

**CINEMA VERITE**

*The saga of An American Family*

DSeltzer  
cutdown  
4/11/10

EXT - UPSCALE SUBURBAN HOME - MORNING

"SANTA BARBARA, CA. 1973"

PATTY LOUD, lithe and attractive at 42, opens her door to greet the day; a bright and beautiful day. The spacious house, with its ocean views and swimming pool, four cars, five dirt bikes, even the poodles that bound down the front path with her to the mailbox, speak to a life anyone would envy. Except on this day.

The neighbor driving by doesn't return her wave, which she finds disturbing. More disturbing still, is what the mailbox holds: a picture of her, with her husband Bill and five teenaged kids; a family portrait so flattering they once used it as a Christmas card. But, instead of Merry Christmas, it now reads "WOULD YOU WANT TO LIVE NEXT DOOR TO THESE PEOPLE?!!"

THE DOGS respond to her URGENT CALL, racing back inside where she locks the door and draws the curtains, shutting out the light.

### CINEMA VERITE

#### *The saga of An American Family*

TITLES CONTINUE, OVER HOME MOVIES, OF:

BILL and PATTY'S wedding; babies appear in rapid succession (3 boys, 2 girls) growing up into a life of love, laughter, and affluence - MONTAGE INTERRUPTED BY TALKING HEADS:

#### ANTHROPOLOGIST (PANEL SHOW 1975)

If there is such a thing as shame, and the Loud family doesn't feel it; then we, as a Nation, are obliged to feel shame on their behalf.

#### POLITICAL ANALYST (NEWS SHOW (1975)

Of the most talked about events of the 20th Century, two questions remain: Why Nixon recorded incriminating Oval Office tapes. And "what possessed the Loud Family to invite cameras into their home, knowing exposure to the truth would destroy them."

The third "talking head" to weigh in, is Patty Loud, in a candid interview, about what it was like to be in the eye of this storm.

#### PATTY LOUD (INTERVIEW)

"One single lesson?" Hard to say. Maybe, that when something seems too good to be true - it is. We were seen as the perfect family. No one, in Santa Barbara, would disagree.

EXT. THE LOUD HOUSE - MORNING

"April 15, 1971"

An AIRPORT TAXI pulls up, in front, and HONKS.

INT. THE HOUSE - SAME

BILL LOUD comes hurtling down the stairs, with his suitcase, making a pit-stop in the kitchen, where he's barely noticed amidst all the cross-talk, except by PATTY, who fills his cup at the head of the table. WE DWELL ON FACES, AS PATTY CONTINUES:

PATTY (VO)

Michelle, at 13, was a "budding young equestrian," in love with a horse named Daisy; Delilah, at 16, was a budding young woman, in love with a boy named Brad; Kevin and Grant, at 17 and 18, were certain their band was the next Rolling Stones.... And then, there was Lance.

A no-show at the breakfast table; Bill's disapproval of his son LANCE, is captured in a single glance at the EMPTY CHAIR.

BILL

He is coming down, isn't he?  
(catches their covert glances)  
Does he understand they're not going to graduate him, if he has anymore unexcused absences?

DELILAH

The kids make fun of him, Dad.

BILL

I wonder "why" that is.

PATTY

We had a good talk about it. He's going to work a little harder, 'til graduation, at blending in.

JAWS DROP as LANCE ENTERS and slides into the vacant seat beside his Father. His hair is the color of aluminum foil.

BILL

What the Hell is that?

LANCE

"Mystic Silver."

MICHELLE

(enthused) It's the same color as Andy.

BILL  
Do you think you're leaving the house, like that?

LANCE  
Andy says, "People's opinion of me, is none of my business."

BILL  
Well, my opinion is. Go wash it out.

MICHELLE  
Can we take a vote?

BILL  
No, we can't.

DELILAH  
I think it's cool.

LANCE  
That's a "yes" vote.

GRANT  
You look like a fruit.

LANCE  
Another "yes" vote.

BILL  
Patty - ?

PATTY  
Yes, Bill?

LANCE  
Another yes vote!

BILL  
If I didn't have to leave town, I'd take you upstairs and wash it out myself.

LANCE  
Why not cancel your trip?

Meant to strike a nerve, it does. Eye-contact between BILL and PATTY indicates there's more to that question, than meets the eye.

BILL  
It might be your trip that's cancelled, Lance. Andy Warhol called you, because you sent him three hundred letters...

LANCE  
310, actually.

BILL  
And he stopped calling you, when he was shot by a insane fan, which you now look like. And, if you're purpose in going to New York, is to look for Andy - looking like that - you'll be looking for trouble!

GRABBING HIS SUITCASE, HE SLAMS OUT THE DOOR; PATTY'S worried gaze at LANCE, taking in the empty chair beside him.

PATTY (VO)  
Bill's constant traveling took a toll on all of them; especially Lance, who hungered for his approval, most of all.

INT. PATTY'S BEDROOM - 1:00 A.M.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)  
It took a toll on me too, for reasons of my own.

STARTLED BY THE PHONE, SHE GRABS IT.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
Who is this?

As expected: a disconnect, leaves her staring into the night.

DRUM-STICKS "TICK OFF" A DOWNBEAT:

GRANT (OS)  
A'one-two-three-four:

EXT. THE LOUD HOUSE - A QUIET SUNDAY MORNING

PATTY, adrift on in the pool, FLINCHES as the boys' GARAGE BAND EXPLODES, with "I Cain't Git-no, Satis-fac-shun." GRANT, complete with strut, and air-stabs, has Mick Jagger down to a Tee.

DELILAH  
(shouting) Hold it down, please?!

INSIDE: DELILAH is channel-surfing past Rock Hudson kissing Doris Day," Nixon speaking, and the Marlboro Man sucking down a weed.

PATTY (VO)  
Rock Hudson loved women, Dick Nixon was a good man, cigarettes couldn't kill you, and Patty Loud had the perfect marriage. 1971 was a good year for lies.

INT. LAX AIRPORT- SAME

LANCE's PINK SADDLE SHOES leading the PACK OF LOUDS (minus BILL) racing for the DEPARTURE GATE - stopping for last-minute hugs.

LANCE

I love you, I love you....

PATTY

Daddy tried to get here.

LANCE

Tell him I love him, too.

GRANT

They're closing the door! Go-go-go!

LANCE

(bounding into it) I can fly! I can fly! I'm Peter Pan, I can fly!

The reality of his departure, brings a profound sense of loss.

KEVIN

Is he tough enough, do you think?  
To survive in Greenwich Village?

GRANT

He's queer enough.

DELILAH

Stop it, Grant.

GRANT

Well, we all know it, don't we?  
Mom, help me out, here.

PATTY

"Ask me no questions, I'll tell you no lies," Grant. That just might be what "survival" is all about.

INT. PHOENIX AIRPORT MARRIOTT HOTEL

BILL, packing fast, calls toward the bathroom, where we catch sight of a woman (MISTY) pulling on a stewardess's jacket.

BILL

Have you seen my hairbrush?

Finished raking it clean, she hands it over.

BILL (CONT'D)

You didn't have to do that.

MISTY

Would you rather explain how these long blond hairs got in it?

BILL

(easy) My client's 4-year old kid got into my suitcase and brushed his dog. What a Brat!

MISTY

Should I feel sorry for your wife?

BILL

You should envy her.

Relishing his role as The Cad; he pulls her into his arms.

MAN'S VOICE (ALAN RAYMOND)

And that's how it happened? Just "out of the blue?"

INTERCUT: PATTY'S ONGOING INTERVIEW

PATTY

Completely. I'd never met him, never heard of him; Mary Avery called, saying "somebody important" wanted to meet me. Wouldn't tell me who, or why.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA TENNIS CLUB COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

Patty's friend, MARY AVERY waits on a patio overlooking the tennis courts, with a man who, in this world of the perfectly tone-and-tanned, is clearly out of place. Dressed for colder climes, he's shed his sweater, revealing a T-shirt too short to cover his paunch. But when he sees PATTY coming, wearing something that shows her form and stride, the "unassuming" presence of CRAIG GILBERT transforms into a formidable force of personal charm.

MARY

(introducing) Patty? Craig Gilbert, from The Big Apple.

Greetings exchanged, a waitress is summoned; PATTY'S awareness of his admiring eyes on her, brings her performance up a notch.

PATTY

I'll have a Manhattan. In honor of - "Manhattan."

GILBERT

In that spirit, I'll have an orange juice.

PAT  
Don't drink in the afternoon?

GILBERT  
If I intend to win any friends on  
The Planet of Perfect Specimens,  
I'll have to lose the gut.

PATTY  
Oh, we're not as superficial as we look.

GILBERT  
That's a relief.

PAT  
But, do get a longer T-shirt.

IT SCORES A SURPRISED LAUGH; a good sign for what lies ahead.

MARY  
(to Gilbert) Was I right?  
(to Patty)) Craig came to Santa  
Barbara looking for the "Ideal  
American Family," Patty.

PATTY  
You came to the right place.

ALAN  
So people have told me. And I  
already found one. In a basket of  
Christmas Cards, at Mary's house  
last night.

THE CHRISTMAS CARD he's holding carries the FAMILY PORTRAIT we  
saw in the opening - before became an instrument of slander.

PATTY  
We're not ideal. We're just a family.

GILBERT  
I'd like to meet them.

PATTY  
With what in mind?

GILBERT  
I make documentary films, Patty.  
Nothing you'd have ever heard  
of; most recently on the work of  
Mead. She's a well-known anthropologist.

PATTY  
Really.

GILBERT

Yes, and her method of researching is what inspired me. Her remarkable study of "family life" in a primitive village -

PATTY

Coming of Age in Samoa - which I quite liked. (off his surprise) We've learned how to tone our bodies here, and read at the same time.

GILBERT

Very Impressive.

PATTY

(quoting Mead) "Fathers are biological necessities, but social accidents." She's dead-on, with gender roles.

GILBERT

She also said, "I don't believe in using women in combat. Because women are too fierce."

PATTY

How 'bout, "throughout history women have chosen *providers*, while men have chosen *anything*."

LAUGHTER, ALL 'ROUND.

GILBERT

Why do I think we already know more about each other, than we should?

The line between playful banter, and flirtation, is blurring here.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

I want to study "An *American Family*," the same way she did, a *primitive* one; by having camera team virtually "move in" with them, to capture life as it's really lived, 24/7.

PATTY

In my family, that would be intensely boring.

GILBERT

Nothing "real" is boring, Patty. You've heard of Andy warhol?

PATTY

(suppressing a smile) Vaguely.

GILBERT

He made a film called "Sleep."  
Eight hours long, of nothing but  
a man sleeping. And audiences were  
fascinated. We're all "born voyeurs."

PATTY

But we're not all born exhibitionists.  
Why would anyone subject their family  
to that?

GILBERT

To be a part of history. A brave new  
experiment in putting "reality" on TV.  
Not fake reality, like "The Brady Bunch"  
or "Leave it to Beaver," but real people,  
with real lives. A real family, like  
"this one" (the Louds Christmas card)  
that gives "family" a good name.

PATTY

Its very flattering, but...

GILBERT

Ah-ah don't say no.

MARY

He's gotten a "yes" from everybody  
he's spoken to, Patty. The Hartells,  
the Kellers, The Bravermans...

PATTY

Excellent choices, all.

MARY

But not as good as The Louds. You  
know that, and so do I. And so  
does everyone in this community.

GILBERT

As will, everyone in the entire  
Country, when they tune in, and  
see the Loud Family on TV.

Her PAUSE provides an OPENING:

GILBERT (CONT'D)

I like that thought. Hold onto it.

PATTY

And, what thought would that be?

GILBERT

The one that says, "Patty, you'd better think this through...or you might be thinking about it, for the rest of your life.

INT. HER CAR - ON THE WAY HOME

PATTY bemused; "Like A Bridge over Troubled Water," on the radio, casting a shadow on the mood. [NOTE: we can use or her on-camera interview, or just her voice, to hear her thoughts, below.]

PATTY (VO)

The "thought" I had, was about the "hangups," late at night, when I'd answer the phone. The woman's handkerchief that came back from the dry cleaners, pinned to his lapel. And the silver cufflinks he claimed to have bought at a pawnshop; and was shocked by my "paranoia" at the freak coincidence that "To My Bad Billie" was inscribed on the back.

INT HER BEDROOM - EVENING

PATTY at the window, in the grip of her fantasy as she watches the kids play football on the lawn.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)

Paranoid or not; I could see their faces when they turned on their TV's and saw the Loud Family, shoulder-to-shoulder in solidarity, bonded by blood, and time, and love, and sacrifice, and a thousand things they couldn't begin to understand - except that they were up against a force that was indestructible.

INT. HER BATHROOM - BEDTIME

PATTY at the mirror, torn with indecision.

PATTY

What would it do to us? Could I use my family, to save my family? I prayed for a "sign," to tell he what to do.

Reaching for the moisturizer, BILL'S travel kit HOLDS HER EYE.

BILL (OS)

Patty? You know what I was thinking, When I came home tonight - ?

Pulling on pajamas as he heads toward the opened bathroom door.

BILL (CONT'D)

When I came home tonight, and -

ENTERING, HE SPOTS WHAT SHE'S STARING AT. GULP.

PATTY

Your hairbrush.

BILL

My hairbrush?

PATTY

It's clean.

BILL

And - ?

PATTY

Who cleaned it?

BILL

I cleaned it.

PATTY

You've never cleaned it. I clean it.

BILL

Well, I did, this time.

PATTY

Why?

BILL

You know, Patty? This is finally too much. Can you handle the truth?

PATTY

(in earnest) I need the truth.

BILL

It had blond hair in it. From a Golden Retriever. Bill Nevin's 4-year old brat opened my suitcase and brushed the dog with it. You're amazing, though, I'll say that. (bursts into laughter) "Who cleaned your hairbrush?!" That's one for the books!!

She can't help but smile; not in appreciation of the humor, but for being delivered the "sign" she's been praying for.

BILL (CONT'D)

So, I was saying. You know what I was thinking? (MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

When I was out there, playing  
touch-football, on the lawn?  
I was thinking that we're the  
"West Coast Kennedys."

PATTY

That's interesting. Because I met  
a filmmaker today, who's looking for  
The Perfect Family, to put on TV.

ASSESSING THEIR MIRROR IMAGE, BILL'S EXPRESSION SAYS 'RIGHT ON.'

ALAN RAYMOND (OVER)

We had no idea what we were getting into.

INT. ACADEMY OF RADIO AND TV AUDITORIUM

**"An evening with filmmakers Alan and Susan Raymond"**

THE RAYMONDS, onstage with a MODERATOR, are young and purposeful,  
with the shaggy sixties 'look' of counterculture intellectuals.

ALAN

First of all, we were just married,  
and had something a little more  
exotic in mind for our honeymoon  
than a cutting room in a motel on  
the beach in Santa Barbara.

MODERATOR

And, what was it, that changed your  
mind? Craig Gilbert's legendary  
salesmanship?

SUSAN

The subject, I think. For me, anyway.  
Getting "up close and personal" with  
people who'd really made a go of that  
thing called marriage; I wouldn't mind  
learning how to do that.

ALAN

For me, a chance to do something *pure*.  
"Cinema Verite." The cinema of truth.  
Just be a fly on the wall, capturing  
life, as it's really lived.

MODERATOR

You'd heard of the Heisenberg principle?  
(trying to quote it) "Anything changeable...."

ALAN

(corrects) "Anything observable, is changed by the fact of it being observed."

MODERATOR

Could that explain, what "went wrong?"

THE RAYMONDS EXCHANGE GLANCE: "How best, to answer?"

SUSAN

It's important to know that Gilbert's own marriage had just collapsed. He was bitter. And believed, the version of "family," spoon-fed to us on television, was a lie; and that the institution of "marriage" was, in fact, doomed to extinction.

MODERATOR

So, it wasn't "being observed" that changed things. It was "the observer."

ALAN

He searched for the "perfect family," with the instinct of a bloodhound sniffing for a "fatal flaw." Consciously or not; he wanted to find a family that looked like The Brady Bunch - and bring them down.

INT. LOUD HOUSEHOLD - A GUEST FOR DINNER

GILBERT, held captive to Bill's bloviating, and noticing PATTY's embarrassment at his need to impress, is becoming more certain, with each passing moment, that his search is over. The intellectual mismatch, plus an underlying tension, is, to say the least, "promising."

BILL

You know what the secret is? You gotta love it. If you don't love it, you can't sell it. And, God help me, laugh if you want, I love drillbits. The sight of a giant Grand Chinook Sawtooth take a big bite out of Mother Earth, it makes me feel... what can I say?

GILBERT

"Humbled?"

BILL

"Powerful."

KEVIN

Mister Gilbert saw Hair, Dad. Said it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

BILL  
(Mr. Quick-wit) Speaking of which,  
you need yours cut! That's a "once-  
in-a lifetime experience," too!

GRANT  
And he knows Mick Jagger!

BILL  
Isn't that the guy yodeling out  
there, in the garage?

GILBERT  
Your boys have promised me a concert.

KEVIN  
When we do the show, he's going  
to shoot it and put it on TV!

BILL  
Whoa, Boys. Let's slow down, here.

GILBERT  
My fault. I confessed to them, that  
out of the 50 families I've interviewed,  
none is as remarkable as this.

MICHELLE  
You should see Lance. He's the coolest  
of us all. But he went to New York.

GILBERT  
We could film him in New York.

MICHELLE  
He'd love that!

BILL  
(quick to intervene) No, no, we'll  
just keep it to the immediate family.

PATTY  
He's not the immediate family?

BILL  
He's not in the house, and that's  
what the show is right? What goes  
on, in the house?

GILBERT  
The house, the school, the super-market;  
wherever the family goes, we go, and  
that's what goes into the show.

MICHELLE  
(sudden fear) What about the bathroom?

GILBERT  
(over their laughter) No.

BILL  
Seriously, what is off limits?

PATTY  
Why, Bill? Do you have something to hide?

GILBERT  
Fair question: the "threshold of privacy."

BILL  
(pointedly) "Thank you." What's  
the answer?

GILBERT  
We'll know it, when we've crossed it.  
You'll come down to the cutting room  
and tell us what you don't like.

