THE SCREEN IS BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

THE CAMERA LOOKS DOWN ON three levels of escalators
transporting a smattering of Southwestern shoppers --
some
in cowboy hats.

AS CREDITS ROLL

A SERIES OF ANGLES of shoppers being conveyed up and

CUT TO:

EXT. ARIZONA DESERT - SUNSET

A beautiful vista -- cacti and sage dot the landscape
as it rises to mountains in the distance.

END CREDITS

THE CAMERA PANS revealing an island of modern culture --
malls and more malls, parking lots, and fast food
franchises.

FADE IN TITLE: ENFIELD, ARIZONA

A brown Pinto pulls out of a parking lot and into rush
traffic.
INT. PINTO - DUSK

BETH WALKER is driving. She looks younger, but she's twenty-eight. She has a strong face and flashing intelligent eyes. She's wearing a WAITRESS UNIFORM from Friendly's. She's deep in thought.

Beth pulls up to stoplight and stops.

SOUND: A gentle toot of car horn.

Beth looks up, startled.

BETH'S POV

SID, a pleasant looking twenty-four year old, is in a pick-up truck next to her. He smiles and points up toward traffic light.

BETH

She looks up toward the traffic light.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

They're red except for one with a lit green arrow.

BETH AND SID

She pantomimes that she's in the wrong lane and wants to go straight.

Sid pantomimes that he'll let her cut in front of him.

SOUND: Horns honk impatiently.

THE INTERSECTION

Beth pulls away in front of the pick-up truck. The HONKING continues. Sid looks back at the honking car, cheerfully waves to it.

CUT TO:
EXT. CAROL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A tiny well-kept Spanish style home in lower middle class residential section.

INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's neat and smartly furnished -- discount Swedish modern, is room bottles, glass

and a swinging metal ball thingabobby on a chrome and coffee table in front of leather sofa.

CAROL AND NICK are curled up together on the sofa, hand.

They're both in their late twenties. Carol's dressed in casually stylish clothes worn by women who work in mall boutiques.

Nick's clothes are frumpled, a knit tie loose around his neck. They've achieved a state of contemplative drunkenness.

Carol sips her drink. Nick sips his drink. Carol sips her drink. Nick brings his glass to his lips, hesitates...

NICK

(flattly)

We're moving.

CAROL

What?

NICK

(enunciating)

We're going to move.
CAROL
(after a beat)
When?

NICK
Two days.

CAROL
In two days?!

NICK
Yeah.

Carol shakes her head in weary disbelief.

CAROL
(covering her hurt)
Thanks for the news...

She knocks back her drink. Nick broods.

NICK
I haven't known for long. I just decided.
(ruminating)
What do I need that makes me make these decisions?

Carol stares at him. He knocks back his drink.

CAROL
You got me.

She pours herself another drink.

CAROL
What does Beth say?

NICK
Beth?...

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S CAR – NIGHT

She stops at an intersection.

NICK (V.O.)
Whatever makes me happy. That's what she says...
Headlights flash from behind her. She turns and looks.

**BETH'S POV**

Sid's smiling from his truck right behind her. He flashes his lights again.

**INT. BETH'S PINTO**

Beth looks up in the rearview mirror, amused.

**REARVIEW MIRROR**

Sid turns off, disappearing into the night.

**BETH**

Surprised to find herself vaguely disappointed, she drives on.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CAROL’S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

It's small, prefab, and tidy. It has a counter with shutters that open onto the living room. Nick is kneeling, going through bottles in a cabinet.

**NICK**

(*w/ drunken desperation*)

I know this place.

Nick stands, with an almost empty bottle of Johnny Walker Red.

**NICK**

I know what happens here.

He pours himself a drink. Carol shuts the cabinet.

**NICK**

I know what's going to happen.

Nick opens a cabinet under the sink and tosses the empty bottle in the trash. He begins to pace. Carol shuts the
cabinet and follows him with her gaze.

As Nick speaks, he gestures grandly with his drink, 
liquor splashing unnoticed over the sides.

**NICK**
(bursting with frustration)
The same job, same scenery, same people... I've been in this town for years... Years!!

**CAROL**
(flatly)
Three years.

**NICK**
(in despair)
Oh, Carol...

**CAROL**
I know...

He stops and slugs back his drink.

**NICK**
Forever -- it seems forever.

---

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BETH'S PINTO - CONTINUOUS**

Beth pulls up to a stoplight, her face blank with thought.
She's suddenly lit by the flash of headlights going on and off. She looks up and smiles.

**EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS**

Sid's pick-up truck is facing her across the intersection. It slowly pulls up beside her and stops.
He smiles and gives a little wave of his hand.
Without knowing why, she smiles and waves back.

**BETH**
(sweetly but firmly)
Good-bye.

She drives away. Sid stares after her.

CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carol lifts the end metal ball on the thingabobby and releases it, starting the chain reaction. She stares at it clacking back and forth as she speaks.

**CAROL**

How long a drive is it?

Nick paces.

**NICK**

Fourteen hours.

**CAROL**

That's not bad.

**NICK**

In a car? It's a fuckin' nightmare.

Carol stops the metal ball. She releases two balls, starting a new chain reaction.

**NICK**

(griping)

And there's no radio in Utah. It's all religious programs.

**CAROL**

Get saved.

Nick slumps on the sofa beside her.

**NICK**

(flatly)

No thanks.

**CAROL**

Hey. Think about this. You take a detour and go through Vegas -- you and Beth stop, see a show, have a nice romantic dinner -- play the
slots, get the free drinks...

**NICK**
(interrupting)
Too much money. The show. The meal. The slots. Then the hotel -- that's another hundred down the toilet.

As Carol speaks she pokes at Nick. He fends off her blows.

By the end of her speech she is on top of him mock-strangling him.

**CAROL**
(jabbing Nick)
No, you skip the hotel. It's night, the highway's empty -- you can make good time. You start speeding. You get stopped in Utah by the cops -- you flunk the breathalizer, they haul you in. The judge is Mormon -- you get fifteen years, you go to prison, but at least your life has taken a direction!

Nick and Carol collapse into laughter. The front door opens.

**BETH**
(calling in)
I'm here!

Beth steps in. Carol quickly lets go of Nick's neck and gets off him.

**NICK AND CAROL**

Embarrassed, they both smile self-consciously.

There's an awkward instant followed by too much cheerfulness.

**CAROL**
(chipper)
Hi!

**NICK**

Hi, honey.

**CAROL**
Hi.

BETH

stands in the doorway, awkwardly conscious of having interrupted something.

BETH

(w/ forced cheer)

Hi.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Nick and Beth are standing in the lawn, lit by the glow of the porch lamp. Both sides of the street are lined with nearly identical tiny faux Spanish houses.

BETH

G'night.

THE FRONT DOORWAY

Carol waves.

CAROL

G'night.

ANOTHER ANGLE INCLUDING NICK, BETH, AND CAROL

NICK

(calling out)

Pizza Hut, tomorrow?

CAROL

Okay.

(to Beth)

I've got the short shift -- you want me to come over, help pack?

BETH

Great... I'm really sorry we didn't tell you sooner. He just decided.

CAROL
smiles to herself, a trace of sadness in her eyes.

    CAROL
    I understand.

She shuts the door.

    NICK AND BETH

She starts to walk across the lawn. She stops and stares at Nick, who's staring out into the night, oblivious to her.

    BETH
    I'm tired. I'm going to bed.

He turns and looks at her.

    NICK
    What's your problem?

    BETH
    I haven't got a problem.

    NICK
    Okay.

He walks up to her and past her -- when she doesn't fall into step, he stops.

    NICK
    You agreed to try Billings.

    BETH
    I know.

    (in Nick's words)
    Billings, Montana. City of the future.

    NICK
    Yeah and I read that a while ago -- so the future's probably already there.

She smiles and shakes her head.

    NICK
    (defensively)
    It's not like you're leaving anything behind. A good job or something.
BETH
Just some friends.

He puts his arms around her waist from behind, and nestles her against his body.

NICK
You'll make new friends.

BETH
I know.
(after a beat)
I'm not eight years old. I know I'll make new friends.

NICK
Then what is it?

She pulls away from him and starts walking to the house next door. He falls into step with her.

BETH
(uncomfortably)
I, umm... I... It embarrasses me. When you talk about something with Carol that happened before me. She's my best friend. It embarrasses me that you used to live with her.

NICK
That was years ago.

BETH
Three years.

NICK
That's right.

BETH
I know...

NICK
And we're moving. She won't be your best friend anymore.

They arrive at their front door. Beth takes out her keys. Nick stops her hand and kisses her. She kisses him back.
NICK
Living with someone isn't such a big deal.

She nods and looks to the lock.

NICK
Anyway... I live with you now.

Beth looks to Nick. He stares out at the night.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP: COFFEE-MAKER

The coffee-maker clock hits nine o'clock. The coffee maker clicks on with a rattle. Steam starts to spew out. The coffee-maker makes horrible gurgling sounds.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is small and a little grimy, its furnishings fatigued.

Nick stares at the coffee-maker in disbelief. He's dressed in a dress shirt, untied necktie, and slacks. He's carrying a sportcoat with a Sears' employee name-tag attached.

NICK
(calling out) Beth!... Beth!!

Beth walks into the kitchen, wearing a robe and carrying the paper.

Nick points accusingly at the coffee maker as water pours down from around its top.

NICK
It's... it's raining!

BETH
It does that.
She drops the paper on the kitchen table and gets a mug off the counter.

**NICK**  
Since we got it?

**BETH**  
No.  
(pouring herself a cup)  
Lately.

**NICK**  
(throwing his jacket on a chair)  
Shit.  
(agitated)  
What's wrong with it?

**BETH**  
Water comes out.

**NICK**  
Shit.  
(unplugging the coffee maker)  
I hate this shit! It never kept the coffee hot. And now this.

He angrily wraps the cord around the coffee-maker.

**BETH**  
(blowing on her coffee)  
It still works.

**NICK**  
(adamant)  
No. It doesn't. Water comes out.

**BETH**  
Okay.

She sips her coffee. She flips open a box of Dunkin' Donuts.

**NICK**  
I could've gotten a new one. On my discount. Now it's too late.

**BETH**  
Do you want a donut?
NICK
(exasperated)
No. I want an appliance that works.

Beth shrugs and takes a donut out of the box. She leans against the counter, eating the donut.

Nick walks past Beth and jams the coffee maker into the trash.

NICK
This coffee maker was junk.

Nick pushes a button on the blender. It makes a horrible GRINDING WHINE. He unplugs it.

NICK
This blender's junk. Our t.v. is junk!

He jams the blender into the trash.

NICK
I don't know why we're even bothering to pack.

BETH
(through a mouthful of donut)
You got me.

NICK
The t.v. gets no channels.

BETH
And it's fifteen inch.

NICK
(shaking his head)
I can't believe we don't have a big t.v.

BETH
We don't watch much.

NICK
But at our age...

They stare at each other. Nick picks the almost full pint
bottle of scotch off the counter and puts it in his jacket pocket. Beth takes another donut.

BETH
Why don't you take one?

