

Hannah And Her Sisters

1 Thanksgiving dinner at a nice Central Park West apartment. It is afternoon, pre-dinner and the guests, about a dozen adults and three or four kids, are all joking, chatting, playing, eating canapes, and drinking.

WE FOCUS ON a lovely young woman who is unself-consciously mingling and enjoying herself in a familiar way.

Over her actions we hear the thoughts of a man who is observing her. She is Lee -- he is Elliot. During this sequence WE WILL CUT AROUND TO SEE who is doing this thinking and then continue to CROSS CUT at judiciously chosen moments, she the observed, him the observer.

A Thanksgiving party needs to be ad-libbed and both characters must have their mundane little actions throughout the thinking.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

(over Lee partying)

God she's beautiful ... She's got the prettiest eyes ... And she looks so sexy in that shirt ... I just want to be alone with her and hold her and kiss her and tell her how much I love her and take care of her ...

Perhaps this might be a possible good time to CUT AROUND TO REVEAL Elliot who's at the buffet table or whatever we choreograph.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)

It's embarrassing ... stop staring ... I can't help it. I'm consumed by her ... It's been months now. I dream about her ... I think about her at the office. I wonder if she even has the slightest inkling?

CUT BACK TO her.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)

But how could she? Unless I'm real obvious and I only think I'm being casual ... Christ, on any occasion we're together I'm always checking her out and directing all my conversation to her ... And we get along great ... the few opportunities we've had to have long conversations were exhilarating ...

CUT TO memory shot just moments prior. Lee brushes past him in doorway -- we suit action to following words:

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)

Before, when we squeezed past each other in the doorway and my lips accidentally brushed her hair and I smelled that perfume on the back of her neck -- Jesus -- I thought I was gonna swoon.

CUT BACK TO present, Elliot still thinking.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)

I can't go on like this ... I'm obsessed ... I knew she'd be over here today so I couldn't get to sleep last night.

Now Hannah comes over interrupting Elliot's reverie. She is his wife and Lee's sister.

HANNAH

Elliot?

(no response)

Sweetheart?

ELLIOT

(snapping to)

Huh?

HANNAH

(a canape)

Did you taste these? Holly and her friend made them.

He tastes one.

ELLIOT

Um -- fantastic ... Your sister is an unbelievable cook.

(stopping Holly who walks near)

You should open your own restaurant.

HOLLY

We practically are. Not a restaurant but April and I are going to do catering.

HANNAH

You're kidding.

HOLLY

No, we decided. We love to cook for all our friends -- so until an acting job comes through we can pick up extra money doing just little private parties.

ELLIOT

It's a great idea. This is where your talent lies.
(a faux pas)

HOLLY

(to Hannah)

Can I speak to you privately?

ELLIOT

(kidding)

She tells me everything, I'm her husband.

(then, latching on to
April who passes)

April, you and Holly are culinary geniuses.

Holly and Hannah now alone.

HOLLY

I have to borrow some money -- don't get upset.

HANNAH

I never get upset over that.

HOLLY

This is the last time. I promise. And I'm keeping strict accounts.

HANNAH

Holly, please, don't insult me.

HOLLY

Someday I'll pay it all back.

HANNAH

How much do you need?

HOLLY

Six hundred dollars.

HANNAH

(a trace of coldness,
hardly perceptible)

Uh-huh.

HOLLY

I know -- it's a lot ... We have this catering idea -- and I think it's going to be great -- you admit April and I are great cooks ... But in order to get started there's some things we have to buy and some old debts I have outstanding.

HANNAH

Tell me the truth -- are we talking about cocaine again?

HOLLY

I swear ... We've already got some requests to do a few dinner parties. I mean obviously I'm not going to be a caterer forever ... we both still go on auditions and something could come up any moment ... but the parties are at night so my days are free. I can still take acting class ... I haven't done drugs in a year.

HANNAH

I worry about you.

HOLLY

I know you still don't trust me. Hannah, I've been so lonely these past two years. You really feel it at the holidays. Can you believe I still miss Howard?

HANNAH

That's why I invited Phil Gammage here tonight. I thought you might enjoy each other.

HOLLY

Oh he's such a loser..

HANNAH

(selling)

He's the headmaster of Daisy's school.

HOLLY

Perfect. He reminds me of Ichabod Crane. His adam's apple keeps jumping when he gets excited.

HANNAH

You're terrible. He's light years ahead of Howard.

HOLLY

Please don't start on my ex.

HANNAH

How can you still defend him? He treated you badly and got you on drugs and ran out on you and you still remember him as a genius.

Lee enters or comes over.

LEE

We need an anti-histamine for guess who?

HOLLY

Mom?

LEE

She thinks she's feeling her asthma. Dad naturally forgot to bring her pills.

HOLLY

At least she's not drinking.

The three sisters laugh and touch and interact with affectionate familiarity.

HANNAH

Doesn't she look beautiful in that black dress?

LEE

Yes and she knows it because she's flirting with all the men here.

HOLLY

So what's new?

LEE

Meanwhile dad is draped over the keyboard ready to break out the old nostalgia.

The girls are laughing.

HANNAH

Ask Elliot for anti-histamine. He has some somewhere.

Lee goes off.

HOLLY

Ken didn't come with her.

HANNAH

When does Ken ever come with her?

HOLLY

He's such a creep.

CUT TO Evan, the dad, happy and high at the piano.
Norma, the mother, near him.

EVAN

Now this is a song by Rodgers and Hart
that nobody ever plays. Norma
and I sang it in a revue in -- in --

NORMA

Evan, just play the song-- don't
make it into a documentary.

Plays and sings one of the obscure tuneful Rodgers and
Hart songs.

SHOT of Gammage, the headmaster, his adam's apple bobbing
as he enjoys the party.

2 CUT TO Elliot and Lee off together in bedroom.

ELLIOT

(searching for pills)

I know it's here someplace ...

LEE

(picking up half open
book)

I very much enjoyed that book
you lent me -- Easter Parade.
You were right. It had very
special meaning for me.

ELLIOT

How's Ken? He didn't come ...

LEE

You know Ken -- one of his moods.
Although it wasn't a terrible
week ... he sold a picture.

ELLIOT

Oh great.

LEE

It was one of his better drawings.
A very beautiful nude study.
Actually it was me. He did a
whole series of nudes of me.
It's a funny feeling to know
you're being hung naked in some
stranger's living room. You can't
tell it's me although Ken says
it's my typical languid, reclining
pose.

ELLIOT

(trying to keep
controlled)

Right ... So, er, what else?
What are you up to?

LEE

I don't know. My unemployment
checks are running out. I was
thinking of taking some courses
at Columbia with the last of my
savings.

ELLIOT

Like?

LEE

I don't know exactly. Maybe
sociology or psychology ...
I sometimes think I'd like to
work with children ... although
I never wanted to have any of
my own ... I don't know ... you
think it's dilettantish to take
courses the rest of your life --
to learn about everything?

ELLIOT

It's great. If you can afford
it. What you need is to marry
some guy who can subsidize you
and who's sensitive to your
particular needs as regards quest
for learning type thing --

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

God -- can you hear yourself?
Quest for learning type thing?
Did you actually make that sentence?

LEE

Elliot, you're turning all red.

ELLIOT

Am I? I -- I -- I've been mixing my drinks and I'm a little flushed.

LEE

How about you? How did you like producing a play? I'll bet that was a different experience for you?

ELLIOT

I don't know. Maybe if I enjoyed Ibsen more. It was definitely different than just playing business manager to my usual list of infantile showbusiness types. I'm like a father figure. This one wants to buy a Rolls-Royce, and one wants a house in Kaneil Bay and a new Jaguar and if I say you can't afford it -- they have a tantrum and get mad at me.

LEE

You don't have to tell me about the immaturity of actors. I was raised by two.

ELLIOT

(finding bottle)

Incidentally, I always have clients who are furnishing places and some of them might be interested in buying art -- should I call you?

LEE

Well sure -- Ken would be real grateful for a sale.

3 CUT TO the dinner table amidst great conviviality and gobbling up of turkey.

Food is passed, kids yelp, there is oohing and ahing over the beauty of the bird.

FATHER (EVAN VERRIT)

A toast -- this is a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner that Hannah made -- and we drink to her -- and we all congratulate her for her wonderful accomplishment this year -- her tremendous success in A Doll's House.

MOTHER (NORMA)

I played Nora and I hate to tell you what year and it's very difficult to behave like Torvald's little chipmunk without making a pretty big ass of yourself and Ibsen would have been damn proud of Hannah.

Laughter and drinking.

HANNAH

I'm very lucky. When I had the children I stopped working and decided to just devote myself to them and I've loved just raising a family but I always secretly hoped that maybe once every few years some little gem would come up to tempt me back on the stage just for a short while. Now that urge is out of my system for another few years and I can go back to the thing that makes me the happiest.

They all assent in hearty convivial fashion.

EVAN

Bravo!

NORMA

(with a nod to Elliot)

It was the classiest show on Broadway this year -- that the producer lost a little money ...

HANNAH

(hugging Elliot)

He was the smartest producer I ever worked for and the most attractive.

Affectionate crowd reaction.

Still Elliot steals glances at Lee and while our friends eat, joke, and drink WE CUT TO:

4 Later. Lee in a cab heading home.

LEE'S THOUGHTS

Is it my imagination or does Elliot have a little crush on me? It's funny, I've had that

(MORE)

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
thought before. Remember a few
weeks ago when I ran into them,
shopping --

- 5 WE CUT TO a daytime ext. and continue to hear Lee's
thoughts over a typical meeting on street.

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
--He was very awkward and I
noticed he did that self-conscious
thing of straightening his hair ...

Elliot does that thing. They have met and it is played to
suggest she might note in retrospect that he was a bit
awkward.

- 6 CUT BACK TO her in cab.

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)
And he blushed tonight when we
were alone in the bedroom. Elliot's
sweet. I love talking to him. I
wonder if he and Hannah are happy?
She always says they are ... Although
you never know with Hannah ... She's
such a good actress you can never
tell. I'm not sure her own per-
formances don't even convince her.
And Elliot did seem a little
distracted tonight. Actually he's
quite attractive. Sensitive. Had
I of met him under other circum-
stances, I wonder....

- 7 CUT TO Holly and April riding home or walking or on bus.

APRIL
There were no interesting single
men at the party.

HOLLY
It's depressing.

APRIL
I can't keep searching. I'm always
checking the room out. I'm going
to develop big eyes -- it's Darwinian.

HOLLY
Remember, "Streetcar" when Stella
asks Blanche if she wants Mitch,
she says, "I want to rest." Hits
home, right? "I want to rest."

APRIL
On the up side, our canapes were
a smash. And Hannah's terrific.
So are your folks.

HOLLY

Can you believe the way they
fawn over Hannah? I mean I adore
Hannah but it's so shameless.
It's like Lee and I didn't exist.

APRIL

No.

HOLLY

Ask Lee. Or Hannah even. We've
all talked about it.

APRIL

Well they're obviously so proud
of her success.

HOLLY

Boy -- we all go through life
playing the hand we're dealt.

APRIL

Yeah? And what were you dealt?

HOLLY

A pair of sixes. No -- I'm two
high pair but I keep losing to
three deuces.

APRIL

If you're two high pair then
I'm one medium pair.

HOLLY

You're three aces -- at least.

APRIL

You're sweet. And your sister
Lee is --

HOLLY

She's three aces too. At least.

APRIL

And Hannah?

HOLLY

It's hard to tell with Hannah.
She's either a full house -- or
she's bluffing.

8

CUT TO Lee at home with Ken, the man she lives with.

She finishes her nocturnal ablutions and sits patiently
down next to the tortured soul of Ken.

LEE

(once again with a sigh
of trying to be
understanding)
Why couldn't you come -- we all
had a terrific time.

KEN

(calmly and decently
but you know this
guy is a volcano)
I'm going through a
period of my life where
I can't be around people. I
didn't want to wind up abusing
anyone.

LEE

My family are all very sweet.

KEN

You're the only person I can be
with -- who I look forward to
being with.

LEE

But you can't function with such
rage against the human race.

KEN

I can't help it ... I try to
reason with myself but in the
end I always come to the same
terrifying judgment.

LEE

It's too harsh.

KEN

I go by what I see. How people
live -- their choices, the world
they created for their children.
Look around you. This is not a
sweet little oasis in the universe
enriched by loving people ... with
maybe a few dark patches here and
there ... It's a floating slaughter-
house. The big question now is:
Will anything survive our own evil
much longer? My one consoling
thought is that when the nuclear
holocaust comes, for every poor,
decent person that goes a thousand
who deserve no better will go also.

LEE

Listen to yourself. If you believe that, what keeps you going?

KEN

You do.

LEE

That's too much responsibility for me.

KEN

Nobody's forcing you.

LEE

(sighs, takes a beat)
Elliot said he might have some clients for you.

KEN

I'm sure those morons he handles all have a deep feeling for art.

LEE

He was just trying to do a nice thing.

KEN

Because he likes you.

LEE

Me?

KEN

Elliot lusts after you.

LEE

Based on what? You never see him?

KEN

Based on -- whenever you see him, you always come home full of books he's recommended or films you must see.

LEE

He's my sister's husband. I think you'd like him. He's very intelligent.

KEN

He's a glorified accountant and he's after you and I'd prefer to
(MORE)

KEN (contd)

sell my work to people who appreciate
it, not rock stars.

9 CUT TO Elliot and Hannah at home. They're putting kids
to bed.

HANNAH

Tonight was fun. And you're
always extra adorable when you
drink too much. I felt a little
bad for Lee and Holly. Here it
is the holidays and they're not
happy.

ELLIOT

Lee's happy with Ken, isn't she?

HANNAH

Not really.

ELLIOT

So why does she stay with him?

HANNAH

She's been trying to get up the
nerve to leave for ages. Believe
me, if she met someone else --
but she hasn't. Kiss me.

They kiss.

HANNAH (contd)

By the way, I saw you staring at
my sister tonight.

ELLIOT

Me?! If anything I was staring
at Holly.

HANNAH

That's who I meant. Don't you think
she's really charming?

ELLIOT

Yes. Though she can be a little
intense.

HANNAH

She was so imprssive when we were
young and then she married that
jerk who wrecked her. How could
she choose him?

ELLIOT

How could you choose me?

HANNAH

Oh no. How could you choose me?
Free wheeling bachelor meets crazy
actress -- mother of three with two
adopted -- you took the chance. I
was in love with you in the first
five minutes.

Kiss. More intimacy and we CUT TO later. Middle of night,
Elliot rises from bed to go to kitchen and grab some
cold turkey. All the way we hear his thoughts.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

What kind of man am I? My wife
adores me.... she trusts me ... she's
she's given me a wonderful home after
after so many lonely years ...
Unsatisfying romances that come
to nothing ... all those endless
dinner dates leading no where --
how quick you forget -- always
looking for perfection ... Whatever
that means ... Hannah's beautiful
and smart and talented ... the kids
are so nice ... She's a solid
citizen ... I like making love
with her ... although maybe that's
waning a little ... Had a little
trouble again tonight ... but I
drank a lot. Admit it -- At the
moment of climax you were doing it
with Lee. Oh god -- what is it with
Lee? My heart just goes out to her
... I want to take her in my arms
... And the truth is, on paper
Hannah has it all over Lee ... She's
so much more substantial ... but that's
on paper ... No, but it counts! ...
It's reality ... Jesus, Lee can
never find herself ... She doesn't
have a job or a goal ... Unemployment
insurance ... doesn't want to have
kids ... not a good sign ... bad
track record with men. Look at
all these negative warning signals
I'm listing ... I mean college
courses ... What kind of bullshit
is that? At her age she's going
back to college? ... Oh god why
did this have to happen to me?
I was happy with Hannah. Can I
never be satisfied with her again?
I never looked at any other women
... not even Lee ... She was the
kid sister ... I saw her now and
then with Hannah and we seemed

(MORE)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
to have a good rapport ... we
enjoyed chatting ... Then one
day --

- 10 CUT TO Lee and Hannah and Ken and Elliot strolling and
suiting action to word. Ext. Little Italy.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
-- we're all in little Italy on
a Sunday afternoon ... And Ken
and Hannah were looking in a
store window -- and Lee and I
were talking about how we both
loved Rome and both preferred
Europe to the United States ...
and she was talking about her
trip to Venice and I noticed for
the first time how beautiful she
was ... not just pretty because
that was obvious -- but deeply
beautiful in a way that I've never
recovered from. After that,
everything she ever said to me
had charm, either from the content
or because of the sound of her
voice.