BILL  
That's in writing?

GILBERT  
For this to work, requires mutual trust.

GRANT  
I trust you, Mister Gilbert.

MICHELLE  
Me too, can we vote?

BILL  
Did someone say there are "votes, "here?"

GRANT  
Come on, Dad. We could be famous!

GILBERT  
They're not wrong. If we do this right,  
you'll get the entire Country watching.

The thought of Bill's Bimbo's brings dark victory to PATTY'S eyes.

GILBERT (CONT'D)  
The intelligent half, anyway.

PATTY  
How do we get the dumb half? (Oops)  
I mean it'd be nice to get everyone.

BILL

What about payment?

GILBERT

Actors get paid, to do what they're told. The public has to be certain there's no "manipulation" going on here.

Seeing the blow to his enthusiasm, worried glances shoot across the room; the kids to PATTY, Patty to GILBERT, who throws her a conspiratorial wink. He's got it under control.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Frankly, Bill, I told my bosses I'd find five great families - which I've already done, right here in Santa Barbara - and do "one hour of TV" on each. If you come aboard, I'd consider giving the whole five hours, to you.

AN ADMIRING GLANCE FROM PATTY: He's thrown the perfect bait.

BILL

What families are those?

PATTY

The Hartells, the Kellers, the Braverman's and the Winstons.

BILL

What's so great about their families?

PATTY

What's not?

BILL

Well, Bill Hartell spits food when he talks, the Keller kid is practically retarded, Clarice Winston can't shut up, and Estelle Braverman is just plain ugly.

GILBERT

So - is that a "yes?"

BILL

I don't know. I hate to be a bad host, but, with all the disruption it will cause, and no payment of any kind, I just don't see any upside, to it.

PATTY

You might, when Bill Hartell becomes head of the most famous household in America. (GOT HIM!)

INT. NY OFFICES OF WNET - DAY

CRAIG GILBERT  
It's casting directors dream.

The Christmas card blown up to POSTER SIZE, for the Network brass, who listen to GILBERT'S PITCH - with skepticism.

GILBERT  
Handsome, hard-working Dad; smart, sultry Mom; 16 year old girl, experiencing her first crush, two boys who think they're the next Rolling Stones - (off their poker faces) Why no "applause" here?

NETWORK PRESIDENT  
Because you promised us "five great families," and came back with one.

GILBERT  
I promised "five great hours."  
And, with this family, I'm betting five hours won't be enough.

PRODUCTION EXEC  
Enough of what? "Pass the salt?"  
"Good pot roast?" "How was your day, Dear?" Frankly, I don't get the point.

Don't get the point? That's kind of "invitation" he lives for.

GILBERT  
Did you get the point of going to the moon, Paul? I'm serious. Did anyone ask Chris Columbus, "what's the point" of checking out what's on the other side of the ocean? If he didn't have an answer before he left, he sure as hell did, when he came back with the news, "It ain't flat, guys, it's round!" Personally, I think it was worth the trip. But that's just me.

Judging by their amusement, we might suspect they provoked him, just for the show.

GILBERT (CONT'D)  
(amping it up) The "point" is, we've gone beyond the horizon, and behind the moon, but have yet to get past The American Front Door! And, if you expect to find the smiling faces they put on Christmas cards, there, you might as well believe, the Earth is Flat, and the Moon is made of green cheese! (MORE)

GILBERT (CONT'D)

And, if anyone around here, should ask "What's the point," it's me! Of having to beg, to make you the most talked about Network executives in the history of TV, for breaking mold, with the most exciting ten hours of television ever put on the air!

"Ten hours" gets a HUGE LAUGH - which was intended.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Remember this laugh, when you see the dailies, and start begging for more.

NETWORK PRESIDENT

I'll take you up on that. I want you here, to screen dailies with us, so we can make sure you're getting something worth putting on the air, every step of the way.

AN ASSISTANT COMES IN - WITH A CALL FOR:

ASSISTANT

Craig? Patty Loud. Sounds "tense."

GILBERT

See there? "Dramatic tension," already!

INT. THE LOUD HOUSE - SAME MOMENT.

PATTY on the phone, amidst the chaos of dogs barking, hammers pounding, drills whining; the RAYMONDS and their Camera Assistant, TOMMY GOODWIN, setting up the house for camera and sound.

INT. GILBERT'S PRIVATE OFFICE - SAME

He barrels in, and grabs the phone.

GILBERT

I was just describing you Patty, and used a "term" that would make you blush.

PATTY

Why aren't you *here*, Craig? There are people tearing my house apart.

GILBERT

They're pre-rigging, so that when we finish shooting in New York, we can just walk right in, and continue.

PATTY

Maybe we shouldn't be starting there. In New York, I mean.

GLBERT

Why, Patty? What's wrong?

PATTY

I don't know. The whole thing. It feels like a mistake.

GILBERT

Okay, slow down. Is *Lance* worried?

PATTY

Only about what to wear. So am I, And what to do. How to act. I mean how to do this. I wish you were here.

GLBERT

There's nothing I can do, at this point, that the Raymonds' can't. They're not only great filmmakers they're good people, who you can talk to. That's why I picked them.

PATTY

I picked you to talk to.

GILBERT

I'll be waiting, when you get here, Patty. And we'll carve out some time together. In the meantime, put Alan on the phone. You're probably giving them that dazzling "Patty smile" that covers up how scared you are.

His words hit so deep, she's left speechless. Handing off the phone, she looks to the PATIO, where MICHELLE is helping SUSAN plant a microphone in a potted palm. In the KITCHEN, the boys are helping TOMMY put brighter bulbs in the Chandelier.

PATTY (VO)

I wondered, that day, where all this was taking me. And why the person I wanted to pour my heart out to, was someone I hardly knew at all.

EXT/INT JFK AIRPORT - DAY

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of "Flight #255, arriving from Los Angeles," jump-starts the FILM CREW (Alan, Susan & Tommy), who shoulder their equipment and run for the gate. TOMMY "slates," on the hoof.

TOMMY

Day one, roll one: An American Family.

INT. THE PLANE - BATHROOM - SAME

PATTY, at the mirror, unties her ponytail, then ties it again, tweaks her collar, glosses her lips and, trying to conceal how nervous she is, strikes an "indifferent" pose.

COCKPIT ANNOUNCEMENT

All passengers return to their  
seats for our final approach.....

INT. ARRIVAL GATE - MOMENTS LATER

As PASSENGERS begin to deplane, ALAN checks his exposure meter.

ALAN

This backlight's killing me.

THE 'SUN-GUN' snaps on, causing ARRIVING PASSENGERS to squint, and PATTY to FREEZE in her tracks.

PATTY

Oh - I didn't realize.

ALAN

Just keep coming, Patty,  
we're "invisible," remember?

PATTY

But, you're right in front of me.

ALAN

Walk right through us. We'll  
give 'way. And, no more talking.

EXT. AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

Filming continues, as she hails a taxi. TOMMY gestures "ignore us" to the DRIVER, as THEY ALL PILE IN and pull away.

INT - TAXI - ON THE ROAD

ALAN is in the front seat, turned around, shooting directly back at PATTY; SUSAN squeezed in beside her with all the sound gear piled in her lap. TOMMY crouches on the floor, beneath the camera lens, reaching up to focus it, on command.

ALAN

(directing focus) I'm on the window,  
got the skyline, panning over to Patty...

CAMERA PANS from the SKYLINE to PATTY'S EYES, and WE HEAR:

CRAIG GILBERT (OS)

How's that for a shot? From the cold, heartless City, to the eyes of a Mother, beginning to comprehend the size of this "monster" that has swallowed up her First Born.

INT. N.Y. CUTTING ROOM - SAME

The TAXI FOOTAGE is being screened on an EDITING CONSOLE, for the Network Brass; GILBERT, as promised, showing evidence of how great the show is, "every step of the way."

GILBERT

And, wait 'til you see "The First Born." This kid is solid gold.

INT. CHELSEA HOTEL - LANCE'S ROOM - SAME

LANCE, in a tank top and bowtie, is doing push-ups to calm his nerves, while HIS ROOMMATE SOREN (bleached hair and bling) keeps watch at the window - EXCITEDLY SPOTTING SOMETHING BELOW.

SOREN

Would she have dark hair, long legs, huge sunglasses, and have cameras following her? Or is that Jackie-O?

EXT. STREET LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

ALAN creeps backwards, in front of PATTY, to stay close on her face, while TOMMY signals pedestrians to "clear away."

INT. CHELSEA HOTEL - AS THEY ENTER

**NOTE: WHENEVER ALAN IS FILMING, WE SEE BOTH HIS POV, AND OURS.**

HIS CAMERA, CLOSE ON HER FACE, captures her shock at how sleazy this place is.

OUR CAMERA has THE WIDE SHOT: people dodging out of the way as THEY APPROACH THE FRONT DESK, TOMMY, admonishing the DESK CLERK, in the broadest possible sign language, to IGNORE THEM.

PATTY

I'm Patricia Loud. My son made a reservation for me, on the 4th floor.

DESK CLERK

802, Mrs. Loud.

PATTY

No, I think I'm next to my Son, who's in 431.

DESK CLERK  
He wanted you on "8."

PATTY  
(irritated) Take the bags up  
to my son's room, please.

INT. 4TH FLOOR - SAME

They spill out of the elevator, PATTY leading the charge to 431  
and, with a Mother's disregard for closed doors, barges in.

LANCE  
Mom!

Her heart instantly melts, THE CREW struggling to work around  
their embrace.

PATTY  
Hi, Baby. How are you?

LANCE  
Good. Mom, this is Soren.

PATTY  
(Uh-oh; the "brave smile" flashes)  
Hello.

SOREN  
Love your gloves.

LANCE  
You do look nice.

PATTY  
You said you'd be in the lobby.

LANCE  
You really look nice. Want to sit?

SOREN  
How was your flight, Mrs. Loud?

PATTY  
Fine. (spots an ashtray) Who  
smokes? Are you smoking, Lance?

LANCE  
Soren smokes.

PATTY'S VOICE  
We'll that's his Mother's problem.  
Just so long as you don't.

LANCE  
Would you like a cigarette?

PATTY  
I have my own, thanks. (lights up)  
This place could use some cleaning.

LANCE  
The maid service is so bad here.

PATTY  
Maybe you should apply for the job.  
Daddy would like to know when you're  
going to start working, by the way.

LANCE  
I actually did apply for the cleaning  
job, but they wanted me to wear a  
hair net, and I just couldn't...

PATTY  
You really applied for that?!

LANCE  
No, of course not, but I'd be happy  
to go pick out a mop, with you.

EYE CONTACT BETWEEN THE CREW; THOROUGHLY AMUSED.

SOREN  
(urging Lance) Tell her about the show.

LANCE  
We got tickets to an incredible show  
at The La Mama tonight. Vain Victory.  
I have very good friends in it.

PATTY  
Really?

LANCE  
I know so many famous and interesting  
people, Mom. (re: a photo on the wall)  
Like Jackie Curtis, who's starring in it.

THE PHOTO IS AN 8X10 GLOSSY OF A BEAUTIFUL ACTRESS.

PATTY  
She's a friend of yours?

SOREN  
She wants to marry him, actually.

PATTY  
(taken aback) Really.

SOREN  
She thinks he's the All-American Boy,  
and she's the All-American Girl.

PATTY  
(mystified) She's very pretty.

LANCE  
Shall we go up to your room?

PATTY  
You said I'd be next door to you.  
Why am I up there?

LANCE  
Because it's big enough for me to  
sweep in the door, like Loretta Young.  
(imitates the Diva sweeping in)

THE CAMERA IS SHAKING, ALAN struggling to contain his LAUGHTER.

PAT  
Well, I hope somebody ran a vacuum  
or something, up there.

LANCE  
I personally hired someone, but  
he's a heroine addict, so we might  
be slipping on some drool.

ALAN BURSTS OUT LAUGHING AND HAS TO GIVE UP; SUSAN AND TOMMY TOO.  
LANCE TURNS, as if "shocked" to see them there.

LANCE (CONT'D)  
My God! You were "invisible!"  
Just like they said you'd be!

THE SCENE BEGINS TO ACCELERATE until it's going ten times normal speed, the VOICES soaring to "CHIPMUNK" LEVEL.

WE'RE WATCHING IT ON AN EDITING CONSOLE AGAIN: GILBERT fast-forwarding, to a scene of PATTY, LANCE and SOREN, on the streets of Greenwich Village, heading toward the La Mama Theater.

CRAIG GILBERT (OS)  
He gets tickets for a show, to take  
his Mother to. His "Santa Barbara,  
Country-Club Mom," right? Is it  
Oliver? Hello Dolly? No.

INT. LA MAMA THEATER: SHOW IN PROGRESS

PATTY front row center, between the two boys, with a sickly smile on her face, watching a high-kicking chorus line of DRAG QUEENS.

GILBERT

He takes her to a drag show! Laced with profanity and sadomasochistic sex, performed practically in her lap!

PATTY, IN SHOCK, CATCHES LANCE'S EYE - and whispers.

PATTY

Is that your friend, "Jackie?"  
The one who wants to "marry" you?

LANCE

Yes.

PATTY

She's a man?

LANCE

Well, I haven't accepted, or anything.

A GLANCE OVER HER SHOULDER makes her cringe. The FILM CREW is there, PLUS CRAIG GILBERT - filming this whole scene.

PATTY

(to Lance) I'm going to leave,  
at intermission, okay? You stay.

LANCE

You don't want to meet Jackie?

PATTY

There are cameras following us,  
Lance, in case you haven't noticed.  
You might have taken this into  
account before you brought me here.

INT. THEATER - THE FIRST ACT CURTAIN COMING DOWN

PATTY flips on her dark glasses, BLOWING RIGHT PAST GILBERT, who pursues her to the street; her eagerness to distance herself from that debacle, making it difficult for him to keep pace.

GILBERT

How'd you like the play, Mrs. Lincoln?

PATTY

Did you know this is what they were  
taking me to?

GILBERT

"Cinema verite," Patty. "What happens, happens."

PATTY

No. This is not "happening."  
Not in our show. "Transvestites?"  
Don't make him look foolish, Craig.  
(anguished) Maybe this is huge mistake!

GILBERT

You have a "say" about what "goes in,"  
and what "comes out," Patty. But,  
if you're this upset about a "drag show" -

PATTY

It's about Bill. If he ever saw this...

GILBERT

Lance is amazing, Pat. I think you  
know that. So does my whole crew.  
If his own Father doesn't know it,  
he's really missing out.

Though stunned by his trespass, she is touched by his words.  
The undermining of PATTY LOUD has begun.

PATTY

I'm scared for him. This place.  
These people.

GILBERT

He's trying to find himself, Pat.  
And this is the place to do it.

PATTY

Do you think so?

GILBERT

It's no coincidence his hero is  
Andy Warhol. And no shame.

Her eyes are hidden by sunglasses, but we sense she is near tears.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

PATTY

Not really.

GILBERT

I'd give you a hug, but it wouldn't  
be appropriate.

PATTY

I thought this was "cinema verite."  
Whatever happens, happens, right?  
Go for it.

GILBERT

I think I'll wait on that.

Winning her confidence with every move, he puts a protective arm around her, and gives her his handkerchief to wipe her tears.

INT. BISTRO - LATER

PATTY, in what will become her signature pose - a cigarette burning, and a drink in hand - is opening up to him.

PATTY

You know what Andy told him, the last time they spoke? That he should honor his Father, even if his Father doesn't honor him.

GILBERT

How much of an age difference is there, between you and Bill?

PATTY

Seven years.

GILBERT

Feels like a different generation. Such fixed moral principles." (fishing) Or, am I wrong, about that?

He gets the "Patty smile; she's not ready for that.

PATTY

What does your wife think of you?

GILBERT

Not much. We're divorced. Weren't the "right fit," right from the start. Still, it's hard to pull away.

If it sound familiar, it's meant to.

PATTY

Could I ask a question? The "adjective" you used. To describe me? You said, on the phone -

GILBERT

Oh. I get kind of flowery, when I'm in my "selling" mode.

PATTY  
Selling?

GILBERT  
You, to my bosses. You, and the family.

PATTY  
What was the "word?"

GILBERT  
Sultry.

PATTY  
"Sultry."

GILBERT  
And "smart." I said that, too.

PATTY  
I like sultry.

GILBERT  
("message received") I think we'd  
better go.

AS THEY EXIT TO THE STREET, WE HEAR:

PATTY (VO)  
Craig Gilbert was a revelation.  
Soulful, intellectual, fascinated  
with every detail of my life... and  
he appreciated Lance, which was the  
most endearing thing of all.

INT. THE LOUD HOUSE - LATER

BILL ON THE PHONE, as PATTY ENTERS HER HOTEL ROOM AND ANSWERS.  
WE CUT BETWEEN THE TWO.

BILL  
Hey, alley cat. Isn't it kind of  
late to be prowling the streets?

PATTY  
Lance took me to a show.

BILL  
How's he doing? Found a job, yet?

PATTY  
No, but he's made a lot of friends.

BILL  
Any girls on the horizon? (MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

That's still my hope, you know.  
That, if he could just meet the  
right girl.

PATTY

I think he has.

BILL

Really?

PATTY

She was in the show tonight.

BILL

And, she likes him in "that" way?

PATTY

Says she wants to marry him.

BILL

Well, I'll be Goddamn! That's  
amazing! Has Gilbert been around?

PATTY

(lighting a cigarette) Mmmm-hm.  
He likes Lance, just the way he is.

BILL

(feeling the barb) Oh, is that so?

PATTY

He's going to try to help him reconnect  
with Andy.

BILL

I don't think that's a good idea.

PATTY

I don't think that matters.

BILL

How much have you had to drink Patty?

PATTY

Enough to put me to sleep. We're  
going for a stroll in the Park, in  
the morning.

BILL

You and Gilbert?

PATTY

Me and Lance. He's happy here.

BILL  
I'm not happy here. I miss you.

PATTY  
Then you can pick me up at the  
airport, Wednesday afternoon.

