

THE CAT PEOPLE

A Screenplay

by

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FIRST DRAFT
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BLACK SCREEN.

WOMAN'S VOICE (a spiel)

The massage by itself is twenty-five dollars. Tipping is allowed, however, if you desire any of our personal services...

FADE UP:

1. INT. ROOM IN MASSAGE PARLOUR. NIGHT.

1.

TIGHTSHOT: On a WOMAN'S FACE. She's a hooker, mid-twenties; very businesslike; cold; not necessarily rude. She is talking to a MAN, o.s., whom we cannot see, and undressing him as she talks. We can't see the room's interior yet, but we should get the feeling of a dimly-lighted, claustrophobic space, with walls an institutional green.

HOOKER (CONTD)

- a hand job is fifteen dollars;
a French is twenty-five; straight inter-
- course is fifty; half-and-half
is seventy-five. I don't do Greek
or S. and M.

FADE-UP TITLE: "New Orleans. 4:00 A.M. September."

HOOKER (CONTD)

If you want two girls, double the price;
three girls, triple it.
You get fifteen minutes to come.
After that you're on overtime at
a dollar a minute...

FADE-OUT TITLE .

HOOKER (CONTD)

...We accept Mastercharge, Visa,
BankAmericard, Carte Blanche and
American Express.

MAN'S HAND enters FRAME, with large bill.

HOOKER

Thank you. Make yourself comfortable
while you're deciding. I'll be right
back.

2.

2. INT. HALLWAY OF MASSAGE PARLOUR. NIGHT.

2.

The Hooker emerges from the room, closes the door behind her and walks down the dimly-lighted hallway (doors on either side) to -

3. INT. MASSAGE PARLOUR LOBBY. NIGHT.

3.

SOFT MUZAK. Several glass cases displaying 'marital aids' - upright dildoes like strange species of underwater coral.

A MAN (THE MANAGER) stands behind the counter, near the cash register. He is reading a magazine.

HOKER

I need a clean towel.

MANAGER

Which room?

HOKER

Twelve.

He enters a door marked 'Manager's Office'.

4. INT. MANAGERS OFFICE. NIGHT.

4.

Equipped with TV monitor hooked into the various rooms. He flicks on the hook-up to Room #12, and glances at the screen.

ON THE TV SCREEN: Thanks to a wide-angle lens, almost the whole room is visible. We can see the MAN (the customer), now seated, naked, on the bed, his back to us, his head in his hands.

The Manager gets towels and soap from a cabinet, records it in a supply log and goes back out.

HOLD momentarily on the MONITORED IMAGE: The Man seated on the bed, his bare back to us.

5. INT. MASSAGE PARLOUR LOBBY. NIGHT.

5.

The Hooker is leaning against the counter, looking at her fingernails. The Manager re-enters with towels, hands them to her.

HOKER

Thanks.

He nods.
She goes back down the hall.

6. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

6.

Hooker walking back to Room #12.
An ELDERLY MAN emerges from one of the rooms
and goes off down the hall, followed by a SECOND
HOOKER, toking a joint.

1st HOOKER
(to 2nd HOOKER)

Gimme a toke -

2nd HOOKER hands over the joint. 1st HOOKER takes
a long toke, hands it back.

1st HOOKER
How's it going?

2nd HOOKER
Fine, if I could just get
home, catch some Z's...

She yawns.

1st HOOKER
Cover your mouth, I can
see what you had for dinner -

2nd HOOKER laughs.

1st HOOKER goes on to door of Room #12, opens it, goes
in.

7. INT. ROOM TWELVE. NIGHT.

7.

The Man is nowhere to be seen.
The Hooker looks around, puzzled.
She puts the towel on the rack by the sink.
Behind her is a high window with fancy barred grillwork
over it.

She looks around: The Man's clothes are folded over
the back of a chair.

She quickly takes the Man's wallet from his pants
pocket and flips through it.

There is no identification in it; just cash.

The Hooker takes several twenties out and stuffs them
into her pocket before replacing the wallet.

She yawns, looks around, goes to bed, sits down,
starts to remove her stockings, stops -

There is something sticking out from under the bed.
Something that looks like a long piece of curled
black rope.

It is right next to her foot.

(CONTINUED)

7. CONTINUED:

7.

She reaches down to pick it up.
 It moves.
 Flicking back and forth.
 We HEAR a GROWL.
 The bed starts to move, as if something were standing
 up beneath it.
 Something huge.

HOOKER

Shit!

She leaps for the door.
 Something grabs her foot.
 Her face - panicked.
 She kicks at whatever's holding her foot.
 TEARING SOUND.
 She screams.
 Lunges for door.
 Gets her hand on the knob.
 SOUND of GROWL - Loud; close -
 With violent effort, Hooker kicks free -
 Pulls open door -
 Dives into hallway -

8. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

8.

Hooker spilling into hallway.
 Frantically pulling door shut behind her.
 Something within CRASHES against the door, hard.
 SOUND OF GROWL, within, BUILDING TO HIGH-PITCHED SHRIEK.
 Hooker holding door.
 SOUNDS of PEOPLE running to her aid.
 FIGURES (blurred) entering FRAME, surrounding her,
 pulling her away from door.
 Hooker, breathing heavily, crying -
 Looks at her foot -
 Shredded; torn wide open; bones visible;
 She screams -
 PHONE RINGS, loud, blending with her SCREAM -

9. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. ALMOST DAWN.

9.

Dark interior. Vague dawn light blue-black in
 windows.
 PHONE, CLOSE in f.g., RINGING.

(CONTINUED)

9. CONTINUED:

9.

It continues to RING as we MOVE through the living-room towards the foot of the stairs and as we MOVE -
FADE-UP MAIN TITLE: (No music)

The CAT PEOPLE

We sense some movement in the dark room: A fluttering; a CLUCKING; low; sporadic.

MAIN TITLE FADES as o.s. we HEAR the SOUNDS OF SOMEONE MOVING ABOUT UPSTAIRS.

The stairway light is flicked on, partially illuminating the living room. We can now see:

A MONKEY (Capuchin) in a large cage.

A PARROT on a stand.

African masks on the walls.

Primitive sculptures on tables and in corners.

Large color shots of African and Asian landscapes, framed, on the walls.

PHONE CONTINUES TO RING.

We now HEAR THE SOUND OF SOMEONE COMING DOWNSTAIRS and -

OLIVER YATES, bare-chested, in drawstring pyjama pants, comes down the stairs still half-asleep, makes his way to the desk where the PHONE IS STILL RINGING and answers it -

OLIVER
(into phone)
Yeah - speaking -

He turns on the desk lamp. Fluorescent. We see a youngish man, thirty-five or so, attractive, well-built and, if possible, well-bearded. He yawns.

OLIVER (CONTD)
(on phone)
Right. - What? - Well,
call Animal Reg, that's
their department - A what?
Come on -
A leopard? In New Orleans?

Oliver is now wide awake.

10. EXT. NEAR PARK. EARLY MORNING.

10.

[MAIN TITLES CONTINUE OVER:]

ALICE MOORE, jogging.

She is in her late twenties or early thirties; trim; tanned; athletic; purposeful. She wears a headband, shorts, a t-shirt, no bra. On her t-shirt is written: 'Save the Animals'.

A MALE JOGGER, fortyish and overweight, already huffing and puffing, runs up, with great effort, alongside her.

She knows him, and knows he is there, but doesn't acknowledge his presence.

MALE JOGGER
Morning, Alice -

(She nods)

Two miles so far -

(He holds up
two fingers in
front of her face)

How far do you go?

ALICE
Seven -

MALE JOGGER
Seven! That's crazy - you'll
get shin splints - my doctor
was telling me -

ALICE
Dog shit!

She points at the sidewalk just ahead of him.
He leaps to one side to avoid the dog shit and almost falls over.

Alice continues jogging.

CUT TO:

Alice, jogging.

A CAR HORN sounds behind her.

And again.

She looks.

Driving across the grass towards her is Oliver, in a truck. He HONKS THE HORN and waves.

(CONTINUED)

10. CONTINUED:

10.

Alice continues jogging.
The truck rides along beside her, on the grass.
On the front seat next to Oliver is JOE CREIGH.
He is young, early twenties, attractive, a little shy. On the side of the truck is written: 'New Orleans Zoological Society.'

ALICE
(laughing) What the hell
are you guys doing?

OLIVER
Get in, get in -

11. EXT. NEW ORLEANS ZOO. MORNING.

11.

Seen from above as the truck pulls up to the gate and Oliver gets out, opens gate, gets back in truck, drives through.

[TITLES CONTINUE OVER:]

TIGHTSHOT: Very close on the face of an ORANG-UTAN, as his eyes follow the passing truck.

SOUND OF TRUCK, o.s.

TIGHTSHOT: A CAMEL, very close, also as if watching the truck.

TIGHTSHOT: A YELLOW, SPOTTED LEOPARD: Watching.

SOUND OF TRUCK, o.s., COMING TO A HALT.

12. EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, ZOO. MORNING.

12.

