.

Jeremy is surprised seeing his HEADSHOT on the wall.

STACY
I remember your dad bringing it in.
He was so proud.
(blushing)
I tried to take it.

ALL
To Cecil's boy! Welcome home!

Glasses clink. Note Jeremy sipping his shot.

STACY
How long you here for?

JEREMY
A day or so.

JACK
Know your pop is pleased ya here.

DANNY
You said it.

TIME DRIPS

Neon lights flicker and glow. More PEOPLE line the bar. Everyone is a little faded. However, not Jeremy. He pushes aside a plate of fries and looks at Fritz. Stacy is standing beside Jeremy's barstool with her arm around his shoulder.

FRITZ
I heard you're kickin' ass in LA
with a pilot offer.

JACK
What of that album you made?

STACY
I love the Jack Nicholson story.

Jeremy is overwhelmed.

FRITZ
Know you're disappointed about him
not making it out. Man, he wanted
to. Ole sickness clobbered him.

JACK

Yeah, he's in bad shape. Other day we were at th' VFW and he leaned over, grabbed my hand and looked me right into my eyes and said, "Jack, I know that ole sonuvabitch is coming."

DANNY

He was thrilled as a fox when Susan said you were heading this way.

STACY

We all were.

FRITZ

He is damn proud of you, son.

JACK

He don't need us tellin' him dat.

And Fritz, with paternal intent, drapes his arm over Jermey's shoulder and says:

FRITZ

I think he does.

Hold a moment on Jermey taking this all in.

JEREMY

Well, it's late and I should be running.

JACK

Them drinks on us now, ya hear?

STACY

Or stay. We could light a joint and listen to Haggard all night.

JEREMY

That's tempting, it is. Thank you all.

At the door, Jeremy catches his reflection in the mirror that fades into Cecil...

INT. CECIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A faint light illuminates Cecil lumbering down the hall. He is clearly in pain and drunk. He plops a record on the turntable ... *Sunday Morning* crackles.

SONG

"...And it took me back to
something that I lost somewhere,
somehow along the way..."

Struggling down the hall, Cecil cradles his Fender, as we--

EXT. COLDWATER COUNTRY/280 - NIGHT

Crashing waves. Moonlight reflects off the ocean.

SONG

"On a Sunday Morning sidewalk..."

Jeremy plops behind the 280s wheel, contemplating.

EXT. CECIL'S HOUSE/280 - NIGHT

It is eerily still. Cecil's bedroom light goes dark as the 280 eases into frame. On Jeremy. He contemplates going inside but reconsiders and instead drives off.

SONG

"...Sunday Morning Coming Down."

--THAT'S WHEN WE SEE A FLASH FROM CECIL'S WINDOW--

--FOLLOWED BY A GUNSHOT--

--THEN EVERYTHING GOES DEATHLY BLACK

EXT. HOLIDAY INN - PARKING LOT/280 - NIGHT

280 is parked under a lone light. Margaret peers out the motel window. Jeremy's head is slouched against the wheel. Margaret exits the motel and pads to the car.

Margaret taps on the window.

She climbs inside. Their eyes are very involved. Jeremy reads her for clues. Her bottom lip quivers.

And then he knows. He releases a flood tears, spiraling into a state of utter shock, as we slowly push into...

INT. HOLIDAY INN - ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A glow filters into the room. Dressed, Jeremy is in a fetal position on the bed. Margaret, too, clothed, is beside him. Jeremy rolls over and looks at her with tear-stained eyes.

She caresses his face. He kisses her lightly. Margaret pulls him closer. Jeremy kisses her passionately. She rolls atop of him, removing her shirt, as we witness our two lost souls make tender/therapeutic love.

FADE TO:

EXT. PIER - TWO DAYS LATER - DAY

The sun reflects off the ocean. Jeremy is flanked by Margaret and Susan. Waves crash against the wooden pier. Jeremy cradles an URN. He leans over the railing and pours Cecil's ashes into the ocean.

INT. CECIL'S HOUSE - CECIL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jeremy enters to find Susan in casual clothes with her hair tied up. She is placing some of Cecil's belongings into boxes. She has record playing.