Hanging up, she lies back on the bed, savoring the feel of FREEDOM

EXT SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT - DAY

BILL, waiting with a rose in hand, greets PATTY with a big hug. Noticing the camera wasn't ready, he waits 'til it is, and does it again; not much more convincing than it was the first time

BILL  
How 'bout I take you guys to lunch?

TOMMY indicates, "We don't speak."

BILL (CONT'D)  
Okay then, how 'bout I take my wife  
to lunch??

PATTY  
(re: filming) "On" or "off" the record?

BILL  
Hey. My life is an open book.

INT. RESTAURANT (EL PASEO) - LATER

THE CREW takes a "working lunch," gobbling food, while the camera runs on PATTY and BILL, in the booth across from them. BILL is downing a second Marguerita; neither has much to say.

BILL  
So, you had a good time. That's good.

PATTY  
I did.

BILL  
(joking) Well, we didn't miss you a bit. Delilah took right over, where you left off: "Michelle, you set the table, Grant, you make the toast." We were all working for her, this week.

PATTY  
Still, in all, you got a nice tan.

BILL

High blood pressure, Kiddo. This strike is going to do me in. Thirty thousand bucks worth of drillbits sitting on the dock, with no one to haul it.

PATTY

(disinterested) Are we going to go broke, Bill?

BILL

You better believe it. Lance "living it up," in New York? I hope he knows he's on a short string, there.

PATTY

He loves it there, Bill. Loves the streets, the people, bursts into song sometimes. He has a "spark of life," like no one I've ever known. So open. And funny.

BILL

And lazy, like the rest. Has he even looked for a job? I tell Grant, he can make ten bucks an hour hauling cement for David Witzell, you know what he says? "Thanks, anyway." If he thinks he's going to spend the summer "howling" in that garage...

PATTY

The band is his dream, Bill.

BILL

How 'bout getting dream that brings in some bucks? It's not like we're raising a bunch of doctors and lawyers, around here.

PATTY

Then, how 'bout raising people who have a shot at being happy?

BILL

(escalating) How 'bout having a Mother who makes certain they know "right from wrong?" What they *should* and *shouldn't* be doing. I think that would be nice, don't you?

ALAN'S CAMERA ZOOMS IN ON PATTY; stunned. Has BILL forgotten they're being filmed, or is he "getting off," on this?

BILL (CONT'D)

Believe me, this week of "baby sitting" gave me a better idea of what goes on, when I'm gone.

PATTY

Really? Like what?

BILL

Like your 16-year old daughter, staying out half the night, after her dance practice. 2:00 o'clock in the morning on a *school night*?! I get home, and her bed is empty? Maybe somebody else's isn't. You know what I mean?

PATTY, FUMING, TURNS TO THE RAYMONDS.

PATTY

We'll end it here. I'll speak to Craig in the morning, about dropping this from the film.

ALAN

(in full agreement) Done.

As they 'wrap', PATTY "dead-eyes" BILL, and issues a quiet threat.

PATTY

"Bait me" in front of the camera again? You'll be very, very, sorry.

INT. GILBERT'S N.Y. CUTTING ROOM - NIGHT

GILBERT ON THE PHONE, FUMING AT ALAN, who is in his cramped cutting room/cum living space, at the Miramar-on-the-Beach Motel. WE CAN HEAR WAVES IN THE BACKGROUND.

GILBERT

So, you let her call "cut?" Is she the director now? I've got people leaning all over me, because we're burning 18 rolls of film per day, and nothing is happening! Finally, something starts to heat up, and you abort it?!!

ALAN

It was about her 16-year old daughter's sex life. Do we want to embarrass a 16-year old girl?

CRAIG

Listen carefully. You were hired to turn that camera on, and let it And run! And run! And RUN! That is Cinema Verite! That is what you signed up for! "No involvement, no judgement, no agenda!" Do I want to embarrass a 16-year old girl?! You bet I do! Because, what goes wrong with that family, goes right with this film! And, if you don't have the guts to shoot it, I'll find somebody who will!

HE SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN; leaving THE RAYMONDS in DISMAY.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SANTA BARBARA - DAY

PATTY and her daughters, out shopping, are spotted by a close friend (VAL) calling from the doorway of "VAL'S CLOSET" - her pricey boutique.

VAL

Hey, Patz! I was about to call you!  
What are you guys up to?

PATTY

New tap shoes, for the dance recital.

VAL

How'd you like a new Spring outfit, complete with purse, hat, and shoes - "on the house?"

PATTY

My goodness. Why?

VAL

Because I wouldn't mind having all of America see my new Spring line, is "why." Bill says he can get me a wardrobe credit, at the end of the show.

PATTY

Well, that's very nice of him.

BILL (OS)

There's my girls...!

Speak of the Devil, he pulls up, with the FILM CREW in tow, bounding to the curb with hugs for all - including VAL.

BILL (CONT'D)

Is this a beautiful bunch?  
One's prettier than the next.

FROM ACROSS THE STREET  
Hey, there's America's perfect family!

It's the HARTELLS, dodging traffic, to get into the shot.

HARTELL  
I hear they're going to film the  
boys' rock band.

PATTY  
And the girls' dance recital.

BILL  
(Got a) bunch of movie stars, here!

ANOTHER PAIR OF FRIENDS joins them for the street-corner gabfest;  
PATTY, having become camera-savvy, makes the most of the photo-op,  
wrapping a possessive arm around HER MAN.

PATTY'S (VO)  
Two months into the filming, I sensed  
I was accomplishing what I set out, to.  
The image of the Loud Family, being  
captured on film, were exactly what  
I wanted Bill's Bimbos to see.

INT. SANTA BARBARA THEATER - DANCE RECITAL

BILL and PATTY, in the audience of proud Moms and Dads, are the  
picture of marital contentment, their eye contact conveying the  
intimacy of "parental collusion," long absent from their lives.

PATTY (VO)  
Craig claimed to be "too busy,"  
to visit - which was just as well,  
because our "charade" was taking  
on a life of its own. So real, that  
I started believing it, myself.

GILBERT (OS)  
The point is, what's lurking  
beneath the surface." Watch this:

INT. N.Y. EDITING ROOM - DAY

GILBERT, trying to take the story in a whole other direction,  
is getting HIS BOSSES EXCITED, with footage of the "lunchtime  
flare-up between PATTY and BILL; working it, for all it's worth.

BILL (ON EDITING SCREEN)  
"Believe me, Kiddo this week of  
baby-sitting gives me a better idea  
of what goes on, when I'm gone."

PATTY (ON EDITING SCREEN)  
 "Really, Bill? Like what?"

GILBERT  
 Here we go! "Gloves off!"

BILL (ON SCREEN)  
 "Like your 16 year-old daughter staying out half the night, after dance practice. 2:00 A.M. On a school night - I get home, and her bed is empty. Maybe somebody else's isn't. Know what I mean?!"

PATTY TURNS TO CAMERA (about to tell ALAN to turn it off), WHEN GILBERT "FREEZES" IT; her ANGER even more RIVETING in a "still."

GILBERT  
 Goodbye Brady Bunch, hello Louds!  
 This "look" this "moment," not to mention this subject, "teenaged sex," blows the lid off anything the American public has ever seen!

PRODUCTION EXEC  
 But, where's the rest of it?

GILBERT  
 Interrupted by a waiter. But "coming soon."

INT. THE LOUD HOUSEHOLD - DINING ROOM

AN OUTBURST OF LAUGHTER; PATTY gazing, in amazement, at the sight of BILL engaging with his children, just like a DAD should; or is he "performing?" THE RAYMONDS are there, getting it all on film.

BILL  
 Remember that jar of Mayo so big, you had to stick your whole arm down it?

KEVIN  
 You once dipped a whole sandwich in it, including your fist!

THE PHONE RINGS: MICHELLE GRABS IT.

MICHELLE  
 Hello? It's LANCE!

All race for phones, overjoyed to hear from him.

PATTY  
 Lance - ?!

INTERCUT LANCE: perched on the windowsill of his hotel room, four stories above the street; a KID WITH AN 8mm CAMERA, FILMING HIM.

MICHELLE, GRANT  
Lancie-boy! Dude! What's shakin'?

LANCE  
I've got good news!

PATTY  
A job, I hope?

BILL  
(incredulous) He got a job?!

LANCE  
I'm going to Paris!

PATTY  
"Paris?"

BILL  
He's got a job in Paris?!

MICHELLE  
Take me with!

BILL  
(grabs a phone) Lance, it's your Dad.

LANCE  
(debonair) Why, hello, Dad.

BILL  
What are you doing in Paris?

LANCE  
Begging in the streets.

BILL  
(laughs) Come on, Lance.

LANCE  
I'm serious. I'm doing street theater, with the coolest people. Really super people, Dad, you'd love them, and they'd love you. I tell them about you, all the time. That you're the greatest. Not that Mother isn't. She's much greater, actually. But, you get what I mean.

What we "get," is that he's stoned - calling down to the street:

LANCE (CONT'D)

Hey, Guys?! Get me a Toasted Almond!

HE TOSSES DOLLAR BILLS, that are taken by the wind.

BILL

Lance? Who's financing this trip to France?

LANCE

This wonderful rich man whose name I don't remember. Something with an S, or a P. Peter something. Maybe. No, that's not it. Maybe Paul. Or John. Or Ringo.

Disgusted, BILL hands back the phone.

PATTY

Lance, are you all right?

LANCE

Yes, I'll write you a letter, tomorrow. X-rated, so please don't read it.

PATTY

I'm going away, for a few days, to see Grandma, Honey.

LANCE

Is her heart bad again?

PATTY

(evades answering) Her friends are giving her a surprise party.

BILL

(to Patty) You can tell him, for me: he's not going to Paris.

PATTY

Your Father says, you're not going to Paris.

LANCE

I'm actually flattered. No one's ever told me that, before.

GRANT

Are you in "high" spirits, Lancie?

LANCE

Yes, but my toasted Almond is here, so, I gotta go. Love you all...bye-bye.

All hang up, bummed by his condition; the kids, not wanting to discuss it, scatter. THE RAYMONDS are wrapping their stuff.

BILL

(To Patty) You're going to Portland?

PATTY

Just for a few days. Would you come? I'm sure she'd love it.

BILL

"Party" with a bunch of old ladies?

PATTY

Maybe there'll be some young ones.

If she's testing, he's about to pass with flying colors.

BILL

I'm married, haven't you heard?

It brings a lump to her throat; THE RAYMONDS gratified too, at the genuine warmth between them.

ALAN

See you guys, tomorrow.

PATTY

Any chance you guys could come with me, and get her on film? It would mean a lot to me.

EXT/INT. PORTLAND AIRPORT - NEXT DAY

PATTY'S MOM, stiff as a Pilgrims broom" meets PATTY at the GATE; not happy to see the FILM CREW trailing behind her.

MOTHER

Why are they here?

PATTY

To film your party.

MOTHER

If you think it's my last, you're dead wrong. I intend to bury you all.

But the quality of their embrace betrays her Mom's bravado.

EXT. A TREE-LINED STREET - LATER

PATTY and her MOM on the front porch of her old house, peeping in the windows; a "sentimental journey," often taken on the way home; THE RAYMONDS getting it on film.

PATTY

Look at that ghastly wallpaper.  
Remember my water lilies?

MOTHER

Nothing's forever, Patz. Except  
Billie's strawberries. They're  
still here.

PATTY

(swept with yearning) Bill's  
garden. Think of that. His  
strawberries are still here.

INT. HER MOMS'S LIVING ROOM, IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE

They're leafing through a family album; The Raymonds, feeling  
their intimacy, filming from a respectful distance away.

MOTHER

"Little Lance, Big show-off" even  
at age two. God, how Bill loved  
that boy...

PATTY

So proud, his "first born" was a son.

MOTHER

(Pats belly) Another one, in the oven.

THE PAGE TURNS to "Halloween '56; all FIVE of the little Louds  
dressed as ELVIS; BILL too. It floods PATTY with longing for him.

INT. HER MOTHER'S GUEST BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER.

Behind closed doors, PATTY dials home - eager to connect.

PATTY

Grant. Hi. How's everything? Oh,  
she's great. Strong as an Ox. Says  
she'll bury us all. (shares a laugh)  
Right. In the "nicest possible way."  
Could I talk to Daddy? (gut-punched)  
What -?! To where? "Phoenix?" Did he  
say where he's staying, or when he's  
coming home?

The EMOTIONAL PLUNGE, leaves her nauseous.

PATTY (CONT'D)

I'll come directly back, after the  
party tomorrow. I know, you don't  
need baby sitting. But he shouldn't  
have left you guys alone.

INT. HER MOTHER'S LIVING ROOM - SAME MOMENT

ALAN shooting the scrapbook from over the shoulder of PATTY'S MOM, while SUSAN records her running commentary.

MOTHER

That's the summer they met.  
In his army uniform.

SUSAN

Very handsome.

MOTHER

Oh, yeah. When Patty met him,  
"that was it." Billy Loud just  
swept her off her feet.

PATTY, watching from the door, is heartbroken.

ON AN EDITING CONSOLE: PATTY AND HER MOM approaching the door of a small house - WHEN IT FLIES OPEN revealing a bunch of OLD LADIES crowing "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"

WE'RE WATCHING IT IN THE N.Y. CUTTING ROOM of CRAIG GILBERT, who gazes on with disgust, as the OLD LADIES dive onto PATTY'S WALLET PHOTOS, like pigeons on peanuts.

OLD LADY #1 (ON EDITING SCREEN)

Where's your gorgeous husband?

PATTY (ON EDITING SCREEN)

Off, on business. He wanted to come.

OLD LADY #2 (ON EDITING SCREEN)

(her own photos) These are my great grandchildren! Would anyone believe I'm this old? How old do I look?!

GILBERT

A fuckin' hundred and twenty.

DIALING the RAYMONDS, he gets an ANSWERING MACHINE.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

If don't know if you people are still in Portland, or what. But, unless you can make one these Old Biddies die on camera, this is a worthless shoot! If they don't getting some "bang for their buck" back here, they're going to pull the plug on us!

INT. PATTY & BILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

PATTY in BILLS closet, furtively, and feverishly, going through every pocket, shelf and drawer, unfolding every scrap of paper, turning his socks inside out, sniffing his shirts and ties....

PATTY (OS)  
 When I got back from Portland, and Bill was still gone, the years of "turning a blind eye" came to a crashing end. I became obsessed, with the need to know.

HER HAND wraps around something in the pocket of a ski jacket: a KEY RING, WITH 3 KEYS ON IT, that she's never seen before.

GRANT (OS)  
 (urgent) Mom?

PATTY  
 (pockets it) Yes?

GRANT  
 (bounding upstairs) Dad's getting out of a taxi. Should we keep it a surprise, or show him what's going on in the yard?

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SAME

BILL surprised to see PATTY appear; she's surprised by his "appearance," as well. He's burned to a crisp.

PATTY  
 Wow. Where have you been? To Hell, and back??

BILL  
 You got that, right. Baking, on a job site for three days, trying to keep Jefferson Contracting from demanding their money back.

PATTY  
 Why didn't you call me?

BILL  
 I thought it'd be a quick round trip, and didn't want to pull you away from your Mom. It's bad out there, Patty. Kern County Quarry had to close down, because the Teamsters have joined the strike. I've got 15,000 worth of equipment sitting on the dock in Galveston.

Not a ruse; his anguish is real. But he forces a smile for the CREW, emerging, with GRANT and KEVIN, from behind the house.

GRANT

We can't hide it, Mom, they've got to start hammering. Man, are you burned.

BILL

"Hammering" what? What's going on?

They lead him to the back, where WORKMEN are building a platform.

KEVIN

(proudly) "Woodstock West," Man. There's a new rock group, gonna break out here, Friday night.

GRANT

We're inviting people from every coffee house and bar in town, so we can get some gigs, this summer.

BILL

You've got a "gig" this summer, Grant, hauling cement for David Whitsell.

GRANT

Oh, I don't think so.

BILL

(taking him on) Oh, I do. We're going to need some financial help, around here.

KEVIN

You'll love pouring cement, Grant.

BILL

(to Kevin) I'm putting you to work too, helping me to branch out.

GRANT

You'll love "branching out," Kevin.

BILL

I need you to go to Australia with Sonny Hartman, and try to pick up some new clients. Start grooming you, as a businessman.

GRANT

He goes to Australia, I pour cement?!

BILL

I have "instincts," Grant. One of them, is putting the right people, in the right jobs.

KEVIN

Do I look like a "businessman?"

GRANT

Do I look like a "cement guy?!"

BILL

(re: the camera) We'll discuss it, later.

GRANT

(steamed) No, let's go for it, right here and now! I want it on film, that our Father doesn't believe in us!

PATTY

(warning) Grant.

He "buttons it," flipping BILL off, as he STOMPS AWAY.

INT. PATTY & BILLS BEDROOM - LATER

BILL (OS)

(moaning) ....Oh God. Oh God...

Not sex - sunburn; lotion being rubbed on his back by PATTY, who's mortified that, by all indications, her fantasies have run wild.

PATTY

Why weren't you wearing a shirt?

BILL

I didn't know the sun was so hot. I didn't know a lot of things. I didn't know you could take ten bucks, turn it into fifteen, keep parlaying it, until you're ready to beat the "big boys" at their own game - then a Goddamn strike comes along and I'm out in the hot sun, unable to pay my vendors - !

PATTY

What's the worst that could happen?

BILL

It scares me to think about it.

PATTY

We could face anything, Bill, if we had each other.

In his vulnerable state, it lands like a BUNKER BUSTER.

BILL

Don't we "have" each other, Patty?

PATTY

Come on, Bill

BILL

(coming apart) My God. I'm flying back here, thinking I've always got Patty, I've always got the family. I give a shit less, what happens to the house, the cars, they can all "go away," so long as...(chokes up)

PATTY

(soothing) Okay, it's okay....

BILL

We've had our ups and downs, Patty, I've taken you for granted, I know. And I'm sorry, Truly. For the pain I've caused. But, without you in my corner, I don't know what I'd do.

Too little, too late? Her HESITATION sends him into a PANIC.

BILL (CONT'D)

Tell me you're "here" for me, okay? You gotta say that for me, Patty. You gotta tell me that.

PATTY

I am, Bill. Of course I am.