A brick building at the back of the zoo.
Oliver, Creigh and Alice get out of the truck and go in.

13. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. MORNING.

13.

The Administration Building includes: A Lab; Several Offices; a Quarantine Room; a Health Center (an operating theatre for animal surgery); and a Pharmacy. VARIOUS ANIMALS, under treatment and/or quarantine, are visible in cages.
ANIMAL SOUNDS, etc.

As Alice, Oliver and Creigh enter the building, we CUT back and forth between their separate activities -

(CONTINUED)

13. CONTINUED;

13.

Oliver, with large key ring, unlocking cabinets in Pharmaceutical area. He takes down several different bottles of drugs; a few syringes; some darts -

Creigh: From quarantine area drags out the unassembled pieces of a metal cage and carries them out towards the truck.

Alice: From locked cabinet takes out tranquilizer rifle and, for good measure, a tranquilizer pistol as well.

REACTIONS: From ANIMALS: Watching, wide-eyed.

14. INT/EXT MOVING TRUCK. DAWN.

14.

THROUGH WINDSHIELD: Oliver, Creigh, Alice. Alice looks down at her outfit as if suddenly remembering that she is still in jogging gear.

[MAIN TITLES END AS WE CUT TO:]

15. EXT. FRENCH QUARTER. DAY.

15.

A CROWD has gathered in front of the old hotel which now serves as a Massage Parlour/Triple-X-rated theatre. Faded photos of big-bosomed women in pasties adorn the windows and doorways. A TV CREW is setting up. POLICE are pushing back the crowd.

Oliver, Alice and Creigh pull up in the truck, park, and approach the building.

COP AT DOOR

Hold it, hold it...

He looks at Alice's jogging outfit.

OLIVER

Dr. Yates, New Orleans Zoo.
Bill Searle just called me.

COP AT DOOR

Oh yeah, go ahead -

They enter the building.

16. INT. MESSAGE PARLOUR. DAY.

16.

More POLICE; some TV and NEWSPAPER REPORTERS.
A DOCTOR is working on the 1st HOOKER'S foot.
She is being interviewed by a REPORTER. We hear
a piece of her conversation as we PASS BY with
Oliver and the others.

1st HOOKER
... I don't know how the
son-of-a-bitch got in there,
I didn't bring him in off
the street, that's for god-
damn sure ... Ow! That hurts...

Oliver, Creigh and Alice continue over to BILL SEARLE,
a black man, thirtyish, in a city worker's uniform.

OLIVER
Bill, whatcha got here?

BILL
(shaking his hand)
Hey, Oliver - Alice -
Um - ?

CREIGH
Joe Creigh.

OLIVER
He's my new assistant.

Bill and Joe shake hands.

CREIGH
Hear you got yourself a
stray cat in there -

BILL
It's a goddamned black
leopard is what it is.
Don't ask where it came
from, 'cause we don't know.
Probably some asshole's
been keeping it in his
garage somewhere without
a permit and now he's
too worried about the
liability to report it
missing -

(CONTINUED)

16. CONTINUED:

16.

ALICE

We had the same thing with
an elephant a few years back.

CREIGH

An elephant?

OLIVER

Where 's the leopard?

BILL

We've got him contained in
a back room, but I don't
think he's worn out enough
to knock down -

OLIVER

Can we get a look at him?

BILL

Yeah, a good look.
Come on.

He leads them to the 'Manager's Office' and knocks
on the door. The Manager peers out suspiciously.

BILL

We need to use the monitor.

MANAGER

Ah, Jesus, I'm already gonna
have a lawsuit -

But he opens the door and they go in.

17. INT. MANAGERS OFFICE. DAY.

17.

Alice looks at the monitors.

ALICE

Let's hear it for voy-
eurism -

BILL

Yeah, he's got the whole
place bugged -

MANAGER

Not bugged, okay? Let's get
our terminology straight -
This is for security precautions
only -

(CONTINUED)

17. CONTINUED:

17.

BILL
Get the leopard on it,
willya?

MANAGER
Fuckin' world, man -

He turns on the monitor and brings in a picture of Room # 12. The room is fairly dark. There is no sign of the leopard.

ALICE
You have these in every
room?

MANAGER
We gotta have tight security,
okay? That's all it's for.
We don't tape the customers,
swear to God. On my Mother's
grave.

BILL
(looking at screen)
There he is -

ON TV SCREEN: We see the LEOPARD, slowly peering out from one of the corners of the room. He is still half in shadow.

ALICE
He's enormous -

BILL
Hundred and seventy pounds?
Hundred and eighty?

ALICE
More like two-hundred.

OLIVER
Yeah. He's real big.

BILL
What'd you bring to knock
him down with?

ALICE
Ketamine and Valium.

BILL
Skip the Valium.

17. CONTINUED:

17.

OLIVER

Yeah. Straight Ketamine.
Twelve-hundred miligrams -
Fifteen hundred miligrams -
Let's knock him down quick
and get him into the squeeze
cage. Probably have to intu-
bate him too if he's eaten
anything in the past twenty-
four hours...

ALICE

Which I doubt -

CREIGH

Why?

ALICE

He must have been starving.
Why else would a leopard risk
coming up against people?

CREIGH

How'd he get in there
anyway?

BILL

Fire escape, I guess.

MANAGER

There's no fire escape there.
And the window's got bars on
it.

OLIVER

Back door?

MANAGER

Locked.

BILL

Guess he came in the front.

MANAGER

I think I would have noticed.

OLIVER

So how did he get in?

MANAGER

When you find out we'll
both know.

18. INT. HALLWAY OF MASSAGE PARLOUR. DAY.

18.

FOLLOWING Oliver, Alice, Bill Searle, Creigh and the Manager down the hall to Room # 12. We HEAR the SOUNDS OF THE LEOPARD now, through the door: SNARLING, HISSING, etc.

ALICE

We can't go in this way -

OLIVER

We could come down from the roof and get him through the window.

BILL

(to Manager) Can we get to that window from the roof?

MANAGER

Maybe you can.

19. EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING. DAY.

19.

Oliver is preparing himself to be lowered over the side of the building in a sling. He is assisted by Bill Searle and his CREW - two or three other EMPLOYEES from the Dept. of Animal Regulations. Alice is preparing the Ketamine and inserting it into the dart-syringes which will be fired from the tranquilizer gun. She goes over to Oliver.

OLIVER

Ready?

ALICE

(Handing him the tranquilizer gear)

When do I get a turn?

OLIVER

You can have the next leopard.

ALICE

'Thanks.'

CREIGH

(nervously) It's gonna' take all of us to get him into that cage -

(CONTINUED)

19. CONTINUED:

19.

OLIVER

He won't get sluggish for five or ten minutes. I'll have plenty of time to get back inside.

BILL

(Handing him a walkie-talkie)

Got room for this? I can tell you what he's doing from the monitor -

OLIVER

Thanks.

He takes a moment figuring out the best way to carry all his gear.

OLIVER

(to Crew)
Okay -

They start to lower him.

ALICE

Be careless.

OLIVER

You too.

They exchange smiles as he disappears down the side of the building.
Alice, Creigh and Bill go back inside.

20. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING. DAY.

20.

Oliver being slowly lowered to the window.

OLIVER

Little more - come on -

He looks down: He's about three stories up. A spiked metal fence runs the length of the building, right below him. Some CREW MEMBERS watch from the ground. The mouth of the alley is filled with SPECTATORS. Among them is a TV CREW, filming Oliver's descent. We HEAR the EXCITED BUZZ of their CONVERSATION.

21. INT. HALLWAY OF MASSAGE PARLOUR. DAY. 21.
 Alice and Creigh assembling the 'squeeze cage.
 It's a barred metal cage with a sliding door that
 moves up and down along grooved edges.
22. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY. 22.
 Bill Searle watching the leopard on the monitor.
 The Manager sulking in the corner and gulping
 gin from a bottle.
 ON MONITOR: The leopard paces the room in a
 frantic circle.
23. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 23.
 Oliver, mid-air, by the window.
- OLIVER
 Good! Okay!
- They stop lowering. Oliver dangles there, staring
 into the window and trying to comfortably maneuver
 the walkie-talkie and the tranquilizer rifle. He
 can't see much through the window: It's dusty and
 the ornate grillwork bars obscure it. Oliver reaches
 through the bars and begins cleaning the window
 with his hand. The SQUEAK of his hand against the
 glass.
24. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY. 24.
 Bill Searle watching the leopard on the monitor.
 The leopard stops pacing and stares at the window.
- BILL
 (Into walkie-talkie)
 Oliver? He knows you're
 there -
25. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 25.
 Oliver wiping the window clean. He has to juggle
 his equipment again to get to the walkie-talkie.
- OLIVER (into walkie-talkie)
 Where is he?
- BILL'S VOICE (on walkie-talkie)
 - just sitting there -
 watching you -

(CONTINUED)

25. CONTINUED:

25.

OLIVER
 (into walkie-talkie)
 He's got the advantage, I
 can't see him at all -

26. INT. HALLWAY. BY ROOM 12. DAY.

26.

