

It's A Man's World

By

Greg Mehrten

Note: *It's A Man's World* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Theater Center (LATC) and premiered there in September, 1985. The work was subsequently revised in December, 1986 and premiered at the Apple Corps Theatre in Manhattan in April, 1987. The New York cast included: Rhonda Aldrich; Tom Cayler, Dan Froot, Ruth Maleczek, Greg Mehrten, Paul Schmidt; and Roger Guenveur Smith. Both productions were directed by David Schweizer. The script below is from the New York production and is dated April 27, 1987.

Author's 1985 note prior to the LATC production: *It's A Man's World* is comprised of 31 scenes which depict selected events in Los Angeles and Palm Springs during 1974. These events take place over a period of six months: five months before and one month following the death of Joey Fontina, a gay, former minor movie star.

The time sequence of the play is scrambled – there are flashbacks, flash-forwards, and repeated parts of scenes. The plot, if presented chronologically, begins with Joey attempting to obtain a role of a soap opera. At the same time, he is trying to raise money for his friend, Roy, a Black activist who's been arrested and released. We see Joey getting the soap opera part, hosing a political fundraiser in Palm Springs, losing the acting job, being dropped by his agent, going on a camping trip to the mountains above Palm Springs, and having his possessions confiscated. We learn of his murder and see the response of his friends and associates.

The unreal, fragmentary structure of *It's A Man's World* is meant to illuminate the process of memory. The scene sequence is based on emotional connections or associative reasoning. Radical shifts in tone and style are designed to jostle the senses of the audience and encourage them to analyze, objectively and subjectively, what they are seeing in relation to what they have previously seen.

The use of video is intrinsic to the script. Live cameras will film the action, which, in conjunction with pre-recorded material, will be broadcast over monitors. We observe the cameras, their operators and the images they create. These images, which “see” the play from a viewpoint impossible for the audience to achieve, heighten the immediacy of the scenes and also present another, alternative method of analyzing the material. I see the production elements as contributing to a “cubist” interpretation of the story, a self-aware approach in which the world of Joey Fontina is constantly refracting and reflecting upon “reality” and our perception of it.

Cast of Characters

Joey Fontina (JF)	35 year old former minor movie star
Jon Waterson (JW)	37 year old film and television actor
Cheryl Spring (CS)	26 year old up and coming actress
Peter (P)	Joey's boyfriend, 24 years old
Roy Rivertree (RR)	36 year old Black activist
Eileen Mandel (EM)	46 year old agent
Harry Atwater (HA)	72 year old British-born film director

Place: Various interiors and exteriors in Los Angeles and Palm Springs.

Time: 1974

Note: This draft of *It's A Man's World* contains no description of the live and pre-recorded video imagery which will accompany the stage action of the play.

ACT ONE

Scene 1 – A Cathedral City motel room. Roy and Joey are in bed together. Roy reads from *Black Skin, White Masks* by Frantz Fanon.

RR: The explosion will not happen today. It is too soon... or too late. I do not come with timeless truths. My consciousness is not illuminated with ultimate radiances. Nevertheless, in complete composure, I think it would be good if certain things were said. These things I am going to say, not shout. For it is a long time since shouting went out of my life. Why write this book? No one has asked me for it. Especially those to whom it is directed. From all sides dozens and hundreds of pages assail me and try to impose their wills on me. But a single line would be enough. Supply a single answer and the color problem would be stripped of all its importance. What does a man want? What does the black man want? If it is true that consciousness is a process of transcendence, we have to see too that this transcendence is haunted by the problems of love and understanding. I propose nothing short of the liberation of the man of color from himself. We shall go very slowly, for there are two camps: the white and the black. The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness. We shall seek to ascertain the directions of this dual narcissism and the motivations that inspire it. Man's tragedy, Nietzsche said, is that he was once a child. None the less, the neurotic's fate remains in his own hands. In spite of this it is apparent to me that the effective disalienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. Reality requires a total understanding. On the objective level as on the subjective level, a solution has to be supplied. There will be an authentic disalienation only to the degree to which things, in the most materialistic meaning of the word, will have been restored to their proper places. I should like to start from there. Many Negroes will not find themselves in what follows. This is equally true of many whites. But that in no way diminishes the reality of the attitudes that I propose to describe. The architecture of this work is rooted in the temporal. Every human problem must be considered from the standpoint of time. And it is for my own time that I should live. The future should be an edifice supported by living men. This structure is connected to the present to the extent that I consider the present in terms of something to be exceeded.

Scene 2 – In the dark we hear the voices of Joey and Eileen on the telephone.

JF: Hello, may I speak to Eileen, please? Joey Fontina.

EM: Hello, Joey. How are you? Hold on one second. (Pause) Hi, I'm back. How are you?

JF: Fine. What's happening with "Another Day"?

EM: The story hasn't changed. The producers still feel that your character is not sufficiently sympathetic.

JF: Sympathetic? What does that mean? Don't they remember I'm playing the bad guy? The sleazy Riccardo Santini?

EM: They're confused, Joey. They're getting all this conflicting information and they just need a little more time to sort it all out and come to a firm decision, one way or the other. What we should do is sit tight and be supportive of the process.

JF: I've said that I'm willing to work on a new concept.

EM: Let's not alienate them any further.

JF: Alienate?

EM: The way you've been approaching the part, there's a general perception that it's not connecting with the ensemble feeling that we're trying to...

JF: So it's not the character as written, right? It's not the story line as written, right? It's me.

Scene 3 – Harry watching a “home movie” of Joey clowning around in Griffith Park. No dialogue.

Scene 4 – Joey (live) and Eileen (pre-recorded) on the telephone.

EM: The way I see it, Joey, you're operating on one level, and all the other actors are at the level of the script, which, let's face it, is pretty low. They're probably jealous.

JF: Eileen, that's not it. The actors are fine. We get along great. Jon Waterson says I picked up the style, the whole trip, better and faster than anyone he's seen.

EM: You should hold out for a project you deserve and let this turkey die.

JF: You're glad I got written out of the show?

EM: Let's be straight with one another, shall we? You've changed, or maybe you haven't changed, but their perception of you has changed. And they don't like what they see. Or think they see.

JF: And what is it they think they see that they don't like?

EM: They see a fag pretending to be straight. And not pulling it off. You're not some sensitive, troubled, ambivalent, “Is he or isn't he?” teenager that can get away with it, appealing to 14 year old girls. You're a grown man. There's no mystique about it. Facts are facts. I'm sorry to have to talk to you like this, but can't you see their position? The part of Riccardo Santini just isn't, wasn't meant to be what you're making it.

JF: What am I making it?

EM: Your presence and, well, whole manner is disturbing to the entire balance of the show. There's just no place for it.

JF: For what?

EM: Stop playing games with me, alright? There's no place for a homosexual on “Another Day”! Is that clear enough? Okay. Now. There's lot of other shows. I'm looking for something for an appealing gay character. I'm sure everyone now believes there's no reason why a charming, subtly written gay character couldn't be a continuous and appealing addition to any project. I'm working on it, and as soon as I turn up something, I'll let you know. The main thing is not to threaten people.

JF: Thanks, Eileen, for your support and for being open. Let me know the final decision on “Another Day”. I’ll be patient. I think I hear my other phone ringing. Goodbye.

EM: Bye-bye, Joey. You don’t have another phone. But don’t worry, honey, your secret’s safe with me.