- 11 CUT BACK TO him after depicting the above. He's looking
at a photo of Lee and Hannah that Hannah had.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Look, pal -- she's your wife's
sister. You really think for
one second she'd consider you
romantically? And is that what
you want? To leave Hannah for
Lee? Are you willing to do that
to Hannah? After all you two have
meant to one another? It would
destroy her. Her husband and her
sister. Ouch ... That's why this
must remain just a fantasy. A
thought crime. But nothing more.
(returning to bed)
And with my luck I'd leave Hannah
for Lee and then things wouldn't
work out with Lee and Hannah'd
be crushed and I'd be out on my
ear ... Great. Forget the kid
sister, will you? You got an
early day at the office.

CUT TO:

- 12 Mickey Sachs, a high powered television producer on the day of his live show.

In addition to all the panics and problems of last minute live entertainment. This scene should have pace in terms of its shooting. It should be in motion, Mickey walking down a hall and/or in and out of the studio where last minute rehearsing going on -- an air of tension and motion.

MICKEY

What do you mean they won't let us do the sketch?

PAUL

Talk to standards and practices -- they think it's too dirty.

MICKEY

They saw it in rehearsal! What'd they do, suddenly figure out what the words mean?

MARY

Half hour to show time!

LARRY

We're short -- the show is five minutes short!

MICKEY

We timed everything long -- how can we be short?

PAUL

If we have to pull out the sketch we'll be ten minutes short!

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

They can't do this to me -- I got a live show on in thirty minutes!

LARRY

This never would have happened with the old regime. It's because our ratings are low.

MICKEY

I don't want to hear about the old regime. I'm the new regime. My head's bursting open. I got a migraine.

GAIL

Mickey, you better go to Ronny's dressing room -- this kid must've taken 1600 Quaaludes. I don't think he'll be awake for the show.

MICKEY

I can't believe this is happening to me.

(looks up)

Why me, Lord? You listening?

PAUL

(introducing Mickey to Ed Smythe)

Mickey Sachs -- our new producer. Ed Smythe. Standards and Practices. Ed's new also.

MICKEY

What is this with the sketch. Suddenly it's dirty?

ED

Child molestation is a touchy subject with the affiliates.

MICKEY

What are you talking about? According to the papers half the country's doing it.

ED

Yes but you name names.

MICKEY

We never name names. We always call him The Pope.

ED

That sketch cannot go on the air.

WRITER

(appears)

Hey, who changed my sketch about the PLO?

MICKEY

It needed cutting! We took out four lines.

WRITER

The whole premise is ruined.

MICKEY

It's not ruined. Everybody is married to every line. I used to write sketches. It's not so delicate.

WRITER

I don't care! I don't want anyone tampering with my god damn work without telling me! You want 'em cut, I'll cut 'em myself!

LARRY

If we repeat an old sketch from an earlier show we don't have the right set. We have the child molestation set.

MARY

Twenty-five minutes to air time.

MICKEY

I can't put this show on. We gotta fill that ten minutes!

13 Enters Ronny's room. Ronny is out of it.

RON

I don't feel good, Mickey.

MICKEY

Ronny, you're in every sketch. What'd you do, swallow a drug-store?

RON

I lost my voice ...

MICKEY

I need a Tagament. My ulcer's
killing me.

RON

You want a Quaalude? I got a
whole suitcase.

14 CUT TO music and TV Studio.

ANNOUNCER

And now -- Live! -- From New
York City! -- The Satire Factory!
With tonight's special guest --
Jay Alonzo!

Music -- sound applause ...

15 CUT from this hodge podge to a day later. Larry, Gail,
Paul, and Mickey are in his plush, modern producer's
office at Thirty Rock. It is a post mortem.

PAUL

(poring over sheets
anxiously)

Lookit these numbers -- We're
last -- we were beaten by a
re-run of "Wild Kingdom."

MICKEY

(newspaper)

Look at what this bum says about
me: "How long is the network
going to sit by while producer
Mickey Sachs systematically
destroys what was for years one
of the most original shows on
television?"

GAIL

(newspapers)

This one's pretty bad too ...
Oh, and this one's brutal.

MICKEY

Ok, do I have to hear every one?
Are you a sadist?

LARRY

Mary said that Michael Jackson
might be willing to host one of
the shows if you spoke with him
personally.

MICKEY

Speak with him? I'd cut my arm off to get him. I'm not letting this show sink. I got a reputation to preserve.

GAIL

(reviews)

I've never seen the word "heinous" used quite this way before.

SECRETARY

(enters)

They want to see you upstairs later this morning. You have lunch at the Russian Tea Room with your accountant, a writers' meeting at three -- you're auditioning new comedians at six, budget meeting seven thirty --

16 CUT TO Mickey on analyst's couch.

MICKEY

I can't take it. Meetings, appointments, deals. And for what? So I can make a fool of myself? So Time Magazine can call me a "sub-par little giggle merchant"? I'm sure they're going to fire me ... I don't sleep nights and I'm a mass of psychosomatic ailments. I go to the doctors, they never find anything ... Now I fantasize I'm going deaf in one ear ... I put a lot of doctors' kids through college ... And every time my ex-partner succeeds it kills me.

17 CUT TO Mickey's thoughts visualized. His ex-partner, a Norman Lear type, nice looking. He is clearly a success as he does something like exit his car and bound into CBS or something.

MICKEY (VO)

He's got the Midas touch ... we wrote comedy together for years -- we broke up and we try producing on our own ... he moves out to the coast ... and every silly show he does makes millions ... I finally get a shot and I strike

(MORE)

MICKEY (VO contd)
out. I can't let that happen.
Do not want to be a failure ...
not a loser ...

18 CUT BACK TO couch.

MICKEY
I want success. I admit it. I
like my co-op, I like my Mercedes.
Sue me. And I want to be thought
of as a contributor. I want to
accomplish something. It was so
embarrassing last week at my
folks' house.

19 CUT TO memory cut of Mickey dining with the folks at
their place. Two elderly Jews. Clearly they are not
comfortable with their son.

MOTHER
You got some terrible write-ups
in the newspapers last week.

MICKEY
As long as the ratings are good.

MOTHER
They said the ratings were
terrible and since you took over
the show it's gone straight down-
hill.

FATHER
Sol Basser called from Miami.
He said the papers down there
were terrible too.

MOTHER
A disaster they called it. No,
no -- a catastrophe.

MICKEY
The show needs time to build.
You know the press -- they
exaggerate everything.

MOTHER
What was it, Martin, a disaster
or a catastrophe?

FATHER
Meanwhile your ex-partner, I see
he produces one hit after another.

MOTHER

His latest is a funny show.
Everybody in the condominium
waits for it.

FATHER

You couldn't hook up with him
again? He doesn't want any
part of you?

MICKEY

I don't want to hook up with
him again.

MOTHER

What does he need with Mickey?
The man's a huge success.

MICKEY

I've got plenty of ideas for
other shows too. Series, mini-
series -- specials. I'm well
thought of around the networks.

FATHER

Ok, but meanwhile you have an
ulcer.

MOTHER

It was a disaster -- not a
catastrophe, a disaster.

20 CUT TO Mickey exiting Tea Room with his accountant.

ACCOUNTANT

(as they walk down
block)

The bottom line is that your tax
shelters are being disallowed.
I don't know what your former
accountant had in mind when he
got you into them. Two of the
limited partnerships have already
pleaded guilty to fraud. The
other eight are under investiga-
tion going back to 1974.

MICKEY

Can I go to jail?

ACCOUNTANT

No -- you're just liable for
back taxes.

MICKEY

How much?

ACCOUNTANT

The taxes plus the interest ...
A considerable amount ... We'll
have to sell off some of your
investments and maybe even get
a loan to keep the cash flow
moving. Hey, I notice you're
getting some grey hairs.

MICKEY

Since lunch.

- 21 CUT TO Mickey at ear doctor's, undergoing simple
audiometer check-up. Mickey signals tones by holding
up fingers, earphones -- the usual.

CUT TO him after test.

DR. ABEL

(checking chart results)
Well, I wish I could say you were
wrong but you have suffered a
hearing loss in your right ear.

MICKEY

(any news relating
to his health is
always grave to him)
Really?

DR. ABEL

(a bit concerned)
A mid-range drop. And the ear
is clear ... When did you first
notice it?

MICKEY

(nervous already)
Me? Recently -- at first on the
phone -- within two, three, six
months ...

Doctor checking chart gravely.

DR. ABEL

Were you exposed to a loud noise
-- or had an ear infection or
a cold in the ear?

MICKEY

No -- not that I can recall ...

DR. ABEL

Think ... could you be forgetting?
A car blowout? A firecracker?
Maybe a virus?

MICKEY

No ... I'd remember. I'm such a
hypochondriac.

DR. ABEL

Are your parents hard of hearing?

MICKEY

They hear like wolves.

DR. ABEL

Are you around rock music much?
On the show?

MICKEY

No.

DR. ABEL

See -- unfortunately it's nerve
loss.

MICKEY

Nerve loss?

DR. ABEL

It's hearing that won't come back.

MICKEY

Really? Is it progressive?

DR. ABEL

Not necessarily at all. It's odd
that it's one ear ...

MICKEY

Why? It's usually both?

DR. ABEL

What about tinnitus. Do you ever
hear anything like ringing or noises?
Buzzing?

MICKEY

Er ... now that you mention it ...
yes.

DR. ABEL

Uh-huh.

MICKEY

Sometimes I think I hear ringing ...
maybe buzzing.

DR. ABEL

See, what we did is just a simple audiometer test. What I'd really like for you to do is to make an appointment up at the hospital and have a complete hearing test done. They have much more sophisticated equipment. Then we could learn exactly what this is about. May I make an appointment for you?

MICKEY

Gee, this comes at my busy time.

DR. ABEL

I think it's worth a check though. And I'm sure it's nothing.

MICKEY

You concerned because it's only one ear?

DR. ABEL

It's highly unlikely that it's anything other than some little unexplained hearing loss -- but why speculate? It's easy enough to check.

22 CUT TO Mickey in phone booth. CROSS CUT phone call with his G.P., Doctor Wilkes.

MICKEY

Er. Doctor Wilkes? Mickey Sachs ... hi ... just want to get some information if you have a minute?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES

Sure, Mickey, what's up?

CUT TO:

MICKEY

If you have a hearing loss in one ear and it's not from the flu or a loud noise or anything -- what's the cause?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Anything. It's often hereditary
... a virus ... even a small
noise can do it.

CUT TO:

MICKEY
Nothing worse?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Well -- sure. I guess the dark
end of the spectrum would be a
brain tumor.

CUT TO:

MICKEY
(not thrilled)
Really?

CUT TO:

DR. WILKES
Does the patient have accompanying
symptoms? Ringing or other noises?
Buzzing? Head pains? That would
be something to look for.

23 CUT TO Mickey at work, forced by schedule to listen to
comics auditioning that afternoon.

He sits with the show cronies while a comic does his
stuff in his office. The cronies seem to be enjoying
the comic. Mickey's mind is a million miles away.

Deep in thought, he tries to fake a laugh now and then
he realizes he should be paying attention.

The comic ends his routine and goes.

LARRY
Funny kid.

MICKEY
Huh? Yeah ... very ...

MARY
Where are you now? You're dazed.

MICKEY
I'm -- yeah ... You hear that?

LARRY

What?

MICKEY

Is there a ringing noise? Is
it my imagination?

PAUL

I don't hear anything.

MICKEY

You don't hear a continuous
ringing?

They all ad-lib agreement.

MARY

You're white as a sheet. Do
you feel all right?

MICKEY

I'm fine ... just wanna wash up.
Been on the go all day.

Enters his bathroom, faces mirror and converses with
himself.

MICKEY (contd)

Will you relax -- you idiot --
you don't have a brain tumor.
You've worked yourself into a
state. You have a slight hearing
loss. It's nothing. But why is
it only in one ear? You always
leap to the absolute, ultimate,
worst conclusion. I've been
perfectly healthy the last year.
I haven't had a cold. The worst
you could say is, in the past
months I've had some bad headaches ...

(realizing what he's
saying)

Hey ... that's been the pressure
of the show ... George Gershwin
had a brain tumor ... I think I
read he was always imagining he
was smelling burning rubber ...

(smells ... then he
listens)

Oh great ... suddenly I smell
rubber ... and I hear a ringing ...
somebody's burning a tire and
ringing a bell ... Ok, c'mon ...
let's go ... you got a show --
with low ratings ... Let's get our
priorities straight here.

Puts cold water on his face and returns to office.

SECRETARY

Dr. Abel called. He said he made an appointment for you tomorrow morning at eleven at the hospital hearing lab. I told him you were busy then, but he said they're fitting you in specially and he'd like you to keep the appointment.

MICKEY

Really?

SECRETARY

You have a meeting with Michael Jackson at eleven.

MICKEY

Cancel it.

24 CUT TO a dinner party being catered by Holly and April. It is a small NY party -- about twenty guests.

Holly is passing amongst them with her canapes.

ETHEL

These are delicious.

BURT

I love those cheese things.

ETHEL

And what are those?

HOLLY

Quail eggs.

ETHEL

They're fabulous.

HOLLY

Try the shrimp puffs.

They do, much approbation, Holly returns to kitchen where April is preparing to bring out another course.

APRIL

The stroganoff is ready.

HOLLY

We're a big hit.

APRIL

In this we're a big hit. Yesterday
I auditioned for Come Back Little Sheba.
There I wasn't a big hit.

And she's out the door leaving Holly to work kitchen for
the moment.

Presently David Tolchin enters, a good-looking man about
forty-four.

DAVID

Any more clams?

HOLLY

Yes -- a few.

DAVID

Can't resist.

HOLLY

How flattering.

DAVID

Listen -- you guys are much too
attractive to be caterers.
Something's wrong.

HOLLY

We're actresses.

DAVID

This your first job?

HOLLY

Really? Is the food that bad?

DAVID

Oh, not at all.

April swings back in and Holly is now ready to go.

APRIL

We need the bread and more
baked lasagna.

Now April is alone with David.

DAVID

I know. You're an actress with
a great flair for shrimp puffs.

APRIL

The shrimp puffs are Holly's.
I do the caviar crepes.

DAVID

And the quail is responsible for
the quail eggs.

APRIL

Let's hope so.

Holly re-enters, all three are there.

HOLLY

I stole you two extra clams.

DAVID

Ah -- Incidentally, I'm David
Tolchin.

APRIL

April Knox.

DAVID

And you're Holly.

HOLLY

We're The Stanislavski Catering
Company.

DAVID

Now I'll tell you the truth.
I came in here because I'm bored
stiff by the party.

HOLLY

What makes you think we're more
interesting?

DAVID

(turning on small tv
set in kitchen)

Well actually I plan to watch
Aida if I won't get in your way.

APRIL

You're not in the way.

HOLLY

We saw Pavarotti in Ernani at
the Met. I cried.

DAVID

I cry at the opera.

APRIL

So do I. I get limp during the
last scene of Traviata. Limp.

DAVID

Me too. I have a private box
at the Met. I bring my little
bottle of wine, open it, and I
watch and I sip and I cry. It's
disgusting.

HOLLY

What do you do?

DAVID

I'm an architect.

The girls are impressed.

APRIL

What kind of things do you build?

DAVID

You really interested?

They ad-lib affirmatively.

DAVID (contd)

What time do you get off?

25 CUT TO SHOT of some structure he's done. CUT REVERSE
and the three are sitting in David's snappy car opposite
it.

HOLLY

It's terrific.

DAVID

I wanted that ground level space
to encourage people to just stream
through.

Note: David's line depends on what we find.

APRIL

It has -- an -- "organic quality"
-- it's wholly -- "interdependent"
-- if you know what I mean. I
can't put it in words. The important
thing is that it breathes.