NICK
I'm not hungry.

BETH
(offhandedly)
Not a donut. A t.v.

NICK
Take a t.v.?

BETH
It's your last day.

NICK
Like a bonus.

BETH
Yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. NICK AND BETH'S CARPORT - MINUTES LATER

Beth is holding a donut and her coffee mug. Nick tosses his jacket into the front seat of his old sedan.

NICK
I might do it.

BETH
I say do it.
    (after a beat)
Sears can afford to give you a bonus.

NICK
Maybe they are.

BETH
What do you mean?

NICK
Maybe when I get my check today, there'll be a bonus in it.
BETH
(evenly)
Nick. They fired you.

NICK
Yeah...

BETH
(flately)
There's no bonus.

NICK
Yeah... That's true.
(shaking his head)
And I sold a lot of teeves for them...

Beth sips her coffee, waiting for Nick to decide.

BETH
(calmly)
You should take a t.v.

Nick looks at his watch.

NICK
I should go.
(sarcastically)
Don't wanna be late on my last day.

He kisses Beth, surprising her. He presses against her. He takes the donut from her hand and takes a bite.

Beth kisses Nick, his mouth still full of donut.

BETH
Mmmmm...

He kisses her fully, then breaks the kiss.

NICK
I gotta go.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - MORNING

About hundred cars dot the vast parking lot.
Nick swings into a parking spot and gets out of the car. He tosses his jacket on the roof and crouches, tying his necktie using the car's outside mirror.

**MAN'S VOICE**
You livin' in your car or what?

**NICK'S POV - IN THE MIRROR**

CHIP, a big redheaded guy in his late thirties, wearing a jacket and tie, is grinning at the crouched Nick. Nick's reflection grins back.

**NICK**
Just waiting for the last second to put on the noose.
(tightening the tie)
So Chip -- what's new?

**NICK AND CHIP**

Nick straightens up and grabs his jacket. They start walking toward the mall.

**CHIP**
Nothing much.
(broaching the subject)
I heard you're leaving.

**NICK**
Yeah. I'm outta here.

They approach the employees entrance.

**CHIP**
They can you?

**NICK**
That's what they think.

**CHIP**
Yeah?

**NICK**
I was gonna quit anyway -- this way I get unemployment.
CHIP
Good deal.

Nick opens the door.

NICK
Yeah... recession insurance...
(Chip enters)
This way I'm not stuck waiting around
for the lay-offs to start.

Nick follows Chip in.

CHIP
(a hint of panic)
Lay-offs?

The door shuts behind him.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP - NEWSPAPER

The front page of the Phoenix Sun-Times -- the headline
"Misery Index Soars".

Beth's hand comes INTO FRAME and crumples the page.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Beth stuffs the paper in a glass and wraps the glass in
another piece. She's sitting on the floor, surrounded
by
dishes, newspaper, and cardboard liquor boxes. She adds
the
wrapped glass to a box.

She hears the SOUND of a CAR DOOR SLAMMING, looks up,
then
returns to her packing. She reaches behind herself into
the
curious
trash, pulls out the blender, and begins to wrap it.

At the SOUND of the FRONT DOOR opening, followed by a
swinging
METALLIC CLUNKING, she stands and hurries through the
doors to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The living room is sparsely furnished -- a sofa, a coffee table, a bookcase cluttered with a handful of paperbooks, a couple of boardgames, a dying cactus, etc. A crappy old fifteen inch t.v. on a t.v. tray. WE SEE this for a moment before...

A paint-splattered cloth is unfurled FILLING THE SCREEN.

It gently floats down, revealing a PAINTER and his shopping cart overloaded with supplies. He's dressed in paint-splattered clothes. A paint-splattered Red Sox cap is pulled low over his eyes, obscuring his face.

Beth stares in disbelief. Without seeing her, the painter backs up, his attention focused on spreading the dropcloth.

BETH
Who are you?

SID
(not looking up)
The painter.

BETH
(agitated)
What are you doing?

SID
Painting.

The painter looks up from the drop-cloth, ready to deal with this obstacle. He freezes. His face lights up. It's Sid.

SID
(exremely pleased)
Well, good morning...

BETH
(recognizing him)
You...
SID
(extend a hand)
Sid. Nice to see you again.

Beth stares in agitated disbelief.

With his untaken extended hand, he pulls a long strip of masking tape from a roll around his wrist, masking one side of the door frame from top to bottom.

BETH
Why are you here?

SID
Realty office likes a fresh coat between tenants.

BETH
(pointedly)
We're still here.

He stands on his tiptoes and puts a strip of masking tape on the top edge of the doorframe.

SID
I've done this house before.
(admiringly)
I did a nice job.

He masks the remaining side of the door frame.

BETH
Can't you come back tomorrow?

SID
Tomorrow's Sunday.

BETH
Yeah...?

SID
The new people move in on Sunday.
(conversationally)
Where are you moving to?

BETH
(wearily)
Billings, Montana.
Sid moves to a window.

**SID**
(incredulous)
Why?

**BETH**
It can't be worse than Enfield, Arizona.

Sid pulls a strip of tape off the roll.

**SID**
(smiling)
I've lived in Enfield my whole life.

He holds out the end of the masking tape.

**SID**
Could you hold this?

Beth takes it. He walks backwards, easing a long strip of tape off the roll.

**SID**
I use this to mask. Have you ever used masking tape to mask?

He tears the tape off the roll and sticks it to the top of the baseboard in one corner.

**BETH**
No. I haven't.

Crouched, he waddles across the room toward Beth, applying the masking tape to the baseboard. He gets to Beth, stands up, takes the tape off her fingers, and presses it into place.

**SID**
A house like this, it's real easy. Hardly needs a paint job.

**BETH**
You can skip it. I won't tell.

**SID**
It needs a fresh coat...

He hands her the end of the tape again and begins another baseboard.

**SID**

...a little color.

**BETH**

(naturally curious)
What color is it gonna be?

**SID**

Off-white.

He goes along the floor pressing the masking tape to the baseboard.

**BETH**

It's already off-white.

**SID**

No. It's white. It's just dirty.

Beth looks at the walls. He's right.

**SID**

Now if it was my house, I would choose a color...

Beth kneels down, holding the tape, as he arrives at her end of the wall.

**SID**

I would not choose off-white.

Beth holds out the tape. They are kneeling next to each other.

**BETH**

What would you choose?

**SID**

The color of your eyes.
(pause, without looking)
Hazel.

Beth stares at Sid. Sid looks to Beth. Smiling, he takes the
tape from her fingers.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIZZA HUT - AFTERNOON

An oasis in the center of a packed mall parking lot.
Carol hurries toward the front entrance in a snappy skirt and combo, a Bullock's name tag attached to her lapel.

INT. PIZZA HUT - CONTINUOUS

Nick is sitting at a booth, a beer in front of him, lost in thought.
Carol arrives, drops a gift-wrapped box on the table, and scoots into the booth.

   CAROL
   Sorry I'm late, the new girl's a moron.

   NICK
   (looking to the present)
   What's that?

   CAROL
   Going away present.

Nick takes it.

   NICK
   Thanks.

He quickly unwraps it.

   NICK
   (happily)
   A map!

   CAROL
   I thought you might need it.

   NICK
   (unfolding it)
   I do! I had a map -- I lost it.
He spreads the map out over the table.

**CAROL**
(organized)
Let's highlight your route.

**A MAP**

of the Western half of the U.S.A. fills the FRAME.

Carol's hand, holding a bright red felt-tip pen, ENTERS FRAME.

**CAROL (O.S.)**
Here's Enfield.

She circles it. Nick's finger ENTERS FRAME.

**NICK (O.S.)**
Here's Billings.

Carol circles Billings. Nick's finger starts to trace the route.

Carol's pen follows, marking the route. Halfway to Billings, Nick's finger abruptly stops. Carol stops the pen at the same point.

**NICK (O.S.)**
Look at this -- right there -- that's the town I was born in.

**NICK AND CAROL**

He looks to her for a reaction.

**NICK**
(emphatically)
Where I grew up. Where my parent's live... Isn't that a coincidence?

**CAROL**
Visit them.

**NICK**
(shaking his head)
Oh... no...

**CAROL**
You're going to be driving by.
NICK
No...
   (shaking his head)
They're not near the interstate.
   (sort of chagrined)
I haven't even called them in years.

CAROL
You might as well visit.

NICK
   (adamantly)
No.
   (shrugging)
I wouldn't know them.

Nick starts to fold the map -- very unsuccessfully.

NICK
   Shit.

CAROL
   Let me.

Nick hands her the map. She deftly folds it in one motion and hands it back to him.

NICK
   Thanks.

He leans over the table and kisses her. She stands.

CAROL
   I'm starved.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH AND NICK'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Two of the walls gleam with fresh paint.

Sid is painting with long-handled roller.

Beth, enters, hesitates, and then -- consciously ignoring him -- walks by with a packed box and adds it to the stack by the front door.
SID
I'm lucky I don't have to kill them.

BETH
(not a line she was expecting)
What?

SID
If they were dark, I'd have to put a layer of kill down first.

Beth starts back to the kitchen. Sid and THE CAMERA FOLLOW.

SID
So the dark paint wouldn't shine through the off-white.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The dishes are mostly packed.

BETH
Oh.

She picks up two empty liquor boxes.

SID
Kill's an oil based paint.

Beth carries the boxes out of the kitchen -- Sid and THE CAMERA FOLLOW.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beth walks right on through followed by the talking Sid and THE CAMERA.

SID
It covers the old paint so that you'd never know it was there, but it gives off fumes when it's drying.

Beth goes into the small hallway, Sid and THE CAMERA FOLLOW.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Beth walks toward the bedroom, Sid right behind her.
Noxious fumes. They would find us on the floor unconscious.

They enter the bedroom, THE CAMERA FOLLOWING.

INT. BEDROOM

There's a queen-sized bed, a bureau, a mirror, and a closet.

Beth takes the boxes to the closet.

BETH

They?

Sid sits on the bed, checking it's firmness.

SID

The "they" that find people...

BETH

(interjecting)

Nick.

SID

...unconscious.

BETH

(flatly)

Nick.  

(after a beat)

The man I live with.

SID

(smiling)

I guess he'd be the "they".

BETH

He'd find us. And he'd be surprised.

Sid gets off the bed and with a grin, gingerly pats out the wrinkles he's made in the bed spread.

CUT TO:

EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON
Nick and Carol are walking away from the Pizza Hut, across a huge parking lot, toward a large mall. Cars circle past searching for close spots.

NICK
(doggedly)
It was the drive that killed us. San Antonio to Seattle is just too many hours in a car. If we'd have flown, we would've made it.

CAROL
(shaking her head)
No...

NICK
Things were all right in bed.

CAROL
But the rest of the time they were... awful.

NICK
(hurt)
Really?

CAROL
 flatly)
Nick. We couldn't stand each other. We stopped in Enfield and just stayed.

NICK
(after a beat)
Why didn't you go on to Seattle? It was your car.

Carol stops. On her face, the answer to his question is clear -- she was stuck on Nick then and she's still stuck on him now.