Alice and Creigh, waiting.
 From within the room we HEAR the leopard: A low
 sound, phlegmy; like the HISS of a snake.
 Alice and Creigh look at each other nervously.

27. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY.

27.

Oliver can hear the SOUND OF THE LEOPARD too.

OLIVER
 (into walkie-talkie)
 I can hear him - he
 doesn't sound overjoyed -

He starts cleaning the window again. The SQUEAK
 of his hand on the glass.
 He looks down: The alley. The spiked fence.

28. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY.

28.

Bill watching the monitor.
 ON THE MONITOR: The leopard backs into a corner, out
 of sight of the camera.

BILL
 (into walkie-talkie)
 I can't see him now -

In the b.g., the Manager is talking to himself.

29. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY.

29.

Oliver cleaning window. Once again he makes an
 effort to get to the walkie-talkie.

OLIVER
 (into walkie-talkie)
 Repeat?

(CONTINUED)

29. CONTINUED:

29.

CRASH! Glass shattering as the LEOPARDS PAW breaks through the window and slices at Oliver.

Oliver pulls back, losing his balance.

The walkie-talkie plunges to the alley below.

Oliver, clutching the sling in one hand, the dangling tranquilizer rifle in the other.

Pushing with his feet away from the wall.

Away from the frenzied reach of the Leopard's claws.

At the window: The LEOPARD'S FACE: through a frame of jagged broken glass: Fangs, burning eyes in a moving black swirl.

The Leopard forces its arm farther out the window, reaching for Oliver's legs.

Oliver: Pushing back as far as he is able.

Raising the rifle to his shoulder; it's awkward; he's too close.

30. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY.

30.

Bill watching on the monitor.

BILL
(into walkie-talkie)
Pull up! Pull up! Oliver!

He runs out of the office.

31. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR TO ROOM 12. DAY.

31.

Bill runs past Alice and Creigh.

ALICE
What happened?

Bill goes by without answering.

32. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY.

32.

Oliver with rifle. Ready to fire.

The Leopard's face at the window.

Oliver's hand on the trigger.

The Leopard - disappears.

SILENCE.

33. EXT. MOUTH OF ALLEY. DAY. 33.

The CROWD: Hushed; waiting expectantly.
The TV CREW: Their cameras on Oliver.

THEIR POV: Oliver, in the air, rifle pointed at the window.

34. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY. 34.

Alice and Creigh.

ALICE
(Calling through door)
Oliver? You all right?

35. EXT. BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 35.

Oliver with rifle aimed and ready.

OLIVER
(Calling back)
Yeah -

36. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY. 36.

ALICE
(Calling through door)
Are you sure?

OLIVER'S VOICE (o.s.)
Yeah, I'm fine.

After thinking a moment, Alice takes out the tranquilizer pistol and begins loading it.

ALICE
Give me one of those darts.

Creigh hands it to her.

CREIGH
What're you doing?

ALICE
Put your gloves on.

37. EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING. DAY. 37.

Bill Searle calling down to Oliver from the roof's edge.

BILL
I think we're gonna have to
destroy it, Oliver -

(CONTINUED)

37. CONTINUED;

37.

OLIVER
No we're not -

BILL
Better him than you!

He nods to a POLICE SHARPSHOOTER who is standing by.

38. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY.

38.

Creigh in gloves and padded coat.
Alice, with tranquilizer pistol, by door.

ALICE
Open the cage and push it
flush against the door.

CREIGH
I don't think Oliver's gonna
like this -

ALICE
Would you rather not help
him at all?

Creigh reluctantly pushes the cage up to the door.

39. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY.

39.

Oliver with rifle, waiting.
He hears NOISE from within room: The SOUND of Creigh
PUSHING THE CAGE AGAINST THE ROOM DOOR.

OLIVER
(to himself) What the hell're
they doing?
(Calling out)
What the hell are you doing?

40. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY.

40.

Alice putting on jacket and heavy gloves.
The gloves interfere with her handling of the pistol:
She discards them.

ALICE
(Calling to Oliver)
We're going to open the door
and run him into the cage -

41. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 41.

Oliver: As this registers.

OLIVER
Like hell you are! Alice?!

42. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY. 42.

OLIVERS VOICE (o.s.)
Alice!

Alice, holding the pistol in both hands, squats behind the cage, bracing her back against the wall, intending to fire at the leopard through the bars of the cage.

Creigh looks back and forth from Alice to Oliver, loyalties divided.

Alice nods to Creigh.

ALICE
Real slow -

OLIVERS VOICE (o.s.)
Alice, goddammit!

Creigh's hand on the doorknob.

43. INT. STAIRWAY FROM ROOF. DAY. 43.

Bill and the Sharpshooter, on their way down.

44. EXT. SIDE OF BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 44.

OLIVER
Alice! Don't!

He begins kicking at the window to draw the leopard's attention.

45. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY. 45.

The Manager watching the monitor. He half-rises from his chair, seeing that something is about to happen -

MANAGER
Hey, he's -

46. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR OF ROOM 12. DAY. 46.
 Creigh opening the door.
 Through the opening, we can now see Oliver at the window, kicking at the glass.
 No sign of the leopard.
 ALICE'S POV: Down the gun site, through the aluminum bars of the cage. No leopard.
47. EXT. BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 47.
 Oliver, peering in, trying to see the leopard -
 OLIVER
 Where the hell is he -
48. INT. HALLWAY. DAY. 48.
 Bill and Sharpshooter approaching.
49. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY. 49.
 As before, half-rising from his chair; he completes his sentence -
 MANAGER
 - behind the door!!!
50. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR TO ROOM 12. DAY. 50.
 The leopard lunges out, pushing the cage hard against Alice.
 The tranquilizer gun goes off.
 A hit! The leopard SCREAMS and staggers back into the room.
 Creigh and Alice: Stunned.
 With a SHRIEK, the leopard leaps at the window.
51. EXT. BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 51.
 Oliver fires. SCREAM from leopard.
 It goes crazy in the room.
52. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR TO ROOM 12. DAY. 52.
 Alice and Creigh: Still stunned. The leopard HOWLS and slashes at the room's interior.
 Bill reaches in quickly and slams the door shut.
 They look at him.
 He looks very annoyed.
 SOUND, from within, of Leopard TEARING THE ROOM TO SHREDS.

53. EXT. BUILDING BY WINDOW. DAY. 53.

Oliver - listening to the leopard.

54. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR TO ROOM 12. DAY. 54.

Alice, Creigh, Bill and the Sharpshooter.
Watching the door.

The leopard smashes against it: It splinters
outwards, but does not break.

55. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE. DAY. 55.

The Manager - watching the monitor in stunned
disbelief.

CUT TO:

58. INT. DARK ROOM (NOT YET IDENTIFIED)

A HAND-HELD TV IMAGE, GREATLY ENLARGED, FILLS THE
ENTIRE SCREEN: Blurred; chaotic.

We are watching a late-night, taped re-play of the
'Live' telecast of the leopard's capture earlier in
the day -

HAND-HELD TV CAMERA: Follows Oliver, Creigh,
Alice, Bill and OTHERS, as they carry the squeeze-
cage containing the drugged leopard down the
crowded hallway of the massage parlour, past
OTHER REPORTERS and POLICEMEN - HANDS WITH
MICROPHONES jutting into frame and obscuring
our view; CHAOTIC, AD-LIB, 'REALISTIC' SOUND -
and down the stairs; and we FOLLOW as they -

Emerge on the street, outside, and begin loading
the cage onto the truck, flashbulbs popping,
CROWD SOUNDS loud and confusing, PEOPLE blocking
our view of Oliver and the others, microphones
lunging up at Oliver, or Alice, or Creigh,
but they wave off the reporters and get into
the truck, and while we have been watching this,
we have also been -

SLOWLY PULLING BACK FROM THE TV IMAGE

- to REVEAL that we are looking at the screen of
a small portable television, on a highly-polished
table, in the center of a very dark and cluttered
room, the -

INTERIOR OF THE GALLIER LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

(CONTINUED)

58. CONTINUED:

58.

And we continue to PULL BACK from the portable television to REVEAL the room a little more fully:

It's dark, but even so we can see the blackening portraits on the walls; and the glass-fronted cabinets filled with antiques; and the sheet covered furniture, and the fancy iron grillwork silhouetted outside the ceiling-high windows; and the sabres, crossed above the fireplace; and the model - the intricate model - of a slave ship, set apart in its own glass case -

- and we also see other paintings: Obscure in the darkness, but clearly pictures of cats: Leopards, with glowing eyes; but we can't really make out the details yet and we continue to PULL BACK until we end on

FEMOLLY. Watching the television in the dark, its light flickering over her ancient Creole face. She wears a tignon, and a man's jacket with patches at the sleeves, and a housedress under it.

She stares at the television with cataract-cloudy eyes as the 'live' image cuts to:

ON TV: A LOCAL NEWSCASTER (a WOMAN) at a News-set desk. She was watching the monitor and now turns to address the viewer.