Scene 5 – The communal patio at Joey’s apartment building, where Cheryl is sunning herself.

CS: Hi, Joey. Come talk to me. I have to stay in this chair twenty more minutes.

JF: Your suit is very far out. Is it new?

CS: Yeah. It cost me a fortune. I don’t know if it was worth it. Do you think it was worth it?

JF: Sure. Everything is worth it. Ya want some coffee? I need coffee bad.

CS: You shouldn’t drink that. I feel so much better since I quit.

JF: Yeah? How can you tell?

CS: Don’t you remember how I used to be? I’d get up, drink about five tons of coffee, get all manic and then have nothing to do with all that weird energy. Okay, I mean I’d go to class, or the gym, or maybe some call, and it’d be like, you know, some other person, like it wasn’t really me. One time, I was so nervous and spaced out, so hyped up and totally out of it, they were calling my name, this guy kept saying, “Cheryl Spring, Cheryl Spring” and I didn’t even hear it. I mean, I heard it, but it just didn’t mean anything to me.

JF: Yeah. Ya gotta focus in that situation. It’s all about focus. (Pause)

CS: How do you do it?

JF: Do what?

CS: You know. Do you have some, like, secret thing you do to make it happen?

JF: Make what happen? You mean my secret to success? I just... ya just gotta feed the other person. Make them open up to you. Don’t think about yourself. Think about them. But, you know, I don’t audition so much anymore. I mean, they know me. If they want me, far out. If not, well, that’s life. There’s always next time.

CS: Every time always seems like the last time to me. I’m up for this TV thing now. A soap. “Another Day”. And guess who I read with? I couldn’t believe it. Jon Waterson.

JF: I know Jon. Jon is doing “Another Day”?

CS: You know Jon Waterson?

JF: Sure. We did “The Desert King” together. That was in ’63. It was great. Jon and I were the youngest guys there. We used to hang out together and we even had a little thing goin’ for a while.

CS: You and Jon? I don’t believe it. Really? Oh my God.

JF: Yeah, but then he met this chick, she was Israeli, like the photographer or unit publicist, something, and when we went back to Rome, to finish, she came, too, so... at first I was pissed off, but then, in Rome, I didn't care.

CS: There's no work in Rome anymore, right?

JF: No. We were staying at the Hassler. The whole trip there is so amazing. And Italian guys... well, I was really in my element. And, I almost got fired, cuz George Hartman was the director of the picture; you know him? Well, he's dead now, but he was about 75 years old then. He'd been making all those Bible pictures and he really believed in all that religious shit. He thought he was fuckin' Moses or somethin'. So when he found out I was, you know, 'perverted', he just couldn't handle it. He even call my mother, for Christ's sake. What a scene that was. "The Desert King" was my last picture. I was sick of playing teenagers. You know, I never like being young. I wanted to be a grownup ever since I was six years old. But it was fucked up, see, because to stop being a kid, I had to play the kid. That's where the money was. Fuck money. Money's for assholes. In fact, you get money for being an asshole. And when you stop playing the asshole game, you stop getting the money. My big career. (Pause)

CS: It's a lot better now, though.

JF: What is?

CS: Being gay, working.

JF: Are you kidding? It's just as fucked up as it ever was.

CS: But everyone in the business is gay now. I mean, of course, not everybody, but you know...

JF: Yeah, but you can't be out front about it. You can't let the public find out. Everybody says that was my big mistake. I mean, if you come out in an interview or something, forget it, man, that's the end. You're history.

CS: Hey, maybe Jon Waterson could get you on "Another Day"! They're adding a whole lot of new people. Why don't you call Eileen and get her to set something up? Then maybe we'll both be on the show. Think of it. We could be lovers, or even married, or something.

JF: That's be fun, wouldn't it? (Phone rings) Must be Eileen, right? Don't get too dark now.

Scene 6 – The fundraiser at Harry's house in Palm Springs.

HA: (Clinks Champagne glass) Good evening, everybody. In case you somehow slipped by me at the door, I'm Harry Atwater, and this is where I live. I just want to say that I was pleased and honored to be asked to act as your host tonight for this very special event. Now that we've all come to know each other a little bit, or a little bit better, without further ado, I'd like to present one of my favorite people and the driving force behind this evening, my friend and colleague, Joey Fontina.

JF: Thank you, Harry. Your graciousness and support are deeply appreciated. Well, folks, I guess we better get started. This is an important night for me, one of the most important in my life, and I want right off to thank you for coming. Just by being here, you are making a contribution, a factual

contribution to the struggle to achieve a better world. That's what it's all about, right? The man I'm about to introduce is a just man, an honorable man, working for an honorable cause. But as so often happens in this world, he has frequently been misunderstood. Is this because of the color of his skin? Is it because of the language that he uses? That is for you to decide. All I ask is that you hear him out – forget where you are, forget all the bullshit, excuse me, happenings of this day, and listen with open ears and open hearts. And when you heard his message, I know you will respond as I did, with a willingness to throw away caution, uncertainty and fear, and join the millions of people around this planet who are fighting, with their lives, every day, for a new freedom. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you my dear friend and comrade in struggle, Roy Rivertree.

RR: Power to the People! Power to the People! Power to the People! Now, you're sayin' to yourselves, "We came all the way out here to listen to this shit? We heard it all five years ago!" Enough already, right? It's 1974! We've had enough of it – enough about marches, enough about guns, enough about "the revolution," enough about "the struggle," enough about "the people"! We gave enough of our money, enough of our time, enough of our energy. Can't those niggers understand that times have changed? Well, people, times may have changed, but I'm here to tell you, things ain't getting' any better. I don't care what it says on TV. Look with your own eyes. More of our people out of work. More drugs in our community killing our children. More young men dyin' on what they call "our" streets and in what they call "our" prisons than ever died in the racist war in Vietnam. And that's a fact. The truth is, the struggle for freedom is just beginning. When I was arrested by the Army of Occupation, otherwise known as the police, two months ago, for safeguarding the rights of our people – basically by sayin' "I am. I exist." There was only one way for me to reobtain my so-called freedom. Money. Well, I never had any of that. I had to get me some. Now, how do you get money in this society? You sell something. I had nothin' to sell. Nothin' material, that is. All I had was an idea. And I sold that idea to Joey Fontina. He bought it. He saw its worth. He saw the value of investing in another person. He's why I'm able to be here tonight. I'll tell ya, I take no pleasure by comin' here. This is a long trip for me and Palm Springs ain't exactly my promised land. But I'd go up the asshole of the Devil himself if it led to the path of salvation. No, I ain't talkin' about Heaven, flyin' around in space. I'm talkin; about salvation NOW. Down here. Hey, I know a lot of you've been into various trips, personal explorations, awareness training, growth workshops, emotional analysis, nutrition consciousness, bio-feedback, whatever. That's fine. But I'm here to tell you, don't be a chump! No amount of individual struggle is gonna change this world. Individualism is the Big Lie of America. The biggest "individual" in the United States is the corporate entity, aided by its "individual" allies: the banks; the police; and the so-called system of justice. No one person, acting alone, can triumph over them. Only through collective, unified effort can we ever hope to overthrow this oppressive beast devouring us. And that's why the Community Defense Council was created. The CDC is the only organized group operating today in our city which openly and forthrightly challenges state terror. The guiding principle of the CDC? That's right: "Power to the People." How do we apply that principle to our daily lives? To begin with, we've organized a food program, run with the cooperation of local merchants, which ensures that anyone who needs food gets it. We have a medical program that sends qualified practitioners to the home, providing preventive and emergency care. We help the sick through the maze of doctors, hospitals and government agencies to make sure the people receive the care they deserve. Our police watch puts a brother on the street – that's what I was doin' when I got busted – to follow harassment at every step of the way, from when an arrest is

made on up into the prisons. We are there to protect the rights of the underclass and the rights of all oppressed people. We are there. Unity in Struggle! That's all I have to say.