DAVID

It's funny, April, people pass
vibrant structures all the time
in this city and never take the
time to appreciate them. I get
the impression you tune in on your
environment.

HOLLY
It's very important.

APRIL
Which are your favorite buildings,
David?

DAVID
Would you like to see some?

APRIL
I'd love to.

DAVID
(pushes in tape in
car. Opera)
Well let's do it.

26 MONTAGE. Music blaring. Some well-picked structures.
Finally we wind up before one of the horrible examples
of contemporary work -- they're not hard to find.

DAVID
This makes me weep too, but for
another reason.

HOLLY
It drags the whole block down
with it ... Environmentwise.

APRIL
You should be very proud of your
work. It stands up alongside the
best of everything we saw.

DAVID
Time will tell. And speaking
of time, it's late. How do we
do this? Who gets dropped first?

The moment of truth for the ladies. They ad-lib shyly.

HOLLY
Gee -- I don't know.

APRIL
I live downtown --

HOLLY
Me too --

APRIL
(to Holly)
You're a little closer if we
take the drive.

HOLLY

The drive is closed off, isn't it?

They are each trying very gracefully not to be the first taken home.

DAVID

(to Holly)

Well if you live in the Village
-- you're probably first.

HOLLY

Ok.

They pull off. As David drives them we hear Holly's thoughts.

HOLLY'S THOUGHTS

Naturally I get taken home first. Obviously he prefers April. Of course I was so tongue-tied all night. I can't believe I said that about the Guggenheim. My stupid little roller skating joke. I should never tell jokes. Mom can tell 'em and Hannah but I kill 'em. And where did April come up with that stuff about Adolph Loos and terms like, "organic form"? ... Well naturally -- she went to Brandeis -- but I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Could you believe the way she was calling him, David? ... "Yes, David -- I feel that way too, David. What a marvelous space, David." I hate April. She's pushy. Now they'll dump me and she'll invite him up ... I blew it ... And I really like him a lot. Oh screw it ... I'm not going to get all upset. I'll get into bed, turn on a movie and take an extra Seconal.

The car speeds into the night as WE CUT TO:

27

EXT: DAY

SHOT of Elliot waiting nervously on the street. Finally WE SEE the object of his intent is Lee as she exits her building and walks to corner. Elliot follows, then, taking a comically circuitous route, winds up ahead of

her, browsing in a store window. She passes, he looks up and fakes a coincidental meeting.

ELLIOT

Oh my goodness -- hi.

LEE

Elliot. What are you doing here?

ELLIOT

Looking at some books ... killing time ... I have a meeting with a client near here ... I'm quite early ... What are you? Well, you live near here. Where are you headed?

LEE

I was just going to my AA meeting.

ELLIOT

My god, why do you still go to those? You're not a drinker.

LEE

Oh but I was. Before I met Ken, I used to drink beer all day. I couldn't see straight. You didn't know me then.

ELLIOT

You must've been very unhappy.

LEE

Unhappy and fat. The AA meetings are still very comforting.

ELLIOT

I'll never understand it. You're so bright and beautiful and charming. I think -- what problems can she possibly have ...

LEE

Don't let me get started on my childhood. Y'know, there's a great bookstore a couple of blocks from here that if you don't know about, you should. You'd love it.

ELLIOT

If you have some free time ...

CUT TO:

28 INT: OLD BOOKSTORE

They browse, then:

LEE

They just have everything ...
and they let you read them here
without buying. Sometimes, on
a rainy day I'll come in and just
read all afternoon.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

Say something. Tell her how you
feel. Get the subject out in the
open. She'll be outraged. She
thinks of me as her brother-in-law.
What if she tells Hannah? Christ,
that's all I need ... But can't
you tell she's flirting back?
Unless I'm misreading the signs.

ELLIOT

Oh -- I want to get you a book.

LEE

Me?

ELLIOT

Yes. I know you'll love e.e.
cumplings' poetry.

LEE

I do love it.

ELLIOT

I read a poem of you and thought
of his the other day -- Christ!
-- I read a poem of his and
thought of you the other day ...
(chastising himself
self-consciously for
flub)
You'll be fine, boy ...

29 CUT OUT ON the street. She's getting into a cab.

LEE

(holding book)
Thanks a lot.

ELLIOT

Thanks for showing me that
bookstore. Maybe sometime
you'll take me to an AA meeting.
I'd love to see what goes on.

LEE

You'd have a good time.

ELLIOT

Oh -- don't forget -- the poem
on page 112 ... It reminded me
of you.

LEE

Really?

ELLIOT

112.

Cab pulls off.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

Elliot -- what are you doing?
This is your wife's sister. I
don't know what I'm doing. It's
like I'm moving forward on a
conveyor belt.

30

CUT TO Ken. He is drawing. PAN the room -- classical
music playing -- WE COME TO Lee off by herself reading
the e.e. cummings.

We hear it aloud in her mind and it's the romantic one
that ends something like " ... not even the rain has
such small hands."

LEE'S THOUGHTS

somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which
enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too
near

your slightest look easily will unclose me
though i have closed myself as fingers,
you open always petal by petal myself as Spring
opens
(touching skilfully, mysteriously) her first
rose

or if your wish be to close me, i and
my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly,
as when the heart of this flower imagines
the snow carefully everywhere descending;

nothing which we are to perceive in this world
equals
the power of your intense fragility: whose
texture

(MORE)

LEE'S THOUGHTS (contd)

compels me with the colour of its countries,
rendering death and forever with each breathing

(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands

Well, there's no question. He's
crazy about me. My god -- I'm
trembling ... what am I going to
do? ... It's so flattering ...
And even kind of erotic ... Because
he's sensitive ... and very gentle
... But I can't allow myself these
thoughts. The whole notion is
indecent. I mean, be rational ...
he's Hannah's husband. And I
couldn't hurt or betray Hannah
for the world ...

Funny -- the truth is , he's not
really right for her. She loves
the house in Connecticut and he
can't stand the country. She
wants an even bigger family and
he's not so keen on that. I've
heard him talk of quitting his
job and moving to Paris ... but
Hannah doesn't like that idea and
she's so good at manipulating ...
She's very strong willed. She
always gets what she wants. Even
as kids she knew exactly what she
wanted and she went after it.
I never had the confidence. I was
such a pathetic kid ... overweight
and afraid to open my mouth. Hannah
was a success so early it was
intimidating ... I think it's
ruined Holly. But let's face it,
Hannah's real talented and very
beautiful. Could Elliot actually
prefer me to her?
It would be very romantic to live
with him in Paris ...

31 CUT TO Mickey undergoing a more sophisticated hearing
test at the hospital.

He is in a glass booth and in our quick MONTAGE he
signals with earphones on, sounds are beeped into his
phones -- the standard serious hearing test.

CUT TO him now before yet another doctor. Dr. Brooks.
Brooks is in office at hospital perusing his results.

MICKEY
(concerned)
How's it look?

BROOKS
(showing graph)
See -- this is normal ... this
range -- you dip here --

Phone rings.

BROOKS (contd)
Hello? Oh yes.
(to Mickey)
It's Dr. Abel.
(into phone)
Hi, Milt ... I'm sitting here
with him right now. I have the
results of the E.N.G. and it's
as we discussed. The drop is
unusual given his data and history.

MICKEY
E.N.G.?

BROOKS
(phone)
I would say that further tests
are definitely indicated. Right
... I would do the B.S.E.R.

MICKEY
E.N.G.? B.S.E.R.?

BROOKS
(phone)
I would think about the CAT Scan.

MICKEY
A scan?

BROOKS
(with a hint of
ominousness)
No, I don't either. But I'll
discuss it with you later. I'll
work out the details with Mr.
Sachs here and I'll keep you
informed step by step. Ok. Bye.
(hangs up)

MICKEY
You think I need more tests?

BROOKS

I'd like to do some Tomography.
I'd like to X-ray your ear ... Don't
look so apprehensive ... We have
to go through this procedure to
exclude certain things. It's not
-- but if it ever was something
serious, the earlier we knew of
it, the better. How about Monday?

32 CUT TO Mickey at bank of elevators.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

All right -- keep calm ... a brain
scan ... big deal ... ha, ha ...
if everybody who had a brain scan
wound up with something fatal ...
ha, ha ... Jesus, I'm petrified.
What is a site of lesion test?
They know there's a lesion on my
brain? ... They just want to find
out the exact site of it? I should
ask more questions. It's that
I'm embarrassed by my anxiety.
That's silly. Go and ask him.
You're going to need some
reassurance or you'll never last
till next week.

Mickey goes back down hall to find doctor. He passes
rooms with terrible looking cases in them, reaches his
doctor's room and is about to enter when he hears Dr.
Brooks on phone.

BROOKS

(phone)

It could be a malignant acoustic
neuroma ... but more likely from
the data, I suspect a cerebellopontine
angle tumor. In either case the
prognosis would, in all likelihood
be pretty grim ... We'll wait
for the B.S.E.R. and the CAT scan.

Mickey recoils in horror.

33 CUT TO him out on street after milking take.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

(as he wanders somnam-
bulistically down
Fifth Avenue)

Mickey ... you're dying. He
suspects the worst. But he's
(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)

got to be super cautious. He has to go this route. These tests are more to protect him from a malpractice suit. If I die, I can sue him. Ha, ha. How could I be dying? I'm functioning actively in the middle of New York City ... I'm forty-eight ... I'm connected to a million living facts ... Hey, what do you think? It only happens to other people? You're getting up there to that age -- the body starts showing weaknesses. But I'm not ready to die ... I always felt my life to be like a long train ride to the end ... but the end is at the end ... in the future ... Except that's wrong ... the train ride is not guaranteed to the end ... it can derail any second.

A derelict passes.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)

Look at that guy ... He looks like he's at death's door. But ironically I'll be gone and he'll still be scrounging in trash cans ... 'cause of a little deadly flower pressing on my brain ... Ok, don't turn into a poet ... Pull yourself together ... You got a show to do ... A show? Are you kidding? Who cares about the show!? I'm not going in to work ... I'm supposed to do a comedy show with this on my mind? "This on my mind" -- suddenly everything has another meaning ... a deeper, more frightening meaning -- Ok, a little will power here, Mickey. A little courage. I will not react to an event before it occurs and I will not obsess.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (cont'd)

Psychoanalysis has taught me this if nothing else. No premature reaction -- no obsession. I will take control of myself and be a man.

CUT TO:

34 MICKEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It PANS his dark room and eventually it comes to a light patch. It is Mickey sitting up in bed, frozen -- unable to sleep. Lights on.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

I don't want to die ... Please ... I don't want to die ... If there's anybody out there -- please. If those tests turn out positive, I don't know what I'll do. I can't face it ... I'll buy a gun and kill myself ... that would shatter my parents ... I would have to kill them too. To spare them the grief. And my aunt and uncle -- and nephew and niece -- It's a bloodbath. To be eternally non-existent ... of all the possibilities in the cosmos, why did we have to wind up with that one? Meanwhile -- you're reacting prematurely ... Cancer's not in your family -- You always run to doctors and the news is always good ... Not always ... not when I was married.

35 CUT TO Dr. Smith at his desk.

DR. SMITH

I'm sorry to say, Mr. Sachs, that you cannot have children.

CUT AROUND and WE SEE Mickey there with his then wife, Hannah.

MICKEY

Gee ...

HANNAH

There's no chance?

DR. SMITH

This doesn't mean you can't have a normal sex life, but Mr. Sachs' tests indicate that he is infertile -- small sperm volume -- and infertile.

MICKEY

Is there anything I can do? Hormones or push-ups?

DR. SMITH

I'm afraid not.

MICKEY

Could you be wrong? Should I get a second opinion?

HANNAH

This is the second opinion.

MICKEY

Then a third.

DR. SMITH

I realize this is a blow. My experience is that many very fine marriages become unstable and are destroyed because of an inability to deal with this type of problem. I hope you won't make too much of it. One can adopt children and there are artificial methods of fertilization.

36 CUT TO them out on street. She's weeping.

MICKEY

I'm sorry ...

HANNAH

You never really wanted to have a baby anyhow.

MICKEY

But I was willing.

HANNAH

I know but your heart wasn't in it.

MICKEY

What a blow. I feel like a eunuch.

HANNAH

Why should you be infertile?

MICKEY

I don't know. My father is healthy, my grandparents, uncles ...

HANNAH

Could you have ruined yourself somehow?

MICKEY

How?

HANNAH

Excessive masturbation?

MICKEY

Hannah, we're on the street. Ok? And excessively is a relative term. If anything, that would be good excersie.

HANNAH

Prostitutes? You've said you've been to bed with whores once or twice.

MICKEY

Once. In college. And I ran to the nurse. I got a complete physical. Including a cardiogram. I'm sorry ... We can adopt a child.

HANNAH

What about artificial insemination?

MICKEY

What do you mean?

HANNAH

That I get implanted. By a donor.

MICKEY

A stranger?

HANNAH

They have banks where it's kept frozen.

MICKEY

What is this? The future? Frozen kids?

HANNAH

I want to experience childbirth.

MICKEY

I know you do -- but from another guy -- you know.

HANNAH

Think about it. That's all I ask. The important thing is we can't let this affect our marriage.

37 CUT TO Mickey back in his bed, dark. Present.

MICKEY

But it did -- it destroyed it completely ... The endless discussions -- the tension. How can a guy hold out? His wife wants to experience childbirth. Can't be a monster.

38 CUT TO memory. Hannah and Mickey at their apartment. They host Mickey's then writing partner, Norman, and his wife, Carol.

CAROL

Oh it was a wonderful show. think it was the best show you two ever wrote.

NORMAN

The best show Mickey and I did was the one we got the Emmy for.

MICKEY

For sheer comedy that was a tough one to beat.

CAROL

Yes, it was funny but the one about the two Frenchmen was funny and it was warm.

(CONTINUED)

NORMAN

We got that idea on our trip
to Paris.

CAROL

Remember that summer in France?
Hannah, you had jet lag for six
straight weeks.

MICKEY

But it was fun though -- aha -- ha ...

The reminiscing and laughs have tapered off and Mickey
and wife have been waiting to broach something.

HANNAH

Listen -- we have something
we want to discuss.

MICKEY

Which is not easy ... and we
can only do it with close friends
... It must never leave this room.

NORMAN

I'm all ears.

MICKEY

For reasons that are too complicated
and embarrassing to go into --
Hannah and I cannot have children.
It's my fault ... please don't ask
for details ...

HANNAH

We've decided -- after much
discussion -- to try with
artificial insemination.

MICKEY

I'm still not sure how I feel ...

HANNAH

I didn't like the idea of going
to a sperm bank and having an
anonymous donor. I just wouldn't
want that ...

MICKEY

We'd both feel more comfortable
if it was someone we knew ... and
felt warmly toward ... someone
healthy and bright ...

HANNAH

And you can say, no -- because
I realize it's got all kinds
of implications ...

MICKEY

So there you have it -- we're
asking Norman for sperm.

NORMAN

(he and wife stunned)
Gee -- I -- My first reaction
-- after the initial shock --
is ... flattered that you'd
ask me.

MICKEY

I'd be the father. You'd have
to masturbate into a little wax
container.

NORMAN

I can handle that.

HANNAH

Obviously we wouldn't have
intercourse.

CAROL

My gosh ... I'll tell you the
truth ... I feel a little uneasy.

HANNAH

Carol, I know it's a lot to
ask --

CAROL

I feel for you ... I'm going to
cry. You're asking my husband
to have a child with you.

HANNAH

Don't answer right away. Think
about it.

MICKEY

Excuse me.
(leaves table)

NORMAN

I've given blood before -- and
clothing to the poor.

CAROL

Let's discuss it at home, Norman.
It's a matter for your analyst,
and mine --

NORMAN

And possibly my lawyer ...

HANNAH

I understand if you say, no --
really ... We didn't mean to
spoil the evening ... we can
forget it now ... move on to
another subject ...

Mickey, out of sight throughout the last few speeches, is
SEEN by CAMERA. He grimaces in anguish over the
experience. It really kills him.