WOMAN NEWSCASTER (on TV)
('happy news' tone)

The leopard will be quarantined at the New Orleans Zoo until its owners, if any, can be located.

Femolly strikes a match on her shoe and lights a small cigar. Smoke like a ghost in the TV light.

WOMAN NEWSCASTER (on TV)
(Continuing)

If not, the Zoo might just have a new resident on its hands. So if any of you know anyone who's missing their pet panther, give the zoo a call, okay?

(turning to her Co-anchor-man)

What next, hunh, George?

(CONTINUED)

58. CONTINUED:

58.

ON TV SCREEN: Camera cuts to GEORGE. Orange-lacquered hair; empty eyes; mellifluous voice.

GEORGE (on TV)
Whew! I knew there were some
strange cats down there on
Bourbon street, but this one's
got to take the cake -

Off-screen LAUGHTER (on TV) from News CREW.
Femolly's hand enters FRAME, slamming off TV.
SILENCE.

TIGHTSHOT ON: Femolly. Smoking. Staring. Thinking.

LONG, SLOW FADE TO BLACK -

BRIEF BLACK SCREEN.

CROWD SOUNDS.

59. EXT. NEW ORLEANS ZOO. DAY.

59.

ANIMAL SOUNDS mix with SPECTATOR SOUNDS as we CUT back and forth between the activities of the two: Quick glimpses; spontaneous; seemingly random, with a HIDDEN CAMERA feel:

A BEAR, moving about in its cage, grouching at and swatting its CUBS,
and -

A SECURITY GUARD, watching over the Spectators as they enter the turnstile; COUPLES, FAMILIES, CHILDREN, etc.

A bevy of BLUE-ASSED MANDRILLS fighting and shrieking over scraps of garbage,
and -

Spectators and their CHILDREN filling the REFRESHMENT STAND and SOUVENIR SHOP -

A PYTHON swallowing a live white RAT,
and -

A MAN cramming a hot dog into his mouth, oozing mustard down his chin.

The BLACK LEOPARD, seen through the bars of his quarantine cage as he paces back and forth,
and -

A YOUNG WOMAN, at the rear of the Crowd by the leopard's cage. We see her intermittently at first, as Spectators PASS back and forth across the FRAME.

She is drawing in a sketch pad, glancing up and down from the page to the leopard as she works.

HER FACE - is pale, with slanted eyes and lustrous hair. She squints a little, as if unused to sunlight. Her age is difficult to guess - mid-twenties to early thirties. There is something old-fashioned and ethereal about her - her hair style, her black dress. Glare from the white sketch pad reflects luminously upwards on her face and eyes, like the flickering glow of light off of water -

Her name is IRENA GALLIER and looking over her shoulder we now see -

HER DRAWING: A series of thick black vertical lines from top to bottom across the width of the page, exactly like the bars of a cage.

60. EXT. ZOO. SUNSET.

60.

Empty of people now. The SECURITY GUARD is locking up. He places the chain over the entranceway and walks, WHISTLING, back past the exhibits.

LONG SHOT, HIGH ANGLE: The Guard walking along. Joe Creigh passes him, waves, on his way to the Administration Building. We STAY on Joe. He is agitated; in a hurry.

61. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. SUNSET.

61.

Alice and Oliver.

She is combing her hair in front of a wall mirror; watching Oliver's reflection as they talk; pretending not to. He is working on some notes.

ALICE

What're you doing for dinner?

OLIVER

I thought I'd eat.

ALICE

You're still angry, aren't you?

OLIVER

No.

ALICE

What was I supposed to do? I could've just sat there waiting for you to get lucky and Bill would've shot the leopard and that would've been it. No leopard.

OLIVER

It was the way you did it.

ALICE

It worked. Didn't it?

OLIVER

Yeah. It worked.

ALICE

And that's why you're angry.

(CONTINUED)

61. CONTINUED;

61.

OLIVER
(Angry)
I'm not angry.

ALICE
You don't like me to
compete with you.

OLIVER
We're not competitors.

ALICE
Yes we are.

OLIVER
No we're not.

ALICE
Yes. We are.

OLIVER
Alright, we are.

ALICE
Thank you. Now I feel
like an equal.

OLIVER
I didn't say you were
an equal. I said you were
a competitor.

They glare at each other in the mirror.
Creigh comes storming in.

CREIGH
The goddamned crows aren't
working out.

ALICE
What do you mean?

CREIGH
I'm sorry, I'm so pissed off -
The goddamned crows are plucking
the goddamned quills out of the
goddamned porcupines -

(CONTINUED)

61. CONTINUED:

61.

Oliver starts to laugh.

CREIGH

You think it's funny? You're looking forward to a lot of little bald porcupines running around out there, hunh?

OLIVER

(He knows whose idea it was)

Whose idea was it to put the crows and porcupines together, anyway?

ALICE

(She knows that he knows)
Mine.

OLIVER

Really? Yours?

ALICE

I put them together because I figured they had nothing in common and wouldn't bother each other.

OLIVER

Having nothing in common doesn't necessarily mean you don't bother each other.

Oliver walks back toward his office.

ALICE

I'll figure out a new territory for them tomorrow.

OLIVER

You do that.

CREIGH

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make such a big deal out of it -

(CONTINUED)

61. CONTINUED;

61.

ALICE
 Want to go to dinner? I'm
 starving -

CREIGH
 Uh - sure -

He glances at Oliver. Oliver ignores them.

ALICE
 Come on. It's on me.

She and Creigh exit.
 Oliver goes into his office and slams the door.

62. INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

62.

A spacious, modestly appointed interior, with
 wide windows overlooking the exhibits.

SOUND OF CLOCK. Oliver working at his desk.

Outside, we HEAR the Leopard, GROWLING; ROARING.

It gets LOUDER. Oliver gets up and looks out
 the window.

He SEES: A Woman, standing by the leopard's cage,
 very close to the bars, moving her head as if
 talking to the leopard.

OLIVER
 Jesus Christ -

63. EXT. LEOPARD CAGE. NIGHT.

63.

Oliver hurriedly approaching.

OLIVER
 Hey!

The Woman turns towards him: It is Irena. She hurries
 away.

He runs past the cage, after her. The black leopard
 stands up suddenly on its hind legs, ROARING and
 SNARLING.

64. EXT. ZOO AREA. NIGHT.

64.

Oliver's POV (MOVING): Following Irena as she runs
 soundlessly through the zoo. We glimpse her through
 the bars of intervening cages.

And Oliver - running determinedly after her.

65. EXT. CUL-DE-SAC IN ZOO. NIGHT.

65.

Oliver running. He comes to a halt.

HIS POV; Moving past the cages to the mouth of the cul-de-sac.

She stands there, waiting for him, in the dark, her back pressed into the wall, her face pale, indistinct in the moonlight.

He looks at her. Walks towards her.

HIS POV (MOVING); Approaching her. The details of her face becoming more and more distinct as we advance.

SOUND of his FOOTSTEPS.

He stops a few feet from her.

Puts his hands on his hips; looks at her with a severe expression, like a schoolteacher.

OLIVER

Come here.

She smiles. Embarrassed. Her face extraordinary in the moonlight.

OLIVER

Come here.

She walks over to him, slowly, head down. She is still carrying her drawing pad.

OLIVER

What the hell were you doing back there?

(She smiles; shrugs)

You want to get your head torn off?

(She shakes her head like a little girl; No)

What the hell were you doing?

IRENA

(Holding up pad)

Sketching.

OLIVER

Sketching.

(She nods; Yes)

(CONTINUED)

65. CONTINUED:

65.

OLIVER (Cont'd)
If you want to sketch
the animals, then come
during visiting hours.
The zoo is closed now.

IRENA
(Hiding a smile)
I'm sorry.

OLIVER
Come on. The exit's over
here.

They begin walking towards the exit.

OLIVER
Do me a favor: Next time
you want to commit suicide,
go jump off the Seven Mile
Bridge, don't come to the
zoo. We can live without
the lawsuits.

IRENA
I wasn't committing suicide.

OLIVER
Let me tell you something:
That leopard has the strength
to jump from the ground,
twenty feet up into a tree,
while carrying a one hundred and
fifty pound man in its
jaws.

IRENA
Really? That's extraordinary.

OLIVER
(Shaking his head at what
a dingbat she is)
Yeah. Right.

IRENA
Are you the keeper?

OLIVER
I'm the curator.

65. CONTINUED;

65.

IRENA
Oh? Like the curator of
an art museum?

OLIVER
I doubt that Tom Hoving
has to worry about his
porcupines going bald.

IRENA
(Laughing)
I guess not -
What do you do? As curator?

OLIVER
Veterinary work. Administrative
work., Research. You want a
resumé?

(She smiles)
What's so funny?

IRENA
Nothing.

OLIVER
I ought to have you arrested.

IRENA
Thank you for not doing that.

Pause. They walk on.

OLIVER
Who are you?

IRENA
Irena.

OLIVER
No last name?

IRENA
Gallier -

OLIVER
Gallier. Gal-yay.
Nice.

(CONTINUED)

65. CONTINUED:

65.

OLIVER

So you're an artist or what?