JF: Thank you, Roy.

(A prerecorded shot of Joey opening a bedroom door. Jon and Cheryl are seen in bed together, naked. They look up and out at Joey and freeze.)

Scene 7 – Peter and Cheryl at the restaurant.

CS: The lentil soup is real good.

P: I think I'll just have a salad. I'm sorry, I don't have too much time. I have to get back to the store.

CS: You workin' again?"

P: Yeah, they let me have my old job back about a month after... I didn't want to do it, but I couldn't find anything else. I'm so desperate for money now.

CS: Joey didn't leave you anything?

P: Are you kidding? He didn't have anything, or, I don't know, his family all came swooping down, they took everything away. They basically told me to get lost. What could I say? They never heard of me. His brother couldn't even imagine that we were really lovers. I guess when someone dies, I don't know, everybody was into this big denial trip. And I was like ruining the picture. I don't believe in burials, you know? Looking into the casket? I thought he should be cremated. I had this fantasy of flying over L.A. in one of those planes that writes messages in the sky – you know, that spells things out? And writing, "Goodbye, Joey" and then letting the ashes float down, all over everybody. Of course his family was horrified. They said it was sacrilegious and "cheap." They took him back East. I don't even know where he's buried. The whole thing was a nightmare. I'm still, I can't, too much death. All this death around me.

CS: I hear you. I know what you're saying. When Joey was killed, I went crazy. I thought, "Some loser, some motherfucking loser killed my friend! They killed my best friend! They killed him!"

P: Cheryl, I don't want to talk about it anymore, okay? He's dead. Joey's gone.

Scene 8 – Jon's house in Mandeville Canyon. Jon and Cheryl as soap opera characters.

CS: Paul, ever since Riccardo's death, and even before, it hasn't been easy for me but the one thing that kept me going is my love for you. Don't you think it's time we told Mother about us? About what we feel for each other?

JW: Heather, I want to tell the world "I love you," you know that. I'd yell it from the rooftops if I could, but you've got to understand. If we told Amanda now, who knows what she'd do? She's still holding the information about what happened to Riccardo. At any moment she could call any

newspaper in town and implicate me in his murder. Do you have any idea what that would mean to our relationship, to my career?

Scene 9 – Joey and Jon at Jon’s house in Mandeville Canyon.

JW: Goddamit, Joey, it’s great to see you. Still Joey after all these years? Not Joe? Joseph?

JF: No. Still Joey. That’s what they call me.

JW: Well, it suits you. You look terrific.

JF: Thanks, Jon. You, too. You look great. Sensational, in fact.

JW: Well, they say men get better with age. You been on vacation?

JF: No.

JW: You’re so tan.

JF: I’m always this color. How come you’re so white?

JW: Just lucky I guess. (Laughs)

JF: I like this house, Jon. It’s fuckin’ enormous. It must have cost a fortune.

JW: It’s only a rental. You need a big house when you’ve got kids.

JF: Two. Alan and Janine. Alan is from my first marriage, you know, Davida.

JF: Davida. Wow. I haven’t seen her in years.

JW: She’s dead.

JF: Oh. I’m sorry. I didn’t know. Really, Jon. Nobody told me.

JW: She died last year. A rare bone disease. Davida was so brave. Right up to the bitter end. It was terrible. Tragic. For us. For Alan, especially. Very difficult. Although he hadn’t seen much of her in recent years, still... She had moved. She went to Italy to live, after we got divorced. That’s where we fell in love, Italy.

JF: Right. In ’63. I was there, too, remember?

JW: How could I forget? Those nights... Oh, Joey, it’s been a long time. Almost seems like that part of my life belongs to somebody else.

JF: It still belongs to us. Not that I spend too much time looking back.

JW: (Pause) Well, what have you been doing lately? Where have you been hiding out?

JF: I haven’t been hiding. And just how lately is lately?

JW: I don’t know. I’m afraid I haven’t kept up with all your various activities.

JF: Oh. Well, okay. Lately I’m, lately I’ve been looking at things. Seeing the way the world works, and then trying to effect some changes, in myself, and in the world, too. The whole enchilada.

JW: Good for you. That sounds like... like positive action.

JF: It is. But it's hard when you haven't got any power and you're basically all by yourself.

JW: You've never... been with anyone?

JF: I been with a lot of people. Still am. But you know how guys are.

JW: No. I never went that route. Except that once, with you.

JF: (Pause) Where is everybody?

JW: Barbaralee took the kids to the zoo. I'm sorry. I wish you could meet them. Barbaralee's a big fan of yours.

JF: You're kidding.

JW: No. She is. Ever since she sat next to you once at dinner.

JF: When was this?

JW: In sixty, uh, sixty-one or two. In Texas. Some big hotel. You were there to promote, it must have been "The Trailhead." Her father was the distributor for the picture and he brought Barbaralee along. And since you two were about the only people there under forty, they put you together. She's told me the story a hundred times. How great you looked. How exciting it was for her. And how she became convinced you would call her up the next morning and propose and then she'd become the wife of a famous movie star. Do you remember that?

JF: No. But it coulda happened, I guess. And, she did end up marrying a movie star, now didn't she?

JW: For better and for worse, yes, she did.

JF: Oh, come on. Did you ever tell her about us?

JW: Tell her what? No, I didn't. Why should I?

JF: No one said you had to. I just thought you might want to. Anyhow, that's all in the past. I didn't come here to swap memories. I came because I want to ask for your help.

JW: Is it money?

JF: It's not for me. I'm fine. It's for someone else.

JW: Who?

JF: A friend of mine, a Black dude. He's in trouble. He's caught in a fucked-up situation and I'm trying to get some bread to get him out.

JW: He's in jail?

JF: Not yet. But he could be any minute. Will you loan be a thousand dollars? You'll have it back in two weeks, I swear to God.

JW: Joey, we were friends once, I still consider you my friend, but, honestly, I can't just – I need some more facts before I could even begin to...

JF: Oh, fuck that, Jon. How many facts do you need? The situation is, I mean, look around. You know what's happening.

JW: Well, what's his name, for starters?

JF: What difference does that make? Okay, his name is Roy.

JW: Is he one of your, what do you call them, lovers?

JF: No, man. He's not my "lover." This is political. This is about a system that divides people, that oppresses people, and as soon as they rebel, it calls them criminals and chases them down. He's innocent, man. He just told some fat pig to fuck off, that's all. That's all it takes.

JW: You don't have to get dramatic, Joey. I believe you. But it's not like before. I have a family now. Maybe if you had children, you'd see.

JF: You won't help me.

JW: I'm here to help, I'm here for you, I am, but not in this way, not with money, not now. I'm sure you think I'm rich, swimming in dollars. Well, I'm not. Remember when we lived in New York and we would walk to work to save on the subway fare? That's how I feel now. Believe it or not, I have to watch every penny. I've been waiting five months to start shooting. And I'm sure as hell not getting paid for all this wasted time.