BILL

I'm done making you unhappy. That's all over, now. I love you. Patty - ?

PATTY

I love you too, Bill. God help me, I do.

The kiss is for his sake. But the hug that follows is a clear demonstration of how much she needs this moment to be true.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SANTA BARBARA - NEXT DAY

The FILM CREW follows PATTY into VAL'S BOUTIQUE; a new lightness in her step; Bill's remorse having given her a sense of hope.

PATTY

(to a salesgirl) Is Val around? I'm here to take her up, on her offer. My boys are giving a concert this weekend, and it might be a good time for me to look nice.

SALESGIRL

I'll get her.

PATTY turns away, thumbing through the rack, as VAL ENTERS.

VAL

Hey, I was just thinking about you.

PATTY looks up - AND HER BLOOD RUNS COLD.

VAL (CONT'D)

I've got these amazing pastel sundresses, with matching shoes. There's a turquoise, that would be dazzling on you. (no response) Patty- ?

PATTY

That's quite a sunburn.

VAL

Can you believe it? One day, of gardening? You should see my back.

PATTY

(tight) It looks like more than "one day of gardening," to me.

VAL

Okay, "two." And half. I lied.

PATTY

"Two and a half." That's about right.

VAL

You should get a job with Coppertone.

VAL LAUGHS. PATTY GLARES. THE FILMMAKERS exchange uneasy glances.

VAL (CONT'D)

Did you want to try it on? It comes in five colors.

PATTY

I'll take one of each. And, forget the "freebee." Bill told me to use his credit card, and buy whatever I want, no matter what the price.

(MORE)

PATTY (CONT'D)

If I didn't know better, I'd think he's feeling a little "guilty," wouldn't you? Or, maybe it's just that he loves me so

THEIR EYES LOCK. VAL'S SUNBURN JUST GOT HOTTER.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, I'll need shoes. And, luggage, maybe. I might be traveling soon. With the children. It'll break Bill's heart, to be left here alone, but I told the girls we might go to Taos this summer. How would that work for you?

VAL

Could I see you for a minute?

PATTY follows her out of camera range, to the back room. ALAN, exchanging a meaningful look with SUSAN, puts his camera down.

VAL (CONT'D)

What on Earth is your problem?

PATTY

You offered to show me your sunburned back. Do you mind - ?

VAL

What for?

PATTY

To see if there's a strap line, or if you unhooked your bra to get an even tan - while "gardening." Bet the neighbors liked that.

VAL

I do mind. And I think, being followed around by those cameras has made you a little nuts.

Seeing the lie in her eyes, PATTY smiles.

PATTY

Are you coming to the concert?

VAL

The boys invited me, but I'm not sure I should.

PATTY

They'd be hurt if you didn't. We've always considered you "family," Val.

TURNING ON HER HEEL, PATTY EXITS THE SHOP.

INT. GILBERT'S CUTTING ROOM IN NEW YORK

Footage of Patty's encounter with Val, on his screen, GILBERT is on the phone with ALAN, in a RAGE.

GILBERT

Not even the slightest bit "curious," huh?! Bill comes home, surprising Patty with a bad sunburn, this woman turns up with a bad sunburn, and Patty's all over it, and you never asked her "why?!"

ALAN, on the other end ,is equally pissed.

ALAN

Just a "fly on the wall," Craig. Wasn't that the job description?! "No involvement?" No "agenda?" "Just turn on the camera, and let it run, and run, and RUN?!"

GILBERT

You know what I think, Alan? It's time to "give you hand," down there.

PANEL MODERATOR (OS)

Would you call it "creative differences?"

ALAN (OS)

That would be a nice way of putting it.

INTERCUT: ACADEMY OF RADIO AND TV AUDITORIUM - 1975

**"An evening with filmmakers Alan and Susan Raymond"**

ALAN

Patty's growing desperation to keep things sugar-coated, was on a collision course with Gilbert's increasing hunger for red meat.

MODERATOR

And you were "caught in the middle?"

SUSAN

We were "in the way."

EXT. BACKYARD - THE CONCERT IN PROGRESS

Swirling lights and Tiki Torches illuminate the stage, where ALAN and TOMMY work TWO CAMERAS, big-time concert style. Honky Tonk Woman plays to a packed house, seated in rows of folding chairs; even the neighborhood dogs are in attendance.

VAL is there, with another attractive woman (LINDA), both of whom catch BILL'S eye, and give him a "thumbs up." Next to BILL, are MICHELLE and DELILAH; the chair meant for PATTY, is empty.

WE FIND HER INSIDE, watching from the kitchen window; the dark glasses, in addition to the usual cigarette and drink, suggesting her mood has sunk to a depth we haven't seen her go to, before.

But she almost drops her drink when she sees a TAXI pull into the driveway, CRAIG GILBERT, with a suitcase in hand, getting out. Unprepared for this, she'd duck if he hadn't already spotted her, smiling and waving, as he heads her way.

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

HE KNOCKS AND ENTERS; PATTY too fragile to do much more than nod.

GILBERT

Hi, I'm Craig Gilbert. From New York? Big fan.

PATTY

Been awhile.

GILBERT

Doesn't seem like it, to me. I watch you in dailies every day. You're beautiful in every frame.

PATTY

Are all men bullshitters, Craig? Or just the two in my life?

GILBERT

There shouldn't be "two." It was clear to me, in New York, that it would be best if I stayed away. I sensed you knew that, too.

PATTY

And you're here tonight, because - ?

GILBERT

At the risk of being called a "bullshitter," I began to wonder if maybe you needed me here. No, that is bullshit. I missed you.

MICHELLE

(bursting in) Mom, you're missing the whole thing! Hi, Craig! You too!

MOMENTS LATER: THE FINALE BRINGS THE AUDIENCE TO ITS FEET.

INT. THE HOUSE - LATER

An after-concert celebration with booze and pizza, the Raymonds, the Loud kids, and all their friends and neighbors, are kicking back with the "boys in the band." BILL AND PATTY are there, so is Patty's brother TOM, and his wife YVONNE (identified, in random dialogue, as "the proud Aunt and Uncle"). VAL is in attendance, with her friend LINDA, so is MARY AVERY, who first introduced Patty to Craig..... and, most importantly, The Man himself, CRAIG GILBERT, holding the ladies in his thrall.

BILL is trying to compete, but out of his league; PATTY, having had too much to drink, glares, with resentment, at both of them.

GILBERT

What Barry told me - "Barry Gordy"  
(aside) who, just between you and  
me, is enjoying a "special friendship  
with Diana Ross - is that the success  
of any group is all about "one person."  
The Supremes have it. The Emotions  
(reminds who they are, with the refrain,  
"Oooh, Baby-baby") don't.

BILL

(challenging) How 'bout the Jackson  
"Five?" Can't say that's about "one  
person," can you.

GILBERT

It is, actually; the ten year old.  
That little guy is going to be a star.

BILL

At least that "Little Guy" is bringing  
in some bucks. Unlike my "little guys."

GILBERT

It takes time, Bill.

BILL

Oh, they got all the time they want.  
They want to "play music," go play it.  
Just, not on my dime.

HIS ANGER blows a hole in the fun - and he falls into it.

BILL (CONT'D)

(re: Grant) "Mick Jagger" here,  
don't want to shovel cement? Fine.  
Don't shovel cement, go support  
yourself. The girls want to tap  
dance, get a job to pay for lessons.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

I even got one, who wears pink shoes  
and thinks he's going to Paris!

GILBERT

(correcting) He's in Paris.

PATTY

(stunned) He's what?

GILBERT

I'll show you the footage. I sent  
a kid from NYU, with a camera, to  
follow him.

BILL

Fine by me, so long as someone  
else pays the tab.

PATTY

(fuming) Well, it's not "fine" by  
me. And I do want to see that film.  
I'd like to see all the film. And  
find out what the Hell else I don't  
know about my family. Where my children  
are, where my husband goes - and what  
the point is, of doing this!

Glances shoot across the room; GILBERT'S eyes dart to the RAYMONDS  
and he SNAPS HIS FINGERS (!) indicating they should be shooting  
this. Offended by the "dog obedience command," they do not obey.

MARY AVERY

I'm sure we'd all like to hear what  
the point is, Craig. Maybe it will  
help Patty understand what an honor  
it was, to have been chosen for this.

Taking center stage, the mix of Mai-Tai and flattery inspires  
the usual poetic spin; but also, an unguarded version of GILBERT'S  
"truth" - that PATTY has never heard before.

GILBERT

Think of a space ship landing on Earth,  
a thousand years from now, and finding  
a "time capsule," with film in it, of  
life inside the human dwelling, in that  
long ago time, of 1971. Everyone sweet, and  
smiling, and happy, and dancing, and singing  
around the piano, safe and secure with the  
certainty and permanence of each others' love.  
(And here's the kicker:) What the Space  
Aliens found, was an old episode of The  
Partridge Family!

(MORE)

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Which is the direct antithesis of how we really live: "fumbling around, in confusion," trying to make sense of those very *false notions* of "family" that television has put into our heads!

PATTY

(livid) That's full of shit. You're full of shit. Is that what you think we're doing, here? Fumbling around, in confusion?!" Let me tell you something, that everyone else in this room seems to know, but you. The Louds are not "fumbling around!" And, are not confused! I am fine, we are fine, my family is fine! And, if our world confuses you, it is you who are confused. To us, it makes perfect sense! And we are safe, and sensible inside of it!.

SHE HEADS FOR THE DOOR; BUT ISN'T FINISHED YET.

PATTY (CONT'D)

I'm coming to the editing room, tomorrow, Mister Gilbert. And if there's anything that gives the false impression we're "fumbling around" in here, it's not going out, on the air!

SHE SLAMS OUT, leaving STUNNED SILENCE, behind her.

INT. BILL AND PAT'S BEDROOM - LATER

The darkness broken by a shaft of light when BILL steps out of the bathroom, slipping into bed beside the sleeping form of PATTY - who stirs. Clearly not asleep.

PATTY

Don't talk. Just listen. I promised the girls a trip to Taos. We'll go as soon as school's out. I want Delilah to take a little break from Brad. I'll find a horse for Michelle to ride. Grant has agreed to give it a try in Orange County, shoveling cement. Kevin will accompany Todd Hartman to Australia.

BILL

It's *about time* someone listened to me.

PATTY

No one is listening to you. I want them all accounted for, before I go, so no one will be in danger of desertion.

BILL

Going to work, is "desertion" to you?

PATTY

I'm not sure, Bill. I'm not sure of anything. That's why I'm going away. To get some clarity about what's real, and what's not. What part of the *nightmare* is my imagination, and what part is true.

BILL

I think it's a good idea to get away.

PATTY

I'm sure you do.

EXT/INT. MIRAMAR MOTEL (CUTTING ROOM) - NEXT DAY

The laughter of children playing in the surf doesn't penetrate the blackout curtains of the cutting room, where GILBERT, as "requested," is screening footage for PATTY; the canny salesman showcasing the stuff she'll love - that he hated. The Portland shoot. PATTY, contrary to her expectations, is moved to tears.

GILBERT

I did some editing, before I came out, so you could see how it will all come together.

ON THE SCREEN, are things we haven't seen; like PATTY and her MOM leafing through the family album, which becomes a PHOTO MONTAGE of the kids growing up, underscored with strings.

Then it CUTS TO the BIRTHDAY CAKE being carried out by the OLD LADIES singing Happy Birthday; ALAN'S CAMERA, guided by infallible instinct, PANNING to PATTY, coming up alongside her MOM, as the old lady makes her wish, her eyes glistening in the candlelight. GILBERT knows when to stop.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

There's 86,000 feet of film, Patty. Every frame as good as this. We could sit here for days, and I'm happy to do that, if that's what you want to do.

PATTY

(chagrined) No.

He hands her a BETA CARTRIDGE, labeled "Lance in Paris."

GILBERT

To be viewed at your leisure.  
There was no deception on my part.

(MORE)

GILBERT (CONT'D)

He gave me the impression, he'd told you he was going.

PATTY

I'm sorry about last night. It's been kind of a tough time for me.

GILBERT

That's *clear to see*.

He opens the door to the sun, ocean breeze, and sound of waves. They step out, onto the sand.

EXT. BEACH - CONTINUOUS

ing the shoreline, among young families reveling in each other's company, GILBERT notes PATTY'S envy of them, offering his arm. Accepting it, she picks up the conversation, where they left off.

PATTY

It's "clear to see" what?

GILBERT

Your "anger." Is he cheating on you?

Surprised by his directness, she ponders how to answer.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

There are no cameras, here.

PATTY

The painful truth is, I'm not sure. I always think so, but can't find proof. He says I'm paranoid. That might be true.

GILBERT

If you did have proof, what would you do?

PATTY

Do you "know" something, Craig?

GILBERT

I "know" what I see in you. And what I saw in you, the moment we met. Unforgettable, actually. A vision of the "Liberated Woman." Her own person. Beautiful, graceful, funny, and strong.

PATTY

Pantsuits will do that.

GILBERT

A "role model." And, like it or not, that's what you'll soon be. You'll be on magazine covers, and women all over America are going to look to you, for a roadmap, of how to be, and who to be, when "family" turns out not to be, all they'd hoped for. To swallow their fears like Patty Loud did, and face it, head on; refuse to accept "unhappiness" as the unspoken wedding vow. That's what I was trying to say last night. You can show women, whose strength is eroding, how to take back their lives.

Impressed, as always, with his eloquence, she sits, digging her toes into the sand, He settles in ungracefully, beside her, following her gaze to the horizon.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

You asked me, last night, if I was a bullshitter. Are you?

PATTY

Test me.

GILBERT

Okay. I told you, what I thought of you, when we first met. What did you think of me?

PATTY

I thought, if that guy could fix his body, he'd be my perfect man.

Few people can shock him like she does; he bursts into guffaws.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Any more questions?

GILBERT

Yes. Would you leave him, if you knew for certain, he was cheating on you?

PATTY

Yes.

GILBERT

Would you consider doing it, with Alan and Susan in the room? With the camera rolling, just tell him to "pack up and get out?" If you had proof?

PATTY

I'd consider *anything*, if I could find out the *truth*.

GILBERT

Well, then. I've got my work cut out for me. (off her look)  
Getting my body in shape, I mean.

PATTY

You might start, by doing some push-ups, right now.

GILBERT

Don't look. I'm going to take my shirt off

PATTY

Wouldn't think of it.

She heads away, never looking back, to see him struggling, to do push-ups, in the sand.

EXT. THE LOUD'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

PATTY, with the help of her three traveling companions (MICHELLE, DELILAH & DELILAH'S FRIEND, "CROW") have finished packing the car for the trip to TAOS; KEVIN and BILL are securing suitcases to the roof rack; the CAMERA CREW there to get the departure on film.

PATTY

(to Kevin) I left the number of the house we're staying at, and I want you to make a collect call, as soon as you get to Australia.

BILL

But not too many of those.

PATTY

(to the crew) When are you guys coming? (off their refusal to speak)  
Oh, for God's sake, you can answer.

TOMMY GOODWIN

We'll fly down, over the weekend.  
We're filming Kevin's haircut today.

BILL

For Ripley's Believe It Or Not?

DELILAH

Gonna to miss us, Daddy?

BILL  
Who do I take, to the Fiesta Day  
parade?

DELILAH  
I might be back by then.

PATTY  
The heck you will.

DELILAH  
You said --

PATTY  
(cutting her off) I left lunch for  
you guys. Let's go.

Hugs all 'round - except for BILL who gets stiffed by PATTY. ALAN  
films the car driving away, until they've disappeared from view.

INT HOUSE - LATER

THE CREW, finished lunch, are carrying their plates to the  
kitchen; about to pass Bill's study, when they're STOPPED BY:

BILL (OS)  
Hey, Beautiful. Guess what the  
temperature is, in Hawaii?

Did they hear right? He's on the phone, with the door wide open,  
making no effort whatsoever, to conceal the conversation.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Well, the best thing for a bad  
sunburn, is to have a handsome  
man rub butter on it.

Paralyzed, they don't know whether to retreat, or continue past  
the door. One thing sure, they don't want to get caught like this.

TOMMY  
(shouts) Hey, you guys! Let's  
bring the plates into the kitchen!

BILL WAVES TO THEM as they pass the door - and continues!

BILL  
(into phone) Grant and the girls are  
gone, Kevin goes to Australia Saturday  
morning, and we could be on the beach  
in Oahu by sunset, with a couple of rum  
punches in our hands.

IN THE KITCHEN: THE CREW IS MIND-BLOWN.

TOMMY GOODWIN

Is he not aware we can hear this?

SUSAN

Of course he is. He's showing off.

TOMMY

Should we shoot it? The door's wide open.

ALAN

And, let Patty see it? Uh-uh.

TOMMY

You know what Gilbert would do, if he knew we didn't get this?

ALAN

Gilbert won't know. Let's go.

INT. CRAIG GILBERT'S SANTA BARBARA HOTEL ROOM - LATER

A PHONE RINGS, he picks it up - SURPRISED AT WHO'S CALLING.

GILBERT

Bill? Hi. Did they get off, okay?

BILL

A few hours ago. How long are you around?

GILBERT

I'm out, on the red-eye, Why?

INTERCUT: BILL, AT HOME.

BILL

I wonder if you could do me a favor.

GILBERT

If it's in my power, you've got it.

BILL

I have a friend, who'd like to get into show business.

EXT/INT "JOE'S BARBERSHOP" - SAME

Much excitement as KEVIN introduces the FILM CREW to the barber/owner (JOE); ALLAN and TOMMY scouting the set-up.

ALAN

We could use more light.

TOMMY

(re: the chandelier) I'll clip a couple of 500's, over his chair.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - SAME

BILL and GILBERT breezing along in a flashy convertible; CRAIG READY TO BELIEVE IN GOD, for what has just been delivered to him.

BILL

Now, you don't have to actually "do" anything. Just give her some advice, look at her photos. On the other hand, if you can do something, that would be great. I personally think she's a knock-out, and you being a movie producer... well, it's all very exciting for her.

GILBERT

It's clear to *you*, I'm not that kind of producer, right?

BILL

Yes, but she doesn't have to know that. And Patty doesn't have to know about this, either.