IRENA

Well - yes. It's my one remaining ambition.

OLIVER

Can I see your drawings?

(Points to the pad)

IRENA

Not these.

OLIVER

Why not?

IRENA

They're - just roughs.
I'll show you some others,
sometime.

They walk on for a moment in silence. He looks at her.

OLIVER

Look, I didn't mean to be harsh. But we have a big vandalism problem. Most of our security is designed to protect the animals against the people.

IRENA

I understand.

They are at the gate.

IRENA

Thank you. You've been very gentlemanly.

OLIVER

Goodnight, Ms. Gallier.

IRENA

Irena.

OLIVER

Irena.

IRENA

Goodnight, Oliver.

She is gone. He turns away, then stops, looks back, wondering how she knew his name.

66. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 66.

A spacious, two-story house on a comfortable-looking street. The house is fenced in, with plenty of trees in the yard.

Oliver pulls into the driveway and goes into the house.

67. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 67.

Dark. Oliver switches on the lights. Picks up the mail lying in the hallway and goes into the living room.

The Monkey chatters at him from its cage.

The Parrot croaks and shifts on its perch.

OLIVER
Sorry I'm late, guys -
everybody hungry?

He goes into the kitchen.

Switches on light - looks into a small waterless fish-bowl, filled with SNAILS.

OLIVER
(to Snails) How's it
going?

ON: The Snails, crawling over a much-chewed piece of lettuce.

Oliver goes to the ice-box and opens it.

THE PHONE RINGS.

Oliver closes ice-box, goes to phone.

OLIVER
Hello?
(No answer)
Hello?
(No answer)
Who is this?
(Click. They
hang up.)

Oliver hangs up. Goes back into kitchen. Opens ice-box. SOUND OF CAT MEOWING. Oliver looks down. A large BLACK CAT wraps itself around his legs. He reaches down and scratches it behind the ears.

OLIVER
How y'doing, Mama? Hungry?

HOLD: On the Cat as we

CUT TO:

68. INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE, ZOO. DAY.

68.

Oliver at work.

Alice enters, carrying a large Manila envelope. She is clearly still annoyed with him. She tosses the envelope unceremoniously onto his desk.

ALICE

Someone left this for you.

Oliver looks at the envelope.

On it is written: 'Curator - Urgent! Open at once!'

OLIVER

(Opening the envelope)

Have a good dinner last night?

ALICE

Terrific. Especially dessert.

OLIVER

What'd you have? Crow?

Alice looks like she wants to hit him. Instead, she exits, quickly, very angry.

Oliver reaches into the Manila envelope and takes out a drawing, an 11 x 14 caricature of him, with a chair in one hand and a whip in the other, frowning down at a tiny caricature of Irena, hands clasped, eyes wide, kneeling, with a 'talk balloon' coming out of her mouth and enclosing the words: 'Thanks for not sending me to jail!'

Oliver laughs.

At the bottom of the drawing, in elegant, frilled cursive, is written:

'Please come to dinner. 7:00 PM. Sept. 30 -
4493 Prytania, Garden District. RSVP 668-9743.
Please come! Irena.'

Oliver smiles; gets up, hurries out of the office.

69. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY.

69.

Oliver enters, goes to door, looks out, comes back. Joe is working at one cage. Alice is on the other side of the room.

OLIVER

Did you see the woman who brought this?

Joe shakes his head: No.

(CONTINUED)

69. CONTINUED:

69.

ALICE
It wasn't a woman.
It was a girl.

Oliver and Alice look at each other: A stand-off.
Joe discreetly goes back to work.

70. EXT. GALLIER HOUSE. GARDEN DISTRICT. EVENING.

70.

Oliver pulls up in front of the Gallier house, checks the address, gets out of the car. He wears a jacket, but no tie, and seeing the elegance of the house, feels a little too informal. He carries a bottle of wine.

The house is old, gray, pre-Civil War; a double-galleried structure with tall windows, dark shutters, columns, cast-iron balustrades and a cast-iron fence surrounding the property. Dark trees hover over the roof and the front walk.

On the roof is a CAT. It MEOWS agitatedly and peers down at him.

He knocks on the front door.

Irena looks out, smiles, opens the door.

71. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. EVENING.

71.

Irena, in dark colors, still with that strange, old-fashioned look. She can't stop smiling.

IRENA
I was afraid you weren't coming.

OLIVER
I was trying to be fashionably late.

He looks around the room: A flight of stairs leads to the second floor. Next to the stairs, built into the wall, is an old-fashioned elevator, with a sliding iron door.

IRENA
That's all right, then. As long as you didn't bring your whip.

OLIVER
No, not this time. I brought this instead.

Hands her the wine.

(CONTINUED)

71. CONTINUED:

71.

IRENA
 You're very extravagant!
 Let's give it to Femolly to
 chill - she's making gumbo
 tonight - Do you like gumbo?

OLIVER
 (no)
 Love it.

Glancing shyly at Oliver, Irena leads him through the house towards the kitchen.

OLIVER'S POV (MOVING) Looking up at the dusty blackening portraits that line the walls of the house (this shot will be repeated on p. 82)
 The interior of the house has the look of an ill-kept museum, the accumulated objects suggesting a pile-up of overlapping historical layers. Everywhere, as in New Orleans itself, the old and new are juxtaposed.

IRENA
 Femolly's famous for her gumbo.

OLIVER
 Who's Femolly?

MOVING through the interior, we should begin to recognize it as the dark room we saw earlier (Sc #58) only now the lights are on and we can clearly make out the details of the furniture, paintings, the slave-ship model, etc.

IRENA
 The housekeeper. Officially.
 She's really one of the family.
 She raised me and my brother
 both.

(Looking back at him)
 Am I speaking too fast?

OLIVER
 No.

IRENA
 I'll try to slow down.

Oliver's expression says: I missed a connection somewhere.

(CONTINUED)

71. CONTINUED:

71.

IRENA

Femolly's mother didn't have a name for her when she was born, so the doctor just wrote 'female' on the birth certificate. Her mother thought it said 'Femolly', so that's what she named her. That story's apocryphal, most likely, but -

FEMOLLY'S VOICE

Dinner's ready, Ms Irena.

(CONTINUED)

71. CONTINUED;

71.

Oliver turns to see Femolly standing in the kitchen doorway, soup ladle in hand. She has part of an unlit cigar in her mouth, otherwise she is dressed exactly as when we first saw her (Sc#58), tignon and all. She smiles toothlessly at Oliver.

FEMOLLY
How're you tonight?

OLIVER
Fine. How are you?

FEMOLLY
I'm alive.

She takes the bottle of wine from Irena's hands.

72. INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

72.

Femolly serving gumbo. Oliver and Irena at table. Stifled atmosphere, with SOUNDS of gumbo being LADLED and POURED overlapping the SOUND of a SMALL ELECTRIC ROTATING FAN (insect-like). The overhead chandelier isn't working and a table lamp with an extension cord has been provided to replace it. Femolly puts a bowl of gumbo down before Oliver. He looks at it: The gumbo. There is something unhealthy-looking about it. Oliver smiles at Irena - She smiles back. He smiles at Femolly - She doesn't. They begin eating. CLINK of their spoons in the bowls.

OLIVER
This must be a very old house.
(and so is this gumbo)

IRENA
Eighteen-forty-two. It was a sugar plantation originally. They grew artichokes, too.

OLIVER
(Spoonng down the gumbo under Femolly's cloudy, watchful eye)
Mm, really -

(CONTINUED)

72. CONTINUED:

72.

IRENA
It was also famous for
its slave rebellion.

OLIVER
(something caught in
his teeth)
Oh - uhm?

IRENA
They killed nearly a
hundred slaves.

OLIVER
(how awful)
Mmm!

FEMOLLY
Yessir. Hanged em. Pulled
out their tongues. Cut off
their -

(gestures below
the belt)
Know what I mean?

OLIVER
(Oh yes)
Mmmmmmm.

FEMOLLY
Oh, they was cruel, very
very cruel in them days.
(smiling)
Not like today.

73. INT. STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

73.

Irena is giving Oliver a look at the house.

IRENA
My studio's right up here -

73a. INT. IRENA'S STUDIO. NIGHT.

73a.

Irena is showing Oliver some of her paintings.
He stops at a picture of a handsome MAN who greatly
resembles Irena.

(CONTINUED)

73a. CONTINUED:

73a.

OLIVER

This must be your brother -

IRENA

Yes -

OLIVER

You look so much alike -

IRENA

We're twins. Not identical,
but -

OLIVER

What does he do?

IRENA

Nothing. Very profligate, I'm
afraid.

She takes the picture away from him as if it weren't good enough for him to pay attention to.'

Oliver stares at another painting: A vivid depiction of a black leopard sitting sphinx-like astride a grave and staring out at us with wide, human eyes and an ambiguous grin.

OLIVER

This is cheerful.

IRENA

Oh - I was trying to be
satirical, like Grandville -
you know him?

(He shakes his
head: No.)

Don't embarrass me, please,
I know it's awful -

OLIVER

No, I think you're very
talented.