But she'd never let him know that.

CAROL
(dryly)
Big trees scare me.

She starts walking. Nick hurries up beside her. They walk
side by side for a few paces before the shot down Nick comes up with a new ploy to win favor.

NICK  
(casually)  
I'm thinking about stealing a t.v.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK AND BETH'S BEDROOM HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Beth's taking extra sheets and towels from the linen closet and packing them in liquor boxes.

Sid enters from the living room.

SID  
(cheerfully)  
I'm done in there. I won't paint the ceiling 'til you've moved the furniture out.

BETH  
I don't think we're going to take much of the furniture.

SID  
No?

BETH  
It's ugly.

SID  
I kind of like the sofa.

BETH  
It's a sofa bed.

SID  
You're not going to take it?

BETH  
(flatterly)  
It weighs two thousand pounds.

SID  
Can I have it?

BETH
It's yours.

SID
Excellent.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The furniture is kind of ugly, but the walls look great. The whole room seems brighter, almost magically more cheerful.

Sid runs into the room and flops onto the sofa. He settles in and sighs contentedly.

The front door BURSTS open. Sid leaps up.

Carol races into the room.

CAROL (excited)
Nick's gonna steal a t.v.!

She sees Sid and freezes.

CAROL
Who are you?

SID
The painter.

Beth hurries into the living room.

BETH (excitedly)
He's really gonna do it?

CAROL
He says yes.

Carol glances pointedly at Sid then returns her attention to Beth.

CAROL (conspiratorially)
We've got to talk.

SID (piping in)
About the crime?
CAROL
(sharply)
There's no crime.

SID
Nick's gonna steal a t.v.

CAROL
That's just an expression.

SID
I've never heard that expression.

CAROL
(witheringly)
It's making the rounds. College students use it.

SID
(to Beth)
Where's he stealing it from?

BETH
Sears.

CAROL
(incredulous)
You want him to know?

BETH
He knows. He doesn't care. (to Sid)
Do you care?

SID
(enthusiastically)
I'm interested. Crime's interesting. I read the papers.

BETH
It's not a crime.

CAROL
It's justice.

BETH
Poetic justice.

SID
How?
BETH
They fired him.

SID
(deducing)
He's got motive.

CAROL
(exasperated)
Who is this guy?!

BETH
The painter.

SID
(helpfully)
Sid.

He holds out a hand to shake. Carol stares at his outstretched hand.

CAROL
(point blank)
No.

Carol takes Beth by the arm and leads her away from Sid. She stares back over her shoulder at Sid.

Taking the hint, he begins to stir a can of paint, assuming an air of indifference. Carol turns her attention back to Beth.

CAROL
(purposefully)
He needs you at the store.

BETH
(tinged w/ apprehension)
He needs me?

CUT TO:

INT. SEARS TELEVISION DEPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nick is standing next to RORY, a precocious eight year old
boy who's staring at a soap opera on a big screen t.v.

As

Nick and Rory talk, the soap ACTOR and ACTRESS passionately embrace.

NICK
You lookin' or buyin'? 

RORY
Lookin'. I hate television.

NICK
Yeah. What do you like? 

RORY
Movies.

NICK
(shaking his head)
No...

RORY
I do.

NICK
(laying it out)
You see... you go to a movie, you're there.

Rory listens attentively.

NICK
You watch t.v., you're thirteen places at once. As many channels as you get, that's as many places as you are. You get cable? You're forty places at once. You get a satellite dish?...

RORY
You're all over the world.

NICK
Exactly.

In the BACKGROUND, on the big screen t.v., the soap actress breaks the embrace and points a gun at the actor.

NICK
You're everywhere.
The soap actress shoots the actor. He stares at her in overacting disbelief and slumps to the floor.

NICK
It's called freedom.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carol watches as Sid whistles cheerfully, ripping the long strips of masking tape off the trim.

CAROL
(w/ attitude)
This is what you do?

SID
I also mow lawns.

CAROL
Which is your career?

SID
Painting. I'm an inside person. (confidentially)
Mowing grass is seasonal.

CAROL
(dryly)
That is true.

Sid wads the tape into a big ball.

SID
(disarmingly)
You've got a nice tan.

CAROL
(not disarmed)
I work on it.

Sid shoots the tape ball into his shopping cart of supplies.

SID
Do you want to get stoned?
Carol thinks for a moment. It's been a long time and she's not crazy about him being there.

**CAROL**

(after a beat)

Yeah.

Sid takes a joint out of his shirt pocket.

**SID**

This kind of painting -- for people I won't know -- it's boring.

(lighting the joint)

It's not very good. It's homegrown.

He takes a drag.

**CAROL**

Yeah?

**SID**

But it'll get you fucked up.

He hands the joint to Carol.

**CAROL**

takes a drag on the joint like an old pro.

**SID (O.S.)**

It'll take you someplace.

Carol chokes back wheezes and then explodes in a coughing fit.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. APPLIANCE CENTER - LATER**

Nick and **MAJOR JENKINS**, a uniformed military man in his late forties, are standing in front of a wall of silent color televisions. On the t.v.s a nearly identical pairs of LOCAL ANCHORS smile their way through the news.

**NICK**

Have you thought about American?
MAJOR JENKINS
No.

NICK
I own an American set. I'm very satisfied.

MAJOR JENKINS
I want Japanese.

NICK
I'll tell you...

Nick put his arm around the man's shoulder and guides him toward a display case.

NICK
...the thing is, a hundred and fifty dollars gets you very little in the way of Japanese technology.

MAJOR JENKINS
Oh.

They stop at the case. Nick points.

NICK
It would get you that t.v.

CLOSE-UP
A tiny two inch Casio television playing "Gilligan's Island".

NICK AND JENKINS
Nick looks to see the Jenkin's reaction. Jenkins stares dumbfounded at the tiny t.v. He looks to Nick.

MAJOR JENKINS
It's for my parents.

NICK
Your parents?

MAJOR JENKINS
Yes. They live with me...

Beth enters the FRAME. Nick doesn't see her.
MAJOR JENKINS
...and they want Japanese.

Nick stifles a strange urge to giggle. Beth tries to get Nick's attention.

MAJOR JENKINS
Is there a problem?

NICK
(controlling the giggles)
No... I, uh, just never think of adults as having parents.

MAJOR JENKINS

(Flatly)
They do.

NICK
(agreeably)
I know...

Beth fake coughs to get his attention. Nick sees her.

NICK
I'm an adult, I have parents.

Nick turns to Beth with a burst of salesman cheer.

NICK
Oh, Miss, I've got your receipt!

Beth approaches them, still not sure what Nick's up to.

BETH
(acting cheerful)
Oh... great!

Nick holds out the receipt.

NICK
This is all you need.

Beth takes the receipt.

BETH
(puzzled, but playing along)
Thanks...
NICK
(personably)
Now you just take this receipt out, give it to the guys at the loading dock and they'll give you your brand new beautiful television set.

BETH
(throw)
I get the t.v...?

NICK
(cheerfully)
Out back. They'll help load it in your car and everything.

BETH
(flatly)
I get the t.v.

NICK
Out back.

Nick turns his full attention to the man.

NICK
Think about American. They're mostly Japanese parts anyway.

Beth stares at Nick, amazed that he's managed to come up with a plan that has her taking the television.

BETH
Excuse me, I just...

NICK
(interrupting, pleasantly)
Miss... I'm helping this customer here, perhaps you might... (firmly, a salesman's put-off)
You might want to see someone else.

BETH
(pointedly)
You can't help me?

NICK
(after a beat, then w/ finality)
CUT TO:

**INT. SEARS - CONTINUOUS**

Beth rides down on the escalator, the receipt clenched in her hand, surrounded by other shoppers, as a tinny Muzak drones on in the background.

Conflicting emotions cloud her face.

CUT TO:

**CLOSE-UP - A HUGE T.V. BOX**

SID (O.S.)

How'd you do it?

BETH (O.S.)

Nick sold a demo, wrote it up like a new set, and gave me the receipt.

As Sid's jacknife ENTERS FRAME and zips through the packing tape, THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal...

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The sun is low, giving the room a golden glow.

Sid and Beth are sitting on the sofa, the t.v. box on the floor in front of them.

Sid opens the television box. Slowly, he pulls out the sheets of bubbled packing plastic. He pops several of the bubbles.

SID

(savoring the bubble plastic)

Excellent.

BETH
Maybe I should just leave it packed...

SID
C'mon! You stole it. You gotta see it! Hold the box.

Beth holds the box. Sid starts to lift out the television.

SID
(urgently)
Wait!

Beth looks to him, anxiously.

SID
I thought I heard the police.

Beth listens, nervously. Sid grins.

BETH
Ha ha ha.
(an amused realization)
You're stoned!

SID
(innocently)
Me?

BETH
You're being silly and you've got bunny eyes.

Embarrassed, Sid pulls Visine from a pocket and drips it in his eyes as he speaks.

SID
I'm a little stoned... not that stoned.

BETH
No?

SID
No.
(after a beat)
Carol's really stoned.

BETH
You got Carol stoned?
SID
Very stoned.

BETH
I didn't think she liked you.

SID
She doesn't. But she likes getting stoned.

BETH
(smiling)
She does.

SID
There's nothing like drugs to create a quick and shallow friendship.

Beth laughs.

SID
(rubbing his hands)
Let's look at the loot.

Sid pulls the t.v. up and out of the box. He sits back on the sofa, the t.v. in his lap.

The t.v. is spectacular -- huge, metallic, and ultra-modern.

SID
(very impressed)
Jesus... you didn't fool around.

BETH
(w/ mixed emotions)
This is the nicest thing I've ever owned.

Beth stares at the television. Sid stares at Beth. She meets his eyes, then looks quickly back to the television.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SEDAN - ENFIELD'S MAIN DRAG - DUSK

Nick is driving. His face is beaded with sweat as he
heavily on a cigarette. He pushes the buttons on his radio, getting NEWS BROADCASTS.

**NEWSMAN'S VOICE**

And in Canton, Ohio today, a man opened fire in a mall, killing nine and wounding seventeen others. Initial reports indicate the young man was a disgruntled employee...

Nick turns the radio off.

He pulls the scotch bottle from his jacket and takes a slug.

He jerks his necktie loose and slips it over his head. He tosses it into the back seat.

**NICK'S SEDAN**

swerves into a vast mall parking lot.

**EXT. MALL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER**

Through the flow of traffic, WE SEE Nick standing at a payphone on the outside wall of a Red Lobster Restaurant.

Nick speaks urgently into the phone, punctuating his conversation with edgy body language. Abruptly, he hangs up.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Carol hangs up a wallphone. She leans against the refridgerator, her expression a controlled blank. She turns her head and looks out her kitchen window.

**CAROL'S POV**

Through Nick and Beth's living room window, WE SEE Sid struggling under the weight of the t.v. as Beth laughingly gestures where she wants it.
CUT TO:

INT. BETH AND NICK'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beth and Sid are kneeling on the floor in front of the t.v.

Playing on the t.v. a rock video featuring girls, guitars, and the endless highway.

**BETH**

It's a beautiful picture.