BILL'S GUY-TO-GUY GRIN is meant to feel GILBERT out.

BILL (CONT'D)

Not that I'm doing anything wrong, mind you, just that Patty can be a little paranoid. And, I've learned, the hard way, not to make any moves, or leave anything around, that could get her started.

GILBERT

"Leave anything around," like what?

BILL

Oh, you know. "Souvenirs."

GILBERT

What kind of souvenirs?

BILL

Matchbooks, swizzle sticks, (wink) "etcetera." You've been married?

GILBERT

I never could figure out where to stash those "souvenirs," either.

BILL  
 "Two words." Lock and key. Or, is  
 that "three?"

GILBERT  
 I'd think anything with a "lock" on  
 it, would be the first place she'd  
 go. My wife would have, anyway.

BILL  
 Not if she doesn't know it exists.  
 More than that, I cannot say.

HE FLOORS THE ACCELERATOR, hard enough to give GILBERT whiplash.

INT. BARBER SHOP - SAME

THE HI-WATTAGE LIGHTS clipped to the CHANDELIER over KEVIN'S CHAIR  
 are turned on; CAMERA ROLLS, and JOE THE BARBER takes his stance.

BARBER  
 Any last words?

KEVIN  
 Please don't make me look like a  
 businessman.

No worries. Before he takes the first snip, THE CHANDELIER  
 CRASHES DOWN on top of KEVIN, opening a nasty GASH in his head.

ALL  
 (panicked) Use the sheet! Get  
 a wet towel! Call an ambulance!  
 Get him into the van!

EXT/INT. MALIBU BEACH SHACK - SAME

BILL and CRAIG studying 8X10 GLOSSIES of "SALLY" an aging wannabe,  
 with the requisite bleached hair, and pendulous breasts.

BILL  
 She photographs great, don't  
 you think? How 'bout this one?  
 (scanty-panties)

SALLY  
 Oh, Billy.

GILBERT  
 Very lovely.

BILL  
 You know what I tell her, the problem  
 is? Too much like Marilyn Monroe.

GILBERT  
That could be it.

BILL  
So, what do you think? Do we have something to "work with," here? Screen test, maybe? If it costs money, I'd personally consider it a wise investment.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME

SUSAN, in a cubicle with KEVIN, holds an ice pack to his head, while TOMMY and ALAN work the LOBBY PHONES, running out of options

ALAN  
His secretary has no idea where he is. He's not with his golf buddies.

TOMMY  
How 'bout whoever he was on the phone with, about Hawaii?

ALAN  
I have no idea who that was, and no interest in finding out.

TOMMY  
If they can't stitch him, without parental consent, what choice do we have?

SUSAN  
(rushes in) Suggestion from Kevin. Their next door neighbor is a retired surgeon. Maybe he can stitch him up.

ALAN  
Where the Hell is Bill Loud?!

INT. THE BEACH SHACK - SAME

He's showing CRAIG GILBERT an 8mm film of SALLY, in Nun's Habit, singing The Sound of Music; the answer to GILBERT'S prayers. When it ends, they anxiously await his verdict.

BILL  
What do you think?

GILBERT  
Truly? I think I know someone who'd be interested in this.

SALLY

Oh My God! Oh My God! Oh My God!

SHE GOES BOUNDING AROUND THE ROOM, out of her mind with EXCITEMENT

EXT. PATTY'S RENTAL HOUSE IN TAOS - SUNSET

The Beta Cartridge being played, of "Lance in Paris," tap-dancing down the Champs Elysees, with his pal Kristian; PATTY and MICHELLE grinning from ear to ear, as they watch. Not so, DELILAH and her pal CROW, who ENTER with SULLEN FACES.

DELILAH

Mom? Could I speak to you?

PATTY waves them off, engrossed in the tape, now showing LANCE and KRISTIAN at an OUTDOOR CAFE, having drawn the attention of two "like kind" - a French woman who is probably a man, and her super-gay escort with an accent thick as Inspector Clouseau.

GAY ESCORT

And, what is it, young fellows,  
you are doing in our City

LANCE

Eating Tater-Tots and writing a play.  
But we're bored, here. Can you think  
of something interesting to do?

DELILAH

He's not the only one.

FED UP WITH DELILAH, PATTY STOPS THE TAPE.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

Well, you said we could talk about it!

PATTY

Not after just ten days!

CROW

My Mom said I could take a bus  
back, if Delilah comes with.

DELILAH

And Dad said, we could come back  
whenever we wanted. "Just call him  
anytime," he said, and he'd have  
dinner on the table.

PATTY

Allan and Susan are coming tomorrow,  
to film us at the ruins.

DELILAH

Then why not go home? Isn't that  
"ruined" enough?

PATTY

(stung) Why did you say that?!

DELILAH

Because it's boring here!

THE STAND-OFF INTERRUPTED BY A RINGING PHONE.

MICHELLE

(grabs it) Hello? Hi! Great time.  
Uh -"Taco grande, "Chimi-chonga,"

PATTY

Who is that?

MICHELLE

Mister Gilbert.

An instant mood-booster: PATTY heads for the VERANDA to take the call. Sliding a glass door shut for privacy, she drapes herself sensually across a couch, and picks up the phone.

PATTY

At last! A grown-up, to talk to!  
Fine, except I have a major rebellion  
on my hands. I was kind of hoping you  
might turn up here, with the crew,  
tomorrow. I don't know. Just feeling...  
kinda "sultry," I guess.

GILBERT, IN HIS OFFICE, has more important things on his mind.

GILBERT

Listen, I saw Bill before I left.  
He took me for a drive to Malibu,  
to visit a friend.

PATTY

Who? Andy Platt?

GILBERT

Her name is Sally. I have an 8X10  
glossy, and a tape of her singing  
The Sound of Music. He was hoping  
I could get her into the movies.

Hit hard, her awareness of the girls watching, forces containment.

PATTY

How's her singing?

GILBERT

You said you wanted to know this.

PATTY

I said I *needed* to, not I *wanted* to.

GILBERT

If this doesn't convince you, there's more. "Souvenirs," he said, that he's got under "lock and key." Any idea where that would be?

PATTY

No.

GILBERT

I think we should meet, in L.A. as soon as possible, and deal with this.

Fighting not to lose it, she's unable to respond.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Patty?

PATTY

The crew is on the way.

GILBERT

The crew can turn around.

PATTY

I'd like them to film me here. In this beautiful place. If Singing Sally ever sees me on TV, I want her to see me smiling.

EXT. TAOS BUS TERMINAL - NEXT MORNING

Putting the two girls on a bus for home, PATTY gives DELILAH last minute instructions; MICHELLE, the loyalist, sticking by her side.

PATTY

Nancy knows the arrival time, she'll make sure your Dad's there to meet you. Do you have phone change? Watch your purses, when you sleep.

DELILAH

Bye, Mom. Are you mad?

PATTY

All Mom's are mad, Honey.

Hugs, kisses; WE MOVE IN ON PATTY, watching the bus pull away.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)  
 I sent Delilah back, to cramp her  
 Father's style, while I wrestled  
 with what to do. I'll always feel  
 guilty, about using her that way.

EXT. THE TAOS HOUSE - LATER

THE FILM CREW (THE RAYMONDS AND TOMMY) PULL UP in an AIRPORT VAN,  
 reuniting with PATTY and MICHELLE, like long-lost family.

EXT. THE TAOS HOUSE - VERANDA - DINNER

The group (including Michelle) gathered around a candle-lit table,  
 laughing about the crew's visit to Grant, to film him shoveling  
 cement - and the "haircut" that ended with Kevin being stitched up  
 by the next door neighbor, because BILL was nowhere to be found.

PATTY  
 (troubled) That happened, the day I left?

TOMMY  
 Within hours of your hitting the road.

UNEASY SILENCE; MICHELLE turns the topic to HORSES.

EXT. THE VERANDA - LATER

DINNER OVER, MICHELLE gone to bed; TOMMY retired too; PATTY, ALAN  
 and SUSAN, gathered around the firepit, sipping Brandy; a sense of  
 intimacy among them, in the silence of the night.

PATTY  
 Have you found your soulmate,  
 Susan? (off her nod) Can you  
 imagine there'd ever come a time  
 when you'd have to leave him?

ON SUSAN - and ALAN - aching with sympathy for her.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
 Bill was my soulmate too; long ago.  
 And I've known I have to (leave him)  
 for a very long time. Craig wants me  
 to do it now. While you're here. Do  
 it, on camera. What do you think?

SUSAN doesn't have to look at ALAN, to know this will STEAM HIM.

ALAN  
 I think it's none of his business. He's  
 making a *film*, you're living your life.  
 (MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

He wants drama, you'll give it to him, he'll get an Emmy for it, and move on to the next film. You can't do that, with your life. "Cinema Verite" is about your truth, not his." What do I think?" Craig Gilbert is out of line.

PATTY

(noting) You're not surprised, I'm leaving him. Did you know he was cheating on me?

SUSAN

(sadly) Sort of figured.

A COYOTE HOWLS: MICHELLE appears, in her pajamas, terrified.

MICHELLE

Did you hear that?

PATTY opens her serape; MICHELLE scampers inside, clinging tight.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

I need to go home too, Mom.

EXT/INT. PATTY'S CAR - MOVING FAST -NIGHT

MICHELLE asleep in the back, PATTY grim-faced behind the wheel. Towns move by us. Radio on. Radio off. She's losing it.

PATTY (VO)

I can't describe the terror of that night; knowing I had to do it, but not knowing how, or when, or even "if" I could. What I did know was, that I'd lost, forever, the blissful blindness, of thinking everything would be okay.

AT A RAILROAD CROSSING: BELLS CLANG, LIGHTS FLASH, REFLECTING THE FEAR IN HER EYES. But the nightmare of this night has just begun.

INT. COMMUTER PLANE TO SANTA BARBARA - SAME (NIGHT)

The RAYMONDS and TOMMY, arriving home ahead of her, buckle up for their final approach, when they hear:

CAPTAINS ANNOUNCEMENT

Asking your patience, we've been asked by the Tower, to maintain a holding pattern due to brush fires in the Santa Barbara area.

They look out, and see HUGE SMOKE PLUMES.

ALAN  
Holy shit.

SUSAN  
When was Delilah supposed to get in?

ALAN  
4:00 today.

INT. SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

The RAYMONDS, race off the plane, to a PAYPHONE, tossing coins in, and get an immediate answer. DELILAH was waiting by the phone.

SUSAN  
Delilah?! It's Susan. Is that  
fire anywhere near you? (nods  
"yes" to Alan) Is your Dad with  
you? "He didn't show up?!"

EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - NEW MEXICO

PATTY at a PAYPHONE, frantic, as her home phone rings. Until:

PATTY  
Delilah! I heard, on the radio --

INTERCUT: DELILAH and CROW: one with a FIRE EXTINGUISHER,  
the other with a bucket.

DELILAH  
Mom, its burning around here!

PATTY  
How close?!

DELILAH  
So far, we're okay.

PATTY  
What about the back of the house?  
Where all the brush is?

DELILAH  
(to Crow) Go check the back.

PATTY  
Put your Father on the phone.

DELILAH  
He's not here. He didn't show up.

PATTY  
What?!

DELILAH

We took a taxi home, and he called to say he was at a meeting, but he wouldn't say where.

PATTY

Son of a bitch! Can you get down the hill?

DELILAH

There's all kinds of fire trucks down there. But the Raymonds are coming.

EXT. THE STREET BELOW: THE RAYMONDS trying to argue their way past a blockade of COPS and FIRE TRUCKS.

ALAN

There are two kids alone up there! Can't we just...? (refused) Can I "walk" up there? (turned down again, he grabs his camera) Let me get a picture of you, so I can identify the man who wouldn't let us up there!

SENSING THIS GUY IS TROUBLE, THE COP CALLS FOR BACK-UP.

INT. THE LOUD HOUSE - SAME

DELILAH still on the phone with PATTY.

PATTY

Go next door! Is Mr. Shestak home?

DELILAH

He's on his roof with a hose. I'm going to get ours, and do it, too.

PATTY

Delilah! Listen to me! Get the Hell the out of there!!

HEARING THE WHOOP-WHOOP OF A SIREN, DELILAH looks out to see:

DELILAH

The cops are here!

PATTY

Go! Go! For Gods sake! GO

EXT THE HOUSE - SAME

THE GIRLS RUN OUT.

COP

Are you, Delilah? Get in!

DELILAH  
Cn you help us save house!

COP  
In the car, Ladies. NOW!

Able to hear the siren fading, PATTY prays they've been taken away

EXT. THE HOUSE - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Surrounded by scorched earth right up to the door; which steams as GRANT hoses it down. DELILAH and her boyfriend (BRAD) are sweeping the patio, THE RAYMONDS filming the clean-up effort - WHEN PATTY'S CAR SPEEDS IN.

GRANT  
Mom!

Emotions break loose as they run into each other's arms, the kids all talking at once, about whose house was burned, and whose wasn't, how scarey it was - until they realize PATTY is sobbing.

DELILAH  
It's okay, Mom. I'm fine. Really.

PATTY  
I was wrong, to send you home.

MICHELLE  
She's been saying that, for the last 500 miles!

DELILAH  
I made you send me home.

GRANT  
Get it together, Mom! We're all good. Be an adult, here!

She regains her composure, but LOSES IT again, when SHE HEARS:

DELILAH  
And guess what?! Lance is coming home! He was trying to get through to us, all night. Kevin's turning around too, to make sure we're okay. He'll be back tomorrow!

PATTY  
They're coming home?! Oh My God. Alan! Susan! My babies are coming home!

EXT. SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT - DAY: [NOTE SIGNS FOR "ANNUAL FIESTA!" ]

PATTY and FOUR OF HER FIVE KIDS (KEVIN'S already back), searching for LANCE among the PASSENGERS exiting the plane and filing down the mobile staircase. But the flow is dwindling.

DELILAH

Could he have missed it?

PATTY

I don't see how. He called from LAX, to say he was getting on it.

DELILAH

Uh....folks? Hold on, there.

MICHELLE

Oh. My. God.

LANCE, making a grand entrance at the top of the stairs, is in full Gloria Swanson mode, with purse, pantsuit, and a sun hat that dips over one eye.

GRANT

Gol' Damn! A true "Unidentified Flying Object!"

Bursting into laughter, the kids run onto the tarmac and swarm him; PATTY's heart aglow, as she watches.

PATTY (VO)

The fire brought my chicks, flying back to the coop. And the rooster was soon to follow.

INT. THE HOUSE - SOON AFTER

Much laughter as LANCE hands out gifts from Paris; a bra with tassels for Delilah, azebra-striped jockstrap for Grant, a newly-minted John Lennon record, sung in French, for MICHELLE, who runs to put it on the turntable - WHEN BILL APPEARS ON THE SCENE; mobbed by the kids, in a way he doesn't deserve to be.

BILL

My World travelers!

He's bearing a gift too, for PATTY; Some kind of document, to justify his dereliction of duty.

BILL (CONT'D)

\$10,000.00 worth of drill bits, Babe. Worth a long weekend in the hellhole of Fresno, wouldn't you say?

PATTY

It must have been very difficult.

## THE PATIO - LUNCHTIME

The kids exchanging tales of their travels, their "one-upmanship" escalating until LANCE has taken center stage, as a PARISIAN POOF, all gasping with laughter. Except PATTY, who can't disguise her revulsion for the man at the head of the table.

BILL

Say, isn't this Fiesta Day? Who wants to go to the parade? Patty?

PATTY

I'm shopping for Helen Harrison, today. Her house burned down.

BILL

(reminded there was a fire) Oh, yeah, that was a Hell of a thing, I guess.

DELILAH

I almost died.

BILL

No kidding.

GRANT

When I got here, this morning, the whole patio was covered with ash.

BILL

Is that why the pool's so green?

PATTY

The poolman left a note saying he couldn't get in. You apparently locked the patio when you went to "Fresno." Judging by the algae, that must have been some time ago.

BILL

Well, I got back in time for Fiesta, how 'bout I flip some burgers, would that be good? To put on the buffet, at El Paseo, tonight?

PATTY

Yes, Bill. Why don't you flip burgers, for the buffet tonight.

INT. THE STUDY - LATER

DELILAH, ON THE PHONE, speaks in a whisper

DELILAH

It's so embarrassing. I told him I almost got killed - and he's looking for "meat," to flip burgers! I'll never get married - well, except to you, but not like they are. "Hey, Dad, I almost died." "Really? How 'bout I flip burgers?" It's just embarrassing, Man.

EXT. PATIO - SAME

BILL, flipping burgers ridiculously high, calls out to the CREW.

BILL

Hey, Alan, shoot this! It's my event! Some guys do the pole vault, some break the hundred yard dash...

And some guys wives are slipping out the front door, looking way too good, to go "grocery shopping for Helen Harrison."

EXT/INT. THE SANTA BARBARA MARRIOT HOTEL - LATER

PATTY, her nervousness concealed by the Jackie-O sunglasses and power-pantsuit she wore when Craig Gilbert saw her as the "vision of the "Liberated Woman," STRIDES TO THE FRONT DESK and asks to call his room; disconcerted when she's directed to the bar.

INT. MARRIOT "BAR & LOUNGE" - CONTINUOUS

He's in a back booth, so deep in shadow she can barely find him; her "hug" less than forthcoming - worried about being seen.

GILBERT

Are you alright?

PATTY

Married woman, meeting a man in a bar at 3:00 in the afternoon - ?

GILBERT

That's why I didn't presume you'd come up to the room.

She pointedly considers it, before taking off her sunglasses.

PATTY

Oh! There you are!

GILBERT

And there you are. I'm a big fan of those things. Your eyes. You should undress them, more often. Sorry, poor choice of words.

PATTY

Good choice. I just don't know how to respond to a compliment anymore.

GILBERT

You'd better learn. In the cutting room, everyone's dazzled by you. The word "regal" is used. And Princess Grace. And Jackie-O.

PATTY

And, what do you think?

GILBERT

They're right. Hungry?

He hands her a menu which she quickly scans, and sets aside.

PATTY

It hasn't changed.

GILBERT

You've been here before?

PATTY

I once picked up a man, at that bar.