IRENA

Do you?

OLIVER

You could make a career of it.

IRENA

Oh, no, I wouldn't want to -

OLIVER

Why not?

73a. CONTINUED:

73a.

IRENA

I'm not comfortable around people - Most people, anyway. I spend my life here, in this room. Painting and drawing. I've done it since I was a child. When you draw someone, it's like touching them - in a way - I guess it's some kind of - substitute -

OLIVER

Why do you need a substitute?

IRENA

I don't know. People scare me. Drawing them's easier than dealing with them.

OLIVER

That was a good likeness you did of me.

IRENA

It was a good subject.

OLIVER

By the way - how did you know my name?

IRENA

(smiling)

Oh, I - made it my business to find out!

73b. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

73b.

Dim light. DIFFUSION EFFECT. A dreamlike atmosphere. Irena is SINGING and accompanying herself on the guitar. Her voice is high, light, untrained, captivating. Oliver sits across the room on a small love-seat. He has that after-dinner look: Sweetly tired; comfortable; a little dazed. It is possible that he is fantasizing himself in the role of Lord of the Plantation - a fantasy to which her shy smiles and self-deprecating attitude lend credence -

(CONTINUED)

73. CONTINUED:

73.

IRENA (Singing)
 'Plaisir d'amour
 Ne dure qu'an moment -
 Chagrin d'amour
 Dure toute
 La vie...
 Joys of love
 Are but a moment long;
 Pain of love
 Endures
 Your whole life long - '

Oliver - listening; watching.
 Irena - singing; playing
 Her hands - on the guitar -
 Femolly - watching quietly. Like a chaperone.

74. EXT. FRONT STEPS, GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

74.

Oliver is leaving.

IRENA
 I'm sorry I'm such an
 awkward hostess -

OLIVER
 Hey, I had a wonderful time.
 Really.

IRENA
 It's just that I - never
 go out and when I do, I
 meet so few people who -

OLIVER
 Irena - stop apologizing -

IRENA
 I'm sorry, I -
 (Laughing)

OLIVER
 Are you free on Saturday?

IRENA
 Saturday? Um - yes, I -

OLIVER
 I'll call you.

IRENA
 Don't forget!

(CONTINUED)

74. CONTINUED:

74.

OLIVER
 (getting into his car)
 We'll spend the whole day
 together -

75. INT. FOYER OF GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

75.

SOUND of Oliver's car PULLING AWAY on the street outside. Irena comes in, closes door, stands there thinking. Femolly comes up behind her, puts the latch on the door, looks at Irena.

FEMOLLY
 You better start thinking
 'bout your brother.

IRENA
 I have been.

76. INT/EXT. OLIVER'S CAR. DAY. (MOVING)

76.

Oliver and Irena driving along. Oliver is smiling, laughing, talking animatedly. Irena smiles when he looks at her, but it should be pretty clear that riding in a car makes her uncomfortable. The back seat is filled with fishing gear.
 MUSIC accompanies them.

77. EXT. HOUSE ON JETTY. DAY.

77.

A fishing shack built at the end of a long jetty overlooking Lake Pontchartrain. Oliver and Irena, both carrying the fishing gear, are walking across the rickety jetty to the house. Irena slips. Oliver offers his hand. Their eyes meet. She starts to take his hand, then changes her mind and walks on.
 He watches her, puzzled.

78. EXT. LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN. DAY.

78.

Oliver and Irena fishing from a small boat. Oliver has a bite. He reels it in; unhooks it; tosses it in the bottom of the boat, looks at Irena. She sits clutching the sides of the boat and looking very nervous. He smiles at her; she smiles back. He re-casts his line. Irena stares at the struggling fish in the bottom of the boat.

HER POV: The fish - wiggling, gulping - We MOVE in TIGHT on its staring EYE -

79. INT. FISHING SHACK. NIGHT.

79.

The fish, cooking in a skillet.
REVEAL Oliver at stove, Irena seated, watching him intently. The house's interior is comfortably sloppy; obviously a place for week-end adventures of whatever kind.

OLIVER

My Dad built this place
when I was about five.
We used to come here on
weekends. He's the one
who taught me how to cook.

He carries the skillet over to the table, serves both plates.

IRENA

Did he take care of animals
too?

OLIVER

Sort of. He was a G.P.

She looks at the fish. Oliver goes to the other side of the room and takes off his shirt.

OLIVER

Yeah, he was a funny guy.

Irena is watching him.
HER POV: Tight on his naked back as he changes.

OLIVER

He liked to hunt; used to
try to indoctrinate me into
hunting all the time - taught
me how to shoot, but -

He turns, sees her staring at him.

OLIVER

What?

She shakes her head: Nothing.

OLIVER

You hate the fish.

He goes over to her.

(CONTINUED)

79. CONTINUED;

79.

OLIVER (Cont'd)

It can't be any worse than
that gumbo -

IRENA

(Eyes averted)

It's not that.

OLIVER

What is it?

IRENA

Did you bring me here to
make love to me?

Pause.

OLIVER

Well - I mean - it's
not just up to me, is it?

IRENA

Could you - feel me watching
you just now?
I was watching you take off
your shirt. I was thinking
that I wanted to touch you -
I wanted to touch you almost
as much as I was afraid to
try -

OLIVER

(gently)

There's no reason to be
afraid.

He touches her shoulder. She stiffens. He runs his
hand lightly over her neck and the side of her
cheek. She is incredibly tense.

Very slowly -

She looks at him.

Her eyes - glazed. Her mouth - taut.

He leans over to kiss her.

He closes his eyes as their mouths touch.

Her eyes are open. Frightened.

She lunges away from him, suddenly, crossing the
room, head in hands, trembling.

(CONTINUED)

79. CONTINUED:

79.

OLIVER
Irena - ?

He goes towards her.
She pulls away from him, runs into the bathroom.
Slams the door.

Oliver goes to the door, turns the knob: Locked.

OLIVER
Irena -

80. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

80.

Irena, crying and trembling, face pressed to the door. She sinks slowly to her knees, trying to stifle her crying so he won't hear.

IRENA
(to herself; like a prayer)
- l'espoir existe - et la
lumière - La bête n'existe
pas - la sang - ne doit -
pas verse - l'espoir existe -
- et moi - je suis ici -
et j'existe -

81. INT. COTTAGE. NIGHT.

81.

Oliver listening. He can make out a faint mumble.
He kneels on the floor in front of the bathroom door.

OLIVER
Irena -

IRENA'S VOICE (o.s.)
(through the door)
Yes -

OLIVER
Don't be afraid of me -
I won't force anything
on you - Irena?

82. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

82.

Irena as before.

OLIVER'S VOICE (o.s.)
(through the door)
Do you hear me?

82. CONTINUED:

82.

Irena - she nods, as if for the moment speaking required too great an effort.

OLIVER'S VOICE (o.s.)
Irena? Please - answer -
are you all right?

IRENA
Yes - yes - all - right -

FADE-OUT.

83. EXT. NEW ORLEANS ZOO. DAY.

83.

ON: The leopard cage. Watching a YELLOW SPOTTED LEOPARD pace behind the bars.
SOUND of CROWD.

ALICE'S VOICE (miked)
(o.s.) In a moment we're
going to put our male leopard
back into the exhibit. We
had to keep him out long enough
to put Kashi back in -

REVEAL: Alice, with microphone, addressing a CROWD OF SPECTATORS. She's good at the spiel, and the crowd loves her, especially the kids. Her rapport with them is genuine.

Oliver, Creigh, and a THIRD KEEPER stand before the cage, Oliver with a Co2 extinguisher, Creigh with a long wooden prod, the Third Keeper with a fire hose.

ALICE (on mike)
(Cont'd) Kashi here is our
female. She's been with us
for about two years. As you
might have guessed, we're
attempting a little match-
making here today, and that's
almost as difficult with
leopards as it is with people -

LAUGHTER from Crowd.
Alice and Oliver exchange glances.

FADE-UP TITLE: 'October.'

FADE-OUT TITLE.

ALICE (cont'd)
(on mike) Leopards are loners,
and very territorial, so in order

(CONTINUED)

83. CONTINUED:

83.

ALICE (cont'd)
 (on mike)
 to work out this relationship
 we had to first: place them
 in close proximity for awhile -
 close, but still separate -

As she speaks, she SEES Irena, in the distance,
 approaching.

ALICE (cont'd)
 (on mike)
 then we had to remove Kashi
 from the exhibit, and put
 the black leopard in by him-
 self - to familiarize himself
 with her territory -

She watches as Irena makes her way through the crowd
 towards Oliver, who hasn't seen her yet.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Then we had to take him out
 again, and put her back in -
 (to a KID in
 the crowd, who
 giggles)

Sounds confusing, doesn't it?
 - Okay, put her back in,
 and now, today, we're going
 to put him back in and hope
 the marriage works out -

LAUGHTER from Crowd.
 Irena has now gotten to Oliver. Alice watches them
 talking and smiling at the front of the crowd.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Now we're going to bring
 our black leopard out of
 the bunker -

The door to the bunker is opened and the
 Black Leopard slowly emerges into the daylight.
 Irena, in the crowd, stops smiling at Oliver and
 focuses intently on the Leopard.