JEREMY

I thought you were going to wait.

SUSAN

Oh. You startled me. Hi. You know me and my compulsiveness.

Jeremy gazes past her at the small BULLET HOLE in the wall.

SUSAN

Where is Margaret?

JEREMY

She thought we needed some time.

SUSAN

It was a nice turnout, wasn't it?

JEREMY

Who were they?

SUSAN

He had a lot of friends who loved him.

JEREMY

It's ironic, huh?

SUSAN

How are you holding up?

JEREMY
Numb. Struggling.

SUSAN
I remember when granddad passed.
Life was a fog for months.

JEREMY
What's gonna happen to this place?

SUSAN
You're the executor.

JEREMY
Me? Wow. I thought you or Fritz.

SUSAN
You don't have to do anything now.
Fritz will look after it until you
are ready. He said he'd fix it up.

JEREMY
(re: Fender RECEIPT)
Check this out.

SUSAN
I remember the day he bought it.
He stayed up all night playing
every Kris and Merle song.

Jeremy stares at tiny droplets of BLOOD on the bed.

JEREMY
Are you surprised?

SUSAN
I honestly suspected he might do
this, which is why I pushed for you
to come.

JEREMY
T.J. now Cecil ... makes you wonder
if it's not genetic.

SUSAN
That's not funny. He was in such
intense pain. He wanted to see you
so badly.

JEREMY
How come he never told me that?
Why didn't he ever tell me what
everyone else seems to know?

SUSAN

He wasn't strong enough. I realize your conversation didn't go as you had hoped, but at least you had a chance to be together ... perhaps find some closure. He shared with me what you said. I tried with everything in me to shield you, to keep you from knowing, to seeing it.

JEREMY

What that he blamed me for his failures?

SUSAN

His animosity. He struggled. Jeremy. Those feelings, love and resentment we forever at odds inside of him. I suppose as he grew older, the latter became more dominate.

Jeremy is struggling with a wave of emotions.

SUSAN

Bottom line is that he did love you and was so, so proud of you. Maybe even a little jealous. Make sense?

And Jeremy's eyes the Fender. There is an ENVELOPE marked 'For Jeremy' taped to its neck. Jeremy opens the envelope. Inside is the red guitar PICK (Merle Haggard's) and a NOTE: 'You'd be an idiot boy if you didn't take this guitar and play your songs. You got the music inside. Love you, dad.'

Susan with an approving smile to Jeremy, cradling the Fender.

EXT. HOLIDAY INN PARKING LOT/SUBURBAN - DAY

Susan is at the Suburban door, hugging Jeremy.

SUSAN

Call me when you hit New York.

JEREMY

I will. Thanks. I love you.

SUSAN

I love you, too, pumpkin. So much.

Susan gets into the Suburban and drives off just as Margaret eases to a stop in the 280.

INT. 280 - CONTINUOUS

MARGARET
Going my way, cowboy?

Jeremy climbs behind the wheel. He notes at her t-shirt: 'A Cowgirl Does It Better!'

JEREMY
Like the shirt.

MARGARET
I knew you would.

Margaret is now in the passenger seat.

JEREMY
I got you something.

Jeremy proffers a small jewel BOX.

MARGARET
What is this?

Margaret opens the box to find an antique NECKLACE.

MARGARET
It's absolutely gorgeous. But you shouldn't have.

JEREMY
I did some horse trading.

Margaret notes the crucifix is missing. Her heart melts. Jeremy fastens the necklace around Margaret's neck. She reads the CARD: 'A young woman delights me but an older woman entralls me. One has the beauty of her body the other experience and richness of her mind -- you're both.'

MARGARET
I will cherish it always.

JEREMY
Seems somewhere along the way I may have fallen a little.

MARGARET
Glad to know I am not the only one.

JEREMY
Sure you have to go back?
(she shakes her head)
Well then, let's do it.

EXT. HIGHWAY - 280 (MOVING) - DAY

Gorgeous day. Sun high in the sky. 280 zips past. Margaret and Jeremy are enjoying their last ounce of togetherness.