JF: What is it?

JW: What? The picture?

JF: Yeah. The picture.

JW: It's, well, I can't really talk about it, you know how these things go, but it's for Harry Atwater to direct. Isn't that great? Daniel Born, the producer, he's new, he's young. Anyway, the idea to get Harry out of retirement and back making pictures, it's just a dream of his. And mine, too. Harry's a genius. Well, I don't have to tell you. You worked with him, too, back then.

JF: The best work I ever did was with Harry. For some reason, I thought I heard he checked out.

JW: Harry? No, no. He lives in Palm Springs. (Pause) Or rather Rancho Mirage. I'm not sure which. He has two places there; the old one in the Springs and a new one out there in the... whatever. Anyway, he lives in one and rents out the other, or vice versa. I don't really know the details of his current situation. He's kind of secretive, reclusive I guess. I haven't been able to talk to him yet. But I've set up a meeting for next month.

JF: I was just curious. I'll be in touch. Ciao, bambino.

JW: Wait a minute, Joey. I didn't mean to (Joey rushes away)

Scene 10 – In the mountains above Palm Springs.

P: (Entering) There's something wrong with the Tramway. They have to fix it before we can do down.

CS: Oh no. How long is that going to take?

P: The guy there didn't know.

CS: I have to get home. I have a million things I have to do.

P: What can I do? It's not my fault. We just have to wait.

JF: I don't care if I never go home.

P: Are you stoned?

JF: What makes you think that?

CS: Because you're sitting in horseshit!

P: Ooh, you are!

JF: No, I'm not. Where? I don't smell anything.

CS: There! There! Don't you see it?

JF: That's a rock, or, I don't know, some weird kind of dirt.

P: Don't touch it!

JF: Why not?

CS: It might have some kind of disease in it.

JF: Cheryl, diseases don't live in shit. Shit is clean. Shit is what makes everything grow. Without shit, nothing could live.

CS: Shit is poison. Shit is what the body can't use. The body is constantly cleaning and purifying itself. If shit were good for you, you would just keep it your body and never let it out. Everybody knows that.

JF: Live and learn. Or live and don't learn.

P: Joey, stand up. Let me see if it got on your pants. Turn around.

JF: The nurse seems to be in a bad mood today.

P: Well, it seems okay.

JF: Uh, nurse? I think the front of my pants needs some attention.

P: Mmmm, yes. Now I see the problem. The zipper seems to have become stretched out of shape. Maybe I ought to check the underlying condition.

- CS: Excuse me. Uh, hello. Before you two go any further, I think you ought to know there are other campers around, and forest rangers, too.
- JF: Other campers and forest rangers, too?!? Yippee! Honey, you think of everything, even slumber party guests. Peter, why didn't you think of that? Cheryl, did you bring your baby oil?
- CS: Oh stop. I just meant, I don't know, we could get arrested!
- JF: "Ex-Soap Star Busted in Desert Sex Orgy!" "Ex-Teen Idol Caught with Pants Down." A trial, man! We could make history. A big us versus them trip. Make a lot of speeches, get a Defense Committee.
- P: You already did that. With Roy.
- CS: What ever happened to him?
- JF: He never answered my letters. I know he got transferred out of the L.A. jail. Maybe they sent him to Chino.
- CS: I liked Roy.
- P: I didn't. He used people.
- JF: So what? There's nothing wrong with that. Just cuz a person is fucked up doesn't mean the cause is wrong. It was just the wrong image at the wrong time.
- P: Yeah. Look what happened at the fundraiser in Palm Springs. Joey's still trying to pay off debts from that little trip.
- CS: There were other problems then that had nothing to do with Roy. Or the fundraiser. Or you for that matter. I don't think you know what really...
- JF: I think I'll go for a walk.
- P: Are you mad at me?
- JF: No, I'm not mad at you. I just wanna look around.
- CS: But it's getting dark now.
- JF: That's okay. I can see in the dark. (Exits)

Scene 11 – The morning after at the Cathedral City motel room.

- JF: How was the pool?
- RR: Small. Fuckin' motel kiddie action.
- JF: You couldn't swim?
- RR: I did my thing.
- JF: You sure did.

RR: And you liked it.

JF: How would you know?

RR: You liked it, man. You fuckin' liked it.

JF: I liked it once.

RR: Come off it. Don't give me that shit. Don't tell me you ain't never been fucked before.

JF: I've been fucked. I don't like being fucked with.

RR: Who's fuckin' with who, man? You been jivin' me all this time. You wanted the fantasy, that's all. Black dick. But that's not what I'm about. And you can't deal with that. The reality of what I'm layin' out.

JF: I'm not "pussy."

RR: Hey, I just said that. Cool out. That's just somethin' to say. It don't mean anything. You know.

JF: I don't know.

RR: That's right. You don't know. You don't know what's happening, and I'm tellin' you now how it is. If you want to support the struggle, you gotta join the struggle. Right? If you wanna help me, you gotta support me.

JF: I'm trying to. I'm doin' all I can. Get liberated, man! Think of the future. Not the past. Look at you. What are you cryin' about? That your fuckin' ass is sore? (Joey throws a radio through the window, or something equally dramatic. Pause.) You happy now?

JF: Yeah, that made me a little happier. Here's to the future.

Scene 12 – Eileen and Joey on the phone. Eileen's office/Joey's apartment

EM: I've been trying to reach you.

JF: Eileen, what happened? I've been trying to get you! Did you go outta town?

EM: No. I was strapped down in a hospital for six days.

JF: You were in the hospital? Are you okay?

EM: I'm fine. It was... just a flare-up of an old physical condition. I'm fine now, good as new. Considering my age.

JF: But what's the matter?

EM: It's nothing, dear, really. Something I'm working through. A chemical imbalance in my system, they say. Probably dating from birth. I've been on and off medication for years. They keep trying different series of drugs, you know, different combinations, strengths...

JF: It's not cancer, is it?

EM: Don't say that. Do you want to send me back into the hospital? Of course it's not cancer. You don't get cancer from birth. Cancer is environmental. In the sense that you acquire it from the outside, or at least something from the outside triggers the susceptibility or latent... whatever inside you. Oh, listen to me. I don't know. They don't know. Nobody knows. Don't frighten me like that.

JF: I didn't mean to frighten you, but I'm concerned.

EM: Thank you, but I really think it's all too, too dreary to spend time speculating about. Now, let's get back to what's really important: daytime television. I have something to tell you...

JF: Is it about "Another Day"?

EM: You got it! You will be Riccardo Santini! Don't you love it? I just found out today. They all adore you. We haven't signed yet but you'll be working for at least two months and depending on how you play with Cheryl, there's quite a lot of interest in beefing up your character and making you a real regular. You're going to start July First. That's next week!

JF: I can't stand it! Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Eileen, you're the one person in this town who has always stuck by me, who has never let me down. I love you for that. I'll never forget, never.

EM: And I'll never forget that moment when I signed you. I couldn't believe Joey Fontina was coming to me. I was just starting out. Let's not mention the year, shall we? Sometime before I was born, in any case. Everything after that came from you. Now, my darling Fontinella, I'm afraid this meeting of the Mutual Appreciation Society must adjourn. But can we meet later? Say, six-ish? I have an appointment with my nutritionist at five, but after, we can stuff our faces and celebrate, okay? My treat. I have some devastating gossip to tell you. You wouldn't believe the dirt I picked up in the hospital.