(CONTINUED)

83. CONTINUED:

83.

ALICE (cont'd)
(on mike)

People ask why we don't call him a panther - but a black panther is actually a melanistic leopard - The melanin - or dark pigment - dominates his coloring, that's all. In fact, if you look closely you can see that he has spots like any other leopard -

The Black Leopard is moving around the cage. He stops when he sees Irena.

Irena - looking at the Black Leopard.

NOISE of the Crowd - subdued - they're impressed with the animal.

The Black Leopard - staring at Irena.

ALICE (cont'd)
(on mike)

All leopards are nocturnal and carnivorous. Their prey includes dogs, pigs, various hoofstock - and when they're too old or crippled or sick to seek their natural prey - sometimes even Man -

The Black Leopard advances slowly towards the bars, still staring at Irena. He starts to GROWL -

The Yellow Leopard is moving around the cage, in close proximity to the Black.

ALICE (cont'd)
- but ordinarily they're more afraid of us than we are of -

Suddenly the Black Leopard leaps on the Yellow female, tearing at her throat. SCREAMS of LEOPARDS. CROWD GASPS.

CREIGH
Jesus!

Oliver blasts the leopard with the Co2 extinguisher. The Black Leopard is dragging the female's limp body around by the throat - shaking it - spattering blood on the floor of the cage; the bars; the on-lookers - The Third Keeper turns the hose on full blast - driving the Black Leopard back towards Creigh.

(CONTINUED)

83. CONTINUED:

83.

The Black Leopard -
releases the Yellow Leopards' body - swats at the
onrushing water - retreats -

Blood and water swirling over the cage-floor -

Alice - grabs up another Co2 cartridge and blasts
the leopard, driving it back -

OLIVER

Get him in the bunker!

Creigh shoves at the Leopard with the prod.
The Leopard grabs the prod in its jaws,
pulling Creigh forward, against the bars -
Hitting his head against them -
Dazing him -
Creigh's arm has been pulled through the bars and
into the cage -

Irena - seeing this, knowing what is about to happen -
Oliver - turning to Creigh, who leans, dazed, against
the bars, his arm protruding into the cage -

The Leopard - springing suddenly forward and clutching
Creigh's arm in its jaws - backing off, shaking its
head wildly back and forth - pulling - tearing -

And Creigh- being repeatedly yanked against the bars
screaming -

And the cage - filled with water; with smoke; the
Leopard barely visible in the white exploding mist -
Creigh's screams -

Oliver - lunging at the leopard through the bars -
He is trying to get Creigh's arm out of the leopard's
jaws -

CREI GH

Jesus! Jesus! Oh God! Help
me somebody!

And there is a horrible WRENCHING POP, and Creigh's
eyes roll back in his head as the arm comes off
and the pressure on him suddenly relaxes and he slumps
forward to the ground, spurting blood from the
empty shredded sleeve he drags behind him -

And in the smoke we see the vague form of the Leopard,
shaking its head back and forth and HISSING and
SCREAMING and SNARLING, the severed arm wagging
in its mouth like a snake -

84. INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM. NIGHT.

84.

SILENCE.

Oliver, Alice, Irena - waiting. Motionless.
Gradually FADE UP muffled b.g. NOISE: ie; TV,
kids, distant traffic, etc.

Long Pause.

A DOCTOR comes in. Avoids their eyes. Sits.
Sighs.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. I wish I could
tell you what you want to
hear.

(Pause)

We lost him.

(Pause)

I'm very sorry.

Long PAUSE.

ALICE

He was twenty-six years old.
Twenty-six fucking years old.

85. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

85.

TIGHTSHOT: Oliver's Monkey. He sits absolutely still.
Stares fearfully through the bars of his cage.

TIGHTSHOT: The Parrot. Like the Monkey - still.
Listening. As if afraid to move.

SOUND, o.s., of GLASSES CLINKING.

REVEAL: What the animals are looking at: Irena,
very still, seated on the sofa. Next to her are
Oliver and Alice, both drunk.
Irena has not been drinking.

ALICE

I guess I'm drunk enough
to go home now.

(She stands)

What about the cat?

OLIVER

I don't know.

ALICE

I want to be there when
you kill it.

A quick shot of Irena's reaction to this.

85. CONTINUED:

85.

OLIVER
I know you do.

ALICE
I want to be there, I want
to see it!

OLIVER
Alice...

ALICE
It went after him, Oliver,
it wanted to kill him -

OLIVER
That's crazy -

ALICE
I want it dead!

(Starts to
cry; controls
it; pulls back)

All right. Okay.

(to Irena; ironic-
ally)

Mamzelle.

IRENA
Goodnight, Alice.

OLIVER
I'll take you home -

ALICE
Take her -

She goes, slamming the door.

86. EXT. OLIVER'S NEIGHBORHOOD. NIGHT.

86.

Alice walking home.
Stumbling.
Crying as she walks.
Walking faster to keep from crying.
Crying anyway.

87. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

87.

Irena picks up the glasses and starts to take them out to the kitchen.

Oliver puts his hand on her arm, stopping her.

His hand - holding her wrist.

IRENA
(nervously)

Oliver -

He moves his hand.

OLIVER
I'm sorry.

She sits down again. He takes one of the glasses from her hand and pours himself another drink.

IRENA
(Quietly)
I was thinking how I would have felt if it had been you today.

OLIVER
It should have been.

IRENA
It wasn't your fault, Oliver. Things happen for reasons no one understands. Why should you and I love each other? The impossibility of it may be the only reason it happened -

OLIVER
Why is it impossible?
Why can't I touch you?
I need to, Irena -
especially now -
Especially now!

She goes over to him.
Kneels beside his chair.
Puts her cheek against his arm.
Strokes his arm.

IRENA
I love you, Oliver.
I just don't want to -
hurt you -

He looks down at her.
 Her profile resting gently on his arm.
 He moves his hand through her hair.
 Slowly.
 Her hand on his forearm.
 Her fingers slowly opening and closing on his arm.
 Her face; eyes half-closed.
 The SOUND of her BREATHING.

CUT TO:

Oliver, asleep in his chair, head back.
 The spilled glass on the floor below his dangling hand.
 The animals peacefully moving about in their cages.
 They look calm now.
 No one else is in the room.

88. EXT. NEAR ZOO. NIGHT. 88.

Irena walking.
 She carries a large key ring.
 SOUND of KEYS JANGLING.
 She disappears into a pool of shadow.

89. EXT. LEOPARD CAGE. NIGHT. 89.

ON: The Black Leopard, through the bars.
 He listens.
 Sits up, as if sensing something.
 SOUND of KEYS.
 The Leopard stands; comes forward to the bars.
 SOUND of KEY in cage door.
 Irena - at the cage door, seen through the bars.
 She is staring at the leopard.
 She opens the cage.

90. EXT. NEW ORLEANS CEMETERY. DAY. 90.

Very QUIET.
 Oliver, with flowers, walking among the stones.
 He stops.
 A CROWD of PEOPLE are moving away, across the cemetery.
 They look at him. Alice is among them.
 We HEAR the SOUND OF AN ALARM BELL in the distance.
 Oliver moves on.
 He stops at one of the graves. The headstone says:
 'Joe Creigh - 1954 - 1980'.
 The ALARM BELL RINGS a second time.

(CONTINUED)

90. CONTINUED;

90.

Oliver turns as if listening for the precise source of the alarm bell.

SOUND OF POURING GRAVEL.

Oliver falling.

The grave is opening; like quicksand; sucking him in-

He grabs at the rim of the grave for support -
Is swallowed up -

Oliver, falling through darkness -
Grabbing wildly at the rotted vines that hug the
inside walls of the grave -

Something catches him, suddenly, and begins dragging
him back up - He looks -

Joe Creigh is holding on to him, pulling him back
up toward the mouth of the grave -

From below we HEAR a LOW GROWL, ECHOED - as if it
came from the depths of a very deep pit -

JOE (frantic whisper)
Don't look down!

Oliver keeps his eyes on Joe. Joe struggles to pull
him up.

THIRD ALARM BELL, louder than the previous two.

ECHOED GROWL BUILDING from below, as if something
were climbing up, fast -

SOUND OF CLAWS SCRABBLING ON DIRT AND STONE -

JOE
Don't look down!

Oliver nearly to the top.

GROWL CLOSER, BUILDING

Oliver reaches up to clutch Joe's shoulder -
- and Joe's arm comes off at the socket.

Oliver, screaming soundlessly, plunging back into
the depths -

FOURTH ALARM BELL - overlapping -

SOUND OF GROWL, BELOW, LIKE A SCREAM, HISSING,
BUILDING, GROWING UNBEARABLY CLOSE -

91. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. MORNING.

91.

Oliver in chair. He sits forward with a gasp.
The PHONE is ringing. Same SOUND as alarm bell in
dream.