Sid takes the remote from Beth and turns the VOLUME UP very loud.

**SID**

(enthusiastically)
Nice speakers!

Carol enters through the front door, unseen by the mesmerized t. v. viewers.

**BETH**

(happily)
Yeah!
(w/ happy disbelief)
Fuckin' Nick...

Sid and Beth stare at the television, completely engrossed. Carol stares at them for a long moment.

**CAROL**

(over the din, dryly)
Hi, kids.

Startled, Sid and Beth jump back. They look at each other and laugh.

**BETH**

(cheerfully)
Come see!

Beth turns the VOLUME DOWN as Carol comes and looks at the t.v.
CAROL
(impressed)
I should have had him steal me one, too.

BETH
You can come over and watch.

Carol looks to Beth, a quizzical expression on her face.

SID
(to Beth, quietly)
You're moving.

BETH
(w/ a tinge of sadness)
Oh. Right.
(to Carol)
Sorry.

CAROL
Forget it...

Beth turns off the t.v. There's a moment of awkward silence as they all stare at the blank screen.

CAROL
(breaking the silence, pointedly)
How's the painting going?

SID
(shaking his head)
Too many distractions. I'll be at it all night.

CAROL
You have bad work habits.

SID
Not when I'm actually working.
(standing)
I better get set up in the kitchen.

He goes to his shopping cart of supplies. Carol and Beth stare at the television.

The television stares back at them, gleamingly modern.
CAROL
It makes teevee seem very futuristic.

SID
(at the kitchen door)
That's 'cause you're stoned.

CAROL
I'm hardly stoned.

She looks to Beth. Beth is grinning.

CAROL
(mitigating)
It was homegrown.

BETH
(teasing)
Want some Visine?

CAROL
(flatly)
No.

SID (O.S.)
(calling out)

It gets the red out.

The Visine comes flying INTO FRAME. Carol fumbles, then catches it.

CAROL
(dryly)
Thank you.

Carol tilts back her head and maneuvers the Visine.

CAROL
Shit. Missed the eye, got the face.

BETH
Need help?

CAROL
Yeah.

Beth goes to her and takes the Visine.

BETH
Okay.

(holding Carol's arm)
Tilt your head back.

CAROL
Beth...

BETH
Stop fidgeting.

She puts a drop in one eye. Carol flinches.

CAROL
Got it.

BETH
Next eye.

CAROL
Wait a second.

Carol blinks and wipes a Visine tear off her cheek.

CAROL
(nodding to the kitchen, in a conspiratorial whisper)
He really wants to get in your pants.

BETH
(smiling)
My pants are taken.

She tilts Carol's head back.

BETH
Why don't you go for him?

CAROL
He likes you.

Beth puts a drop in Carol's eye. Carol flinches and rubs her eye.

BETH
I wish Nick would get back and help with the packing.

She sighs, cheerfully exasperated.

BETH
He's probably getting drunk with the stockboys...
(after a beat)
That's what he's probably doing.

Carol braces herself.

**CAROL**

Beth...
(pause, then w/ difficulty)
Listen...

They stare into each other's eyes.

After a long moment Carol averts her eyes and looks down.

**BETH**
(simply)
He's gone.

**CAROL**
Yeah.

**BETH**
(badly shaken)
Where'd he call from?

**CAROL**
He said the highway.

Beth takes a deep breath, controlling her emotions.

**BETH**
I have to do something.

**CAROL**
I'll help.

**BETH**
I've got to be out of here Sunday.
That's tomorrow.

**CAROL**
You can come to my place.

**BETH**
(stunned)
He's gone.

Beth sinks onto the arm of the sofa to support herself.

**CAROL**
(gently)
He's an asshole.

CLOSE-UP: BETH

The truth makes its way deeply into her.

BETH
(a half whisper)
Fuckin' Nick...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The lightly traveled highway cuts a straight line through the desert.

Nick's sedan pulls off into a service station with a giant teepee beside it.

EXT. SERVICE STATION

The wind is roaring, kicking up swirls of grey dust in the flourescent light of the service station.

A TEENAGE NAVAJO boy is filling Nick's tank. Nick leans against the car staring at the giant teepee.

NICK
Nobody lives in that, right?

NAVAJO TEEN
Gift shop. But it closed at seven.

NICK
(cheerfully shrugging)
I got no one to shop for.

A gust of wind sends dust into Nick's eye.

NICK
Shit.
(rubbing his eye)
Fuckin' wind...

NAVAJO TEEN
Yeah.
NICK  
(sincerely)  
What does it mean?

NAVAJO TEEN  
High pressure field coming in -- should bring some nice weather.

NICK  
No. The wind itself, you know what I mean, you're an Indian...

NAVAJO TEEN  
(correcting him)  
I'm a Navajo.

NICK  
Yeah, so you're in tune with this stuff...

NAVAJO TEEN  
(checking the pump)  
It's thirteen bucks.

NICK  
(his train of thought broken)  
Oh... right.

Nick pulls a bill out of his wallet and holds it out.

NICK  
Here's a twenty.

The Navajo Teen takes the bill and takes a wad of bills from his pocket.

Nick stares out at the moonlit desert and the mountains rising in the distance.

NICK  
So what does the wind mean? Like as an omen or something, you know --  
(making his voice mystical)  
-- a change is coming to the people. -- the spirit of freedom is walking the land.  
(flatly)
That kind of meaning...

**NAVAJO TEEN**
(handing him money)
Fourteen, fifteen and five makes twenty.

He opens Nick's car door for him.

**NAVAJO TEEN**
The wind is. It's the wind like I'm a Navajo.

**NICK**
That's it?

The Navajo teen nods.

**NICK**
Shit.

He gets in the car, his mood darkening, and pulls his door shut with a slam.

**NICK**
(out the window)
It would be better if meant something.

The Navajo teen shrugs. Nick starts the engine.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. A BAR IN ENFIELD - NIGHT**

A dimly lit room filled with raucous customers and lots of neon beer signs. Waitresses in red dresses tote brew to the thirsty throng. At the far end a band plays foot-stompin' good time tune about a trucker on his way to see his woman.

THE CAMERA MOVES through the crowd and discovers Carol and Beth sitting at a small table, an almost finished pitcher of beer between them.
They speak loudly to be heard over the din.

**CAROL**
- He said he needs to be alone again.
- Learn about himself. Make a fresh start in a new town.

Beth shakes her head then takes a sip of her beer -- it tastes bitter in her mouth and she puts her glass down in disgust.

**CAROL**
- (after a beat)
  - He's sorry.

Beth stares at her beer. Carol puts a hand comfortably on Beth's arm.

**CAROL**
- He said he would have called you, but your phone's disconnected. 'Cause you're moving.
  - (after a beat)
  - He's always been an asshole.
  - (after a beat)
  - You'll be all right.

**BETH**
- Yeah...

**CAROL**
- (gently)
  - I'm here.

**BETH**
- I know that.

A big-haired WAITRESS approaches the table.

**WAITRESS**
- You ready for another?

Carol looks to Beth.

**BETH**
- Oh... uh, no...

**CAROL**
- We're fine.
WAITRESS
Is Nick coming in?
Carol throws the waitress a look that could kill. Beth takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. NICK'S SEDAN - HIGHWAY - NIGHT
Nick stares at the road ahead. He takes rapid drags on a cigarette. The RADIO is barely audible over the ROAR of the WIND through the open windows.

PREACHER'S VOICE
(covered by static)
"And he arose and came to his father, but when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and..."
Nick turns the radio off.
He fumbles the cigarette into the ashtray.
He takes a pint of scotch from the front seat, uncaps it, takes a slug, takes another slug, recaps it, and drops it back on the seat.
He stares at the road. He looks down to the front seat and finds the map. He splits his attention between the road unfolding the map. The wind catches the map. The map billows up, covering his face. Losing control of the car, Nick slaps it down.
A car HORN blares.
Nick jerks the car back into his lane, bats the map down again, and pulls off to the side of the road.
He stops the car and slams the shift into park.
He opens his door a crack, turning on the dome light. He smooths out the map on the dashboard. Billings and Enfield are marked with Carol's big red circles.

CLOSE-UP - THE MAP

Nick's finger traces from Enfield toward Billings along the route Carol highlighted with the red felt-tip. Halfway to Billings, the red line stops. Nick's finger stops.

NICK
He stares at the map.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Beth comes in the front door. The sound of Sid whistling comes softly from the kitchen. Beth stares at the t.v. for a moment then strides purposefully toward the kitchen.

INT. BETH'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sid is standing on the counter masking the top sill of the kitchen window. There's half a donut hanging from his mouth.

Beth comes through the swinging door.

BETH
(forcefully)
You've lived here your whole life?

The half-donut falls from the startled Sid's mouth.

SID
(after a beat)
Yeah.
BETH  
(incredulously)  
You've never gone anywhere?

He picks up the half-donut.

SID  
Travelling has no allure for me.

BETH  
None?

Sid climbs down and sits on the counter, dropping the half-donut back into the donut box.

SID  
Maybe through time.

BETH  
(smiling)  
That's not offered.

SID  
So I stay here.

BETH  
Why?

SID  
(the simple truth)  
It's my home. I belong here.

BETH  
I'm serious.

So was Sid -- but he realizes Beth doesn't believe it can be as simple as that.

SID  
My father says if you stay in one place long enough your luck knows where to find you.

BETH  
(wryly)  
Maybe that's my problem.

SID  
(carefully)  
Maybe it is...
Sid holds out the box of donuts to her.

**BETH**

Thanks.

She takes a donut and fiddles with it.

**BETH**

You think your father knows the truth?

**SID**

He's a bartender.

(smiling)

He's lived here his whole life.

**BETH**

Has his luck found him?

**SID**

Not yet.

(after a beat)

But it's probably very close.

Beth smiles weakly. Abruptly, she drops her donut back in the box.

**SID**

(cautiously)

Are you all right?

**BETH**

(apologetically)

Must be the paint fumes...

She opens up the back door and steps out. Sid stares at the empty doorway.

**EXT. BACK STOOP – CONTINUOUS**

Beth stands in the moonlight, staring out at the stars.

**BETH**

(contemplatively
dubious)

You find what you want here?

Sid steps out behind her.

**SID**
It seems that way.

BETH
Yeah?

SID
(simply)
I found you.

BETH
Oh. No...

She walks out into the backyard. Sid follows her.

SID
(earnestly)
We never met before last night...

The moonlight through the orange trees casts a magical air about the backyard. Beth stops by a swingset.

SID
...but we know each other.

Beth stiffens.

BETH
No...

She walks away from him. He watches her intently.

SID
Leave it behind.

She looks to him.

BETH
Leave what behind?

SID
Unhappiness.

BETH
(amused)
That was a bad answer.

SID
 seriou
(seriously)
No. It was true.

Beth stares at Sid.
BETH
It's not.

SID
Come hold me.
(after a beat)
Come hold me, and you'll be happy.

BETH
(dryly)
I'll find happiness. Right. In your arms.

SID
Yes.

BETH
In you.

SID
Yes.

BETH
But I won't. I have to find happiness in myself.