It gets a SHOCKED LAUGH; until he realizes she's not kidding.

GILBERT

Truly?

PATTY

Twice.

GILBERT

I'm astonished.

PATTY

That I could do such a thing?

GILBERT

That you could tell me.

PATTY

I guess the "Grace Kelly" thing. Must mean I look "untouchable." In case you had that impression, I wanted to correct it.

He signals a waiter: beer for him, a highball for her.

GILBERT

And - waiter? It's an emergency.

It draws a laugh; and smiles of mutual appreciation.

GILBERT (CONT'D)  
Was it out of "revenge?"

PATTY  
Yes and no. I always imagined  
I'd leave him, if I could find  
the right man.

GILBERT  
When you leave him this time,  
you'll have a clearer reason.

Not the response she'd hoped for.

PATTY  
(hurt) Oh?

GILBERT  
I have the photograph. "Singing Sally."

PATTY  
What kind of photo is it?

GILBERT  
Her face. A professional head shot.

PATTY  
And that's your "evidence?" My  
"irrefutable proof" of adultery?  
(mocking) "Your honor, look at this  
8X10 glossy! It's an open and shut case."

GILBERT  
You're angry at me?

More like "humiliated." She grabs her purse.

PATTY  
I should go.

GILBERT  
Why?

PATTY  
I'm tired of whoring in this hotel.

GILBERT  
(stops her) Okay. Hold it. I was  
hoping we could wait, until you've  
put it behind you. Leaving him.

PATTY

Then, I "get to sleep with you,"  
is that it?

GILBERT

I didn't mean it, to sound -

PATTY

Listen, twenty pounds lighter,  
maybe you'll be in a position  
to blackmail me.

A good fat joke will always crack him up. Tension eased,  
the drinks arrive.

GILBERT

I've been thinking about those  
"souvenirs," that Bill keeps under  
"lock and key."

PATTY

I found three keys in a sock drawer.

GILBERT

Keys to what?

PATTY

I don't know.

GILBERT

When I had something too hot to  
leave around the house, I kept it  
in my office.

PATTY

(taken aback) You cheated on your wife?!

GILBERT

(sheepish) "Viva La 70's."

PATTY

I'll drink to that.

They do - the atmosphere thickening.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Where is that photograph, anyway?

GILBERT

Up in my room.

PATTY

I think I'd better see it, don't  
you?

GILBERT

Would you prefer to go up by yourself?  
I mean, if someone should spot you ---

PATTY

Cinema Verite. Let's go.

Throwing caution to the wind, they head for the elevator; she runs back to the table to retrieve her purse, and slug her drink down.

EXT. EL PASEO RESTAURANT: "FIESTA!"

Mariachi music blasts out the door, as people stream in;  
CRAIG GILBERT with PATTY, among them.

INT. EL PASEO - SAME

Revelers packed like sardines in a sea of Margueritas, the music so loud, that conversations have to be shouted, mouth-to-ear, to be heard. OUR CREW is in the thick of it, their camera trained on BILL, who's at a long table with friends, looped and flirting shamelessly with the woman seated next to him.

BILL

I don't know how else to say it,  
Kay, other than I envied your  
husband from the moment we met.

KAY

And I pitied your wife.

BILL

She's always mad at me, Kay.

KAY

Can't imagine why.

BILL

I'm at a dangerous age.

KAY

Fourteen is always difficult.

ALAN and SUSAN, filming from a distance, are amused.

ALAN

Are you getting this?

SUSAN

Unbelievable.

TOMMY sees something that STUNS HIM.

TOMMY

Pan "left," Alan. And be prepared  
to shit your pants.

It's PATTY, escorted by CRAIG GILBERT - who spots them, and waves!

ALAN

What the Hell does he think he's doing?

SUSAN

This is too bizarre.

Ducking his head as if it will make him invisible, GILBERT  
shepherds PATTY into a tight space next to BILL, forcing him  
too close to KAY, who gets up and leaves.

BILL

Hey, Kay! Tell Jerry I hope he  
feels better soon!

No idea that PATTY is beside him, he catches the eye of a  
BUSTY BEAUTY - instantly smitten; it looks like she is, too.

BILL (CONT'D)

Come over here. I saved this space  
just for you!

She's with someone else, but it leads to a shouted conversation  
that ends with BILL looking for something to write with - coming  
eye-to-eye with PATTY sitting right beside him.

BILL (CONT'D)

Hey! There you are! I saved  
this space for you!

PATTY

(her pen) Here you go.

BILL

What's that for?

PATTY

Her phone number.

BILL

Oh, Man, there you go again.

She scoops a Marguerita off a passing tray; a second one for  
GILBERT, who has settled into a seat right across from her.

BILL (CONT'D)

(spots Gilbert) Well, look who's  
here! Cecil B. De Mille! (toasts)  
"Viva La Fiesta," Mister DeMille!

WHEN GILBERT'S "toast" comes into frame, ALAN CUTS THE SHOT.

ALAN

What are you doing, Craig?

GILBERT

I'm not on camera. Just shoot over my shoulder.

ALAN

You can't be at the party, Craig.

GILBERT

Patty wants me here.

ALAN

For what?

GILBERT

Moral support. Now, get that thing on your shoulder, and shoot.

Tempted to belt him, ALAN catches SUSAN'S signal, that she's picking up something in her earphones, he should get on film. Shelving his anger, he raises his camera; and finds himself shooting the scene he hoped he'd never have to film.

PATTY

"Grumpy?" I'm not grumpy at all, Bill. Matter of fact, I'm pretty damn happy right now.

BILL

Then, how 'bout put a hat on the table and start dancing around it? You used to be a great table dancer, you remember that, Kiddo?

PATTY

I'm afraid you're confusing me with someone else, Bill.

BILL

No, that was you, before you turned into.... "this."

PATTY

What did I turn into, Bill?

BILL

Someone who brings me down. Isn't that your purpose in life?

PATTY

If it is, I'm not doing too well at it.

BILL

You did just fine tonight, Kiddo.  
I think I'll go sit somewhere else.

PATTY

Why don't you do that? (re: the  
busty babe) She's right over there.

BILL

Good. Right in "plain sight." Save you  
from having to snoop around my closet and  
open my drawers, looking for something  
you'll never find - because it doesn't exist!  
That's what you've "become" - paranoid.  
You've turned my pockets inside out, so  
many times, there's no lint left! And you  
accused your best friend Val, of having  
something "going on," with me?! Do you  
want to know what's going on? I'll let  
you watch! It's called flirting, God  
help me, send me to the electric chair,  
for just trying to have a little fun,  
like I was tonight, because I'm married  
to a downer! (in her face) So, what do  
you think of that?

PATTY

I think you're full of crap.

BILL

Do you?

PATTY

I think you're a pathetic fool. A sad,  
ludicrous, idiotic, incomprehensible,  
childish, schizophrenic, sadomasochistic...

BILL

Whoa, whoa, gimme that pen. I gotta  
write this down. Seriously, Patty,  
I think this is important stuff.

PATTY

Did I mention GOD DAMN ASSHOLE?!!

Loud enough to have cut through the din, ALL EYES TURN TO PATTY -  
and ALAN CUTS THE SHOT, pulling off his headset and summoning  
TOMMY and SUSAN to follow him out. GILBERT, unable to believe his  
eyes, bounces out of his seat, chasing them through the crowd.

GILBERT

Alan! Susan! What the hell - ?!

ALAN

"Technical problems", Craig.

GILBERT

Then, get the second camera!

ALAN

We're out of film.

GILBERT

That's bullshit! Don't do this to me!

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

GILBERT IN HOT PURSUIT, as they head for the VAN.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

Get back in there, Goddammit! This is what we've waited for! The best stuff is happening right now!

ALAN

The "best stuff" in your opinion, is the worst stuff, in mine.

GILBERT

Gimme that camera!

ALAN

You don't know how to shoot.

GILBERT

I want that camera, so nothing happens to the film we just shot! I own it, Goddammit! And I'll sue your ass if you destroy it!

ALAN

What about destroying these people?

GILBERT

They're destroying themselves! And not shy about it!

ALAN

They forgot we were there!

GILBERT

(freaking) That's the point! Don't you get it?! Cinema verite! We succeeded, Goddammit! And you're fucking it all up!

ALAN

There are five kids who shouldn't have to see what happened in there.

GILBERT

And there are five million families that should! This is a lesson for all families! You think I don't care?! About the kids? And Patty? I've been with her all afternoon! And, I assure you, she knows I "care!"

ALAN

(catches the innuendo) We're leaving now.

GILBERT

(grabs him) The hell you are.

ALAN

Don't put your hands on me.

SUSAN

Guys! Guys!

Too late. They're into it, GILBERT'S fists flailing as ALAN lifts him off the ground and tosses him onto the cement.

TOMMY & SUSAN

(running to him) Craig! Are you okay?

GILBERT

Congratulations, Tommy. You just got your boss's job. Pick up a camera, we're going back in!

SUSAN

Alan, go home.

ALAN

Get in!

SUSAN

Let me handle this! Go!

ALAN pulls out, but stops short, as GILBERT to his feet, RAGING.

GILBERT

Call the police! I want the police!

SUSAN

Excuse me. "Award winning filmmaker in drunken brawl?" "Crew rebels against Gilbert's orders to shoot foul language for Family Show on Educational TV?!"

Her point made, he dusts himself off, and heads back inside.

INT. EL PASEO: GILBERT LOOKS FOR PATTY - BUT SHE'S GONE.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SANTA BARBARA - MOMENTS LATER

HER CAR pulls up, in stealth mode, in front BILL'S OFFICE. She pulls the KEY RING out of her purse, with the 3 "MYSTERY KEYS." Marshalling her courage, she gets out, and tries her keys on the front door, despairing, when all three fail. But she's drawn the attention of a NIGHT WATCHMAN, who, before can flee, calls out -

WATCHMAN

Do you need "in," Mrs. Loud?

PATTY

(breathless) Yes. My husband sent me, for something in his office.

Happy to oblige, he opens up, escorting her to the elevators.

PATTY (CONT'D)

(re: the markings on her 3 keys)  
I figured "F" probably stands for  
"Front door." "O" for "Office."  
And, "E" would be...I don't know.

WATCHMAN

"E" is for "elevator." I'll send  
you up. "O" is for the office door.  
"F" is for files.

PATTY

Files. Good. That's what my husband  
forgot to bring home.

INT. UPPER FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

She steps off the elevator, moving down a darkened hall, to a locked door, marked "WESTERN FOUNDRIES." The "O" key gets her inside, where she moves through Reception, to the office of "William C. Loud, Pres." and steps in, locking it behind her.

In the semi-darkness, she surveys the photo gallery of FAMILY PHOTOS, horse shows, vacations, Christmases and graduations; not the office of someone who doesn't love his wife and kids. It brings a wave of emotion, which she can't afford to succumb to.

Her first target is the desk; all drawers locked; none will yield to her keys. HEARING FOOTSTEPS, SHE FREEZES until they've passed, her eyes falling on THE FILING CABINET. Free-standing. Solid steel. But, this time THE KEY - "F" for "file" - FITS! A DRAWER SLIDES OPEN. Her hands tremble, as she thumbs through the files, the NIGHTMARE OF HER LIFE, materializing before her eyes

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)

"For my Mother's generation, the World changed with Pearl Harbor. For my generation, it was the shot that killed JFK. For me, personally, it would be "The Night of The Files." After that, the World would never be the same.

The cache is overwhelming: file after file of incriminating hotel bills, boarding passes, love letters and locks of hair, photos of Bill with all the bimbos he's wined and dined, on yachts and four-star hotels. There are Polaroid peek-a-boos, taken in hot tubs and four-poster beds; several off "AUNT VALERIE"; judging by her aging process, taken over a period of years. Overwhelmed by it, PATTY anchors herself in a chair.

INT. GILBERT'S HOTEL ROOM - 2:00 A.M.

GILBERT startled by the phone.

GILBERT

Hello?

PATTY

Craig? It's me.

INTERCUT PATTY: IN HER BEDROOM; eyes swollen from crying, a bottle of Scotch on the table; a cigarette trembles in her hand.

PATTY (CONT'D)

I'll do it. And, I'll do it, on camera. But, not talking to the kids. I have to do, alone. And, with my brother and his wife; I have to tell them alone. Just "Bill." You can film that; me, telling Bill to get the Hell out, and never come back. I want the women of America to see that. That's what I want his Bimbos to see.

GILBERT

I am so proud of you.

PATTY

Just Alan and Susan. Not you. Not Tommy. Just me and Bill. And Alan and Susan. No one else.

GILBERT

I'll abide by whatever you say.

GILBERT HANGS UP. THE THRILL OF VICTORY IN HIS EYES.

INT. MICHELLE'S ROOM - LATER

MICHELLE and LANCE singing, with the French version of Imagine.

LANCE & MICHELLE

"Imagine there's no Heaven; It's easy if you try. No Hell below us -

GRANT

(interrupting) Family meeting.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

We sense the kids' anxiety, as they wait for PATTY - who breezes in, wearing the pants LANCE bought for her in Paris.

PATTY

How do they look?

LANCE

A little loose around the tush. (her mantra) " Are you eating anything besides junk food?!"

OTHERS

(piling on) Yeh, Mom. "You look too skinny." "Are you trying to be Twiggy?" "I can see your bones."

The anxiety-born outburst fades; too soon for PATTY, who knows what this is going to do to them.

PATTY

I guess we'll call this meeting to order.

MICHELLE

Can we do "old business?"

GRANT

That would be pretty "old." We haven't had a family meeting since you were six.

KEVIN  
Why are we having it?

GRANT  
Why do you think?

DELILAH  
(fearful) Is it about Dad?

PATTY  
Let me talk.

MICHELLE  
What about Dad?

GRANT  
Jesus! Let her talk! Okay?!

It shuts them up. PATTY prays for strength.

PATTY  
This is hard. Life is hard. I love you all, very much. And the hardest thing I can imagine, in life, is disappointing the people I love most in the world. And I'm about to do that; disappoint all of you.

DREAD sweeps through the room like an arctic breeze; DELILAH's eyes beginning to water. LANCE seated on the floor, drops his head into his hands. No turning back; PATTY bites the bullet.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
I'm divorcing your Father. When he gets back from out of town, I'm asking him to move out.

The silence is so profound, it seems like no one is breathing.

MICHELLE  
We can't get divorced, we're "The American Family!"

PATTY  
No, we're not, we're just a family, like everyone else.

MICHELLE  
Don't you love him anymore?

PATTY  
It's more complicated than that.

MICHELLE  
 "It's all that counts," you once said.

PATTY  
 I was wrong.

MICHELLE bursts into tears, DELILAH quick to her side.

MICHELLE  
Why?!

PATTY  
 Grown up reasons, Honey.

GRANT  
 We thought, you didn't know, Mom.

KEVIN  
 Even people in Australia know.

MICHELLE  
 "Know" what?

PATTY  
 (for Michelle's sake) The details  
 aren't important.

GRANT  
 Yeah, they are. It's "reality,"  
 right?! Let's get it all out!

His free-floating anger doesn't know where to land.

GRANT (CONT'D)  
 He "hit on" Candace Graham.  
 Shelby's Mom? And the hygienist  
 at doctor Frankel's office.

KEVIN  
 The old gnarly one?

GRANT  
 The young gnarly one.

MICHELLE  
 (horrified) He's a cheat?

GRANT  
 And Danny Zietler's parents saw him, at -

DELILAH  
 (cuts him off) Grant!

PATTY

"Saw him, at" what," Grant?

GRANT

At the airport coming back from Hawaii, with Valerie.

MICHELLE

(horrified) "Aunt Valerie?!"  
You're a thousand times more pretty, than Aunt Valerie!

GRANT

Can we end this now?

PATTY

No.

GRANT

Why not? Just do what you gotta do! He does! "Off with his head!"  
I'm outta here.

PATTY

This meeting is not adjourned!

GRANT

Why not?!

PATTY

Because we are a family, and families help each other.

GRANT

I don't need help from this family.

PATTY

Maybe this family needs help from you!

Having nailed him in place, PATTY'S gaze goes to LANCE, whose participation ended when he heard the word "divorce."

KEVIN

The film. What about the film?

GRANT

Yeah, what about that? Just flush it down the toilet, with Dear Old Dad?

PATTY

I'll try to keep that from happening.

MICHELLE

I don't want Susan and Alan, and  
Tommy to go away.

KEVIN

Where are they?

PATTY

I asked them not to come tonight.

DELILAH

Do they know?

PATTY

That I've decided to end it? No.

KEVIN

(re: "ending it") When are you?

PATTY

I'll go to Glendale in the morning,  
and speak to Uncle Tom and Yvonne  
about it. I'll tell your Dad, when  
he comes home, tomorrow night.

DELILAH

Where will he live?

PATTY

He'll be fine.

LANCE remains an island unto himself, hugging his knees to  
his chest, to keep his heart from bursting.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Lance? You haven't spoken.  
(off his headshake) Lance Loud,  
"speechless?"

LANCE

I thought some day we'd get to  
know each other. I always thought  
there'd be time for that.

MICHELLE

He'll be so sad,

PATTY

We'll all be sad. But we'll be  
sad, together.

INT. THE HOUSE - NEXT DAY

LANCE on his bed, beneath a wall of Warhol posters; Carol King's It's Too Late Baby (Carol King) heard from the patio, where MICHELLE and KEVIN sit, gazing into the ppl.

DELILAH is on the front porch swing with BRAD, tucked under his strong, comforting arm; as GRANT pulls in, ambling up the walk.

GRANT  
(re: the gloom) Somebody die, around here? Come on, it's only a divorce.

DELILAH  
She wants you to pick Dad up at the airport tonight and bring him home.

GRANT  
Oh, I'm afraid not. Walk him to the guillotine? Not on your life. (calls into the house) Mom - ?!

DELILAH  
She went to Glendale, to tell Tom and Yvonne.

EXT. TOM & YVONNE'S HOUSE - SAME

PATTY pulls up, and STOPS SHORT; outraged at the sight of the FILM CREW'S VAN.

PATTY  
What the Hell - ?!

INT. THE HOUSE - SAME

SHE storms in, finding ALAN rigging cable, her Brother and Sister-in-law looking as confused as she is.