39 CUT TO him at night in his bedroom.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

So you and my ex-partner's baby
... and now that night seems like
it should have been a comedy
sketch on my TV show. Funny,
now it all seems so trivial.
When you're dying, everything
takes on a different perspective
... You're not dying! Maybe the
doctor was talking on the phone
about a different patient. Some
other poor soul with a brain
tumor. Not me.

40 CUT TO opera -- Puccini.

CUT REVERSE. Holly and David alone in his box. They sip
wine and watch.

He has obviously asked her, not April, and she's
enthralled by the whole event and the man.

There is a moment of their enjoying, the opera, romantic.

CUT TO:

41 We are at the apartment of Ken and Lee. Using it as an
excuse to see Lee, Elliot has brought a client to buy
pictures from Ken.

The client is indeed a rock star with lots of money.

Ken is as always, annoyed and suspicious.

ELLIOT

Ken, Lee -- say hello to Dusty Frye. Dusty just bought this huge house in Southampton and he's in the process of decorating.

DUSTY

I got nothing but wall space, man. It's really weird.

ELLIOT

I told him about your work and he's very excited.

DUSTY

I bought an Andy Warhol and a Frank Stella. Very beautiful. Weird. You look at the Stella when you're high -- the colors float. It's weird.

LEE

Sounds exciting to become a collector.

DUSTY

I gotta learn more. I was never into art when I grew up.

Giving in, in spite of his constantly suppressed anger, Ken points to one wall.

KEN

You like drawings?

They all look over -- it is a nude of Lee -- very unrecognizable but languid and sexy and Elliot knows it's her.

DUSTY

It's beautiful -- but I'm talking about filling a lot of wall space.

KEN

I don't sell stuff by the yard.

LEE

Show him the oils -- Ken's just done a new series that I'd bet he'd love.

KEN

(to Dusty)

They're in the basement. You scared of rats?

DUSTY
Yeah, aren't you?

KEN
I'm used to them.

DUSTY
They're weird.

They go.

ELLIOT
(awkward)
How's everything?

LEE
You know -- I spoke to Hannah
on the phone this morning.
She said you two might go to
the country for the weekend.

ELLIOT
She loves being out in the woods
-- but I go nuts. It's a --
conflict.

LEE
(pause)
I have to get my teeth cleaned
this week.

ELLIOT
That's nice ... I figured I'd
get Ken and Dusty together.
This kid's earned a trillion
dollars -- he's got like six
gold records.

LEE
Speaking of records, I bought
that Mozart Trio you recommended
and the man in the record shop
showed me another that you'd love.

ELLIOT
Really? You have it?

Lee goes to get it and put it on.

ELLIOT (contd)
Love to hear it ...

LEE
Oh -- And Holly met a wonderful
man who loves opera! An architect.

ELLIOT

That's nice. I'd love to see her
wind up settled. She's a tense
one.

LEE

(the Mozart)

Isn't that beautiful?

ELLIOT

I know this piece. It's the D
Minor Quartette -- it's one of my
favorites.

He sits listening to this sublime music. He stares at
Lee.

ELLIOT (contd)

Er -- did you ever get around
to the e.e. cummings?

LEE

Yes. He's just adorable. They
have quite a large gay clientele
where I get my teeth cleaned --
the hygienists now all wear
gloves because of AIDS.

ELLIOT

Right ... er, did you get around
to the poem on page 112?

LEE

Yes, it made me cry. It was so
romantic.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

I want so badly to kiss her. Not
here, you idiot! Use your head.
Find out where she gets her teeth
cleaned and arrange to meet her
accidentally outside. Brilliant.
... Brilliant? How many times
are you going to meet her
accidentally? What is she, a fool?
You keep turning up in the street
accidentally? Great. She wept
over the poem. She must sense
how I feel. But I must be patient.
I can't afford a mistake or a
blunder. I'm walking a tightrope.
God forbid what if she's outraged
and tells Hannah? ... Please ...
don't even suggest that ... No ...
Ask her to go to an AA meeting.

(MORE)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Perfect! ... You've already laid
the groundwork ... Now that's the
move.

And with all this thinking, Elliot tries clumsily to kiss
her.

ELLIOT
Lee, I'm in love with you.

His attempt at an embrace, being tentative, did not work
and becomes clumsy and awful.

LEE
(surprised, put off,
not angry, just momen-
tarily thrown)
Elliot, don't.

Still in the clumsy motion -- perhaps he hits the tone
arm of the turntable and the needle scratches unpleasantly
across the Mozart disc.

ELLIOT
I'm sorry!

LEE
What are you doing?

ELLIOT
Please forgive me. I have to
talk to you. There's so much I
want to tell you.

LEE
Elliot --

ELLIOT
I've been in love with you for
so long now and I --

And in the midst of his speech, Ken and Dusty re-enter in
the throes of a quarrel.

KEN
Look, forget it. I just don't have
any interest in selling anything!

DUSTY
What'd I say to offend you?

LEE
What's the problem?

KEN
I'm not interested in what your
interior decorator would think, ok?

DUSTY

Well I can't commit to anything without consulting her. That's her job.

KEN

This is degrading! I'm not that hard up for a sale.

DUSTY

Ok, ok, forget it, man -- let's go, Elliot.

ELLIOT

What happened?

DUSTY

This guy flew off the handle. It's weird.

LEE

I apologize for Ken.

KEN

Hey, don't apologize for me! It's condescending.

ELLIOT

Well I didn't mean to cause you any unpleasantness. Come on, Dusty.

LEE

(to Dusty)

I'm sorry.

ELLIOT

We'll go -- we'll go -- I'm sorry it didn't work out ...

They go, WE FOLLOW them. Elliot is anguished.

DUSTY

(exiting building)

What a creep that guy is. He's a total paranoid -- Jesus -- what's the matter? You look wiped out. It's not that big a deal ... we didn't hit it off ... are you ok? You're sweating. Weird experience.

ELLIOT

I'll be ok -- I just need some fresh air. Probably something I ate. You go ahead. I'm gonna walk.

Dusty looks upon him sympathetically as he gets into his chauffeured stretch limo and pulls off, leaving a wrecked Elliot on the curb.

Elliot runs to corner phone booth. Dropping change clumsily, he dials.

CUT TO Ken only -- on phone.

KEN

Hello?

CUT BACK TO Elliot -- he quickly hangs up. He is distraught -- he wanders out of booth --

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

(as he bumbles around,
distraught)

What possessed you!? You moron!
What came over you! How could
you blurt it out like that --
with Ken right there -- don't
you have any self-control!? You
were going to ask about the AA
meeting! -- What made you grab
her!?

And now, in the street, he comes upon Lee who has apparently left the house and is seeking him out.

LEE

There you are -- I was looking
for you.

ELLIOT

Look, I apologize -- I'm sorry
-- I'm so mixed up.

LEE

(upset)

How do you expect me to react
to such a thing?

ELLIOT

I know, I know, I'm just in
love with you.

LEE

Don't say those words.

ELLIOT

I'm sorry. I know it's terrible.

LEE

You know the situation.

ELLIOT

I know -- I realize ...

LEE

What do you expect me to say?

ELLIOT

Hannah and I are in the last stages.

LEE

She's never mentioned any problems, and we're very close.

ELLIOT

It's so sad -- she's crazy about me and somewhat along the line, I've fallen out of love with her.

LEE

Not because of me, I hope.

ELLIOT

No -- no -- no -- well yes. I love you.

LEE

I don't want to be the cause --

ELLIOT

It was inevitable I would break up with Hannah anyway.

LEE

Why?

ELLIOT

A million reasons.

LEE

Not over me.

ELLIOT

We're grown in different directions.

LEE

Poor Hannah.

(CONTINUED)

ELLIOT

And what about you? Do you share any of my feelings? Or is this just an unpleasant embarrassment to you?

LEE

I can't say anything.

ELLIOT

Please -- I'm trying to simplify things, not complicate them. Don't confuse me by not being candid.

LEE

Yes, I have certain feelings for you but don't make me say anymore.

ELLIOT

Ok -- you've said enough. The responsibility is mine now. I'll work things out.

(CONTINUED)

LEE

Don't do anything on my behalf
... I live with Ken -- and Hannah
and I are close.

ELLIOT

But you do care about me?

LEE

Please, Elliot -- I can't be a
party to this ... Suddenly I
feel wracked with guilt over
talking to you on the street ...

ELLIOT

You're guilty because you feel
the same way.

LEE

Please, I have to get my teeth
cleaned. Oh, that's tomorrow
... Goodbye.

She runs back to her building, leaving Elliot.

ELLIOT

(looking after her,
breathing hard)
I have my answer, I have my
answer! I'm walking on air!

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

42 SHOT of taxi pulling up. Hannah runs out. She runs into
building.

43 CUT TO her entering her parents' apartment. Her mom is
dead drunk, house messy, father distraught.

HANNAH

Oh, Mom, not again.

EVAN

I won't stand for it! I can't
go on like this!

NORMA

I'm ok, I'm ok ...

EVAN

Don't say you're ok. You promise
and promise ... it's all lies.

HANNAH

Don't make it worse. C'mon, Mom,
get some black coffee. What
triggered it?

NORMA

Nothing.

EVAN

I know why ... don't think you're
fooling me. We were doing a
commercial for the mayor's office
and there was a good-looking,
young, advertising man and your
mother was throwing herself at
him in a disgusting way and when
she realized she was too old to
seduce him, that he was just
embarrassed by her --

NORMA

Liar! Liar!

EVAN

So at lunch she got drunker and
drunker and turned into Joan
Collins.

NORMA

You're such a nonentity that
I have to drink to be able to
find you in the room.

EVAN

You should wear break-away
clothes like the basketball
players.

NORMA

Go to hell.

HANNAH

Stop it!

EVAN

She'd sleep with a snake if you
held its head.

HANNAH

You've had a bit much to drink
too.

EVAN

Naturally she threw up -- They
postponed the commercial. I
wanted to crawl under the table.

NORMA

You should live under the table.

HANNAH

Will you both stop it.

NORMA

My whole life I have to suffer insults from this non-person. This haircut that passes for a man ... who couldn't support us ... so you had to work for us. Fortunately we had a talented daughter.

EVAN

I only hope she's mine. With you as her mother she could be anyone's in Actors' Equity.

NORMA

She's talented, so it's unlikely she's yours.

HANNAH

Dad, go in the other room. I'll take care of her.

EVAN

(going)

You never know when she's going to fall off the wagon and humiliate everyone.

HANNAH

(alone with her mother)

Drink this ... take these ... Mother, you're awful. You probably were flirting.

NORMA

I joke around and he gets angry. Because I get the attention. He's gotten sourer as he's gotten older and I've tried to keep young at heart.

HANNAH

You promised to stay on the wagon.

NORMA

The opportunities I gave up in my life because of that man.

(MORE)

NORMA (contd)

He ruined me with his ego and his philandering and his demands and his mediocrity.

HANNAH

Ok, stop being dramatic.

NORMA

He's the one that laid every ingenue in stock.

HANNAH

Ok -- ok ...

NORMA

They wanted me for screen tests but I knew he'd flounder around out there ... with his expensive haircuts and clothes -- and his deep voice ... he was all show. How's he going to act if there's nothing inside to bring out.

HANNAH'S THOUGHTS

She was so beautiful at one time -- and he was so dashing ... Both of them full of promise and hopes that never materialized ... and the fights and constant infidelities to prove themselves ... and blaming each other ... it's so sad. They preened on the rituals of having us kids but raising us didn't interest them much. No time for that boring stuff. Lee's right when she says they were selfish. But I forgive them. They didn't know anything else. They were two beautiful flowers wilted by their own mediocrity. Although I had it better than Holly and Lee. By the time they came Mom was just an alcoholic ... they have a lot of hostility to her ... But one can't dwell on that or life is too painful.

NORMA

It's very sad when you get old, Hannah.

HANNAH

You're not old.

NORMA

Everything is behind you.

HANNAH

You have a husband and children
that all love you.

NORMA

I know you do. I hope Holly and
Lee don't think too badly of me.

HANNAH

They adore you.

NORMA

But you were always my favorite.
You have a certain spark.

- 44 CUT TO Lee. Alone by river or some such place. She's
staring out to water. She has Elliot's poem. She is
in a pensive, conflicted, romantic mood.

LEE'S THOUGHTS

I can't believe it. He chooses
me over Hannah. And I did nothing
to seduce him in any way. Though
I guess I was a little flirtatious
with him. But it's not my fault.
He's fallen out of love with her.
Funny -- when Hannah first introduced
me to him, I was unimpressed. Now I
think that with him my life would
be complete. I'd have children
with Elliot. I would. Do I really
care about college courses at
Columbia? To what end? I'm crazy
about him.

She walks and we go with her a bit to play her mood.

- 45 CUT TO a row in the theatre that night. Hannah and
Elliot have tickets and watch something. We hear only
a scene from a classic, perhaps Shakespeare or Strindberg
-- whatever -- but we choose a scene that is between man
and woman and while it is not right on the nose, is in
the ballpark along with Elliot's mental state.

We play his face and he's a man deep in thought, anguish,
conflict, perspiration emerges on his brow and after a
period of time, he faints.

(CONTINUED)

There is an ad-lib small commotion around him. People say, "Get a doctor."

"Give him some air."

"This man's passed out."

HANNAH

Elliot! Oh my god! Get a doctor!

ELLIOT

(coming up a bit
but weakly)

I'm ok -- I'm ok ...

HANNAH

Don't move.

ELLIOT

No -- I'm ok ... let's just get
to the fresh air ...

HANNAH

Do you feel chest pains? Anything?

ELLIOT

No -- no -- just lost my breath
... I'll be fine ... thank you ...
excuse me ... excuse me ...

She helps him out of aisle and WE CUT TO:

Mickey at the hospital.

- 46 We do a MONTAGE of something like, if not precisely, a B.S.E.R. and/or CAT scan. This is done deliberately with the attending doctors and assistants looking not too thrilled as the steps progress.

CUT TO him receiving a brain scan.

- 47 CUT TO him sitting in the office at the hospital waiting for the results.

Mickey is not enjoying this at all.

Presently Dr. Adams enters with X-rays and sheaf of charts and a grim face.

DR. ADAMS

Mr. Sachs, I'm afraid the news
is not good.

Mickey reacts in quiet anguish. The doctor posts the X-rays.

DR. ADAMS (contd)

If I can point out exactly where
the tumor is and why we feel
surgery would be of no use ...

Mickey is too ravished to speak, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

DR. ADAMS (contd)

See, it's become quite large
without being detected. It's
very unusual. See this little
white area pressing on the
cerebellum ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

(as doctor rants
professionally)

It's over.

I'm face to face with eternity.

Not later -- but now ...

I'm so frightened I can't move --
or speak -- or breathe --

Now WE CUT AROUND from Mickey's face where WE'VE HELD
for these thoughts and Dr. Adams enters buoyantly.

DR. ADAMS

Well -- you're just fine -- stop
looking so anxious.

(The first one was just imagined.)

DR. ADAMS (contd)

(re: X-rays)

There's nothing here at all ...
and your tests are all fine. I
must admit I was concerned, given
your symptoms ... Why you've had
this hearing loss in one ear --
I guess we'll never really know
but it's certainly not anything
serious at all. I'm very relieved.

48 Bang! WE CUT TO Mickey outside the hospital and he's in
a state of relief supreme.

He's walking on Fifth Avenue. He's smelling the air,
the leaves. He's looking at people, children, smells
a vendor's frankfurters.

49 CUT TO him on park bench. He just stares.

He looks upward to heaven. He walks, he sits. Sunlight
coming through the treetops, etc.

Maybe a street saxophonist -- the music is music to his
ears.

50 CUT TO Larry and Gail in Mickey's office at Thirty Rock.

LARRY

What do you mean you're quitting?

CUT AROUND and Mickey is gathering a few items.

MICKEY

I'm finished, I'm through, I quit.

GAIL

But why? We need you -- the show was in chaos the last two weeks.

LARRY

And the network didn't replace you -- So that's a vote of confidence.