SID
No. That's wrong.
(going toward her)
People tell you that, but it's wrong.

She turns away from him. He stands behind her, close.

SID
I've lived with people who have that happiness from within. That happiness -- it's just them being pleased with themselves. It's not enough. It's a lonely thing.

She turns and faces him. The moonlight casts a pale glow over them.

She stares in his eyes for a long moment. She steps back from him.

BETH
You're showing how young you are.
SID
No. I'm not. I'm showing you a way.
You know that. And you know me.
(after a beat)
And I know you.

She walks away from him, back to the swingset.

BETH
I don't know you.

Sid follows and takes her arms, turning her to face him.

SID
You know.

BETH
(after a beat, defensively)
I know you want to fuck me.

He pulls her very close. He lets go of her arms so she is standing against him, unrestrained.

SID
Is that what you know?

Beth stares at his face for a long time.

BETH
I know...

She kisses him, suddenly, long and slow.

BETH
(whispering)
I know you.

They kiss, pulling each other tight.

They lose their balance and stagger against the swingset, kissing passionately. Beth pulls back.

BETH
(w/ fierce intensity)
I know you.

SID
That's right.
CUT TO:

EXT. TWO-STORY SUBURBAN RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

A canopy of stars hangs over it.

INT. NICK'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Nick is parked, staring at the house. The roadmap is on the seat beside him. He takes a drink from a half empty pint of scotch. He screws the cap on and drops the bottle on the map.

He steps out of the car, unsteadily.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE'S FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Nick walks toward the door. He stops, stares at the door and starts back for his car. He stops, shakes his head, and walks quickly to the front door.

FRONT PORCH

Nick stands, staring at the door. He knocks. He waits impatiently, then pounds on the door. On his third pound the lights in the house suddenly go on.

OVER NICK'S SHOULDER

The door abruptly opens.

MR. AUGUST, an eighty year old man, stands in the doorway. He wears pajamas, slippers, and a long robe. He is over six and a half feet tall.

NICK AND MR. AUGUST

Nick, startled, steps back. Mr. August stares at him. Nick composes himself.

NICK
Excuse me...
Mr. August stares at him.

**NICK**
Excuse me... I'm... I'm looking for my parents.

Mr. August calmly puts his hands over his ears, and slowly shakes his head.

**NICK**
My mother, my father... they...

ELIZABETH, a fifteen year old girl steps out from behind Mr. August. She seems very small next to Mr. August. He puts a hand on her shoulder. She stares at Nick.

**NICK**
(uncomfortably)
Hello.

**ELIZABETH**
Hello.

**NICK**
(exhaling in relief)
Oh... good...
(to the point)
This is my house. I, uhh... mean this is the house I grew up in.

Nick looks past them into the house.

**ELIZABETH**
(nodding to Mr. August)
This is his house now.

**NICK**
Nice to meet you.

He holds out a hand to Mr. August, who slowly shakes it.

**ELIZABETH**
He's deaf.

**NICK**
(loudly)
Nice to meet you.

ELIZABETH
He's stone deaf.

NICK
Oh.
(uncomfortably)
Yelling doesn't help.

ELIZABETH
No.

Nick breaks the handshake. Mr. August smiles at him. Nick looks to Elizabeth.

NICK
My name is Nick, Nick Brennan.

He waits for her to introduce herself. She doesn't.

NICK
Did you know the Brennans?

ELIZABETH
No.

NICK
They lived here. They used to live here. I used to live here with them...

Elizabeth stares at him. Nick tries his salesman charm.

NICK
What's your name?

ELIZABETH
Elizabeth.

NICK
No...

ELIZABETH
Yes.

NICK
I know an Elizabeth.
(quietly)
I call her Beth.
CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bathed in moonlight, Sid and Beth make tender passionate love.

Sid has never wanted someone so much and Beth has never felt so wanted.

Beth clings to Sid as if she were afraid of being swept away... and then she is.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MR. AUGUST'S DINING ROOM - LATER

A chandelier casts a gently sparkling golden glow.

The CAMERA TILTS down to reveal...

Mr. August, Elizabeth and Nick, sitting at a large antique dining room table.

Nick is eating a sandwich, an untouched glass of milk in front of him. Mr. August and Elizabeth watch him, expectantly.

Nick notices this.

NICK
(swallowing)
This is a good sandwich.

ELIZABETH
Thank you.

NICK
(abruptly nodding toward Mr. August)
When did he move here? Would he know where the people before him went?

ELIZABETH
No. He wouldn't remember.

NICK
You're sure?

ELIZABETH
Yes. He doesn't remember anymore.

NICK
Oh.
(taking a deep breath)
He can't help me.

ELIZABETH
No.

Nick looks around the familiar room, struck by the absurdity of the situation.

NICK
(with wry awareness)
I've lost my parents.

Nick smiles weakly at Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH
(matter-or-factly)
Did you lose them both at the same time?

NICK
Is that like a joke?

ELIZABETH
No.

NICK
Then yes. I lost them both at the same time.

ELIZABETH
I lost mine one at a time.
(after a beat)
Last year.

Nick realizes she's talking about death.

NICK
I'm sorry. That's tragic. I should...

ELIZABETH
(interrupting)
Six months apart. Body failures.
Separate body failures.
NICK
I'm really sorry.
(standing)
I should go.

Mr. August slowly stands as Elizabeth follows Nick toward the foyer.

ELIZABETH
First my father's heart kept starting and stopping.

NICK
(nodding)
(Attacks)

IN THE FOYER
Nick edges toward the door followed by Elizabeth and Mr. August.

ELIZABETH
My mother and I were with him in the hospital and he'd grab at us, he'd grab my arms and hold on.

NICK
That's very sad...
(after a beat, backing toward the door)
I've really gotta be going. I, uh...
thank you again for the sandwich.
Delicious...

ELIZABETH
Right before my mother died, she said -- "Elizabeth. You're adopted."

Nick stops in his tracks, his hand on the doorknob.

NICK
Have you found your real parents?

ELIZABETH
No. Two are enough to lose.

Nick stares at her -- the sad truth of her statement sinking in.
ELIZABETH
I'm not alone. I have my Grandfather.

Nick looks down. He is alone. He has no one.

NICK
(opening the door)
Listen...

He looks into her eyes.

Elizabeth suddenly grabs his arm.

He stares at her, not knowing what to do. She holds his arm tightly for a moment, then lets go.

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry.

She steps back from Nick, against her grandfather.

ELIZABETH
(in explanation)
He's stone deaf.

Nick stares at Elizabeth.

NICK
I have to go.

And he hurries out the door into the night.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Beth is sitting up in bed, Sid leaning back against her, her arms wrapped around him.

SID
(after a beat)
I'd like to stay right here...

BETH
I have to be out tomorrow.

SID
In this moment... Enjoying this
They both lie perfectly still. A flicker of sadness crosses Beth's face.

BETH
(hushed)
The moment's gone.

SID
(shaking his head)
It can go on as long as we want.

Beth leans him back, cradling him in her arms. She stares at him, a quizzical expression on her face.

BETH
(skeptically)
Have you ever been in a relationship?

SID
No.
(after a beat)
I was married... but it wasn't really a relationship.

BETH
(incredulous)
You weren't married...

SID
Two years. Right out of high school.

Beth ponders this for a moment.

BETH
Do I remind you of her?

SID
No.

BETH
(relieved)
Thank God.

Sid runs his hands over her body.

SID
You have beautiful skin... her skin was polka-dotted.
BETH
Freckled...

SID
When we were kids we called her "Spot".

BETH
(laughing)
What happened?

SID
She disappeared.

Beth looks to Sid. He's staring off.

BETH
(after a beat)
Was she ever found?

A flicker of loss crosses his face.

SID
No. Not by me...
        (looking to Beth)
I didn't go look.

Beth stares at him, uncertainly. He leans up and gently traces circles on Beth's skin.

SID
She wanted to meet someone new. I asked her "why?" -- she said, "Because he won't know me from before. Just now. Just what I am now."

Beth looks to him, puzzled.

SID
I knew her... on playgrounds... in Sunday School... all those grades -- I knew her as she changed. But she was still the same person. All the times I knew her, she was still her.
       (after a beat)
She can't get away from that.

He holds Beth tightly.

SID
You stay in one place, and all those things that are you... are there. She didn't understand that if you leave, they're still there, in you -- but they stop being clear. You stop knowing who you are, and what you want.

**BETH**
You've stayed here and you know who you are?

He moves away from Beth.

**SID**
I see the lawns I mow, houses I've painted, faces I know... my parents... And I'm constantly reminded of who I am.

**BETH**
And you know what you want.

**SID**
I want you.

**BETH**
Oh.

**SID**
I want to be inside you.

**BETH**
Good.
(after a beat)
Come here and put it inside me.

**SID**
No... I want to be able to put myself inside of you.

**BETH**
Doing this is as close as you get.

Beth pulls Sid close, bringing him into her.

**BETH**
Come here.

**SID**
I love you.
She holds him tightly.

    **BETH**
    Come inside me.

Sid arches away from her.

    **SID**
    Beth?

    **BETH**
    Yes?

    **SID**
    What do you want?

    **BETH**
    (uncertainly)
    I want... I want...

Beth pulls Sid back to her.

    **BETH**
    (w/ quiet urgency)
    Come inside me.

They hold each other tightly.

**CUT TO:**

**INT./EXT. NICK'S SEDAN – NIGHT**

Nick looks like hell -- his eyes red, his hair a mess.

The nearly empty scotch bottle is on the dashboard.

The car windows are open, the roar of the wind competing with the blasting radio.

Nick suddenly jerks the wheel over.

**EXT. ABANDONED REST STOP – CONTINUOUS**

The sedan screeches off the highway into the abandoned rest area.

It stops facing a battered phone booth -- the engine turns off but the headlines stay shining on the phone booth.
IN THE SEDAN

Nick turns off the radio. It is suddenly very quiet -- only the occasional lonely DRONE OF A TRUCK passing on the highway.

He takes a deep breath.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is standing in the phone booth, harshly lit by his headlights.

NICK

(into the phone)
Could you give me the number for information in Arizona?... Thank you.

Nick dials with drunken concentration.

NICK

(into the phone)
Enfield. Carol, Carol, umm... (mortified)
Carol... Carol Something... Shit!

He hangs up. He hits himself in the head in angry disbelief.

He hurriedly dials zero and listens for a moment, desperately summoning up all his salesman charm.

NICK

(into the phone)
Hello Janet, thank you for being my operator. I hope you can help me, I need to call my home.

Nick listens impatiently.

NICK

Well, I'll tell you my number, but there's a problem. My phone's been disconnected, not because of bills, I mean we paid all our bills. We were hardly ever even late. We were very good customers, but we're moving, so we had the phone disconnected. But now I need to call... the woman I live with. She's still there and
I've got to let her know where I am.

Nick listens, shaking his head emphatically.