PATTY  
What are you doing, Alan?

ALAN  
Putting up a light.

PATTY  
We're not filming what's happening here.

ALAN  
I have no idea what's "happening here."  
Craig called and said -

PATTY  
Craig promised me!

ALAN

He's in the back bedroom, on the phone.

Her march down the hall resonates with increasing anger,  
until it sounds like JACKBOOTS -

INT. THE BEDROOM - SAME

SHE BURSTS IN; GILBERT quick to get off the phone.

GILBERT

You're upset. I understand.

PATTY

You gave your word.

GILBERT

Let me explain.

PATTY

You said I was in charge!

GILBERT

You are, but "hear me out!"

PATTY

No, hear me out.

GILBERT

That's exactly what I want to do!  
"Hear you out!" In your own words!  
Spoken to people who won't interrupt,  
or argue, or shut you down, or walk  
out, because that's what Bill is going  
to do, when he gets hit with his walking  
papers. And no one will ever know about  
the years of lies, and betrayal, and  
humiliation that brought you to this.

PATTY

(unswayed) All that "big talk"  
about the "threshold of privacy?!"

GILBERT

It has be crossed, in order for  
this story to be told, in a way  
that can reach peoples hearts.

PATTY

Then, go make a Lassie movie!  
There is real suffering going on,  
here! You should have seen my kids - !

GILBERT

I should have seen your kids! And the whole world should have! And frankly, without that, and without this, I don't know if it's even worth putting this thing on the air!

PATTY

I'll be fine with that!

GILBERT

Maybe you will, but how about Alan and Susan? And Tommy and Charlotte and Sharon, who've worked round-the-clock, for God-knows how many months? And an army of people in New York, you don't even know about, sifting through more footage than was shot in all of World War II! Not to mention me. My dream. (going for the guts) And the dreams of two aspiring young musicians named "Loud" who believe - and rightfully so - that this show can change their lives.

LOW BLOW. IT WON'T BE FORGOTTEN.

PATTY

Just Alan and Susan. No one else.

EXT TOMMY & YVONNE'S HOUSE - TIME HAS PASSED

CRAIG, listening through earphones, paces in front of the window, where PATTY is doing what she has to do, to get this over with. Seated on the floor, with her back to us, our only measure of her words, is the look of horror on TOM and YVONNE'S faces

INT - THE ROOM - SAME

At the end of her tale, PATTY is wiping her eyes.

TOM

Remember what Mom said, at your wedding? That you were the "champagne," and he was the "beer?"

PATTY

I said, "I like beer." She said, "So do I, but I don't mix it with champagne."

It provides a laugh, in spite of all.

TOM

How did the kids take it?

PATTY  
Hard. You know who took it  
hardest of all?

TOM  
Lance.

PATTY  
(ironic) The "unfavorite" son.

TOM  
You've more than made up for that.

The thought of the children, renews her tears.

Sensing she's at the end of her endurance, ALAN signals GILBERT  
he's going to cut. GILBERT, having gotten his "gold, agrees.

ALAN  
(gently) Cut.

Her BROTHER pulls her into an embrace; YVONNE joins in.  
GILBERT is waiting outside, to walk her to her car.

GILBERT  
There's no one with that kind of  
courage, Patty. Felt good though,  
didn't it? To get it all out?

PATTY  
In front of the camera? Not at all.

Shunning his attempt to touch her, she open her car door.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
Kind of funny isn't it. That I let  
you into my life, to show how solid  
my marriage was.

GILBERT  
I understand. But after tonight,  
the hard stuff is over.

PATTY  
"Tonight."

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

PATTY'S PULLED OFF, AT A PAYPHONE.

PATTY  
Nancy? It's important to tell Bill  
not to come home, tonight.  
(MORE)

PATTY (CONT'D)

If he calls you before he gets on the plane, tell him to check into the Lemon Tree, and I'll be in touch in the morning. (answering Nancy) Because I have to tell him something very personal, and the crew will be at the house tonight. (answers, again) That I'm leaving him. Tell him that. And, tell him not to come home.

INT. GRANT'S ROOM - LATER

PATTY trying to enlist the "second line of defense."

GRANT (OS)

Come on, Mom. I can't do that!

PATTY

Hopefully, Nancy will have gotten to him, and you won't have to. But, if she hasn't -

GRANT

What am I supposed to say?

PATTY

That I'm telling him to move out, and prefer not to humiliate him in front of the camera. (off Grant's look) You'll be doing him a favor.

GRANT

Right. "Hey, Pop, you're gonna love this!"

INT. GRANT'S CAR - ON THE MOVE - NIGHT

Gimme Shelter plays on the radio; GRANT behind the wheel, his eyes filled with dread.

INT. THE HOUSE - SAME

DELILAH in the living room watching TV; PATTY in the den playing solitaire; THE RAYMONDS are in the kitchen, ready to film dinner, as they do every night, waiting for Bill to arrive.

ALAN (OS)

I'd have bet good money, it wasn't going to go down, that night.

INTERCUT:     **"AN EVENING WITH FILMMAKERS ALAN AND SUSAN RAYMOND"**

THE RAYMONDS, ON STAGE at the Academy of radio and TV.

ALAN (CONT'D)

She seemed determined, at her Brothers house. But, after all the years of not having the courage to end it, there was no reason to believe her hand was actually "on the trigger," that night.

SUSAN

Also, she wasn't very nervous, which I'd have thought she'd be. We didn't know, of course, that she'd sent her emissaries, to keep Bill from coming home.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA AIRPORT - OUTDOOR WAITING AREA - SAME

GRANT watches BILL'S PLANE taxi to a halt - and takes a fortifying breath when he sees him coming toward.

BILL

Hey, "Big G!"

GRANT

Hey, "Big B!"

A hearty hug, much back-patting, GRANT grabs the bags.

BILL

You sure you're strong enough to carry those? Oh, right. You've been hauling cement.

GRANT

Sure have.

BILL

A little hard work never hurt anyone.

GRANT turns away to hide the TERROR in his eyes.

INT. THE CAR - HEADED HOME

GRANT, behind the wheel; mute. BILL, as always, provides filler.

BILL

The Datsun's still up at Eagle, right? Has your mother been driving the Jag? (silence) Grant?

GRANT

The jag? Yes.

BILL

I'd like to rotate those tires. Makes a big difference.

GILBERT

Bet it does.

GRANT turns to him, searching for some sign that he already knows.

BILL

If my eyes look a little funny, I was up at 5:00 o'clock, this morning.

GRANT

Have you talked to your secretary?

BILL

Every day.

GRANT

Today?

BILL

No. Why?

GRANT

(Dear God) Oh, just wondering how everything is, at the office.

BILL

(impressed) You know, I don't think you've ever asked me that, before. That's because you "earned your keep," this summer. You can finally appreciate what it takes to bring home a buck or two. I sometimes I think, if your Mother ever had to make a buck in the world, she'd have a little more respect for the Old Man, too.

EYES RIVETED STRAIGHT AHEAD, GRANT can feel FLOPSWEAT forming.

BILL (CONT'D)

How's she doing, by the way?  
Your Mom.

GRANT

Mom? Good. Well - y'know. "Mom."

BILL

I sure do.

THE MOMENT HAS COME, now or never - AND IT GOES. GRANT turns up the radio, burning with SHAME.

EXT/INT. THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Hearing the CAR PULL UP, PATTY pauses in her game of solitaire.

ELILAH lowers the sound on the TV. ALAN and SUSAN, not knowing that BILL wasn't expected, get ready to roll.

PATTY, hearing HIS FOOTSTEPS, and turns to STONE.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(calling out) Hello....!

THE RAYMONDS see him pass the kitchen. GRANT, close behind him, drops the luggage, and scrambles up the stairs.

BILL (CONT'D)  
(calling out) Patty - ?

IN THE VESTIBULE, he looks through the mail until the RAYMONDS catch up to him, then steps into the LIVING ROOM - where PATTY looks like she's seen a ghost.

BILL (CONT'D)  
Are you alright?

PATTY  
I didn't expect to see you.

BILL  
Why not?

PATTY  
(thinks he's "conning" her) Come on, Bill. We both know.

BILL  
"Know" what?

PATTY  
(stopped) You haven't spoken to Nancy?

BILL  
About what? (spots Delilah, watching from the door) Hey, Big Dude!

DELILAH  
Hi, Dad.

She throws herself into his arms, clinging tight

BILL  
Well, at least somebody's glad to see me come home. (back to Patty) I'm sorry; What about "Nancy?" I haven't spoken to her today.

PATTY  
Well - Didn't Grant say anything?

BILL  
About what?

PATTY  
Don't be playing with me, Bill.

BILL  
(at a loss) What the hell are you  
talking about?!

PATTY  
You don't know there's a "problem".

BILL  
No, what's your problem?

PATTY  
Oh, this is great.

DELILAH flees the premises; PATTY cuts to the chase. Digging  
through her wallet, she pulls out a business card.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
Let's not spill any blood here.  
I've spoken to a lawyer. This  
is his card.

BILL  
Oh?

PATTY  
You can call him in the morning.  
I want you to move out, tonight.  
Now. Just, turn around and get out.

BILL  
(stunned) Really?

PATTY  
We're done, Bill. The marriage is over.

BILL  
Just like that?

PATTY  
Just like that.

BILL  
Twenty-two years, just like that.

PATTY  
(a finger-snap) Just like that.

Painfully aware of the camera, he forces a casual smile.

BILL

Fair deal.

PATTY

I figured, you'd think that.

BILL

Yeah, well...I think it's a little short-sighted on your part.

PATTY

Do you, Bill?

BILL

I really do.

PATTY

He'll be in his office tomorrow, waiting to hear from you. I've been to the bank and copied our tax forms.

No signal could be clearer; the life force drains out of him.

BILL

Right. (re: the kids) Got them pretty shaped up here, have you?

PATTY

They all understand the problem; and, that it's only between you and me.

BILL

The problem.

PATTY

The problem.

BILL

Well then. I don't have to unpack my bags, do I?

PATTY

See how easy it is?

Numbed, BILL turns and leaves the room.

WE HEAR the "slap-slap" of a film runout; ALAN makes a quick switch of magazines, catching up with BILL, in the KITCHEN, where DELILAH waits; her heart aching for him.

BILL

How are we doing out here, Big D?

DELILAH  
Not so good, Dad. None of us, are.

BILL  
Do you know the number of the  
Lemon Tree?

DEILIAH  
They're already got a room for you.

BILL  
That's.....handy.

Fearing she's going to break down, she grabs her backpack.

DELILAH  
I have to go, Daddy.

BILL  
Are you going?

DELILAH  
I really have to.

BILL  
Keep in touch.

DELILAH  
Bye, Dad.

BILL  
Honey - ?

DELILAH  
Yeh?

BILL  
We're all going to be fine.

The door closes behind her, Bill forcing himself to move picks up his suitcase to go; but stops, to call back:

BILL (CONT'D)  
Patty? If Glen Bernson calls me,  
it's very important. Make sure he  
calls me at the Lemon tree. We've  
got a pretty huge order in Dayton,  
and your friend Merriwether - you  
remember him? - is going to try to  
sell Bernson the same damn thing.  
And we can't have that happen. We  
really can't.

No response. The crew follows him to the car where he deposits his luggage in the trunk, and turns to them, forcing a smile.

BILL (CONT'D)

Don't be strangers, okay. There'll be plenty to be filmed, on my end, too. I can guarantee you, that.

ALAN'S CAMERA remains trained on the car, until its tail lights disappear - and puts down his camera. Susan comes into his arms, for a hug.

INT. THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ALAN and SUSAN find PATTY in MICHELLE'S ROOM, still as statuary, staring out a window, her back to the door.

SUSAN

(gently) Patty? Would you like us stay?

PATTY

Thank you, I'd like to be alone.

SUSAN

You know where to find us, okay?

When they leave, WE MOVE IN ON PATTY, hearing her VOICE OVER:

PATTY (VO)

There was "plenty" to film on "Bill's end," and Craig made sure to get it, hiring a second crew, so as not to miss "one juicy morsal."

EXT/INT. "VILLA CABRILLO" - DAY

BILL, being filmed by a DIFFERENT CAMERA CREW, is meeting with his DECORATOR, on the patio of his "swinging singles" complex, built around a swimming pool, where plenty of prospective new "friends" in bikinis are sunning themselves below.

BILL

I thought I'd drop a bamboo curtain, some kind of filter deal, that would give it a nice warm, easy feel...

DECORATOR

(taking notes) Warm and easy...

BILL

Warm and easy. And, you know, I like that French, Louis The 15th, kinda jazz. I really do, dig that stuff.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

PATTY and LANCE out for a stroll, while the dogs romp in the surf, ALAN and SUSAN filming far enough behind, to give them privacy and get their silhouettes against the setting sun

PATTY

It's not a question of "enjoying your company," it's just not right for you to be "hanging out" with your Mother all the time. Since Daddy's been gone, you've said you're going to San Francisco, you're going to the South of France...

LANCE

If I were you, Mom, I'd enjoy me while I last. Because I'm not going to last forever.

PATTY

That makes two of us. Which is why we both have to figure out what we want to be when we grow up, and "go for it."

LANCE

Do you think Peter Pan was a cross-dresser?

PATTY

(laughs) I don't know.

BARKING AT THE DOGS, he chases them, knee-deep, into the surf.

LANCE

Come John! Come Wendy! We're going to the Land of The Lost Boys! Back to Greenwich Village!

EXT. MIRAMAR-ON-THE-BEACH MOTEL - A STORMY DAY

Watching a TRUCK haul their equipment away, the RAYMONDS bring their luggage outside, where PATTY is waiting, to say goodbye.

Lone survivors of a gut wrenching war, their hugs are heartfelt, too emotional for words; Patty, framed against the storm-tossed ocean, is a portrait of abandonment, as they drive away.

PATTY (VO)

When Bill left, I had the comfort of the Raymonds by my side. When they left, I was hit with the enormity of what I'd done - and the fact that I was on my own.

EXT. STREETS OF SANTA BARBARA - MORNING

WE FIND PATTY, carrying a briefcase, in the march of foot soldiers on their way to work.

PATTY (V0) (CONT'D)  
 Bill had played hardball with the finances, as I suspected he would. I joined the workforce at the age of 44, as a fact-checker for The Santa Barbara Historical Society....

INT. HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICES - SAME

PATTY at a SECRETARIAL DESK, sorts through the morning mail.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
 And Craig Gilbert, my mentor and Svangali, who'd made me feel smart, sexy, and strong enough to do this, had evaporated like spit in a hot pan.

In the stack of mail, is one addressed to her, from WNET, NEW YORK which she opens, and reads; her eyes filling with FEAR.

ALAN (OS)  
 He doesn't answer your calls either?

INTERCUT: BETWEEN ALAN (IN NY), and PATTY, ON THE PHONE.

PATTY  
 No, but I just got this letter from him, saying I'm "gorgeous in every frame, the kids are the five most fascinating kids ever seen on TV, and the film is fantastic *in spite of what I may hear!*"

ON ALAN; instructing SUSAN to pick up the phone.

PATTY (CONT'D)  
 What the hell does that mean, "In spite of what I may hear?"

ALAN  
 He's probably screened it a few times, and taking the usual sniper fire.

PATTY  
 How can it be "screen" it? I was supposed to have a say. He gave his word!

ALAN  
 Craig's "word?" He denied me, my director's credit. We're boycotting the premier.

PATTY

What premier?!

SUSAN

Here at the Museum of Modern Art next week. You weren't invited?

PATTY

No! What the hell's going on?

ALAN

Obviously, clearing everybody out of the spotlight, so he can have it all to himself.

PATTY

I'm terrified, Alan, of what this film is going to be. Can't you just go to it "incognito," or something, and let me know how it is?

ALAN

(a thought) No. But, I bet Lance can.

EXT/INT - N.Y. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Limousines off-loading New York Glitterati, from Norman Mailer to Mayor John Lindsay -- and LANCE LOUD, who gets out of a TAXI, wearing a feather boa, accompanied by KRISTIAN in full BIKER MODE. Drawing press attention just for being bizzaros, the barrage of flashbulbs is enough to get them through the door... where they're given PROGRAMS, and find seats.

KRISTIAN

(re: the huge crowd) Looks like a hit.

But, one look at the PROGRAM sends LANCE INTO SHOCK. The cover is the Christmas Card Portrait, captioned:

**"Would you want to live next door to these people?"**

LANCE

Oh, God.

With each turn of the page, his jaw drops wider.

LANCE (CONT'D)

They're totally making fun of us.

VOICE (OS)

Ladies and Gentlemen: director, producer, creator of An American Family: the award winning filmmaker, Craig Gilbert.

BIG APPLAUSE greets GILBERT, who steps to the podium, unbuttons his too-tight tuxedo jacket, puts on his glasses, and reads:

GILBERT

"A brilliant new art form." "The ultimate soap opera." "A sad comedy." And, "Be it ever so hollow, there's no place like home."

A buzz of titillation ripples through the crowd, LANCE flipping through the program, in HORROR.

GILBERT (CONT'D)

These quotes are but a few of the strong opinions flooding in, about an unprecedented 12-hour documentary covering several months in the life of An American Family, which, the noted anthropologist Margaret Mead called "the most important new form, since the creation of the novel."

LANCE

(the program) Look.

A PAGE OF "WHAT THE CRITICS SAY," HAS A SHOT OF LANCE, CAPTIONED:

**" HE DYED HIS HAIR SILVER AND HIS SHOES PINK"**

A STILL-FRAME OF HIS PARENTS, shoulder-to-shoulder, glowering into space, during their fight on Fiesta Night, is captioned:

**"THE SILENCE OF THE LOUDS IS DEAFENING"**

KRISTIAN

(concerned for him) Come on, its all bullshit.

LANCE

It's my family.

GILBERT

Before we start, I'd be remiss in not thanking my camera and sound people, Alan and Susan Raymond, and the seven brave Louds, whose courage inspires me, and whose trust honors me. Ladies and Gentlemen: "An American Family."