JF: How were the nurses?

EM: That's another story. Don't let this get around, but between you and me, it's all true. Uh-oh. My secretary, otherwise known as Ida Rolf, has got all the lights flashing, and if I don't start answering, she'll begin session number seven, THE PELVIS. That's where it all comes out. So, I can pick you up at six?

JF: Let's celebrate!

EM: Now you're talkin', Bye-bye, darling. I can't wait to see you.

Scene 13 – Joey and Harry by Harry's pool in Palm Springs.

HA: Ah, there you are, my dear. You look enchanting in this desert light.

JF: Who wouldn't? Everything's perfect here. I can see why you don't ever want to leave. Do you ever do into town?

HA: Not if I can help it. One becomes accustomed to a certain ambience.

JF: How'd the meeting go? Did Jon leave?

HA: Yes. I'm not going to do the picture.

JF: Why not?

HA: I don't have the strength. Besides, the script is insufferable.

JF: What's it about?

HA: Oh, it's a love story about a man and a woman and their enduring relationship over forty years. It's described as a romantic comedy. Who comes up with these ideas, I really don't know.

JF: But don't you want to work again?

HA: Not necessarily. It depends what it is. And Jon Waterson, I don't know, my dear. His face. All the intrigue and mystery has gone out of it. He's like Stein on Oakland: "There's no there, there." At least for me. Now, on the other hand, if they were offering you...

JF: But they're not.

HA: Which only adds to their discredit. Such a loss. You had a great talent, my dear. I saw that immediately. I saw it in your face. Beneath your face. But the match between you and the right material never... materialized. So you were forced to create projects for yourself? To express yourself?

JF: Some. A little bit. I'm thinking about doing more, though.

HA: And this political work. How does that fit in?

JF: It's the same, Harry. Can you see that? I'm reaching down into the same muck within myself, that creative pool you talk about, how when you know the moment's right and the action's right, the feeling of strength, of liberation you get? I'm not denying the acting thing, I'm not. I'm just trying to reach out to the world a little more.

HA: But you're afraid. They've made you afraid. And you've built up your shell. Where is the love in you?

JF: It's there. Somewhere.

HA: You have a gift. Never forget it. That is your strength. Don't go back tonight. I want you to stay with me here. I want you to live here. (Pause) No? Well then, shall we go back inside?

JF: Are you disappointed in me? Because I've changed?

HA: No, my dear. I was looking at you, but I was thinking about myself.

Scene 14 – A soap opera shoot. A young woman (played by Cheryl) confronts a lawyer (Jon).

JW: Heather, your mother is my oldest friend. There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do for her. But when she asked me to look into this... case, I hesitated.

- CS: Mr. Manley, I've got to know the truth. If you've learned something, anything about what happened to my husband Dirk, I want to hear it.
- JW: Heather, Dirk Westergaard is not your husband.
- CS: What? Are you crazy? What are you saying?
- JW: There is no Dirk Westergaard. The man you married one month ago is named Riccardo Santini.
- CS: Riccardo Santini! What kind of a name is that?
- JW: Italian, dear, Italian. Unfortunately, Mr. Santini already has a wife and family back in Sicily. And, it turns out he entered the country illegally, attempting to escape criminal prosecution in his native land. The man is a bigamist and a fugitive from justice.
- CS: I don't believe it. You're lying; lying to protect my mother because... because I saw her. I was there at the big house the day Dirk disappeared. I saw her and Dirk, together, the day my baby was buried.
- JW: Heather, calm yourself. You don't know what you're saying. That tragic day Dr. Gramm had you under heavy sedation. You were torn apart by grief. It wasn't Dirk, I mean Riccardo, you saw. It was me.
- CS: You? It was you?
- JW: Yes. I was with Amanda the whole afternoon. Nothing improper took place, believe me. You didn't see anything. What you think you saw is a fantasy, a product of your troubled mind, caused by your... your illness. But now, you're better. Your whole life is ahead of you. And if that new life is to be as fulfilling, as joyful as Amanda and I hope it will be, you've got to wipe the slate clean.
- CS: Where is my husband? Where is Dirk?
- JW: I told you. There is no Dirk. Riccardo Santini is believed to be in hiding, we think in Columbia.
- CS: You mean – I'll never see him again?
- JW: No, darling. I pray to God you never will. Believe me, it's better this way.
- CS: No! I can't believe what you're telling me. I won't! (Joey, as Riccardo Santini, enters. He is wearing camouflage garb. Jon and Cheryl look at him and freeze in amazement.)

ACT TWO

Scene 15 – Jon, Joey and Harry at Harry's house in Palm Springs.

JW: Are these your paintings, Harry?

HA: Do you mean, did I paint them, or do I own them?

JW: Well, you do paint, don't you?

HA: Not for the public. I would never show, that is, display my own modest endeavors. It would be so embarrassing to everyone involved, not to mention vulgar in the extreme. I can't bear looking at second-rate work, especially my own. No, those I picked up years ago. When I first came here, in fact. Right after the war. They're by... that woman, what the hell's her name? You know, the one who was married to Bobby Wright and then became a Communist and went to live with the Indians? We used to call him "mothersucker" and her "The Animal." I can't remember... you can't expect... they're all dead by now, I'm sure. But I'm not and I've still got the pictures.

JW: They're lovely.

HA: Do you think so? What exactly do you like about them?

JW: They're so... full of life.

HA: Considering they're motionless and abstract.

JW: But you can see the artist's intent.

HA: Can you? I don't see any intent, except to parade her monomania and glorify her attempted flight from reality. Is that what you mean?

JW: Of course not. I wouldn't presume to see anything of the sort. I just find them lovely as objects. But don't you think the frames somewhat contradict the feeling she was trying to convey? Perhaps if you experimented with new ones...

HA: What difference does the frame make? I don't look at the frame. It's only there to delineate the composition and to prevent the canvas from "decomposing," so to speak. It's for protection, period. Because it's flat. I tried something in "The Madonna" in '37. Accentuating the frame, insisting upon it. It was an interesting idea, I suppose, typical of a young director. But it was a dead end. From then on, I always attempted to enlarge the depth of the action. Forget about the frame.

JW: If you're not going to acknowledge the frames, why have them at all, it seems to me, but maybe I don't know enough about you to say...

HA: So many things to learn about, aren't there? When I began making pictures – I'm talking about moving pictures now – I knew all about art, but I didn't know a damn thing about people, or America, or men, or anything, really. So I very methodically set out to experience life. To improve my art, of course. That took about twenty years. And each picture reflected and, in some way, marked my progress towards the ideal. But now, this is what I find so fascinating, now I've

returned to what I was first taught. I appreciate what I first appreciated, that is to say, a kind of broad un-knowledge. I am the ideal. Going back to first impulses. I think one always does return to those feelings, don't you? That power. It's somehow sexually-linked, I'm sure. Do you find that? I can see I'm talking to the wrong generation. I suppose you'd rather do something than contemplate what you've already done, or not done. Forgive me. Joey, you look like you need another drink.

JF: Thanks, Harry.

HA: Jon?

JW: No thanks. One's my limit.