NICK
I don't know any of the neighbors. I know one, but I can't remember her last name.
(he listens, frustrated)
No. No. No. You see you have to be able to help me, this is not a prank, it's my home phone, this is an emergency.
(he listens, then urgently)
Yes it can, it can be done. Someone there can hook the phone back up. It's not like a phone guy came to our house to disconnect the phone, nobody came to our house, someone just flipped a switch somewhere, somewhere there where you work, or plugged something into a computer and our phone stopped working!
(he listens)
They turned it off, they can turn it back on!
(he listens, starting to panic)
I know it's the week-end! I know! Call them at home! They'll have a computer at their house, they'll have a phone thing to hook it up to the real computer! That's how these people live! They'll be glad to do it!...

Nick listens. Suddenly all his energy drains away.

NICK
(crestfallen)
No. No. I can't have the police go to the house. That won't work, there are circumstances.
(desperately)
It's you... you've got to help me! Please! I've gotta call home! I can't wait. It could be too late! Janet!! You've gotta help me! Please! You can reconnect me. Please!! Don't hang up! Don't hang up!!
He hurls the receiver at the phone.

**NICK**

You fucker!! You heartless...

Nick doubles over, retching, clutching the side of the booth.

**TELEPHONE RECORDING**

"If you'd like to make a call, please hang up and try again. If you need help..."

CUT TO

BLACK:

FADE IN:

**INT. BETH'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

Sid is sprawled out over the bed, sleeping, Beth nestled against him. She stirs and cuddles closer.

Suddenly she realizes it's not Nick. She pulls away, orientating herself. She quickly scoots out of bed and hurriedly pulls on a pair of jeans.

The alarm clock CLANGS.

Beth looks about for the alarm. She tensely scatters some boxes. She dumps one, finds the alarm and shuts it off.

She stares at the clock and drops it into a box.

**SID (O.S.)**

(cheerfully)

Morning.

Beth cringes slightly and turns to face Sid.

**SID AND BETH**

**BETH**

(attempting a smile)

Hi.

**SID**

(grinning)

Hi.
BETH
I didn't want to wake you.

SID
(cheerfully)
I'm awake. I'm a morning person.

BETH
I'm not.

SID
Then why don't you come back to bed?

BETH
I've got to pack.

SID
(sitting up)
Where do we start?

BETH
(firmly)
No.
(softening)
You paint.

She looks around the room littered with boxes and piles of clothes.

BETH
I'll manage.

SID
(cheerfully)
Whatever you say.

Sid gets out of bed, wrapping the sheet around himself. Beth stares at the room. She suddenly trembles. She steadies herself on the bed table.

BETH
Oh God...

SID
(concerned)
What?

Beth avoids his eyes, glancing around the room.

BETH
I'd be so much happier if I could blame this on Nick, but it always happens to me. I'm always left with nothing.

(taking a deep breath)
It doesn't matter if I leave the guy or if the guy leaves me -- I'm left with nothing. I never do anything for myself. I never acquire anything. I mean Nick didn't take from me. He stole a t.v. and left it for me. He didn't take my things, he didn't take our things... he didn't even take his clothes! And I'll still leave this house with nothing!

SID
He took three years from you.

BETH
No...
(meeting his eyes)
He didn't take 'em. I mean, when he cared about me, he cared about me. And he was really good in bed.

She glances away from Sid toward the bed.

BETH
(after a beat)
I didn't expect more.

She turns away from Sid and the bed. Sid moves toward her.

SID
(carefully)
Beth...

Beth summons up all the composure she can manage.

BETH
(referencing the cluttered room)
I can't face this.
(looking to Sid)
I'm gonna finish up the kitchen...
(heading for the door)
...get some momentum...

She goes out the bedroom door. Sid stares after her.
CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED REST STOP – MORNING

Nick's sedan is parked in the same place as the night before.

A YOUNG MAN with long hair ROARS into the rest stop on a Harley-Davidson, his life's possession strapped on the back. He stops the bike between Nick's car and the phonebooth, idling the engine, loudly. He looks to the phonebooth, the receiver dangling. He turns to Nick's sedan.

YOUNG MAN

Phone work?

NICK

Awakened by the ROAR, Nick has wearily leaned his head out the window.

Nick stares at the young man.

NICK

(after a beat)

No.

Drained, Nick rests his head on the steering wheel.

OFFSCREEN, the motorcycle starts up and zooms away. A silence falls over the rest stop.

Without raising his head from the steering wheel, Nick starts the car.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM – MORNING

Sid is making the bed.
CAROL (V.O.)
(gleefully conspiratorially)
How was he?

BETH (V.O.)
(sheepishly)
He's twenty-four.

Sid pulls up the blanket and fluffs the pillows.

CAROL (V.O.)
A little weak on tenderness, but long on juice?

BETH (V.O.)
Long on conversation.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The cupboards are all open and bare. A half dozen boxes are neatly stacked. Beth is sitting on the floor packing the final dishes. Carol holds out a mug of coffee.

CAROL
Did you need talk?

Beth stands and takes the coffee.

BETH
Yeah. I guess I did.

CAROL
Good.

Beth sips her coffee, gazing out the kitchen window.

BETH'S POV

The backyard. In the light of day it's lost its magical quality. The grass needs cutting and is marred by brown patches. The swingset looks pathetically rusted and dilapidated.

CLOSE-UP: BETH

Her face clouds over.
CAROL (O.S.)
(cheerfully)
So what are we doing?

BETH AND CAROL

Carol is staring at Beth staring out at the backyard.

BETH
Christ...

She turns to Carol.

BETH
(w/ an edge of desperation)
I gotta get out here. I was in Tucson two years before you and Nick got here.
(in disbelief)
I've been here five years...

CAROL
Yeah...

BETH
This state's driving me crazy.

CAROL
So what are you gonna do?

BETH
I've got no money.

CAROL
I've got some.

BETH
(chagrined by self-awareness)
I can't take it. I mean you're being great, but I can't take it. I'm gonna be gone, we won't see each other, and I won't send the money. I won't. I know... I won't get around, I'll forget, I won't do it.

She looks around the room in disgust.

BETH
(agitated)
Shit. I'll sell all this shit. I don't want any of it, just my car and my clothes...

CAROL
(carefully)
Okay...

BETH
(shaking her head)
I'm sorry... I shouldn't have fucked this kid last night. I should have slept. Now I've got all this stuff to do, and I'm tired, I'm churned up, I'm in a fuckin' mood.

CAROL
Let's do things, get you busy.

BETH
Yeah.

CAROL
You get all the stuff you wanna sell, and I'll make some tag sale signs.

BETH
No one'll buy my stuff. It's all junk.

CAROL
That's what people buy at tag sales. Broken appliances, ugly knicknacks.

Beth looks at the semi-packed boxes.

BETH
(laughing)
I guess I do have stuff to sell.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S FRONT LAWN - DAY

Boxes full of a motley collection of knickknacks, housewares, and crummy appliances are spread out on the lawn. In the BACKGROUND a couple of M.T.V. influenced teens are checking out the knickknacks and goofing on them.
MRS. DOTSON, a woman in her late forties wearing a NURSE'S UNIFORM is poking through the odds and ends. Beth and Carol hovering near her. Mrs. Dotson picks up the coffee maker, examines it, and puts it down. She picks up the blender, examines it, and puts it down.

CAROL (impatiently)
Is there something specific you're looking for?

MRS. DOTSON
Yes. (sheepishly)
Actually everything... I don't have anything.

BETH
Nothing?

MRS. DOTSON
I just moved to town. (hesitating then confiding) My husband passed away, and I, umm, didn't want to have our things... they were too familiar.

Beth realizes why she's selling all her stuff -- it's too familiar.

BETH (abruptly)
You can have it all for three hundred. The stuff in these boxes and everything inside.

MRS. DOTSON (taken aback)
Oh, my, I don't know... everything?

BETH
Everything. (hesitating)
Except the t.v.

Mrs. Dotson searches Beth's face with a kind gaze. Beth smiles nervously.

**BETH**
(apologetically)
The t.v.s not for sale.

---

**CUT TO:**

**INT/EXT. NICK'S SEDAN**

Nick's smoking, looking haggard. Between drags, he taps a tempo on the steering wheel with his cigarette holding his hand.

**NICK'S POV**

The highway and the desert stretch out before him, the heat waves of late afternoon shimmering above the blacktop. In the distance, the giant teepee souvenir shop rises out of the horizon like a mirage.

**NICK**

An idea strikes him and his lips tighten into a small determined smile.

---

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TEEPEE GIFT SHOP - AFTERNOON**

A couple of vacationing families and a busload of elderly sightseers poke through the stunning assortment of Native American souvenirs.

Nick stands at the counter talking to a plump elderly **NAVAJO WOMAN**.

**NAVAJO WOMAN**
Maybe some nice turquoise jewelry.

NICK
(shaking his head)
I don't think she really wears jewelry.

A little boy stares at the disheveled Nick. His mother hurries him away.

NAVAJO WOMAN
Maybe a nice Navajo rug?

NICK
(incredulous)
As a present? No.

He points past her.

NICK
What about that?

THEIR POV
A huge beautifully feathered ceremonial headdress.

NICK AND THE NAVAJO WOMAN

NICK
That would make her laugh.

NAVAJO WOMAN
(not amused)
That's authentic -- it's very expensive.

NICK
You got something like it but fake?

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN - LATE AFTERNOON
Beth and Mrs. Dotson are standing beside the now empty blankets.

In the BACKGROUND, Sid and Carol are packing boxes into Mrs. Dotson's car.
Mrs. Dotson has begun to fill out a check.

**MRS. DOTSON**
I'm sorry, what's your name?

**BETH**
Can you just leave the name blank? I won't have an account, so I'll have to find someplace to cash it for me.

Mrs. Dotson looks at her. They stare into each other's eyes.

**MRS. DOTSON**
(after a beat)
All right.

Mrs. Dotson hands Beth the check. Beth sticks it in her back pocket. After an awkward moment she extends her hand.

**BETH**
Thanks a lot.

Mrs. Dotson takes her hand. Sid and Carol walk up to them.

**SID**
(cheerfully)
You're set.

Mrs. Dotson lets go of Beth's hand. They turn to Sid and Carol.

**MRS. DOTSON**
(warmly chagrined)
You did all the work...

**SID**
(good-naturedly)
Sure.

(mischievously)
Now I've gotta finish painting, but Carol here would be happy to help you unload.

Carol starts to protest and then checks herself for Beth's sake.

**CAROL**
Of course. I'll follow you in my car.

SID
(to Mrs. Dotson)
And I'll be by tomorrow with my truck and the big things.

He heads into the house. Beth stares after him. Mrs. Dotson touches her shoulder, lightly, getting her attention.

MRS. DOTSON
(to Beth)
Thank you.
(smiling)
You've given me a home.

She looks to Carol.

CAROL
(nicely)
I'll be right along.

Mrs. Dotson walks off toward her car.

CAROL
(to Beth)
This had to be history's most efficient tag sale.

Beth laughs, distractedly.

BETH
Yeah... I'm sorry Sid stuck you with unloading.

CAROL
No problem.
(smiling to herself)
He kinda bites my butt, but he's okay.

BETH
He is.

Beth suddenly embraces Carol.