MICKEY

Let me tell you something: For the last ten days I was convinced I was dying -- I thought I had a brain tumor -- and the doctors were not reassuring ... ok? ... And I was scared -- but I mean scared not like when the head of programming calls you in because the show stinks -- I mean scared in a different way. And I had to sleep with the light on -- when I could sleep at all ... And I'd lay there knowing my time had come -- and I was going to vanish forever -- just disappear and not exist ... And it's not a fun thought ... in fact it's very horrible ... And no matter how much you try to rationalize it, something in your blood and bones rebels against the idea -- let's say I experienced panic -- to put it mildly ... ok? And you're sort of thrust into a different reality -- suddenly only life and death is real and all the daily stuff I'm used to is nothing -- it's not real -- it's man-made -- the show, the sponsor, my accountant, my Mercedes, the Americans and Russians -- it's all nothing -- it's just silly. You're just scared out of your mind and you want to be protected. You don't understand what life is all about -- just that you're gonna be snuffed out. Ok -- then suddenly, it turns out -- I'm not dying! It's not a tumor
(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)

... And I'm running down Fifth Avenue and everything smells great and everyone looks great -- trees, flowers, I just want to touch things ...
And I happen to wander into the Metropolitan Museum ...

51 CUT INTO Met Museum and suit action to word.

MICKEY (contd)

... and I'm drinking in all the paintings and the colors and I come across the statue of The Thinker -- and he's sitting there thinking -- and I'm thinking -- and I'm wondering what he's thinking about and then it hits me -- I know what he's thinking -- he's thinking what I'm thinking ... that all the doctors gave me was a postponement --

52 CUT BACK TO Mickey live, continuing tale.

MICKEY (contd)

I'm not dying now -- but eventually I'm going to be in that position of last week. Right? You following this? -- There's gonna be a time when I'm facing that horrible thing again and sooner or later -- it'll be real ... And if that's so, then nothing has any meaning ... this is all ephemeral nonsense ... Life is like a giant, "So what" -- There's another reality that lets itself be seen now and then and it's a scary one -- but that's the one I want to find out about ... Because unless I can deal with this, I'm not going to have a decent moment in life ... And don't tell me to put it out of my mind ... I never can again. I'm a changed person. Well -- I hope I've cheered up your day ... Good luck.

53 CUT TO Mickey walking in the street, having quit. WE FOLLOW him as he walks rapidly, a man with questions on his mind.

Mickey observes faces. A pregnant woman -- a blind man ... a very old man ...

CAMERA FOLLOWS him. Music. He passes a hotel, CAMERA LEAVES HIM AND PANS UP TO higher floor.

54 CUT inside. Elliot in a hotel room. Presently there is a knock on door. He opens it, it is Lee. He lets her in.

ELLIOT
(looks at watch)
I thought you weren't coming.

LEE
I almost didn't.

ELLIOT
Lee --

LEE
I didn't sleep all night.

ELLIOT
No -- I'm sure ...

LEE
What are we doing? Meeting in a hotel room? It's terrible, isn't it?

ELLIOT
I didn't know where else I could invite you without a risk.

LEE
I promised myself I wouldn't let this happen till you were living alone. I was so torn when you called.

ELLIOT
I wanted to call everyday since I told you how I felt. I resisted so many times ... Don't think badly of me ... this is not an easy situation.

LEE
I know it's not. .

They kiss and it is now passionate and leads step by clumsy step to sex. There should be one or two physical obstacles but eventually they fall behind bed on floor or some out-of-sight spot.

After a moment of passion WE CUT TO the same room later. Now the lights are out and rain cascades down the window-pane. Lee and Elliot are in bed. They are relaxed. He is reading her poetry.

Elliot reads aloud to Lee from e.e. cummings or the like.

LEE

It's beautiful.

ELLIOT

You're beautiful.

LEE

No one in my life has ever read
to me.

Kiss -- back to sex ...

LEE (contd)

I love you so much. What are we
going to do?

ELLIOT

Don't speak -- don't speak ...
This afternoon just belongs to
the two of us.

More passion.

(CONTINUED)

55 CUT TO later. Lee walking home, blissed out.

She enters her house. Ken is fixing a sandwich, having been watching tv with contempt.

KEN

You're late.

LEE

Lucy and I kept talking ... I didn't realize how late it got.

KEN

You missed a very dull show about Auschwitz. More gruesome film clips and puzzled intellectuals declaring their mystification over systematic murder of millions. The reason they can never answer the question: how could it possibly happen? is that it's the wrong question. Given what people are, the question is: why doesn't it happen more often? Of course it does in subtler forms.

LEE

I have a little headache from this weather.

KEN

It's been ages since I sat in front of the TV just changing channels to find something. You see the whole culture ... Nazis, deodorant salesmen, comedians and wrestlers who scream their lines at the camera. On one cable channel you have a little pornography where the participants are such morons you never want to have sex again. Then you got your Fundamentalist clergymen telling the poor suckers that watch them to send in money -- money, money, money -- They don't really care about protecting the unborn with their anti-abortion stance. They simply want to be obeyed. If Christ came back and saw those guys on TV hustling in his name, he'd never stop throwing up. Health shows, talk shows, beautify contests, science made popular -- football -- the entire cesspool of
(MORE)

KEN (contd)
contemporary values. I gotta
move to a Greek Island and wash
myself in the Mediterranean.

LEE
Why don't you relax, Ken. I said
I had a headache.

KEN
Y'know, you've been very nervous
lately.

LEE
Well I just can't take this anymore.

KEN
I'm just trying to complete an
education I started on you five
years ago.

LEE
I'm not your pupil. I was but
I'm not.

KEN
When you leave the nest I just
want you to be ready to face the
real world.

LEE
Ken, we have to make some changes.

KEN
Like what?

LEE
You know what. I'm suffocating.

KEN
Are we going to have this conver-
sation again?

LEE
Ken -- I want to get my own place.

KEN
Why?

LEE
Because I have to.

KEN
What are you going to use for money?

LEE

I don't know. I thought of moving
in with Holly for awhile.

KEN

I always told you, you would leave
me but does it have to be now?

LEE

Maybe it'll only be temporary
but I have to try.

KEN

(embracing her)
Lee, you're my whole world --
I want you to --
(notices some
intangible)
Jesus -- Have you been kissed
tonight?

LEE

No.

KEN

Yes you have. You've been with
someone.

LEE

Stop accusing me.

KEN

I'm too smart, Lee -- you can't
fool me -- you're turning all red.

LEE

(bursts into tears)
Leave me alone!

KEN

Oh Christ -- what's wrong with you?

LEE

I'm sorry!

KEN

Couldn't you say something!? You
have to slither around behind my
back?

LEE

I'm saying it now!

KEN

You've met someone else?

LEE

Yes ... But you know this was
going to happen sooner or later.
I can't live like this.

KEN

Who is it?

LEE

Someone I met.

KEN

Who? Where'd you meet him?

LEE

What's the difference!? I have
to move out!

KEN

You're my only connection to
the world.

LEE

I can't have that responsibility.
It's not fair. I want a less
complicated life. I want a husband
and maybe a child before it's too
late.

KEN

Oh Jesus --
(he weeps now)

LEE

I don't even know what I want.
What do you get out of me? It's
not sexual anymore -- it's not
intellectual -- you're much
superior to me in every way ...

KEN

(turns on her, grabbing
her in fury)
Please don't patronize me or I'll
kill you!

They struggle a bit.

KEN (contd)

I should have married you -- years
ago -- when you wanted to -- when
we first met.

LEE

I was a kid. I never had a long affair with anyone. I was turning into a drunk. And you were so impressive. I was so desperate to learn and be taken care of. But you were wise enough not to take me seriously when I wanted to legalize it forever.

KEN

I told you one day you would leave me for a younger man.

56 CUT TO Elliot and Hannah awake in bed, lights on. They both read innocently their respective books.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

What passion tonight with Lee. She's a volcano. It was a totally fulfilling experience ... just as erotic as I dreamed it would be ... And now I feel very good and cozy laying in bed here next to Hannah ... There's something very lovely and real about Hannah ... She gives me a very deep feeling of being part of something ... She's a wonderful woman and I betrayed her. She came into my empty life and changed it and I paid her back by banging her sister in a hotel room. I feel so miserable. I did such a cruel and shallow thing. It's just crazy. Am I looking to wreck lives? I want to call Lee now and tell her what we did was crazy. Crazy! ... It can't ever happen again. I value Hannah too much. Hannah's my person. I can't betray her! Oh god!
(getting out of bed)

HANNAH

Where you going?

ELLIOT

Gotta get a phone number from my desk. I forgot to call Mel Kaufman.

HANNAH

It's so late.

ELLIOT

I know. I can't believe I forgot.
(runs to remote room)

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

What if he answers. I'll hang up.
I'll tell her we can't communicate
until I terminate my marriage.
It's immoral. Then time will pass
-- I won't call. She'll get the
idea. I must stop this before it
gets too deep. I'd rather hurt
Lee a little than destroy Hannah!
It's one-thirty. She'll never
be able to have a conversation
with me with him around. I'm
getting hysterical. I'll call
first thing in the morning. I'll
call at six. Ken jogs at six.
She'll be alone. I'll call and
nip it in the bud.

Suddenly the phone rings and Elliot jumps with fright!

He picks it up.

ELLIOT

Hello?!

(calls to Hannah)

I got it -- I got it -- I got it!
... Hello? -- Mel? ...

57 CUT TO Lee alone in her place on phone.

LEE

(on phone)

I'd have hung up if you didn't
answer -- and I realize I should
never do this and I won't again
-- but I just had to tell you --
I feel very close to you. Very,
very close. Goodnight.

58 CUT TO Elliot hanging up ... He stares forward in
confusion.

59 CUT TO Mickey wandering city ... Park bench.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

I can't work ... I just wander
the streets ... I don't see the
point of anything ... All these
people ... jogging ... Trying to
stay young ... stay healthy ...
(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
hold back the inevitable ... My
Uncle Phil dropped dead playing
squash ... the doctor suggested
it for his health. Two weeks
later the doctor dropped dead
playing squash. Must give up my
membership at the squash club ...

60 CUT TO him before window of health food store ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Natural, organic, Vitamin C.
Right. Organically raised
chicken, organically caught
fish ...

A near-death jogger runs by with weights.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Lookit this guy ... he's jogging
with the hundred dollar sneakers
and carrying the hand weights.
He'll be dead by morning.

61 CUT TO mummies at Met Museum.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
(surveying a sarcophagus)
Poor kings buried with their
possessions so in the after-
life they'd have their favorite
chair ... servants buried alive
with them so they could serve ...
no unions in those days ...

62 SHOT of Mickey before statue of The Thinker again.

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)

Human life is so unexplainable
... so fragile ... one egg and
one sperm out of millions and
millions ... one egg and one
sperm.

CUT TO memory.

- 63 Mickey and Hannah. She is largely pregnant. Gathering includes relatives and Norman and his wife.

NORMA

If it's a girl, I hope it resembles
Hannah. If it's a boy, I also hope
it resembles Hannah.

(to Mickey)

No hard feelings. I'm prejudiced.

EVAN

(to Mickey)

You must be very happy.

MICKEY

(half heartedly accepting
the praise)

Er ... yeah ...

HOLLY

And you're so big.

HOWARD (HOLLY'S GUY)

Maybe it's twins ...

(to Mickey with a nudge)

You eat that Ginseng I gave you,
it really puts lead in your pencil.

Mickey glances over to Norman across the room.

EVAN

(to Norman)

You think it'll take after Hannah
or Mickey?

LEE

(trying it out)

Aunt Lee. Aunt Lee's Pancakes.
Aunt Lee's Salad Dressing. Aunt
Lee's Old Fashioned Home Fries.

HOLLY

Aunt Holly's Angel Dust.

NORMA

Do they still feed them those
dreadful little jars of strained
carrots?

HANNAH

(aside to Mickey)

Have you thought of a name?

MICKEY

Arty. It's short for artificial.

64 CUT TO Mickey going up steps of Public Library.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

Now I have a daughter except I
have no daughter. It's Norman
and Hannah's. Is it fair to
bring someone into the world?
As the French Existentialists
say -- when we're born, we're
immediately condemned to death.
Nice trick to play on the kid.

65 CUT TO SHOT of Mickey poring over the philosophers.

He sits surrounded by open tomes --

One in his hands reads: Schopenhauer.

MICKEY

(reads)

The individual is simply the will
to live personified. Although --
(picking up another book)
Hume says we're only a bundle of
perceptions ... This is not helping
me ...

(lifts third book)

On the other hand, Spinoza figured
the inner nature of the world is
God ... How does he know? These
guys all think they figured it out
... And all those materialists
believed in total annihilation
after death ... Like the stoics ...
what the hell did the stoics know
... sat around in white robes and
took public baths ... I'm gonna
listen to guys who bathe together?
... I mean common science ... the
conservation of matter ... it's
indestructible ...

(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)
(waving Schopenhauer)
Schopenhauer said the will is
imperishable ... But the universe
itself is of limited duration ...
so you got the will and no
universe ... where do you eat?
Not according to Nietzsche ...
Eternal recurrence ... everything
is going to happen over and over
exactly as it occurs ... which
means I will have to sit through
the Ice Capades again! Not worth
it ...

66 CUT outside Library. Exiting.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
All those philosophers. They're
real deep when you're a student
but when you're facing death --
how shall I put it? -- Mere words
suck.

He notices a bar or cafe -- let's say Joe's Bar.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
Joe's Bar ... Remember that day?

67 CUT TO memory. Hannah and Mickey seated in bar.

HANNAH
(very nicely)
I met a wonderful man and we're
going to get married. I wanted
you to know. I know sometimes an
ex-spouse gets depressed -- but
I'll always be someone you can
count on.

MICKEY
What's he do?

HANNAH
Business manager. He handles
finances for various personalities
-- but I'm encouraging him to
produce.

MICKEY
It is a funny feeling. We swore
eternal love -- now it's you and
him ... the heart is a very nasty
little muscle ...

HANNAH

How 'bout you? You have anybody?

MICKEY

Not at the moment.

HANNAH

I'd love to see you settled.

MICKEY

Feeling guilty, right? Don't. I been very busy. Since Norman and I split, I've had my hands full. Trying to produce.

HANNAH

What about Holly?

MICKEY

Your sister, Holly?

HANNAH

You always thought she was fascinating.

MICKEY

She is.

HANNAH

She's been in the doldrums. She broke up with her husband. You'd probably both have a nice time.

68 CUT TO Holly and Mickey on date. He's seated next to speaker at rock cafe. FIRST SHOT is rock act, before WE REVEAL Mickey and Holly.

MICKEY (VO)

How wrong you were, Hannah -- what a disaster.

HOLLY :

Why you making those faces?

MICKEY

How can you stand this?

HOLLY

You're witnessing genius.

MICKEY

My ears are experiencing a meltdown! ... I'm liable to go deaf someday.

HOLLY

Can't you feel the energy? It's tangible energy. The room is alive with positive vibrations.

MICKEY

My right ear hurts and I think the group is capable of performing a human sacrifice.

HOLLY

(re: coke)

You want some?

MICKEY

If you have any more of that you're going to develop a third nostril.

69 CUT TO them later on street.

HOLLY

I like songs about extra-terrestrial life, don't you?

MICKEY

Not when they're sung by extra-terrestrials.

HOLLY

I can't communicate with you. I never realized you were so tight-assed.

MICKEY

Hannah likes good music; Lee likes good music. How'd you stray?

HOLLY

I'm my own person.

MICKEY

Lemme take you to hear something nice, ok?

HOLLY

It's getting late.

MICKEY

C'mon, don't be angry.

HOLLY

You don't believe in ESP, you don't like rock music, you won't get high ... it's like I'm dating Cardinal Cooke.

70 CUT inside Carlyle ... Bobby Short doing Cole Porter.
Square crowd, good music. Mickey eagerly looks to Holly's
reaction.

71 CUT TO them outside Holly's door.

HOLLY
(sarcastic)
Thanks for a swell time.

MICKEY
(angry)
If you didn't like it, you didn't
like it, but you didn't have to
talk so loud while he was singing.

HOLLY
I was so bored.

MICKEY
You don't deserve Cole Porter,
you should stay with your extra-
terrestrial rock.

HOLLY
At least I'm open to new concepts.

MICKEY
And you didn't have to snort
cocaine at the table. You could've
at least gone into the bathroom.

HOLLY
That crowd wouldn't know the
difference -- they're embalmed.