HA: Really? Am I talking to the same Jon I used to know. Joey, does Jon seem changed to you? It's hard to know how much people really change inside, just by looking. Or is it? I've completely forgotten about food, haven't I? You boys must be ravenous. Why don't I have my...

JW: No, please don't bother. Really. I'm going out to dinner later.

HA: Here in town? I can't imagine where.

JW: An Italian restaurant. It's supposed to be very good, for the desert.

HA: The very idea of an Italian restaurant in the desert strikes me as somehow obscene. No offense intended, Joey. Indeed, how is your charming mother?

JF: Oh, all right. She went back home about ten years ago.

HA: Home? Do you visit?

JF: Sometimes. Not too often. Do you ever go back home?

HA: Are you referring to dear old England? Never, my dear. When I left that dark little world, I left for good.

JW: Harry, excuse me, I know you're busy with the... the party, but I wonder if we could squeeze in a few minutes to talk about our project.

HA: Certainly my boy. This nostalgia is very tiring, isn't it? Lost beauty is such an elusive goal. Are you here to report something new? Some new development?

JW: Not exactly, Harry. But Daniel and I have some ideas, about financing and the script and so forth that I'd like to outline for you, if I may.

HA: Of course you may. I've always found financing a very provocative and stimulating topic. Let's transfer to the office, shall we? Joey, you don't mind finishing your drink alone, do you? While you're at it, help yourself to more. Perhaps you'd like to sit by the pool, or even take a swim. Don't bother about a suit. I don't. I find there's nothing like the water in the late afternoon. We'll join you later.

JW: Well, I won't be able to, I'm afraid. I'm running a little late.

HA: Oh. Well then, it will just be me, Joey, if that's alright. But I must warn you, you might have to close your eyes when I arrive. My body is... well, the passage of time yields unexpected surprises.

JF: Okay, I'll be outside. Business first.

HA: For you, Joey, pleasure first tonight, and then comes business. And then, perhaps, more pleasure?
(HA and JW exit)

HA: Oh. Well then, it will just be me, Joey, if that's alright. But I must warn you, you might have to close your eyes when I arrive. My body is... well, the passage of time yields unexpected surprises.

JF: Okay, I'll be outside. Business first.

HA: For you, Joey, pleasure first tonight, and then comes business. And then, perhaps, more pleasure?
(HA and JW exit)

Scene 16 – Joey and Peter at Joey's apartment in West Hollywood.

P: (Waiting)

JF: (Entering) Listen to this: (Reads letter) "Dear Mr. Fontina: The producers of "Another Day" wish to inform you that until further notice, September 15, 1974 will be your final day of taping. Because of delays in the artistic furtherance of the continuing story line, we wish you to know that you will be officially considered "On Hold" until the end of your contract, October 26, 1974, and will be paid half your working salary during these weeks. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding in helping us through this difficult period of transition. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me through your authorized agent, Eileen Mandel. Sincerely, Robert Green, Producer." It's not even the original signature! The whole thing's a fuckin' copy! I can't believe these people. Of course I knew something was up, I'm not that stupid, but what gets me is nobody has the balls, the fuckin' grace to tell me in person. I'm gonna grab that fat son-of-a-bitch Green and throw him out his goddam brown-tinted fuckin' sealed windows.

P: I know it sounds bad, but maybe it's just some kind of formal notice they have to send out, and in a couple days you'll be back working again.

JF: I'm not going back there, man. I know what happened. That ugly old bitch Shirley Fuckface had it in for me from the start. Whenever I gave any suggestions about how to play the scenes, whenever I tried to inject something that had some fucking life in it, they shot it down. I'm sitting there talking to these jerks who never acted a minute in their lives, I know what I'm doing, I've been doing it all my fucking life, and they're like "Oh, we don't know if the character would really do that" and "You've got to look at the total picture." I mean, the limits, the fucking limits of their cocksucking little minds.

P: Maybe if you talk to them, whoever's in charge...

JF: I can't keep talking, explaining, justifying myself to them. It's war, man. They are determined to keep me out! What am I gonna do? I already spent all the money. Half-pay my ass. And then what? It's like give more, pay more, and smile when you do it, because somehow you're supposed

to be so fucking privileged to be able to wipe their big fat asses and call it “acting.” Well, let ‘em rot. Let ‘em find some other fool. And where’s my so-called friends, I’d like to know. I haven’t heard a fucking word from Jon or Cheryl.

P: Maybe they don’t know.

JF: They know! They know. They’re probably hiding out, too afraid to say anything cuz it might jeopardize their own fucking position. And they’re right. It would. I mean, when you come right down to it, it’s like all straight people gotta hang together, gotta hang tough. Always and forever. What assholes.

P: Jon and Cheryl are your friends. They care about you.

JF: Not enough. Not enough.

P: I care enough.

JF: Yeah, but you’re not, you don’t have, you’re just not part of that world.

P: I know, and I don’t want to be part of it if this is how it makes you feel. I’d rather stay where I am and stick with my own kind.

JF: Yeah, stick with me, baby, and watch the lights go out. Fuck!

Scene 17 – Peter and Cheryl in the mountains above Palm Springs.

P: I hope he’ll be alright.

CS: Don’t worry, he will.

P: I always worry. Because... Has he said anything to you about me?

CS: No. He doesn’t talk to me about you.

P: I’m afraid he’s going to leave me.

CS: He loves you. There’s nothing to be afraid of.

P: Except other people. This’ll probably sound really dumb to you but when he’s gone, I still have this image in my head of him, it’s like this beautiful little picture I can always look at. Do you know what it is?

CS: No, I’m sure I don’t. What is it?

P: It’s of the first time I saw him. I was at Triangle, the clothing store, working the register; I guess it was about three o’clock. I was just standing there, flipping through some magazine, and then, the door opened, and there he stood. He was wearing a black tank top, really new, and white shorts, not running shorts, but the kind, you know, heavy cotton, and real plain, but split up the sides, real sexy, kind of International Male-esque, but not too much, and thongs. I just was like staring at him, my mouth probably hanging wide open, and he was looking at me, too, and then he smiled. You know how sometimes you know that it’s for real, like something is really happening, and you

don't want to blow it or anything by doing something weird, so you just kinda do nothing? I mean it was so intense, and then he walked right up to me and said, in this really cool way: "Can you help me?" and like, I was so freaked out, I didn't know what to do or anything so I said – can you believe this? "I hope so" and then he did that smile again and I thought, "Oh God, I don't think I can take much more of this." It's funny, cuz later, after we'd been seeing each other for a while, I mean, you know how it takes a while to find out things about people, we'd go out, and sometimes he'd run into somebody really important, from before or something, and he'd do that smile, and I'd feel a little weird about it, cuz I thought, right, I'm just like everybody else, I could be anybody, it doesn't mean anything, but it does, because he'll see me watching him do that thing, and he'll be kinda embarrassed that I know, but see, to me, it only brings us closer, like we have some sorta pact or something. Like we're in some foreign country and in disguise and we've got some secret mission, and at every step he'll kinda look back at me to see if I'm still there, and I am still there, but now... Am I talking too much? You can tell me, don't worry. I'm used to it. Have you ever been in love before?

CS: I'm in love now.

P: With Jon Waterson?

CS: That's right.

P: Isn't he married?

CS: Yes he is.

P: What are you doing?

CS: I'm going to sleep. I want to get up early and go back to L.A. Is that okay? Do you mind waking up early?