BETH
Listen.
(breaking the embrace)
I'll probably be gone before you get back.

**CAROL**
I thought maybe we could be roomies for a while. You know, while you figure out what's next.

**BETH**
(shaking her head)
I can't.
(after a beat, admitting her feelings)
He gets to me... too much. If I don't go I'll end up with staying with him.

**CAROL**
(gently)
You've done worse.

**BETH**
Sure.

They look at each other and start to laugh. Their laughter builds -- a release of the strain of the last two days.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. NICK'S SEDAN - INTERSTATE - DAY**

Nick's driving fast, completely focused on the road ahead, the wind ROARING through the open windows.

A cheap plastic Indian headdress with brightly colored synthetic feathers is perched on his head.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Sid's finished painting -- the room gleams. He pulls a dropcloth off the bureau, then another one off of Beth's two packed suitcases.

**BETH (O.S.)**
(softly)
Sid?

Sid turns and looks, smiling.

**SID’S POV**

Beth is standing in the doorway, a weariness having settled over her. She steps into the room.

**BETH AND SID**

**SID**

Hi.

**BETH**

I'm sorry about selling the sofa bed.

**SID**

I didn't really need one. When my friends get drunk, they throw up and sleep on the floor.

**BETH**

But I gave it to you.

He puts his arms around her.

**SID**

You gave me a lot more.

**BETH**

No.

(holding him tightly)

It was all even in this department.

**SID**

(softly)

...Feel me?

**BETH**

(whispering)

I know... You're hard again.

Holding her tightly, Sid runs his fingers down her spine.

**SID**

I want you all the time.

**BETH**
Shit.

She kisses him. They kiss, long and hard. Abruptly, she breaks the embrace and moves away from him.

**BETH**

(ironically self-aware)
I just fleeced a widow.

**SID**

(protesting)
No...

**BETH**

It was all junk.

She shivers.

**BETH**

Shit. I've got to get some aspirin...

(shaking her head)
I didn't drink enough to be hung over.

She walks away from Sid, out of the bedroom.

**INT. BETH'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Beth gulps down aspirin. She stares at herself in the mirror, wearily searching.

**IN THE MIRROR**

Sid appears in the doorway, his reflection small next to the reflection of her face.

**SID**

You just feel bad for her like I feel bad for her... 'cause her husband died.

**BETH**

(doubting this)
Yeah?

**ANGLE TO INCLUDE SID AND BETH**

**SID**
That's about the saddest thing there is... losing someone you love.

Beth is struck by a certainty that she's never lost anyone she's loved because she's never really loved anyone.

BETH
It's never happened to me.

Sid hesitates, then speaks his heart.

SID
If you died, I couldn't stand life.

BETH
I...

She steps forward and kisses him. She steps back.

BETH
(businesslike)
I've got to go now.

She walks out of the bathroom. Sid and THE CAMERA FOLLOW as she hurries though the living room toward the bedroom.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

BETH
The new people'll be here.

She disappears down the hall to the bedroom.

SID
(following)
Go to my house.

BETH (O.S.)
No.

IN THE BEDROOM

Beth picks up her suitcases. Sid steps into the doorway.

SID
While you find a place.

BETH
No. I gotta get out.
She heads to the bedroom door.

**SID**
I can talk to the realtors, I know they've got a place in Agawam.

Beth stops.

**BETH**
(shaking her head)
No... Agawam?... no. I don't know where I'm going. Somewhere else.

She walks past him into the hallway. Sid and THE CAMERA FOLLOW.

**SID**
You can call me when you get there. I'll give you my number.

**IN THE LIVING ROOM**

She stops and puts down the suitcases.

**BETH**
(gently)
Sid. I'm going away. You're making me way too important. You met me yesterday.

He goes to her.

**SID**
And today I love you.

She steps back, shaking her head.

**BETH**
Jesus... one day...

**SID**
That doesn't matter. You know that. It can take a second.

Beth loses control, upset with herself for having mixed emotions, upset with her life, and upset he's making this more difficult.

**BETH**
No! That's... that's a fuckin' animal
thing, I've done that.

SID
Not with me.

BETH
I meet men, go home with them and just stay. No decision involved -- it's just what I do. And then I don't have to live my life, I just lead theirs. I can't keep doing that.

SID
(adamant)
We're not that way!

BETH
What way are we?

SID
We're passionate. We're comfortable.

BETH
It's been passionate, it's been comfortable. But it hasn't been... important.
   (after a beat)
Like you're making it!

SID
(urgently)
It is important! You know that.

BETH
No! It was a night! It wasn't real. It was fun, it was some great fucking! But it's just something that happened! It's not real!

SID
It didn't "just happen"! You know we're it! I'm the one for you!

BETH
The "one"?! I've had lots of "ones"! I look like a baby but I'm twenty-fuckin'-- eight years old! You're just the latest!

SID
No. I'm the last. You've found me. And it can go on forever.
BETH
No!
(her heart breaking
for him)
Oh, Sid... Forever?
(shaking her head)
You have to understand -- it's just
talk.

SID
It's not.

BETH
(defiantly disbelieving)
It is. C'mon, these things you say...
c'mon! What?! If I died you couldn't
stand life? That's... that's...

SID
That's true.

BETH
No.

Beth can't bear the risk of opening her soul to believe
him --
and she can't bear to hear the outpouring of his soul
without
believing him. So she ends it.

BETH
(after a beat, harshly)
You won't know when I die. You won't
be there.

She picks up her suitcases and heads for the door.

SID
(following her, certain)
You'd want me there. If I wasn't
there it wouldn't matter who was.
You'd be alone.

BETH
No.

He grabs her arms and spins her to face him.

SID
(imploring)
Beth... Beth... you love me...
BETH
(defiantly)
No!

SID
How do you feel? Think! You love me.

She stares at him, breathing deeply, gathering herself. He lets go of her arms and steps back.

BETH
(his words carefully chosen)
I care about you.

SID
You have to be with me.

BETH
No.
(pause)
I care about you. But I'm an adult. I can say no.

They stare at each other.

SID
(w/ controlled anger)
That's what makes you an adult?

BETH
(unwavering)
Yes.
(pause)
I can say no.
(pause)
No, I won't do that. No, I won't have that. No, I can't.

SID
(need to hear her say it)
You can say no to me?

BETH
Yes.

He looks away from her. She stares at his back.

BETH
I'm going.

She steps toward the door.

**SID**
Beth!

She stops.

**SID**
(after a beat)
Have someplace to go.

**BETH**
(simply)
I don't.

She opens the door.

**SID**
Why don't...

**BETH**
(interrupting)
Don't tell me what to do.

She goes out the door. Sid goes to the door.

**EXT. THE FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS**

Beth makes her way to her car. Sid stands in the doorway, watching.

**SID**
What are you gonna do?

She turns and faces him.

**BETH**
I don't know.

Beth tosses her suitcases in the backseat. She gets into the car and starts the engine.

Sid stands, willing her to stop the car.

Beth pulls out to the end of the driveway.

**INT. BETH'S PINTO**
She looks up at the rearview mirror.

**BETH'S POV**

Sid is framed in the doorway of her old home, waiting, trusting that she can't leave, that they are destined.

**BETH**

Her eyes well with tears. Her face sets with resolve.

**THE HOUSE AND DRIVEWAY**

The car pulls out and disappears down the road. Sid stands in the doorway for a long moment. He steps back into the house and shuts the door.

**SLOW DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. NICK'S CAR - DUSK**

Nick is driving, the cheap headdress still perched on his head. Crumpled empty coffee cups are scattered about the front seat. He reaches up and turns the rearview mirror.

**REARVIEW MIRROR**

Nick's face stares back at him. It's not a pretty sight.

**NICK**

Nick reaches into the back seat, fishes and comes up with his necktie. He slips the still-knotted necktie over his headdress and tightens it around his neck.

Nick looks back to the road and suddenly swerves off an exit ramp. The CAMERA LINGERS on the Exit Sign -- "Enfield AZ."

**DISSOLVE TO:**
INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Sid silently goes through the motions of pulling the masking tape from around the window sills of the freshly painted room, his face a stony mask.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nick's car screeches to a stop in front of the house. He leaps out of the car and runs toward the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door flings open. Nick charges into the room.

NICK
(calling out)
Beth!
(bellowing)
Beth!!!

Sid steps through the swinging door into the living room.

Nick freezes.

SID
(coldly)
She's not here.

NICK
(desperately)
Where is she?

SID
She's gone.

NICK
Shit!
(a moment of manners)
Excuse me.
(exploding)
Shiiiiit!!
(confrontationally)
Who are you?

SID
(coldly)
The painter. You're Nick.

NICK
(startled)
Yeah.

SID
The Indian chief.

NICK
(puzzled)
What?

Then Nick, remembering the headdress, rips it off his head and furiously tears it apart -- scattering a flurry of plastic feathers. He hurls what's left of it across the room.

NICK
Shit!

SID
(accusingly)
You're too late. She's gone.

NICK
(angrily)
I got that. Where'd she go?

SID
She didn't say.

NICK
Shit!

SID
(bitterly)
She didn't know.

Nick runs out the front door.

EXT. NICK'S FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Nick runs out into his lawn.

NICK
(running; under his breath)
Be at Carol's... be at Carol's...
The CAMERA FOLLOWING he races up to Carol's front door and leans on the doorbell -- a loud tight buzzing. He pounds on the door, then stops, gasping for breath. No one's home. He turns, leaning against the door for support, staring out at tract house neighborhood.

NICK
(spent)
I'm too late...

Suddenly he bolts for his car. Nick yanks his car door open and disappears into it. In a second he emerges with the bottle of scotch. It's empty. He eyes it for a moment then hurls it as far as he can down the street -- it shatters explosively. He races to his front door and stops dead in his tracks at the open doorway.

INT. NICK'S LIVING ROOM

Sid has covered the floor and remaining furniture with drop cloths and is applying even strokes to the ceiling with a long handled roller. Nick steps in and stares at Sid and his own nearly empty drop-cloth covered home.

NICK
(at the top of his lungs)
This really bothers me!

Sid stares at him.

SID
(after a moment, with mock politeness)
Will you do me a favor?
NICK
(spitting out the word)
What?

SID
Act normal.

Nick advances on Sid.

NICK
(adamantly)
Listen! I don't want to be normal. I don't have to be, I don't! This is my house. You're in my house. And I'm tired of going to my house and finding strangers!

They're face to face in a stand-off.

SID
It's not your house. You're gone.
I'm painting --

He puts the long handled roller right in Nick's face.

SID
-- for the new people -- whose house it's going to be.
(pause)
You're gone. They're not here yet.
I'm here.
(calmly)
I guess that makes this my house.

Nick ponders this logic, Sid's size, and the roller in his face.

NICK
(politely)
May I look around?

SID
(w/ a stony politeness)
Sure. Make yourself at home.

Nick wanders around the nearly empty room, then, after a beat...
he pulls a dropcloth off an object in the corner, revealing the television.

NICK
(dismayed)
Nooo... she left the television.

SID
Yeah.

NICK
Too bad.

SID
(pointedly)
She didn't seem to want it.