MARGARET

Why were you at the Beverly Hilton?

JEREMY

Some party for Warren Beaty but that's not important.

MARGARET

Fine, so you follow Jack Nicholson into the bathroom...

JEREMY

Right when I walked in he was lighting a smoke. I said, "Hey, buddy, you got an extra one?" He gave me one. We chatted. Then he disappeared into the stall as I said, "I love *The Shining*." Right then it's Jack Torrance yelling over the stall--

(mimicking Jack Nicholson)

"Wendy, I don't want a goddamn sandwich. Whenever you come in here and interrupt me you're breaking my concentration." It was fucking fantastic. He washed his hands and then walked out.

(eyeing line of TRUCKS)

Hey, we got us a convoy. When we pass these guys move your arm up and down like this.

Approaching the first TRUCK, Margaret hesitates. Jeremy eggs her on. The next truck she actually performs the maneuver. Trucker blares his horn. Caught in the moment, Margaret flashes her breasts. She drops into her seat, laughing --

WHAM -- THE NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE

EXT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND - MARGARET'S APARTMENT - DAY

Fifth Avenue is abuzz. A hansom CAB strolls past the parked 280. Margaret's luggage is on the curb. Jeremy is struggling to unfasten his eyes from hers. They are standing on the sidewalk; people, cars ... life passing by.

JEREMY

I don't want to let you go.

MARGARET

You have to.

JEREMY

I'm not happy about it.

(a beat)

Good luck with Tom. Been a damn good ride, cowgirl.

MARGARET

Memorable can't even describe it.

JEREMY

I'm gonna miss you.

MARGARET

I will miss you more. You have my number. Well. Good-bye then.

One last embrace. One final squeeze. Now Jeremy watches Margaret cross to the revolving door. She pauses a moment-- we pray she runs back into his arms. But sadly, she disappears inside the building leaving Jeremy on the busy sidewalk.

INT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors open to Margaret. She enters, noticing Tom's changes, most significantly, his missing belongings.

MARGARET

Tom? Tom, I'm home.

A strange sensation crosses Margaret as she pads to her bedroom door. She opens it.

MARGARET'S BEDROOM

Her bronze face is awash with sunlight spilling through open windows. Her eyes go at once to the corner noticing the missing sailor outfit and doll.

She is engulfed by bittersweet emotions.

On the bed is a CARD. Margaret opens the envelope and reads the card. She begins to cry. Regaining her composure, she drifts to the window and looks down below, disappointed not to see Jeremy.

As she stares over Central Park, the sky turns grey and trees shed their leaves, and people now hurry past in COATS--

EXT. NEW YORK CITY HOTEL - THREE MONTHS LATER - DAY

Jeremy looks fresh and fit, and sporting new boots. Speaking on his phone...

JEREMY

Terrific, Phil. I'll be there in two days. And again, thanks a ton.

Jeremy grips Cecil's guitar case and enters a stream of faces, hustling along the SIDEWALK.

E/I. BOOK STORE - FIFTH AVE. - EVENING

Package-totting SHOPPERS scurry past SANTA. Jeremy observes POSTERS announcing: 'Margaret Waters in her final Connie Steele book.' He pads inside and instantly spots Margaret behind a table, signing books.

Margaret. Her eyes grow soft at the sight of seeing Jeremy. We notice she is wearing Jeremy's necklace. He withdraws her BOOK from his guitar case and is about to say something when Tom places down a stack of books.

Margaret opens Jeremy's book to the pink ribbon bookmark and signs: "To living in the moment." They exchange one final glance before Jeremy waltzes out the door.

EXT. JEREMY'S 280 (MOVING) - TENNESSEE HIGHWAY - DAWN

There's a cold mist hanging over an open pasture dotted with horses. The sun is beginning to rise. Perfect. Suddenly the 280 races into view.

Jeremy is behind the wheel. He releases a loud cowboy yell, passing a highway sign: 'Nashville, 62 miles.'

And this makes us smile.

FADE OUT:

THE END