MICKEY
I'm glad Hannah got us together.
She has such wonderful instincts
when it comes to people.

HOLLY
I'm sorry it didn't work out.
It was probably me. I've been
in a depressed mood lately.
'Bye.

MICKEY (VO)
(as he walks down
block from her house)
Yes, it was quite an evening.
You neglected to tell me she was
going through a very bad phase.
(MORE)

MICKEY (VO contd)
Still in love with her ex-husband
and heavily on drugs. Talk about
oil and water. Humpf.

CUT TO:

72 PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Elliot on phone.

ELLIOT
(on phone)
Please, I have the whole after-
noon free.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
I'm not just going to sleep with
my sister's husband. What do you
think I am? We said we weren't
going to have an affair.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
I'm in the process of working
things out. I'm looking to do
it as painlessly as possible,
so of course it takes more time
than if I just cut the cord.

CUT TO:

LEE
(on phone)
I don't want to hear about you
and Hannah. That's your own
business. If you truly decide
your marriage is over and you
become free, call me and we'll
see what's happening.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT
(on phone)
I miss you, I try to resist calling
but I'm just too crazy about you.
I'm going nuts.

CUT TO:

LEE

(on phone)

But we said we wouldn't sneak around and carry on an affair. I can't do that to my sister. I have bad dreams about Hannah already and I know you don't want to do anything sleazy either. Yes ... yes ... of course I think about you ... Elliot, please ... Ok, ok -- but it has to be some very out of the way spot and not a hotel room.

73 CUT TO Hannah and Holly shopping. Obviously Hannah is helping Holly pick out something for her at some store.

WE SEE it with no dialogue for a moment or just ad libs of "yes?" "no -- not you," and that kind of stuff.

HOLLY

How about this?

HANNAH

It's a perfect color for you.

HOLLY

Did you ever think you'd be helping me buy something to wear to the opera?

HANNAH

I'm so happy for you. I can't wait to meet him.

HOLLY

He's married -- and his wife's in and out of institutions -- she's schizophrenic ... and sometimes she's terrific and then she breaks down. And he has a sweet daughter and when she goes to college next year he's going to split permanently with his wife. He's really paid his dues. But she helped put him through architecture school.

HANNAH

You learned this all on one date?

HOLLY

I think he's been dying to open up. It's so sad. Now what should I wear to my audition. I'm singing for

(MORE)

HOLLY (contd)

Joe Papp down at the Public.
Of course I'll never get it.

HANNAH

Singing?

HOLLY

Can you believe it?

HANNAH

Really?

HOLLY

Why not? What have I got to lose?

HANNAH

Nothing. I didn't know you sang.

HOLLY

Why? You think everyone in
musicals sing so well?

HANNAH

No, but they sing ...

HOLLY

Well don't say it that way. My
confidence is not my strong point.
I think I can fake my way through
a song.

HANNAH

Uh-huh ...

HOLLY

Why? ... You don't think it's
realistic?

HANNAH

No, I just don't want you to put
yourself in a position where you
can get discouraged. You know
you take every rejection as
confirmation you have no talent.

HOLLY

Well maybe I'll get it.

HANNAH

I hope.

HOLLY

(pause)

Boy, you really know how to cut me
down.

HANNAH

Don't be so high-strung. Can't I say anything?

HOLLY

I sing a little. For Chrissake, you've heard me sing!

HANNAH

Ok -- Hey, what happened? We were having a nice time and in one second we went to bad feelings.

HOLLY

Nobody else can do that to me but you. I don't know why?

HANNAH

Come on -- everything's going your way.

HOLLY

(snapping to)

You're right. I'm happy. Why must I let my insecurity always spoil everything? So -- aren't you going to get anything?

HANNAH

We're here to shop for you.

Happily they resolve their flare-up.

74 CUT TO waterfront, isolated. Elliot is doing it to sister Lee in some overt but discreetly cinematic fashion. They are in the throes of lovemaking, passion; let's say he's doing it from behind her and enough clothes are on to keep me happy.

Obviously they have found some isolated niche near the docks. They consummate their lust.

Huffing and puffing, they button up or whatever.

LEE

This is terrible -- we're like two animals.

ELLIOT

(puffing, out of breath)

You get me so excited.

LEE

I'm mad -- I'm god damn angry.

ELLIOT

Oh come on --

LEE

No! It's not right! You said
we wouldn't do this!

ELLIOT

Then when I see you --

LEE

That's why we can't see each other.
Neither of us has any self-control.

ELLIOT

Because I have such deep feelings
for you.

LEE

So do I, but it's wrong. Look
at us. We're sneaking around
on the docks, making love in an
alley.

(CONTINUED)

ELLIOT

It was kind of sexy.

LEE

It was very sexy but that's not enough. I can't do this to Hannah and I want more for myself. Now I feel rotten -- we can't lay around or sit over dinner or do all the things you want to do with someone you care about.

ELLIOT

I can't just chop Hannah off abruptly like that. It'll crush her. I'm not the kind of person that can wreck another human for his own instant gratification. I'm trying to lower the boom gradually but it requires a little finesse ... if that takes time, I'm sorry.

LEE

You're not doing Hannah any greater kindness by living with her and deceiving her.

ELLIOT

You make it sound like we do this regularly. It's one time -- and the hotel once. Apart from that we're like phone friends. So once in a great while we weaken ... A lot of people would have rented a little apartment already.

LEE

I didn't say we did it all the time.

ELLIOT

When you're not around I daydream of you in the most pornographic situations with me.

LEE

I've never made love with anyone like I do with you.

ELLIOT

(embracing her)

Because there's real feelings.
Real feelings are everything.

He kisses her ... and they go at it again ...

75 CUT TO that night. Elliot and Hannah home in their apartment. He is antsy. She's normal.

HANNAH
(doing something
with kid)
It's a wonderful camera, Jimmy,
and you can take pictures under-
water ...

DAISY
Can I try it?

HANNAH
When we go to the country. In
the lake. It'll be fun.

Kids scramble off.

ELLIOT
Are you going to sew all night?

HANNAH
I don't have to.

ELLIOT
It's so domestic ... it makes
me nervous.

HANNAH
Are you in a bad mood?

ELLIOT
(pacing)
I didn't know, I'm antsy.

HANNAH
I know ... you were very curt
with me at dinner tonight.

ELLIOT
Was I?

HANNAH
A little insulting but I chose
to let it pass.

ELLIOT
I didn't mean to be insulting.

HANNAH
Then, when I brought up the idea
of having a baby you kind of
jumped down my throat.

75 CONTD

ELLIOT

Well I don't think it's a very good idea.

HANNAH

Why not?

ELLIOT

Because it's the last thing in the world we need right now.

HANNAH

Why do you say that? Is something wrong?

ELLIOT

I don't know.

HANNAH

Tell me. Should I be worried?

ELLIOT

You've got three children.

HANNAH

I want one with you.

ELLIOT

We should wait till things settle.

HANNAH

What are you talking about?
We've been married four years.
How settled can they be?

ELLIOT

I don't know. There are still certain aspects of my life that I'm not totally comfortable with.

HANNAH

I can tell. These past weeks you haven't been yourself. Have I done something?

ELLIOT

You might ask me, what? .

HANNAH

What?

ELLIOT

Y'know you have some very set plans about how you want your
(MORE)

ELLIOT (contd)
life structured ... the house,
the kids, certain schools, home
in Connecticut. It's all very
preconceived ...

HANNAH
I thought you needed that. You
were the one who said your life
was chaotic before we met.

ELLIOT
I know but there's got to be some
give and take. Oh listen, I don't
know what the hell I'm talking
about.

HANNAH
Are you angry with me?

ELLIOT
No.

HANNAH
Are you disenchanted by our marriage?

ELLIOT
I didn't say that.

HANNAH
Are you in love with someone else?

ELLIOT
God -- what is this? The Gestapo?
No.

HANNAH
What aren't you telling me?

ELLIOT
What kind of interrogation --
Suppose I said, yes, I'm disen-
chanted -- or I'm in love with
someone else --

HANNAH
Are you?

ELLIOT
No. But you ask those awful questions.
My god, it's like you want me to say
yes.

HANNAH
Of course not. I'd be destroyed.

ELLIOT

Yeah -- well -- gimme a break ...

HANNAH

Something's bothering you.

ELLIOT

Maybe I don't like living in New York -- maybe I don't want a big family -- and boring weekends in the woods.

HANNAH

Are they boring? We're together. I didn't think they were boring.

Her eyes begin to well up with tears.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

For Chrissake, stop torturing her ... tell her you want out and get it over with ... you're in love with her sister ... you didn't do it on purpose. These things happen ...

HANNAH

I looked forward to those weekends in the country. I thought it brought us closer together.

ELLIOT

It did. I've just been so tense lately. It's my work -- then I take it out on you.

HANNAH

(weepy)

Can I help you? ... If you're suffering over something -- share it with me.

ELLIOT

Hannah, you know I love you ... Jesus ... I should have my head examined ... I don't deserve you.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

You idiot. You try to develop a theme of discontent so you can prepare her for a break and you wind up hurting her and having to insist you love her twice as much. I don't know what I want. I want to be hit by a car is what I want.

76 CUT TO singing audition for a Broadway musical.

Holly is finishing off a song best she can. When it's over they thank her and she scurries offstage where there are other girls waiting to audition, including April.

HOLLY

They're very nice but I did so lousy. Hannah was right -- I'm not a singer.

APRIL

I'm the embarrassing one.

HOLLY

You'll be great.

STAGE MANAGER

April Knox.

77 CUT TO April singing. We let her sing a few lines and
78 CUT TO the two girls walking down the street.

The above was to both show the girls' lives continuing and again punctuate the talk scenes with a musical interlude.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY
(as they walk)
Who knows. You may be surprised.

APRIL
Thank god we have a party to
cater this week. I'm really
low on money.

HOLLY
We have Mr. Morris Levine's
eightieth birthday on Riverside
Drive -- or Riverside Memorial
Chapel, depending on his health.

APRIL
Oh listen -- David called me up.

HOLLY
What?

APRIL
David asked me if I'd go to the
opera with him this Friday. I
didn't know what to say.

HOLLY
You're joking.

APRIL
No -- he phoned late last night.

HOLLY
I -- I'm very surprised.

APRIL
He wants to take me to see
Rigoletto.

HOLLY
And -- you -- you're going?

APRIL :
Well I didn't know what to say
... first I said, no, but then he
pressed it. He said he took you
once and he very much wanted to
invite me.

HOLLY
But I'm seeing him.

APRIL
That's what I said but he felt
it was something he really wanted
to do.

HOLLY

Gee ... I'm kind of taken aback.

APRIL

It's only an evening at the opera.
Did I do wrong in accepting?

79 CUT TO Father Flynn in his rectory office.

FATHER FLYNN

Now why do you think you'd like
to convert to Catholicism?

CUT AROUND TO Mickey who sits there.

MICKEY

Because I need something to
believe in -- otherwise life is
meaningless.

FLYNN

But why Catholicism?

MICKEY

From what I know it's a very
strong religion -- very struc-
tured and very beautiful.

FLYNN

And what about the faith you
were raised in?

MICKEY

I don't know -- maybe because
it was beaten into me by my
parents --

80 CUT TO synagogue PAN suiting action to words --

MICKEY (VO)

-- it never had any special
meaning for me -- it was always
old, bearded men who prayed in a
foreign language ...

SHOT of his rabbi -- action to word.

MICKEY (VO contd)

And my rabbi never seemed to me
to have any special grasp of
life ... He was always sneaking
peppermints ... And mostly you
couldn't turn on the lights on
Saturday or eat bacon which I
love to this day.

81 CUT BACK TO Mickey live.

MICKEY

And I like Christmas and Easter's
the best because I need the promise
of an afterlife ... I can't bear
the thought that this is it ...
that there isn't anything more
... and the Jews are not big on
an afterlife. They're not a merry
people.

FLYNN

So at the moment you don't believe
in God?

MICKEY

No. And I want to. I'm willing
to dye Easter eggs if it works.
I want some evidence -- a miracle
-- even a little miracle. I want
so badly to believe in God. Other-
wise I'm not sure it's worth it
to go on living.

FLYNN

It means making a very big leap.

MICKEY

Can you help me?

FLYNN

Often skeptics make the best
Catholics.

82 CUT TO Mickey with his parents. His mother is screaming,
having heard the news. She is inconsolable.

MOTHER

Ohhh -- no -- no -- please ...
oh please ... I can't breathe
... no, no ... please ... oh god
... why? ... Oh god ...

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

For God's sake, I thought you'd be happy.

FATHER

How could we be happy?

MICKEY

Because after not taking the idea of God very seriously my whole life I've decided to try something.

FATHER

But Catholicism? Why not your own people?

MICKEY

I don't know -- I got off on a wrong foot with it -- I need a dramatic change in my life ...

MOTHER

No ... no ... you can't ...

She runs to bathroom, weeping, locks herself in.

FATHER

You're gonna believe in Jesus Christ?

MICKEY

I know, it sounds funny ... I'm going to try.

FATHER

But why? We raised you as a Jew.

MICKEY

Yeah, but you don't have to keep a religion just because you were born into it ... You get older, you see what's around and you make a mature decision.

FATHER

But why Jesus Christ? Why, for instance, shouldn't you become a Buddhist?

MICKEY

That's totally alien to me ... Maybe, but ...

FATHER

You quit your job, you wander the streets like a bum, now this ... maybe we should just have you committed.

MICKEY

I need something to believe in. Look -- you're getting way up there in years? Do you have no fear of dying?

FATHER

Why should I be afraid?

MICKEY

Because you won't exist.

FATHER

So?

MICKEY

So that thought doesn't terrify you?

FATHER

Who thinks about such nonsense. Now I'm alive. When I'm dead I'll be dead.

MICKEY

Yes, but you're not frightened?

FATHER

Of what? I'll be unconscious.

MICKEY

Never to experience life again.

FATHER

How do you know?

MICKEY

It certainly doesn't look promising.

FATHER

Who knows what'll be? I'll be unconscious or not -- and if not I'll deal with it then. I'm not gonna worry now about what'll be when I'm unconscious.

MOTHER

(calling from behind
bathroom door)

Of course there's a God, you
idiot! You don't believe in
God!?

MICKEY

(to door)

Look, just on a simplistic
level ... if there's a God, why
is there so much injustice and
evil? Why were there Nazis?

MOTHER

(behind door)

Tell him, Max.

FATHER

How the hell do I know why there
were Nazis? I don't know how
the can opener works.

MICKEY

If there's no God, life has no
meaning.

FATHER

Leave me alone, I got enough
problems.

MICKEY

Unless one can accept that we
only live once -- this is it --
there is no other meaning to life
except what we put into it and
that's good enough. I have
trouble with that.

FATHER

Good. Become a Catholic. You'll
go to heaven -- you'll play the
harp. Rose -- get me an Alka-
Seltzer.

83 CUT TO church -- a mass in progress -- beautiful singing.

Mickey is there observing. We continue the sound of the
choir and WE CUT TO:

84 SHOT of Mickey and Father Flynn in office -- Flynn is
giving him Catholic books to study. Music over.

85 CUT TO Mickey home reading the New Testament -- music
over ...

86 CUT TO empty church -- music swelling on the sound-track very religiously beautiful -- SHOTS of Mickey confronting Christ statue -- really trying to get with it. Must devise funny bits.

87 CUT TO street, outside a restaurant in theatre area. Hannah waits and Lee presently joins her.

HANNAH

Hi, where's Holly?

LEE

She was auditioning for a television commercial. She's late.

HANNAH

Is she ok?

LEE

You know Holly. She's manic when she's depressed. I think it was a good idea to take her to lunch.

HANNAH

I hope you told her it was your idea because everytime I try to be helpful she gets so defensive.

LEE

Oh, Hannah, she's embarrassed in front of you. She still wants to be you.

HANNAH

And how are you?

LEE

I'm ok.

HANNAH

You miss Ken?

LEE

No.

HANNAH

I can't believe Elliot and I can't think of someone for you to date.

LEE

And how are you? How's Elliot?

HANNAH

Irritable. Over the past months he's gotten more and more short-tempered. Something's gone very wrong somewhere but when I ask him, he just gets vague. I don't know if he's interested in someone else or what. I feel him slipping away from me.