NICK
That's foolish. That t.v. is a remarkable thing.

They both stare at the television.

The sweep of HEADLIGHTS turning into the driveway cross their faces. They both race to the door.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Carol gets out of her car. Nick hurries toward her.

CAROL
(flatly)
You came back.

NICK
(a little chagrined)
Yeah.

CAROL
Is Beth here?

NICK
No. Do you know where she went?

CAROL
No.

NICK
Shit.
CAROL
You're too late.

SID
(from the doorway)
She's gone.

NICK
(to Carol, exasperated)
Who is this guy?

CAROL
(walking past him
toward the house)
Beth's new boyfriend.

NICK
(exploding)
What?!

CAROL
(stopping)
You heard me.

NICK
(to Sid)
Is this true?!

SID
Not really.

He turns and walks back into the house.

NICK
(to Carol)
Not really?

He races after Sid.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Sid is painting the ceiling. Nick bursts through the door.

NICK
(to Sid)
Not really?! What? 
(w/ "say it ain't so" attitude)
Did you fuck her?

SID
I don't tell.

**NICK**
Jesus! The next day!
(bitterly disillusioned)
That's the world, huh? They don't even wait a day anymore.

**CAROL**
(stepping in the doorway)
You left her.

**NICK**
(defensively)
I didn't fuck anyone.

**CAROL**
(witheringly)
You didn't find anyone.

**NICK**
(hurt)
No... I didn't leave her for another person, I left her for another place.
(pause)
Which I think is a little more excusable.

**SID**
I don't.

**NICK**
Well it's none of your fuckin' business!

**SID**
(threateningly)
I think it is.

**NICK**
Cause you fucked her? No! That gives you no business in my life.

**SID**
If you hadn't gone, I'd be done by now. I'd be home.

**NICK**
Be glad you have a home, asshole!

**CAROL**
Let it drop, Nick!

**NICK**
(outraged)
Why?!

**CAROL**
He was nice to Beth when you treated her like shit.

Nick stares at her -- knowing what she says is true.

**NICK**
(protesting weakly)
I came back...

**CAROL**
(busting him)
Nick. This is me. You didn't come back for Beth's sake -- something just didn't work out like you had planned.

**NICK**
(defensively)
You see -- you don't know everything about me -- I didn't really have any real plans!

**CAROL**
He was sweet to her. They were sweet with each other.

Nick stares at her.

**CAROL**
Beth looked young with him. They had a real connection.

**NICK**
(after a beat, dryly)
And I brought them together?

He exhales loudly and holds his head in his hands.

**NICK**
It seems I'm blessed... in what I do. I do wrong, and it turns out right... that I've done right. So it really doesn't matter what I do.

Nick takes a deep breath.
NICK

Hey!

Sid ignores him.

NICK

(after a beat)
I said "hey!"

Sid looks at him.

NICK

(flamboyantly sarcastic)
I hope you're very happy together!

SID

She's gone.

NICK

(glancing to Carol, pointedly)
She is, isn't she?
(to Sid)
If you two were such the happy couple
why the fuck did she leave, Romeo?

SID

After three years with you, she wanted
to be alone.

NICK

I was already gone! This is not about
me and Beth, there is no me and Beth!
This is about you! Why didn't you go
with her?

SID

It wasn't offered.

NICK

(advancing on him)
People aren't going to offer you
anything! You have to take what you
want.

SID

You can't take another person. They
have to give themselves to you.

NICK

(in his face)
That's very wise, but not very true.
(relentlessly)
I sell televisions. People don't
know what they want. You have to
show them.

SID
I couldn't show her.

NICK
Go after her!

CAROL
Leave him alone!

NICK
No. He's not alone, he's with us.
She's alone. She's out there alone.
(after a beat, quietly)
Just hoping she's closer to what she
wants...

CAROL
(sardonically)
And what is that?

NICK
(exploding)
I don't know!

Nick throws his arms in the air and storms up to
Carol's face.

NICK
How would I know?! What do I know?!

Carol doesn't flinch. He steps back.

NICK
(w/ a sweeping gesture)
I know that what I want isn't there.
(pointing to his chest)
It isn't here.
(gesturing wildly)
It isn't inside! It isn't outside!
(spent)
It doesn't exist.

He turns on Sid.

NICK
But you want her, and you aren't doing shit about it!

**CAROL**
There isn't anything he can do.

**NICK**
He can go after her.
(to Sid)
Go after her!

**SID**
I can't. She...
(torn)
My life is here.

**NICK**
What kind of man won't fuck up his life for the women he loves? Go find her!!

He stares at Sid.

**CAROL**
He wouldn't know where to look.

**NICK**
(groping)
She'd she'd she'd...
(triumphant)
She'd head for her parents!

**CAROL**
What?

**NICK**
She'd head for her parents. Believe me.
(pause, then flatly)
They're in Florida. That's east.

Nick stares at Sid, waiting.

**SID**
I...

**NICK**
(businesslike)
You start driving east on route forty. Keep going east and around eleven start checking every roadside motel.
The budget ones... You do that all night, you'll find her.

CAROL
How do you know she's on the highway?

NICK
When you don't know where you're going, you drive on the highway.

Sid looks to Carol, then around the drop cloth covered room.

NICK
(cheerfully)
I'll finish painting.

SID
(to Carol)
Do I have a chance?

Nick and Sid both look to Carol.

CAROL
(after a beat, shaking her head)
You've got a chance.

SID
(determined)
Then I'm gone.

Sid races out the door.

Nick tosses a self-satisfied smile at Carol and walks past her to the door.

SOUND
Sid's truck engine roars to life.

NICK'S POV
Sid peels out, driving up onto the lawn past Nick and Carol's cars, out onto the street and out of sight.

THE DOORWAY
Carol steps into the doorway beside Nick.
CAROL

So.
(dryly)
Start painting.

Nick looks back into the room.

NICK
(after a beat)
Fuck the ceiling.
(walking in)
Who looks up that often?

Carol follows him into the room. Nick slumps on the sofa,
staring at the blank t.v.

MAN'S VOICE
(happily)
This is it!

A MAN and a WOMAN, both slightly portly Mexican-
Americans in their late forties, wearing their Sunday best, step over the threshold and kiss.
The man is carrying the woman cradled in his arms.

CAROL
(politely)
Hello...?

MAN
(surprised, breaking the kiss)
Oh. Hello.
The four stare at each other in awkward silence, the woman still cradled in the man's arms.

MAN
I'm sorry. We thought it was going to be empty.

NICK
(flatly)
It is.

WOMAN
(cheerfully)
We're here to move in.

The man puts her down on her feet.

**WOMAN**

Are you the couple moving out?

**CAROL**

No.

**NICK**

No...

Nick and Carol look to each other, at a loss. Nick looks back to the couple.

**NICK**

(improvising)

We're your new neighbors. From next door.

Carol throws him a look.

**MAN**

Well.

(putting on a good face)

It's nice to meet you.

He holds out his hand to shake. After an instant of awkward hesitation they all shake hands with too much enthusiasm.

**WOMAN**

(cheerfully, while shaking hands)

It is... and it's so nice of you to greet us.

**CAROL**

Thank you.

They finish the handshakes -- there's an awkward pause.

**NICK**

Actually, we're here for the t.v.

He waits, half expecting this statement to be challenged. It isn't.
NICK
(confidently)
The people who left here -- our old neighbors -- left us that t.v.

They all look at the t.v.

MAN
Oh. It's very nice.

CAROL
Yes. It is.

There's an awkward pause.

CAROL
(going to the t.v.)
Well, dear... we should carry it home.

Nick and Carol lift the t.v.

WOMAN
Do you need help?

NICK
We can manage.

They move toward the front door, Carol going backwards.

CAROL
Thanks anyway.

Nick looks to make eye contact with Carol. He can't. She's looking back over her shoulder for obstacles. He smiles and glances toward the couple.

Nick and Carol go out the door, lugging the t.v.

WOMAN
(calling out)
Nice meeting you.

The man and woman look at each other. They look around the room.

MAN
They're not done painting.
WOMAN
They'll finish.

She stares out the front door.

WOMAN
(whimsically)
I wonder where our furniture is?

She looks back to him. He's staring at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LAWN - CONTINUOUS

They're lugging the t.v. across to Carol's -- Carol backing up and Nick going forward. They arrive at the front door.

Nick takes most of the weight of the t.v., while Carol fumbles with her key into her front door lock with her free hand.

CAROL
You're not going to be their new neighbor.

NICK
It was just something to say.

Carol gets the door open.

CAROL
Good.

Carol backs into the house, leading the way.

INT. CAROL'S FOYER - CONTINUOUS

They lug the t.v. toward the living room.

CAROL
You look terrible.

NICK
Yeah? Well, I had a big day.
(after a beat)
I went to my parent's house. Like
you said to. And there was this ancient man, this giant man in the doorway.

They step into the living room.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Carol leads them to a corner.

**NICK**

And I thought, "It's my father. My how he's aged."

**CAROL**

You were drunk...

They gingerly put the t.v. down.

**NICK**

Not at the house. At the house I was stone sober.

Nick slumps down onto the sofa. Carol watches him, puzzled.

**NICK**

He was very tall. He was too tall to be my father. He was wearing a long overcoat, and I thought, "it's a trick, he's on my mother's shoulders".

He smiles at the memory.

**NICK**

And then out from behind him came this beautiful young girl... Beth.

**CAROL**

Beth?...

**NICK**

(lost in reverie)

And they sang to me. They sang "London Bridge is Falling Down"...

(singing softly)

"Falling down, falling down."

Nick looks to Carol. She stares at him.

**NICK**

 serioulsy)
It was very touching.

    CAROL
I'm sure.

    NICK
(defensively)
It was.

Carol sits beside him.

    CAROL
Nick?...

    NICK
Yeah?

    CAROL
What you've been doing... you can't do anymore.

Nick looks to Carol, puzzled.

    CAROL
You just can't do it.

    NICK
(after a beat, agreeably)
Okay.

    CAROL
(very skeptically)
Okay?

    NICK
Yeah. I understand.

    CAROL
No. I don't think so.

    NICK
(defensively)
I understand.

    CAROL
(determined)
It's not like you can't do it.

    NICK
(interjecting)
I'll stop.
CAROL
(urgently)
It's that I don't want you to do it.

NICK
I've stopped.

She stares at Nick. He avoids her stare. She takes his face in her hand and makes him look at her.

CAROL
(staring in his eyes)
Nick.
(emphatic)
I don't want you to do it.

Nick stares in her eyes.

NICK
(calmingly, after a beat)
Okay.

She lets go of his face.

CAROL
Shit.
(after a beat, wryly)
I hate talking to you.

CUT TO:

EXT. SID'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Through the windshield we see Sid driving slowly, looking out at motel parking lots. Their neon signs reflect in the windshield.

EXT. STRIP OFF THE HIGHWAY

Gas stations, fast food joints and motels.

Sid and his truck pull away from the strip and up onto the ramp.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS
Sid and his truck pull onto the highway.

CREDITS ROLL

As Sid's taillights disappear down the barren highway.

FADE OUT:

THE END