P: No, I like getting a good start. It's Joey who likes to sleep late.

CS: Yes, I know. Well, alright then. Nighty-night. I can't believe people actually enjoy sleeping on cold dirt.

P: I'm sure you get used to it.

CS: Life isn't long enough. Goodnight.

P: Goodnight. (She exits)

Scene 18 – Peter (live) and Joey (prerecorded) on the phone.

P: Hello?

JF: Peter?

P: Hello? Joey?

JF: Yeah. It's me.

P: Can you hear me?

JF: Yeah. Can you hear me?

P: Kinda. Yeah. Okay. I can hear you now. There's something wrong the connection.

JF: The phone's been fucked up lately.

P: Did you ever get it fixed? You know, after you tried to break it?

JF: Well, it seemed to work okay and I didn't really want to shell out another fifty bucks or whatever, so...

P: I don't understand how anyone could live with a telephone that's fucked up. Especially here. Anyway, is that why you haven't called me?

JF: Honey, I called you yesterday.

P: You did? When?

JF: I don't know. I talked to what's his name, he said he'd give you the message.

P: Who?

JF: One of your roommates. Not Frankie. That other one.

P: Rich? Ugh. His days are numbered. I can't believe he didn't give me the message. Do you know what he did last night? About three o'clock in the morning, a couple of his trashy friends came over, they all started smoking dope and eating my ice cream, and then they played Barry White's "Love" album over and over again. I thought I was going to go insane. I wanted to kill him so bad. I wish I could move out of here. Oh God. Well, anyhow, you called.

JF: Yeah. I miss you.

P: Do you really?

JF: I'm nuts about you.

P: What are you doing?

JF: This minute? Talkin' to you. Thinkin' 'bout you.

P: Pleasant thoughts?

JF: Very pleasant.

P: I could come over.

JF: Or I could come over there. Either way.

P: Why don't you come over here. That way. I can get everything ready. We could have some lunch. I could go to the store, get something. Would you like that?

JF: Yeah, baby, I would.

P: Do you think, I don't know, in about an hour? Is your car working?

JF: I rented a new one. A white Karmann Ghia. Red gave me a really good deal.

P: Red.

JF: Listen, Red is okay. He always come through when I need him. He rents me anything I want. Forks, spoons, lampshades, whatever. It's like, you know, ten cents a week for the placemat, a dollar a month for the ashtray... It's crazy but it's better for me this way.

P: I know. But he's just so... sixties.

JF: What's wrong with the sixties? The sixties were great. You're just jealous cuz you missed out on them and now you have to hear everybody talk about them and how great it was to be alive then.

P: I think it's weird when people do that.

JF: No. But I am. I'm weird enough for both of us.

P: You said it, not me. Are you gonna come over now?

JF: Yeah.

P: You won't be late?

JF: Don't worry. I'll be there.

P: Later, my angel.

JF: Later, honey.

Scene 19 – A soap opera shoot, with Jon and Cheryl

JW: Are you all right?

CS: Yeah. Okay. I'm ready.

Offstage voice: And action!

CS: Paul, ever since Riccardo's death and even before, it hasn't been easy for me but the one thing that kept me going is my love for you. Don't you think it's time we told Mother about us? About what we feel for each other?

JW: Heather, I want to tell the world "I love you," you know that. I'd yell it from the rooftops, if I could, but you've got to understand. If we told Amanda now, who knows what she'd do? She's still holding the information about what happened to Riccardo. At any moment she could call any newspaper in town and implicate me in his murder. Do you have any idea what that would mean to our relationship, to my career? Everything we hoped for, and planned for, and worked for would be – Stop! Stop the cameras! I can't do this. I can't stand on this set, the set where Joey stood and worked so many times, and say these lines. I can't spit on his memory like this. He's dead. Don't you people read? He's really dead. Don't you have any consideration for Cheryl, for

me, for the people who are going to see this show? What are they going to think? That it's just some sort of coincidence? Are they supposed to think it's funny? Well, answer me, goddamit! How can you ask me to do this? What do you think I am? I can't... If this is the best you can do, if this is the best memorial to Joey you can come up with, well, include me out. I mean it. Cheryl, let's get out of here. Cheryl? Come with me!

CS: I'm coming.

Scene 20 – Joey (live) and Eileen (prerecorded) on the phone.

JW: (Answering) I'm busy.

EM: Joey. Eileen.

JF: Man, they're here! They're takin' away all my stuff! Will you call him?

EM: Who?

JF: Red! Red sent his people here. They're takin' it all back! Eileen, I need some bread. Can you front me 500 bucks? You'll have it back in two weeks, I promise.

EM: Joey, I can't.

JF: Hey, this is for real.

EM: You've been let go.

JF: What do you mean "let go"? Eileen...

EM: Joey, it's not my fault. They made me do it. I didn't want it to happen. I tried, believe me, I tried.

JF: I don't understand. What happened?

EM: They said we had to cut back on our clients and only keep the ones who were, you know, working all the time or looked like they were going somewhere and that we had to cut everybody else. But you, it was just so incredible that after all this time...

JF: Wait a minute, Eileen. It's your agency. Nobody can tell you what to do.

EM: No, it's not like that anymore. There's all these other people now. My name's on the door, but that's it. Joey, I need your help. Can I come over?

JF: Eileen, this is Joey. Remember Joey? The guy you just dumped?

EM: I know. I've got to talk to you, explain everything. I miss you. I want to see you. Everybody here thinks I'm crazy.

JF: This isn't exactly a good time for me to talk, Eileen. Do you understand what's happening here?

EM: Please, Joey. Don't hate me. Please don't hate me.

JF: I don't hate you. It's just I got to deal with my house now.

EM: Are we still friends?

JF: Sure.

EM: I don't believe you. You're just saying that to get me to shut up.

JF: Eileen, this is too weird. You drop me like a piece of shit and I have to like you for it?

EM: You hate me. I knew you hated me. I knew it. Why are you doing this to me? I'm going to quit. Why are you being so mean to me? I can quit. I can do that? I can go live on that lake in Kashmir and have as many beautiful babies as I want. I can do anything I want. I can. There's nothing stopping me. And you could come, too.

JF: No.

EM: No what? Can't we just talk like civilized people?

Scene 21 – Peter and Cheryl at the restaurant.

CS: Oh no! I can't believe my eyes! That woman. Do you see her?

P: Which one?

CS: That one! Her! Isn't that... you know. Oh. What's her name. Isn't she... No, I'm sure it's her. One time my parents took me on this trip up to Big Sur and we went to that restaurant on the ocean, I mean overlooking the ocean, on the cliff, what's it, you know, "Nepenthe" and she was there. Oh no! She's leaving! Anyway, I went up to her, I was about ten – now I remember who she is! She did those coffee commercials, the grandmother routine, just as sweet as sugar soup, but of course in reality, I mean when I went up to her she was a total 24-carat iceberg, sort of like Elsa's mother in "She-Wolf of the SS." Anyway, I stood there paralyzed in front of her thinking: "This is it. I'm going to die. If she doesn't stop staring at me, I'm going to turn into a rock." I mean, she was definitely a major cause of my teenage trauma. I don't mind telling you, I have spent untold hours and huge sums of money trying to block that Nazi's face off my memory banks. And what do you know, she's still alive! I guess. Maybe it's not really her, but her double, sort of like Lassie. You know, she's number eleven, but everyone thinks she's the same person? I just love the industry, don't you?