Holly arrives and they begin to enter restaurant. She's manic.

HOLLY

Well I just came from an audition -- which I did not get -- so what's new? I'm too off-beat looking -- whatever the hell that means. But who's there auditioning? Naturally April. We said hello, I was very polite -- I maintained my poise.

LEE

I never trusted April. She's got eyes in the back of her head.

HOLLY

She and a certain architect are now a definite item. Which I still can't believe. Although it's put an end to the Stanislavski Catering Company. That's why I have to speak to you -- and you're going to get impatient but I need to borrow some more money.

HANNAH

It's ok.

HOLLY

What I've decided to do is some writing. I think I've had it with acting. Those meaningless auditions -- cattle calls ... and I can't handle another rejection ... Let's face it -- I've got to latch on to something in life, something with a future. I'm not sixteen anymore ... this is crazy. But I have an idea for a story -- more than one -- but I need time -- a few months or a year without worrying about rent ... so I can just concentrate.

Both other sisters sense her manic desperation throughout.

HANNAH

Gee, you never were interested in writing before.

HOLLY

I've picked up a lot about dramatic structure from doing scenes in acting class.

HANNAH

Yes but -- six months or a year -- if you spent it more productively.

HOLLY

Like what?

HANNAH

I don't know -- didn't Mom mention there was something possibly at the Museum of Broadcasting?

HOLLY

That's clerical.

HANNAH

Wasn't it in the publicity department? That can lead to other things.

HOLLY

Y'know, I knew you'd be discouraging.

HANNAH

I'm not. I'm trying to help. A person doesn't just declare one day: I'm finished as an actress and I'm a writer. And then blow a year just --

HOLLY

You mean not at my age.

LEE

Look, we came to have lunch.

HOLLY

Ok, forget it. What's to eat? I just want a salad.

HANNAH

Holly.

HOLLY

You really think I'm a loser,
don't you?

HANNAH

You're being ridiculous.

LEE

You are, Holly. Stop it.

HOLLY

You treat me like a loser.

HANNAH

How?

HOLLY

You never have any faith in my
plans. You always undercut my
enthusiasm.

HANNAH

I've tried to give you honest
advice. I'm happy to help you
financially. I've gone out of
my way to introduce you to
interesting single men.

HOLLY

Losers, all losers.

HANNAH

You're too demanding.

HOLLY

I could always tell what you
thought of me by the kind of
men you fixed me up with.

LEE

Holly, you're being unreasonable.

...

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY

Somewhere along the line I've disappointed you by not turning out the way you hoped and you sit in judgement.

HANNAH

I don't.

HOLLY

Not everybody is as gifted as you.

HANNAH

I struggled hard. Somebody had to take care of this family. It sure wasn't Mom or Dad.

(CONTINUED)

HOLLY

You never struggled. Not with anything. You don't know what it is to struggle.

LEE

Stop attacking Hannah. It's not fair. She's the last person in the world guilty of anything.

HANNAH

Look, you want to write? Write. Try it for as long as you want. If it doesn't pan out, we'll talk then. I don't know what else to say.

LEE

(with some inner
guilt and upset)

Let's just get off the subject.
We came to eat.

CUT TO change of season MONTAGE.

- 88 Snow. Winter DISSOLVES TO spring.
- 89 SHOT of Mickey studying to be Catholic, ext.
- 90 SHOT of Hannah and Elliot with kids, ext. He's distracted.
- 91 SHOT of Lee in hotel room with Elliot. Romantic.
- 92 SHOT of Lee alone, weeping.
- 93 SHOT of Elliot with psychotherapist.

ELLIOT

(to psychotherapist)

I can't seem to take action.
I'm like Hamlet unable to stab
his uncle. I want Lee but I
can't harm Hannah. And in no
other area am I a procrastinator.
I run a big firm. I'm responsible
for fortunes of money for my
clients. I do great for them.
They love me. I make big in-
vestment decisions. I'm decisive.
And I'm like a father to them.
They come to me with problems
that go beyond their finances.
Problems with their personal lives
-- and I advise as a friend --

(MORE)

ELLIOT (contd)
and they thank me -- they
compliment me on my wisdom.
What a joke.

94 He continues VO as WE CUT TO Lee walking on campus of
Columbia.

ELLIOT (VO)
Meanwhile Lee's got no real
direction. She's taking courses
at Columbia, but just randomly.
I try not to call her but she
calls and then I call and we try
to resist meeting but once in awhile
we meet and inevitably wind up making
love and then we both feel terrible ...

95 CUT BACK TO him live --

ELLIOT
But it's my fault. For all my
education and accomplishments,
my so called wisdom, I can't
fathom my own heart.

96 CUT TO Holly writing, struggling with herself.

97 CUT TO Mickey at church. (Try to find amusing bits.)

98 CUT TO Lee with a woman psychic in her apartment.

PSYCHIC
I see a love affair -- ending
in marriage.

LEE
Uh-huh.

PSYCHIC
The man is older than you ...

LEE
Right ... so you know when?

PSYCHIC
Soon.

LEE
Really? No big obstacles?

PSYCHIC
No -- but I see -- blood ...

LEE

Blood?

PSYCHIC

A relative ... a man ... married
to someone close ... the husband
of your sister ...

LEE

An accident?

PSYCHIC

Inflicted ... inflicted ...
violence ...

99 CUT TO Halloween mask, PULL BACK, REVEAL Hannah and her
parents and kids having Halloween fun.

Phone rings.

HANNAH

(on phone)

Hello?

100 CUT TO Holly's home.

HOLLY

Can I send you something to read?
No -- I'm not finished. I'm
completely blocked. I have a
first scene which I wrote -- and
an alternate one -- a part of a
climax scene -- I'm so disorganized
... I want you to read it and give
me an opinion ... Oh -- and I have
a scene from something else com-
pletely. Lee read it but I need
more feedback.

101 CUT TO Hannah.

HANNAH

(on phone)

Bring it over -- or leave it with
the doorman. Ok, ok -- I have to
run.

Hangs up, kids come rushing in with their lively chatter
and requests.

(CONTINUED)

102 CUT TO Elliot in hotel room. Lee enters.

LEE

Sorry I'm late.

ELLIOT

That's ok. What was the emergency?

LEE

I'm only staying a minute. I want to put an end to everything once and for all. No more meetings, no more phone calls.

ELLIOT

I don't deserve any different.

LEE

I've been just as at fault.

ELLIOT

I ask you to forgive me and please believe that I love you and always have and will.

LEE

I've got to be honest, Elliot. I've met someone else.

ELLIOT

What do you mean?

LEE

I told you I wasn't going to wait forever.

ELLIOT

It hasn't been forever.

LEE

It's been nearly a year since our first time and you're still married to my sister. Which I now realize is fine because you're probably more in love with her than you realize.

ELLIOT

Don't tell me you've met someone else because I've been angling and finagling and struggling to free myself for you. My life is a bad farce.

LEE

If you had really wanted to,
you would have. We've talked
this to death already and we
just go 'round in circles.

ELLIOT

I phoned you every day -- We
had so many long talks -- and
made plans.

LEE

Yes. In a way you led me on.
I believed you were unhappy with
Hannah. Otherwise I wouldn't
have let myself be drawn in.
Now I've met someone else.

ELLIOT

And you're in love overnight?

LEE

I like him very much. Where
it'll lead I don't know.

ELLIOT

Lee, I'm so totally involved
with you.

LEE

I can't help it. It's over.

103 CUT TO Elliot in street, shattered.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

Suddenly it's all clear to me.
Clear as a bell. I want Lee
more than anything or anyone
in the world. The thought of
someone else being with her and
making love to her is more than
I can bear. It's like a veil
has been lifted. Like I'm
coming out of a dream.

104 CUT TO Hannah and Elliot at home that night.

HANNAH

(upset)

What are you telling me?

ELLIOT

That I need time by myself.

HANNAH

I -- I don't know what to say.
I'm so hurt.

ELLIOT

It's nothing you've done. I
just need time to think. I'm
confused. I know you want a
child ... and that's been a
question for me ... and I'm
professionally dissatisfied ...
and I've snapped at you on
several occasions -- made you
cry ...

HANNAH

Are you in love with someone else?

ELLIOT

No. Absolutely not. I don't
want you to think that.

HANNAH

Do you not love me anymore?

ELLIOT

Of course I do. I guess I'm
just going through something.

HANNAH

(frightened)

There must be someone else.
You're not being honest.

ELLIOT

It's not a divorce or anything.
Just a period of solitude --
reflection ... to find myself.

HANNAH

What kind of reflection? What
are you talking about?

ELLIOT

Don't overreact.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

Don't cave in now ... assure her
it's temporary ... Once you're
free you can try to put things back
together with Lee. You can still
do it. Don't let up now. You've
got one foot out -- then it'll all
be easier to terminate permanently.

ELLIOT

Come on, Hannah -- I'm asking for a little time to get my thoughts in order. It's silly for you to get alarmed. It's not a big deal. Trust me.

105 CUT TO Elliot in street phone booth. He's on the phone.
EXT.

ELLIOT

I'm at Columbus Circle -- on the street. I've moved out. It's over.

106 CUT TO Lee at her home.

LEE

(on phone)

I know. Hannah called me. She's very upset.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT

(on phone)

When can I see you?

CUT TO:

LEE

(on phone)

We can't, Elliot. I'm seeing someone right now. I explained it all. If there's ever a change maybe we can see where we're at then.

CUT TO:

ELLIOT

(on phone)

You mean I'm free finally and I can't even see you? After all our talks and plans. I can't even see you? We can spend time together and I don't have to rush home and you don't have to feel guilty. I'm a free man.

CUT TO:

LEE

(on phone)

I'm sorry, but at the moment, I'm very involved with someone.

(MORE)

LEE (contd)

Yes ... very involved. Totally.
If you want to know the truth.
Goodbye and please don't call
me anymore.

107 CUT TO Elliot hanging up disconsolate.

108 CUT TO Hannah alone home ... wanders gloomy. Laconically
opens manilla envelope and a mess of disorganized junk
from Holly falls out.

HANNAH

(aimlessly glancing
at material)

Act one ... scene one -- scene
three ... Act three, scene three
... Notes notes on characters of
Craig and Emily ... Scene one
alternate ... Jesus, Holly ...
brother ...

From inside a scene a letter drops to the floor. Here
we must create the clear idea that it's a mistakenly
included or lost letter.

Hannah picks it up, glances at it, reads with progressive
interest.

HANNAH (contd)

Dear Holly -- your first act is
very interesting. Also the end
scene but my own opinion is that
the two characters which you call
Helen and Arthur but which obviously
you have based on Hannah and Elliot,
are not clearly drawn.
I see it from a totally different
perspective. Helen is a woman who
will always be admired by her
husband but he will never feel
passion for her. He will respect
her intellect, her talent and
discipline -- her fundamental
decency, but there will always be
something missing.
I can envision him as a man who
might need someone who is less
adept at handling life, perhaps
even clumsy -- someone he can take
care of and who leans on him rather
than someone as self-sufficient as
the character of Helen.

(MORE)

HANNAH (contd)

After all, Holly, in real life, we've both joked about it so often. Hannah is so damn perfect. So beautiful and so utterly competent that she leaves no room for anyone to reach out to her. How often have the two of us stood foolishly by as she came to our aid, each of us feeling humiliated over our needs and then grateful to her for answering them. Yet this gratitude brings with it a sense of dependency and finally I believe, resentment. If only we could repay her. If once she confessed some need that we could comfort her by supplying. My guess is -- and it is only guessing as I certainly would have no way of really knowing -- is that Hannah has brought much to Elliot's life but has not needed anything in return. I sense that this could, in time, build a wall between them. In answer to your question -- yes -- I can see, under the right circumstances, him feeling the need for someone else. But not the kind of woman you've drawn. Someone whose confusion and helplessness sparks something in him. I realize I'm no writer and my imagination may be running away with itself but it seems more plausible than the surfacey characters you've written.

Hannah considers this as WE CUT TO:

109

Art gallery opening. UP, musical scene. A small, bubbling crowd clucking over paintings by Ken, Lee's former beau.

They sip alcohol out of paper cups and extoll the genius of the artist.

FIRST MAN

They're wonderful. He reminds me of Heironymous Bosch.

FIRST WOMAN

But morbid, don't you agree?

SECOND WOMAN

I can't tell if they're fashionably alienated or fashionably narcissistic.

CUT TO Ken in corner being interviewed by art critic.

CRITIC

They're social, they're humorous, but are they art?

KEN

What Americans consider art is when they can see the technique. Flashiness. The other night at the theatre I saw a young actor playing an old man in a play and he was "acting" like an old man; and full of cutesy mannerisms and at the end the audience stood on their feet and cheered. Made you want to puke.

MRS. BLINT

(with them)

This I take it are the seven layers of Hell?

KEN

Yes. Populated by the various deserving. Our politicians, our clergy, our press, our generals --

CRITIC

Are you anti-American?

KEN

No.

(pointing to canvas)

These are the members of the Politburo and they're eating feces.

CUT TO other side of the room and WE DISCOVER that April and David are two people at the opening.

DAVID

They're very funny in a nasty way. I love what he's saying about pseudo-intellectuals.

APRIL

Yes, David ... they have a truly penetrating quality ... almost
(MORE)

APRIL (contd)

what I'd call -- an "organic wholeness" -- I can't really put it in words.

DAVID

No, but I see exactly what you mean, darling.

CUT BACK TO Ken.

CRITIC

You consigned the press to hell and also politicians. How do you square that with something like Watergate, a press triumph.

KEN

When the press turns it's pious and fraudulent fangs on a hustler as bad as itself like Nixon, it's like a cobra and mongoose. I loved watching it but make no mistake -- I trust neither.

MRS. BLINT

(gesturing to drawing of Lee)

I like you best when you're simple -- here you're like another person -- a different artist -- it's unburdened beauty.

KEN

Yes ... well ... it's not for sale ...

(CONTINUED)

110

CUT TO Mickey's parents' home. His father is dying. The doctor is there, a few either friends or relatives, one of which is consoling the distraught mother. Mickey enters, having raced over upon hearing news.

MICKEY

How is he?

DOCTOR

It was very sudden. He never knew what hit him.

Mickey hugs his mother. The onlookers must sparingly and quietly ad-lib an occasional apropos remark as Mickey goes to bedside and takes his just-about-dead father's hand.

Tears fill Mickey's eyes as he is kneeling bedside.

MICKEY

He looks so peaceful ... oh --

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

It's so sad. I knew this day would come. He was such a nice guy.

MOTHER

(to comforter)

He used to take him to baseball games.

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

You can't believe this guy was once so strong and full of life ...

MOTHER

He always saw that Mickey had money in his pocket ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS

I had so many fights with him about ridiculous things but he always loved me ... And I disappointed him so ... Wanted me to be a teacher ... I didn't pay enough attention to him in his last years ... didn't think he had anything to show me ... But he was a sweet guy ... Took me to my first movie -- bought me my first book of philosophy -- Now what? Now they just throw a little dirt over his head and

(MORE)

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS (contd)
that's it. He deserves better --
we all do. No one deserves this.

Mickey kneels now in prayerful position, clasping hands.

MOTHER
Don't pray to Jesus Christ for
Max because it won't work ...

MICKEY'S THOUGHTS
The truth is I can't pray to
anybody because I don't believe
in anything. I can go through
the motions but after months and
months of trying to believe --
I can't do it. I want to so
badly but I can't ... It just
won't come ... I'll never believe
in the Christian God -- or the
Jewish God -- or anything -- It's
all nothing. Everything is nothing.
Life has no meaning. There's
only suffering and loneliness and
waiting to die. So why wait?
May as well get it over with.

CUT TO:

111 EXT: HERMAN'S SPORTING GOODS STORE ON FORTY-SECOND STREET
CUT inside and buying a rifle from a Puerto Rican salesman
is Mickey.

SALESMAN
It's a beauty, boy -- feel
that action.

As Mickey awkwardly plays with the hammer or bolt.

MICKEY
And I can't buy a handgun?

SALESMAN
No -- we don't sell that --
You need a police permit. What
kind of hunting you want to do?