LIGHTS GO DOWN and THE FILM BEGINS -

Starting with "fun montage" of The Loud Family, at play, accompanied by "cheerful" music that ENDS ON A DISSONANT "STING" when the Main Title, AN AMERICAN FAMILY appears, written on blocks of stone that suddenly "CRACK." A not-too-subtle indication of the story GILBERT intends to tell.

TIME/CUT TO: LANCE DEVASTATED, as the AUDIENCE HOWLS WITH LAUGHTER at the scene of him and his Mom attending the drag show in N.Y.

TIME/CUT TO: LANCE being subjected to a scene of BILL telling his HARD-HAT BUDDIES what a con-artist "the one in Paris" is, and how nice life has been, "without him, around the house."

TIME/CUT TO: THE CLIMACTIC SCENE of PATTY telling BILL to take his bags and get out. LANCE watches with tears in his eyes.

LANCE (OS; READING)

"Patty Loud, the smiling, martini-drinking Queen of a 'culture-minus Universe' in which there is no concern for anyone's needs except their own, exudes an eerie calm, and sees no way out of a false marriage, except booze.

INT. LANCE'S N.Y. APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

LANCE, on the phone with PATTY, chokes back tears, as he reads:

LANCE (CONT'D)

"Lance, the family's "evil flower," oozes his leech-like homosexuality, with the glee of a grotesque Goya-esque emotional dwarf!" Continued, page 9:

PATTY

Please, don't "continue."

But he can't stop himself.

LANCE

(Page 9) "Is it any wonder, the Father couldn't get close to him? Getting close to Lance Loud would be like swimming with an electric eel."

PATTY

Stop reading it, Lance.

LANCE

But, they read it! Everyone in the theater. It's five pages long, and they handed it out, at the door!

(MORE)

LANCE (CONT'D)

And, remember the Christmas card we sent out, in '69, with that fantastic picture Benji took of us?

PATTY

Of course. It's framed on my desk.

LANCE

They're using it, to promote the show, with the line: "Would you live next door to this family?"

CLOSE ON PATTY - STEAM COMING OUT HER EARS.

INT. GILBERT'S NEW YORK OFFICE - MORNING

GILBERT, flushed with self-importance, giving a phone interview, is INTERRUPTED by his SECRETARY, with a note, that makes him recoil with surprise. "PATTY LOUD IN THE OFFICE. NOT HAPPY."

By the time he's hung up, she's at the door.

GILBERT

Wait a second. Aren't you Patty Loud? The sexy divorcee who's soon to be TV, every week? The "social phenomenon of the 70's?" That's what I was just told, by The New York Times - just now - on the phone. That's what our show is going to be! Did you hear about the screening?

PATTY

By chance. I wasn't invited.

GILBERT

You're going to be the big deal, at the one, in L.A. I'm hiring photographers just for you and the kids, you're going to be all over the papers the next morning.

In the face of his "FLOPSWEATING," she speaks with complete calm.

PATTY

You're a bastard, Craig. And a liar. You've held my family up to public ridicule.

Though surprised by her pluck; he's ready to stand his ground.

GILBERT

It's not a work of fiction, Patty. The film speaks for itself.

PATTY

(challenging that statement) "Would you live next door to this family?"

GILBERT

Well, yeah, that's the Advertising Department. Listen, you're the one who wanted to reach the "dummies."

PATTY

I flew here, to tell you to stop using it.

GILBERT

I don't really control that.

PATTY

I retained a lawyer who has a good feel for bullshit artists, to deal with Bill Loud, and I'd be happy to sic him on you, if you don't stop using that slogan, and handing out that program full of slanderous crap, meant to make us look like fools.

GILBERT

No one put words in the mouths of the critics Patty. They "call it like they see it."

PATTY

I assume, what they see has been twisted.

GILBERT

I'd quit "assuming," until you know what's in it.

PATTY

I don't need to, I know what's in you.

GILBERT

You know nothing about me, Patty. Who I am, or what I've done, to keep this "Ship of Fools" afloat.

PATTY

Shame on you.

The words, delivered with the quiet intensity of a voodoo curse, silence him. She picks up her purse and goes to the door - but isn't finished,

PATTY (CONT'D)

Are you capable of making "one promise,"  
and keeping it? Just one? For the sake  
of my family, who you once professed to  
care about?

GILBERT

What would that be?

PATTY

Discontinue handing out that program.

GILBERT

They'll never be handed out again.

EXT. THE LOUD HOUSE - A WEEK LATER

Having come full circle to the scene that opened our story: PATTY comes out her door, on a beautiful morning, to get the mail, and finds a mailing tube from WNET, with something scrolled up inside of it - which we now know is "the program," captioned:

**"WOULD YOU WANT TO LIVE NEXT DOOR TO THESE PEOPLE?!!"**

PATTY (VO)

Craig lived up to his promise and  
didn't hand them out. He sent them.  
Everybody on the L.A. screening list  
got one in their mailbox, that morning.

INT THE LOUD HOUSE - NIGHT

PATTY, WITH ALL THE KIDS (including LANCE), gathered in front of the TV, with bowls of popcorn.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)

We skipped the screening, and waited,  
to watch it, with the rest of the  
world, hunkerd in front of our TV.

THE SHOW BEGINS - and WE CUT TO:

A MONTAGE OF PEOPLE WATCHING: TOM and YVONNE (Patty's brother and his wife), THE HARTELLS (who didn't get the gig); MARY AVERY (who introduced Craig to Patty), BILL in his bachelor pad, with a group of friends, "AUNT VALERIE," "SINGING SALLY," and miscellaneous people, representing "America."

PATTY (CONT'D)

Thus began the lynching of the Loud  
Family, in the public Square.

INT. THE LOUD HOUSE - NEXT EVENING.

PATTY & THE KIDS, with newspapers spread out on the floor around them, picking up reviews, at random, and reading aloud:

KEVIN

"The most expensive home movie ever made, and the most worthless."

LANCE

"A family of Affluent Zombies!  
Now, that's a movie I'd go to see."

GRANT

I'm getting hungry. Can we order a pizza?

PATTY

Oooh! here's a compliment! "Whether she is making small talk with her own Mother, or candidly revealing her husband's infidelities, Pat Loud has all the instincts of an actress, and puts them to relentless use."

LANCE

Another rave: "Their minds are like fetid swamps!"

DELILAH

"The Louds are symptomatic of a cultural compulsion to confess."  
(a thought) Cultural Compulsion  
to Confess. Is that "alliteration?"

LANCE

No, it's Doctor Seuss.

GRANT

"Pizza," guys! Who wants what?!

PATTY

"They're not so much a *family*, as a collection of *narcissists*, whose only allegiance, was to further their careers as celebrities."

LANCE

I think that's fair.

PATTY

Absolutely.

MICHELLE

Pineapple and chicken.

DELILAH  
3-Cheese.

LANCE  
Pepperoni.

GRANT  
Kevin?

KEVIN  
Whatever.

LANCE  
Aww, here's a sweet one about Dad.  
"Maybe his womanizing had something  
to do with his knowledge that his  
First Born son would never become  
a man." If they're talking about  
Grant, he was Number Two.

GRANT  
When are you guys gonna stop this?!

LANCE  
When we find the perfect "curtain line."

PATTY  
Got it! "I'd rather be a Corleone,  
than a Loud. At least they have  
some family pride!" (the kids  
whistle and cheer)

DELILAH  
Perfect!

LANCE  
Done.

MICHELLE  
Pizza time! Let's go.

BUT THEY'RE STOPPED BY THE PHONE: PATTY PICKING UP.

PATTY  
(surprised) Hi, Bill.

INTERCUT BILL IN HIS BACHELOR PAD: a newspaper in hand, and

BILL  
Did you read this, Patty?

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

"The Father, completely out of touch with any world except the false one he inhabits, reaches out to his children, like a blind man patting bunnies!!"

PATTY COVERS THE PHONE, SO HE WON'T HEAR:

PATTY

Kids? How 'bout we invite your Father to pizza?

INT. PIZZA PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

THE LOUDS ENTER; people all over the restaurant, recognizing them.

PATTY (VO)

The first episode got two million viewers, the second got ten, the third beat out The Mary Tyler Moore Show and The Watergate Hearings, with the most viewers, in television history.

INT. PLANE - DAY

PATTY AND THE KIDS - and BILL - ON THEIR WAY TO NEW YORK.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)

As Craig predicted, we were a "cultural phenomenon." And, with all the TV shows calling, it was our turn to fight back.

INT. THE DICK CAVETT SHOW - COUNTDOWN TO AIRTIME

THE LOUDS, nervously waiting - are SURPRISED by the appearance of a "participant" they didn't expect to see. CRAIG GILBERT greets them with hugs and kisses, completely comfortable, as he settles into his seat. They are completely thrown.

A RED LIGHT GOES ON, A PROMPTER CUES AUDIENCE APPLAUSE: CAVETT TAKES CENTER STAGE.

CAVETT

Thank you. We have an exciting show today: the William C. Loud family, who everyone in America has a strong opinion about, and award-winning filmmaker Craig Gilbert, who brought them into our lives.

THE APPLAUSE IS SPONTANEOUS, THIS TIME.

CAVETT (CONT'D)

Or, as one of our Staffers suggested, as an introduction: "The Family you love to hate, and the Man they hate even more." Not funny? That's why I didn't use it.

MINUTES LATER: THE "TOUGH STUFF" HAS BEGUN.

CAVETT

Craig. There's been a lot of criticism of the Louds - Patty in particular, centered around the scene where she tells her brother about all the womanizing Bill has done - so candidly, that she even refers to one of her children as the "unfavorite" son. Was it her idea to film this?

CRAIG

It wouldn't be on film, if it weren't. And I applaud her commitment to the truth.

PATTY

Not so. He pushed me into it, with the promise I'd have final say over what goes in, and out, of the film. A promise he failed to honor, in spite of knowing the psychic damage it would cause us all.

GILBERT

Look. I'm no psychiatrist. I'm no anthropologist, or sociologist. I'm just a filmmaker, who had an idea. That idea, was to make an honest film.

TIME CUT: BILL'S TURN

BILL

So, here we are, sitting around in Santa Barbara, and this guy comes walking down the street, looking like Buddha in baggy pants - and says, how'd you like to be the most famous family in America?

(AUDIENCE LAUGHTER)

You know, we'd spent 25 years, at hard labor, raising kids, with no particular upside in sight, and along comes this guy, saying we could be "famous" for just being who we are.

TIME CUT: CAVETT TURNS TO LANCE; the only one on stage having fun with it. Cavett is having fun with him, too.

CAVETT

Now, Lance.

LANCE

Yes, Dick.

CAVETT

I understand you've met Margaret Mead, who called An American Family "The "most revolutionary concept since the invention of the novel."

LANCE

Margaret is wonderful. I had to sleep with her, to get that review.

HUGE LAUGH: the audience loves him.

CAVETT

You emerged, as the "star" of the show. Or am I wrong about that?

LANCE

Yeah, like the girl in Deep Throat. But I loved it. I get a suntan, just thinking of it.

CAVETT

I noticed they never used the word "homosexual," in the film.

LANCE

The critics made up for it. One of them said, my sexuality was so slimy, to get in bed with me would be like getting into a bath-tub with an electric eel. It made me very popular at the 97th Street Spa.

ANOTHER ROAR OF LAUGHTER; he has the instincts of a stand-up.

LANCE (CONT'D)

But seriously, the way Craig edited it, made me seem really obnoxious. And I really, really, get harder to swallow, over the course of the series.

"Swallow" sets off some snickers; CAVETT jumps aboard, with a sibilant "S."

CAVETT

So to speak. (off Lance's look)  
Sorry, not meaning to imitate you.

LANCE

You just can't help yourself. It's okay, I've been imitating you, the whole time, too.

TIME CUT: THE MAIN EVENT: GILBERT AND PATTY SQUARING OFF.

GILBERT

No one betrayed you, Patty, except the mirror. It didn't show you what you wanted to see. Are any of us, seen the way we wish to be seen? This is where "ego" comes in, and accusations are made, and people look for a Fall Guy. What seems like a happy scene to one person, might seem unhappy to another. What seems *tragic* could seem *funny*, and what seems *funny* could be *tragic*.

CAVETT

What do you think, Patty?

PATTY

I don't even understand the guy.

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.

CAVETT

Which brings up a "delicate matter." But, I have to ask.

GILBERT

I know what you're going to ask. Did Patty and I go to bed together? Everyone asks, and I don't know why. The truth is, I was never attracted to her.

CAVETT

Patty?

PATTY

That must be why it didn't work.

THE LAUGH IS ON GILBERT; he laughs too, as though she's joking.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Hey, Craig. Do you still "applaud my commitment to the truth?"

Having seized command of the audience, she makes her FINAL POINT.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Here's the thing. We're going on this show, and others like it, because we need to show people we're not monsters, or idiots - or "zombies." We're pretty decent people, who were doing pretty well, and didn't really understand what we were signing up for. This man came to us, through a friend, as a friend, and persuaded us to put our lives in his hands, and abused our trust. And now, all the barnyard sociologists, and Model-T Freudians, are having their "fifteen minutes," at our expense.

THE TV CAMERA CUTS TO HER KIDS. ("Go, Mom!")

PATTY (CONT'D)

Some people are mad at us, because we were too real, and not edited enough. Other people are mad, because we were too edited, and not real enough. To this man, we were more "real" on celluloid, where he could turn us into whatever he wanted to, than we were in the flesh.

GILBERT makes sure to signal, he's rejecting every word.

PATTY (CONT'D)

He set out to prove that marriage is an institution "so weak," that a puff of wind could blow it over. He selected one that was fighting for its life, and subjected it to a hurricane. I blame myself for putting my family in the eye of that hurricane, because we'll never be the same. Bottom line? Real people should never expose themselves to judgement, for being who they are. And, beware of anyone who knocks on your door, and tells you he'll make you famous for just being yourself. Because he does not have your best interests at heart.

Home run. Her children are the first to applaud, joined by BILL, then the whole audience; GILBERT eating shit, with a smile.

INT. N.Y. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

PATTY, BILL and THE KIDS bonded by victory, looking every bit as solid as PATTY had wanted them to be portrayed. WE MOVE IN ON HER, wanting to hold the vision in her mind, like birdwatcher trying to capture a breathtaking sight, before it flits away.

PATTY (VO) (CONT'D)

Bill got married the following year,  
divorced two years later, and grew  
closer to the kids, as a single Dad,  
with the passage of time.

INT. CHELSEA HOTEL - LOBBY (1974)- 2:00 A.M.

LANCE, ASLEEP ON A COUCH, is SHAKEN AWAKE by KRISTIAN, so excited,  
he can hardly breath.

KRISTIAN

Lance! On the payphone, upstairs!  
You're not gonna believe this! I  
recognized him right away, this  
soft little voice, asking if knew  
a person named Lance Loud!

LANCE BOUNDS OFF THE COUCH, dashing out of frame.

PATTY (VO)

Andy recognized Lance on the show,  
as the young fan he used to enjoy  
talking to, in Santa Barbara, and  
tracked him down to the Chelsea  
Hotel. And they became best friends,  
after all.

ACTION CONTINUOUS: AT THE CHELSEA HOTEL: LANCE staggering up  
the stairs, breathlessly grabs the phone - TOO LATE!

LANCE

Hello - ?! Hello? (??) Shit!

HE SLAMS IT BACK ONTO THE HOOK; IT INSTANTLY RINGS.

LANCE (CONT'D)

Hello? Hi, Andy. What's up?

PHOTO MONTAGE (REPLICATING ACTUAL PRESS PHOTOS): LANCE, posed  
with ANDY and his "royal entourage; THE MARQUEE of "CBGB's"  
(Warhols favorite night club), emblazoned with, "LANCE LOUD AND  
THE MUMPS"; LANCE, fronting for his insane punk-rock band ("The  
Mumps"); LANCE, the media darling, stark naked on the cover of  
"Screw Magazine, and LANCE, in the loving embrace of his siblings.

PATTY (VO)

Andy once said, "everyone in the  
world will have fifteen minutes  
of fame." Our fifteen minutes,  
stretched out over six months of  
filming, two months of editing,  
three months on the air...with  
plenty of time left over.

IMAGES FLASH BY, OF:

- 1.) GRANT and KEVIN'S BAND, ON TV, morphed from The Stones into The BeeGees, wearing preppie haircuts and bow-ties.
- 2.) DELILAH, a "teen dream" on THE DATING GAME.
- 3.) MICHELLE and DELILAH doing a gig as back-up dancers for LANCE'S PUNK ROCK BAND.
- 4.) PATTY, the glamorous "Liberated Woman," gracing the covers of every National Woman's Magazine.
- 5.) BILL, modeling Mens Fashions; the most outrageous being pajamas, for Playgirl Magazine.

AS PICTURE FADES, we hear the French version of John Lennon's "Imagine." And SUPER the following information about each of the Louds, accompanied by photos of them, as adults.

**" PATTY LOUD MOVED TO NEW YORK AND BECAME A LITERARY EDITOR"**

**"GRANT BECAME AN ACTOR, TELEVISION PERSONALITY, AND GAME SHOW HOST"**

**"KEVIN BECAME A BUSINESSMAN, TAKING OVER BILL'S COMPANY WHEN HE RETIRED"**

**" DELILAH BECAME A PUBLIC RELATIONS EXECUTIVE"**

**"LANCE BECAME A JOURNALIST, HIS WICKED CRITIQUES OF POP CULTURE WIDELY SYNDICATED IN NATIONAL MAGAZINES "**

**"MICHELLE BECAME A FASHION DESIGNER, MOVED IN WITH LANCE WHEN HE BECAME ILL WITH AIDS , AND REMAINED BY HIS SIDE UNTIL HIS DEATH, AT AGE FIFTY, IN 2001"**

**HIS DEATHBED WISH WAS FOR HIS PARENTS TO BE REUNITED, WHICH THEY HONORED ; TODAY, LIVING HAPPILY, AND PEACEFULLY, IN LOS ANGELES, AS MAN AND WIFE.**

**LAST SUPER:**

**"Family is eternal. You can see it in the shape of the ears, or the initials carved into hearts, on trees. Divorce can't destroy it. Television can't devour it. We're still standing. Loud and Proud."**

**1997, Lance Loud**