P: But what's her name?

CS: I don't know, and nobody probably remembers her but me, and no, she never did anything to anybody, I don't think; she's just this image. I just have this image of her, and me, and the ocean and my parents and Nepenthe, that's all.

Scene 22 – Joey and Harry in Harry's bedroom in Palm Springs.

HA: Are all the guests gone? I must say I really am too old for this sort of thing. Before... before the war I was very engaged. I helped raise money, lent my name to various causes, to THE cause, there's only one, really, the total transformation of the world.

JF: That's what I want, too, Harry. What we all want. We got to keep pushing for that. I'm too tired to push anymore. And tonight, well, it didn't see to...

JF: You have to believe what you're doing is right. That's all.

HA: I believe in what I see. In what surrounds me. I see the paint cracking on the walls, changing colors. I see the sky changing color, the trees becoming purple, then black. I see you changing color, too, right before my eyes. Or perhaps it's my eyes that are changing. Some would say "failing." I'm not afraid of that. Let them fail. Let all the light stop coming in. It might be a relief. You know they say even the blind experience light, know color and shape, of a different order, perhaps, but how thrilling to pass from one kind of light into another. From the outer to the inner, so to speak. You can go on using my name if you wish. If it will help you and your friends. Harry Atwater. Did you know that's not my real name? Sometimes I'd like to start all over. Like a tree. Or a cloud. One doesn't see many clouds out here. I used to watch them. Lying on the ground. Looking straight up. Perhaps I should change my name again. One to die in. Perhaps we should choose a different name for each stage of our lives, something to identify and describe each one. I must think on that. A name for this period.

JF: Goodnight, my dear.

HA: Can you stay a few more minutes? I don't want to be alone. Not just yet.

JF: Sometimes I feel like I've already died and I wonder, how long will it take them to find out I'm dead? I often am dead in my dreams. Those are the only ones I ever remember. The rest just slip away. (Pause – looks at Harry) Goodnight, sweet prince.

Scene 23 – Harry on a TV show.

HA: Is this on? (Pause) A director has many ways to express his or her personality: through the use of lighting, sets, editing, story, script, and casting. But the actor is alone. He has lines and actions but these are propelled solely by his own personality and unique experience. Behind the mask of the role lies the human face of the actor, and how the person interplays with the mask is what we directors look for in an actor. It is only in a mysterious coalescence of the actor and the role that we find true expression on film. The limits of the role must be balanced by the limitless depths of the actor's response to life. It is that life which informs the image and creates its eternal power to move and excite us. This sublime moment of interaction is very rare, rarer than you might think. The smart director seizes and attempts to capture it whole, for, alas, it is a fleeting moment and often invisible to the world at large and unknown even to the actor himself.

Scene 24 – Joey and Roy at the County Jail. Joey is seated behind a glass partition. Roy enters in prison garb and sits opposite Joey.

JF: Hi. How does this work? Can you hear me?

RR: Yeah. You don't have to do nothin'. They turn it on, and when your time's up, they turn it off.

JF: Okay. How are you?

RR: I'm still alive.

JF: When do you leave?

RR: I don't know. There's some bullshit about finding me a space. They say they ain't got no space for me now, so I gotta stay here. I guess some more people have to die first, then they'll send me up.

JF: Did you get my letters?

RR: Man, don't go sendin' me any more letters like that. I don't want to hear that shit. The pigs read everything, don't you know that?

JF: I can't write that I love you?

RR: No. And don't say it here neither. I'm not ready to die. Not on account of you.

JF: All right. I don't want to cause you any trouble. But, will you tell me where you're going?

RR: No. I don't want you followin' me around. We did our thing; now it's over. Now we're back to where we started. And I got some new friends.

JF: That's good. I'm sure that that's the best thing to have while you're waiting for...

RR: Listen to me now. In here there ain't nothin' lower than a fag. That's the fact. In here, man, you're a fag, you're just like a nigger on the street. There's always gotta be a nigger. I ain't never been nobody's nigger, an' I ain't gonna start now.

JF: What does that have to do with us? It doesn't do any good, if you're oppressed, to start oppressing other people.

RR: It's different in prison, man. In here, you stay tight with your own people first – that's your power. You gotta be a man.

JF: You're already a man. Just because we slept...

RR: Hey, cool it, would ya? See that dude over there? The big one? He already tried to fuck with me.

JF: What happened?

RR: Typical stir bullshit. Comin' out of the showers he says: "You eye-fuckin' me? You eye-fuckin' me?" So I said real loud, so everybody else can hear: "When I'm gonna fuck some jiveass, I don't use my eyes."

JF: You better be careful. Is there anybody you can call for help?

RR: Not yet. But I'm gettin' it together. Anything else you want to know? Before you have to leave? You don't seem to like it here too much.

JF: Why should I? Do you like it here?

RR: It's the same as outside. Just painted a different color. Hey, you're borin' me. This is a drag. I could be watchin' "I Dream of Jeannie" right now on TV. You got anything else to say?

JF: I guess only what you don't want me to say.

RR: Is all the money gone?

JF: Yeah. I brought you ten dollars for cigarettes or whatever.

RR: Don't give me charity.

JF: I didn't mean it as charity. It's just... a gift.

RR: Thanks.

JF: How's the food?

RR: Shit. (Pause) Joey, it's not what I want, but what is. I'll catch you later, man. Keep the faith.

JF: But we've got more time. They haven't turned it off yet.

RR: Adios, amigo. I got work to do.

JF: I'll write you.

RR: You can do whatever you like.

JF: You think so?

RR: Goodbye, Joey.

JF: Goodbye, Roy.

Scene 25 – Joey and Peter in the mountains above Palm Springs. Night. Peter is asleep. Joey enters.

JF: Peter, wake up. It's me. Are you awake?

P: Uh-huh. I fell asleep for a while. What time is it now?

JF: I don't know. Late, I guess. Pretty late.

P: Where are you taking me?

JF: (They move across stage) Look. Look at all the lights. Each light is like a hundred people and what are they doing? They're sleeping, or fucking, or watching TV. I mean, think of all the TV's in the desert, all the colors from them and even the little night lights on the walls, only you can't see them, of course, cuz they're inside.

P: Joey, are you okay?

JF: I was looking down there and I realized I can't see into their lives, I'll never be able to, I can never know why anything happens, I mean really why.

P: Why do you have to know about their lives?

JF: Because each light seems to represent someone's fear, a boundary between itself and everything else. All the lights, the picture that they make, it's like a big picture of fear.

P: Fear of what? What are you afraid of?

JF: I used to be afraid of drifting away into some... dot. Like those maps of the desert we were trying to read. All those dots, some with circles around them, some all pressed together so you can't tell one from the other? It's that feeling of merging with everything else.

P: Joey, you're not a dot on a map.

JF: But that's just it. I am. All the lines and connections and angles and structures, they're all contained in each little dot, just magnified, and I can disappear into them. That's what happened before I woke you up. I disappeared. I took it all in at once. I became aware of everything happening simultaneously, of every moment as full of energy, as full of movement as this moment right now, looking at you, seeing only you. It's all here. Do you understand?

P: I think so. But don't tell me any more. Let's just sit in silence, okay? And then... maybe we'll disappear together.

THE END