MICKEY
Deer.

SALESMAN
With a handgun? You need this.
It's a beautiful rifle -- very
well made, easy to use -- and a
good price.

MICKEY
And I need bullets.

SALESMAN
How many?

MICKEY
One -- I mean one box.

112 CUT TO Hannah's apartment. She and Elliot are there,
she's just finishing setting table.

ELLIOT
Where's my slipover?

HANNAH
In your drawer.

ELLIOT
I wish we weren't entertaining.
I'm exhausted.

HANNAH
Because you didn't sleep last
night. You tossed and tossed.

ELLIOT
I know -- I'm sorry if I kept
you awake.

Downstairs buzzer rings.

HANNAH
(into house phone)
Yes -- yes -- send them up.
(hangs up)
They're here.

ELLIOT
(tense)
Right ... I wish we could have
made it some other time ...

HANNAH
Oh come on -- Aren't you dying
to meet her fiancé? Aren't you
curious?

ELLIOT
They decided to marry so fast.

HANNAH
She fell for this guy like a
tone of bricks. I've never
(MORE)

HANNAH (contd)
seen Lee so happy. She's
radiant.

ELLIOT
Great.

HANNAH
She was shy about bringing
him over at first but I
insisted.

Bell rings --

They admit them ad-libbing hellos.

LEE
Doug -- this is my sister
Hannah and her husband Elliot.

Ad-libs all around ...

(CONTINUED)

Play the moment with Elliot looking at Lee and her fiancé --

113 CUT TO mid-dinner.

LEE

Doug's a professor at Columbia.

DOUG

Irish literature in general but my specialty is Yeats.

LEE

He knows every single fact about Yeats and every line he's ever written.

DOUG

Well I wouldn't say every line. Maybe there's a laundry list somewhere I missed.

As dinner chat continues ad-lib, we tune out.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

That little nance. This is what she chooses over me? Yeats. He's probably one of those creeps that visits Ireland and walks on all the streets Yeats wrote about -- I'm surprised he doesn't collect memorabilia .. the poet's walking stick -- Yeats' old pipe -- his old toilet paper.

DOUG

I'm taking Lee to Ireland this summer ... to Sligo. I want to show her the tower where Yeats wrote some of his most interesting things.

114 CUT TO after dinner ... sitting around. Hannah is showing Doug family album. Elliot and Lee not present.

HANNAH

There's Lee at twelve. Wasn't she cute?

DOUG

She was very fat.

HANNAH

And there's Holly -- and me.
And there's Dad. He was so
handsome.

115

They ad-lib in this fashion and WE CUT TO Lee combing
her hair in bathroom mirror. She finishes and exits and
is suddenly confronted by Elliot.

ELLIOT

Lee --

LEE

Oh my god, you scared me.

ELLIOT

I have to talk to you.

LEE

Not now.

ELLIOT

Is it over between us?
Completely? Forever?

LEE

I don't want to get into it
here -- I'm going to marry Doug.

ELLIOT

You met him so recently.

LEE

I'm getting older -- I want a
coherent life -- he's a lovely
guy.

ELLIOT

I don't hear you say you love him.

LEE

I do love him.

ELLIOT

But not like we loved each other
-- you can't love that little
pedagogue with the same passion
we had.

LEE

Now don't get insulting.

ELLIOT

I still love you -- very much.
I moved out for you.

LEE

And then right back in I see.

ELLIOT

You wouldn't even see me --
what did you want me to do, live
in a hotel room?

LEE

I see. Hannah's better than
nothing, eh?

ELLIOT

Hannah's great -- but to me
you're something special.

LEE

It's all for the best.

ELLIOT

I was staring at you all through
dinner.

LEE

Shamefully.

ELLIOT

I wanted so badly to touch you
-- to smell your hair and kiss
you.

LEE

That's over forever.

ELLIOT

(trying to embrace her)
Don't say that. Please ...

She wriggles free -- he persists --

LEE

Stop. Stop it! You're drunk.

He won't give up, she's getting madder, he forces a kiss
on her, then is practically taking her by force -- hand
lifting her dress -- tearing at her pants --

ELLIOT

We've made love in more
dangerous situations.

She's fighting it, objecting, he's almost raping her in
a clumsy way --

116 WE CUT inside to Hannah and Doug.

HANNAH

This was Lee and my mother at
the Jersey Shore.

Sound: A terrible scream from Elliot.

They drop everything and race into the back room, ad-
libbing appropriately.

117 They find Lee and Elliot quite separate -- not caught at
anything -- but apparently Lee has taken the letter opener
and stabbed Elliot's hand -- but more than she intended,
I guess, because he's bleeding terribly and in pain.

HANNAH

What happened?

LEE

I didn't mean it! Are you ok?

ELLIOT

(covering fast)

I was joking with Lee -- showing
off and I fell on the letter
opener somehow ...

DOUG

My god ... you're really bleeding.

LEE

It was my fault ...

HANNAH

(picking up weapon)

This thing is filthy -- you can
get tetanus or gangrene.--

DOUG

You better get him over to the
emergency ward.

ELLIOT

I'm fine, I'm fine ... ooohhh ...

HANNAH

No -- you're going to need
stitches. We'll get a cab.

LEE

I feel awful.

HANNAH

Don't feel bad. You didn't
stab him.

DOUG
Shall we go along?

HANNAH
No -- we'll get a cab. It's
right nearby ...

LEE
We should just go -- it'll be
less confusion. I'm sorry,
Elliot.

Elliot is a sorry sight, drenched in red -- hurt --
awkward as his wife escorts him to coat rack -- after
placing towel around him ...

HANNAH
I never knew you to be such a
kidder ... You usually never
horse around. Too much wine.

118 INT: CAB - NIGHT

SHOT of them sitting in silence, demoralized.

119 EXT: CAB

120 CUT TO Mickey at home. Opening door to admit Holly.

MICKEY
What a surprise. When you called
I was so shocked. It's been years.

HOLLY
This is so nice of you -- I know
how busy you always are with the
television productions --

(CONTINUED)

MICKEY

I'm not busy -- I've been out of television for almost a year.

HOLLY

You have?

MICKEY

Yes -- I gave it all up ...

HOLLY

Well that's why I wanted to talk to you.

MICKEY

About television?

HOLLY

I didn't know you were out of it -- I have a project ... I wrote a script --

(which she has
with her)

-- I mean the truth is, if this doesn't pan out, I'm going to have to waitress tables to keep afloat. I owe Hannah a fortune. And, er ...

MICKEY

How's Hannah?

HOLLY

Fine. I brought it with me.

MICKEY

Holly, I'm the wrong guy ...

HOLLY

Mickey, I know we never really hit it off but I was going through a rough period.

MICKEY

I'm sure.

HOLLY

It's a very good script ... At least I think ... I've never written anything before ... What are you doing?

MICKEY

Just been thinking ... re-evaluating my life ...

HOLLY
(jokingly)
Come to any conclusions?

MICKEY
Let me see your script.

HOLLY
Can I read it to you?

MICKEY
Read it to me? What am I, a
cretin?

HOLLY
No, but I know how to emphasize
certain parts ... It'll take no
time ... I need some advice --
I need some help -- I'm really
up against it ...

CUT TO two hours later, Holly's concluding.

HOLLY
(reads)
We all go through life playing
the hand we're dealt.
Craig: What were you dealt?
Emily: Two high pair -- maybe
even aces up. The problem is
you got three deuces.
(Holly closes script)

MICKEY
Well gee I'm very surprised --
it's not bad at all.

HOLLY
Really?

MICKEY
It was damn interesting. I saw
some weak spots but full of feeling.

HOLLY
No.

MICKEY
Yes. How did you ever think of
that climax scene? ... Where the
architect is taking his actress
girlfriend home from the opera
and the guy's schizophrenic wife
is waiting for them and kills her?
It was inspired.

HOLLY

It just came to me one day.
But you think I can write?

MICKEY

I thought I'd have to make a
polite excuse but I loved it.
It's moving and funny and
full of promise.

HOLLY

(excited)

Gee -- you wanna go have lunch?

MICKEY

Yeah. I'd love to talk about
your script.

HOLLY

And I want to hear about what made
you suddenly drop out of life. You
used to be so ambitious. Ooh you
liked it!

MICKEY

You sure you want to hear it?

She nods.

121 CUT TO the two of them walking someplace, chatting.
Merely strolling.

We merely hear scoring and no dialogue -- Mickey, very
animated, talking to her.

122 CUT TO second locale -- the two having coffee, the music
playing, the conversation continues -- now some personal
laughs.

123 CUT TO third location -- someplace stable like a park
bench or whatever.

HOLLY

I don't understand. If you've
been so tortured by this spiritual
crisis -- to the point of buying
a rifle ... What happened? What
changed you? Why didn't you use
the rifle?

MICKEY

I nearly did.

124 CUT TO memory CUT -- Mickey alone in apartment.

MICKEY (VO)

I brought it home and I loaded
it --

(suiting action to
word)

-- and I pressed it to my head
... I didn't want to miss ...
my luck I'd be a vegetable ...
And then I thought -- this is
crazy -- I'm bringing about the
very thing I dread most.

(lowers rifle)

But then I thought -- how could
I exist in a Godless universe?

(raises gun)

But then I thought -- how do I
know it's Godless ... I mean it
seems like it is ... but I can't
prove it ...

(lowers gun)

And I vacillated for what seemed
like forever ... thinking, do it
-- there's no God -- and then --
don't do it, because no one really
knows -- even those big shots
who claim to have it all figured
out ...

(raising and lowering
gun)

And I thought -- boy -- it's a
very slim reed to hold onto --
that maybe -- maybe -- we're part
of a meaningful plan ... maybe
... to base your life on a maybe
... And I thought and thought and
I got more and more tense and
then without realizing it --

The gun goes off -- not at Mickey, with a loud blast ...
Mickey panics and in comic fashion can't shake loose of
gun which discharges several times ... His mirror
splatters.

Panic-stricken, he dumps gun on floor.

Neighbors pound on door -- he kicks gun under bed --

Opens door.

NEIGHBOR

You ok? We heard shots.

MICKEY

Not from here ... I heard 'em
too ... got so scared I walked
into my mirror ... ha, ha ...

Because they've skeptically noticed carnage.

NEIGHBOR

We better call the police.

125

CUT TO Mickey in street after incident.

MICKEY (VO)

(as he walks)

I was so shaken up I ran out of
my apartment and walked the
streets ... I just walked for
hours, my hands shaking ... I
went into a bar and had a drink
... me -- a drink ... and I felt
calmer ... And after awhile I
got tired but I was afraid to go
back home ... so I wandered into
a movie house to sit ... I
didn't care what was playing ...

He wanders into cinema ... sits ...

MICKEY (VO contd)

... and I sat there thinking ...
and then I looked up at the screen
... and all these people were
singing and dancing ... and I got
hooked on it ... and I started
to feel ... How can you kill your-
self? ... Isn't it stupid? ...
Look at all these people up there
... I mean what if the worst is
true and there's no God and you
go around once and that's it?
Don't you want to be part of the
experience? I mean it's not all
a drag ... there's still music ...
I guess music's real important
to me, Holly ... that's why I
got so mad at you that night we
went out ...

And as I sat there I thought that
I should stop ruining my life
searching for answers I'm never
going to get but enjoy it while
it lasts and after -- well --
who knows?

(MORE)

MICKEY (VO contd)

And maybe it does require having
a shot of whiskey once in awhile
and going through some sleepless
nights and depending an awful lot
on that slim reed -- maybe --
maybe ... but is it really wise
to kill yourself?

And then, who comes on the screen
but old Bing Crosby and I got
kind of hooked on the movie ...
and for the first time in a year,
I took a deep breath and relaxed
a little ...

126 CUT TO Mickey walking to river with packaged rifle.
VO continues.

MICKEY (VO contd)

And I went home and got my rifle
and decided to throw it into the
river forever --

By river, he's about to, package opens, rifle falls out,
a cop sees him.

MICKEY (VO contd)

And a cop saw me dumping it ...

SHOT of Mickey leaning forward on his hands, cops with guns
drawn frisking him ...

MICKEY (VO contd)

And he arrested me but I explained
it all to them.

127 CUT BACK to present with Holly.

HOLLY

I always regretted the way I
behaved that evening we went out.
I made such a fool of myself.

MICKEY

Oh no, I was the inflexible jerk.
Actually, maybe it was you.

HOLLY

No.

MICKEY

Would you like to try it again?

HOLLY

I'd love to.

MICKEY
How 'bout tonight?

128 CUT TO Thanksgiving a year later. Hannah's apartment. Everyone is there -- her sisters with their beaus, Mickey now going with Holly. Parents. Hannah, Elliot. A few friends. Holly hasn't arrived yet.

Much ad-lib gaiety ... Mostly about the food and small talk.

MICKEY
(drinking)
It's astonishing -- I've been to these Thanksgiving dinners in the past as your son-in-law ... now I'm here again as your son-in-law -- only the daughters have changed.

EVAN
Where is Holly? She's late.

MICKEY
She'll be here. She had an errand.

LEE
I thought that last thing she wrote was wonderful. She's really developed.

MICKEY
We're working on one that's funny. At least the idea's funny. But she can write funny dialogue.

HANNAH
Any more wine, anyone? Mickey? --

MICKEY
We were married for years -- I never drink wine.

NORMA
Hannah, can I tell everyone you're going to play Desdemona?

People respond with some delighted surprise.

HANNAH
Oh, Mom -- it's only television.

NORMA
But it's public television and for me Shakespeare doesn't get
(MORE)

NORMA (contd)

any finer than Othello -- you
with some big, black stud -- I
love it.

The gaiety continues and WE SEE Lee and Doug very happy together.

ELLIOT'S THOUGHTS

Oh Lee -- you are something.
I find you more beautiful than
ever. Marriage agrees with you.
Funny -- everyone's having such a
nice time and here I'm mingling
and joking but underneath I'm
crushed. Totally wiped out.
Fortunately these get togethers
are infrequent and I don't get to
see you very often -- because the
truth is, the minute I lay eyes on
you I realize how much I still
care about you. Not that I'll
ever cause any grief again. Not
that you'd ever consider me again
after the way I bungled everything.
And it's probably just as well.
My life works with Hannah. I love
her and she's wonderful. But it's
very different. As big a fool as
I made of myself I had a feeling
for you that I've never experienced
before or since. Not a day goes by
that I don't think of you at one
moment or another -- though hope-
fully that will pass with time --
but on those rare occasions that
I see you -- I feel so alive and
yet so empty -- so unhappy that
I'm not sure I can bear it.

He throws back his drink and stares out the window or
something.

Bell rings.

Ad-libs of "That must be Holly."

Holly enters, ad-lib greetings ...

NORMA

When are you going to write some-
thing for your father and I to
play in ...

EVAN

Don't pay attention to her.
We can't remember our lines
anymore.

NORMA

Speak for yourself, gramps.

Lee and Doug are chatting with Mickey.

LEE

It's great living up by Columbia.
All those students so full of
hope -- they look great ... I
just love it ... And Doug and I
are hoping to rent something in
the Hamptons next summer.

MICKEY

I like the ocean. It's romantic
and moody.

DOUG

The gong-tormented sea.

Evan plays a song on piano -- Rodgers and Hart for
example.

HANNAH'S THOUGHTS

They think that I'm the one they
lean on -- but if they only knew
how dependent on them I am ... If
I could only make Elliot feel it
-- and the others ... maybe ...

CUT TO Evan who now is finished with song and goes into
Cole Porter. Let's say the tune Bobby Short did the
night Mickey and Holly had their abortive date.

Laughter, gaiety. Mickey and Holly find themselves alone
momentarily.

MICKEY

It's so ironic ... life ... I was
saying before you came, how I've
been here before but as Hannah's
husband. I loved her very much.
I never thought I'd love again --
but the human heart is remarkable.
There's a story in this. A guy
marries two sisters. His first
marriage breaks up, some years
later he's back in her house,
married to her sister and completely

(MORE)

MICKEY (contd)
in love with her. I mean, Holly
-- how you gonna top that?

HOLLY
(after a look
she says)
Mickey -- I'm pregnant.

FADE OUT.