(CONTINUED)

- 55.
91. CONTINUED: 91.
- OLIVER
(on phone)
Yeah - hello -
92. EXT. ZOO. DAY. 92.
- Oliver, a WATCHMAN, SECURITY GUARDS, POLICE,
KEEPERS, Alice.
By the Leopard cage.
The Black Leopard is gone.
- OLIVER
How could this happen? I
want to know who's responsible
for this!
- WATCHMAN
Someone forgot to lock
the cage -
- ALICE
Bullshit!
- WATCHMAN
Either that or he was let
out on purpose -
93. EXT. NEW ORLEANS. DAY. VARIOUS LOCATIONS. 93.
- Helicopters; POLICE; VOLUNTEERS; DOGS; All searching
for the leopard.
Alice and Oliver in a helicopter.
AERIAL VIEWS FROM HELICOPTER: New Orleans.
- DISSOLVE TO:
94. EXT. NEW ORLEANS. NIGHT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS. 94.
- The search continuing.
SOUND of HELICOPTERS overhead. Sweep of searchlights
over buildings, residences, etc.
95. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT. (PAUL'S ROOM) 95.
- Femolly, at window, watching helicopters overhead
and ringing out a washcloth in a basin of water.

(CONTINUED)

95. CONTINUED:

95.

We are on the house's second floor.
 In a dark room with a low ceiling. Sparsely furnished:
 A bed, a dresser, a rocking chair, some family pictures,
 and some strange, charm-like objects made of string,
 small bones and straw, hanging on the walls.

Femolly turns away from the window and carries the
 basin of steaming water over to the bed.

PAUL GALLIER lies naked on the bed, partially covered
 by a sheet. Although his face is somewhat obscured
 by shadow, we can see that he bears an uncanny resem-
 blance to Irena. He is unshaven, his body covered
 with callouses, bruises and cuts. He looks painfully
 undernourished.

Irena sits beside him on the edge of the bed. She is
 clipping his nails. SOUND of CLIPPER and PING of
 NAILS hitting bowl.

His nails are curved and tusk-like. His fingers, like
 his body, are calloused and covered with tiny cuts.

He watches Irena closely. His eyes shine. His expression
 is somehow both mocking and sad.

Irena glances severely at his face. He smiles. She
 looks back at his hand.

Femolly puts the basin of water down on the bedside
 table. On the table-top is a glistening straight
 razor and other shaving paraphernalia.

Femolly looks at Paul. She puts her hand to his
 forehead as if feeling for temperature. He snuggles
 into her hand like a child. Femolly removes her
 hand, looks at Irena, and exits from the room.

Irena puts down the nail clipper and prepares to
 shave Paul.

PAUL
 (A strained whisper)
 I hear my little sister
 has a lover...

He watches her reaction.
 She lathers the shaving brush.

PAUL
 (Tasting the name)
 O1 - i - ver -

She begins to lather his chin.
 He is watching her face, closely.
 Suddenly she stops moving.

(CONTINUED)

95. CONTINUED:

95.

REVEAL: His hand, clutching her thigh. He works it up toward her crotch.

Paul and Irena - face - to-face. Irena struggling not to respond. Paul enjoying her discomfort.

He puts his other hand on her breast.

Fondles her breast.

Raises himself up slightly to whisper in her ear:

PAUL

We can only have each other -

He freezes.

Somehow she has gotten hold of the razor and now she holds it at his throat.

He smiles.

His hand between her legs - he continues to caress her.

Her face - like stone.

She presses the razor into his neck.

Blood bubbles at the edges of the blade.

His hand - moving away from her body.

The razor - still at his throat. He pulls away from her, lifting his hands up beside his head in a parody of a holdup surrender. He smiles.

She gets up; drops the razor into the bowl of water. Goes out of the room.

Paul - on the bed - watching her. The blood on his neck. SOUND of door SLAMMING.

96. INT. HALLWAY. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

96.

Irena emerging from Paul's room.
Closing the door, leaning against it.
Breathing heavily.

LIGHTNING FILLS THE SCREEN.

97. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

97.

THUNDER. Rain. A streetcar crosses FRAME, wet and shiny from the downpour. Lights on in Oliver's house.

FADE UP TITLE:

'November'

FADE-OUT TITLE.

(CONTINUED)

98. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

98.

Thanksgiving dinner.
 Alice, Irena, Oliver, and BRONTE JUDSON, Alice's
 date, at table.
 Oliver carving the turkey.

OLIVER
 Bronte? Light or dark meat?

BRONTE
 I'm eclectic - a little of
 each.

He smiles at Irena. He is watching her closely.
 He's fortyish; affectedly ironic; attractive;
 confident.

BRONTE
 You're a vast improvement
 over your photographs, Ms.
 Gallier -

IRENA
 Where have you seen my
 photograph?

BRONTE
 Oh, I'm a long-time student
 of the Gallier family
 history.

IRENA
 Perhaps you could explain
 it to me.

LAUGHTER.

ALICE
 Bronte is writing a book
 on New Orleans.

BRONTE
 (to Irena)
 That's why I wanted to meet
 you. I was hoping you'd
 grant me an interview.

Irena looks taken aback.
 Oliver looks at Alice, annoyed. Alice looks apologetic.
 Bronte picks up the tone of these silent transactions.

(CONTINUED)

98. CONTINUED:

98.

BRONTE

I admit it's cheating a little to use a dinner invitation to land an interview, but you Galliers are so secretive -

OLIVER

Now you know why

BRONTE

I deserve that, but I couldn't resist. Your brother won't answer my letters or return my calls. I was hoping you might be willing to talk to me.

IRENA

What's your book about?

BRONTE

Oppression. And Voodoo as a response to it.

Oliver serving the plates and handing them down.

IRENA

I don't know a thing about either subject.

BRONTE

Oh, now, voodoo is certainly a part of your family history, you can't deny that. And all women are experts on the subject of oppression these days.

OLIVER

Why don't we oppress our appetites first? Who'll say grace?

IRENA

May I?

ALICE

You don't have to ask permission, Irena.

(CONTINUED)

98. CONTINUED;

98.

IRENA

That's how grace is granted,
Alice.
For what we are about to
receive, may the Lord make us
truly thankful and bless us,
Amen.

ALL

Amen.

FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

99. INT. FEMOLLY'S ROOM, GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

99.

THUNDER. SOUND OF RAIN.

Femolly asleep in bed.

SOUND of ELEVATOR, o.s.

Femolly opens her eyes; sits up; listens.

Goes to door. Peers out.

HER POV: The elevator descending to the ground
floor.

CREAK OF CABLES.

The elevator stops.

The door slides open.

Femolly steps back against the wall so that she can't
be seen from below.

FLASH OF LIGHTNING.

100. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

100.

As before. At table.

ALICE

I'm curious. What does voodoo
have to do with your family
history, Irena?

IRENA

Nothing. All those stories
were invented to keep mis-
chievous children in line.

BRONTE

Even the curse?

ALICE

The curse? What was that?

BRONTE

Certainly not a story you'd
tell to children.

101. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

101.

Femolly creeping down the hall to the door of Paul's room.

IRENA'S VOICE (o.s.)
(Over)
I would. Just as I would
tell them 'Rapunzel' - or
'Beauty and the Beast' -
or any other fairy tale -

Femolly at the door. She opens it.
The room is empty. She looks in.

BRONTE'S VOICE (o.s.)
(over)
It hasn't been proven that
fairy tales inspire murder
- and madness.

Femolly looking into Paul's room.
The sheets on the bed have been torn to ribbons.

102. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

102.

Irena, upset, gets up suddenly from the table and
goes into the kitchen.
Oliver follows her.
Alice looks daggers at Bronte. He shrugs an
indifferent apology.

IN THE KITCHEN -

Oliver tries to comfort Irena.
She pulls away from him.

IRENA
I'm all right. I just need
to be alone for a minute.

OLIVER
Okay.

He goes back out to the living room.

AT THE TABLE -

BRONTE
I suppose I'm guilty of a
major faux pas, but all the
same, I proved my point -

(CONTINUED)

102. CONTINUED:

102.

ALICE
 (Angrily)
 Well, that's what's important,
 isn't it, Bronte?
 Is she all right, Oliver?
 I'm sorry, it was my fault, too -

IN THE KITCHEN -
 Irena is listening to their conversation.
 Suddenly there is a -
 VERY LOUD PEAL OF THUNDER, and -
 - the lights go out.

BRONTE
 There we go!

Darkness.
 We stay with Irena.
 Her eyes begin to take on a luminous quality in the
 dark.
 From the living room we can HEAR the other three.

ALICE'S VOICE
 I can't see a damned thing -

Irena moves silently out of the kitchen.
 HER POV (MOVING) As she walks towards the living room.
 This is a SPECIAL EFFECT: We are seeing the dark
 house through her cat's eyes: The rooms have a
 grainy look - contrasts heightened - dark dark
 blacks, washed-out light areas. We can see Bronte
 Alice and Oliver fumbling in the dark, at the
 table. They are like three blind mice.

BRONTE
 Do you have any candles or
 anything?

OLIVER
 I've got some hurricane lamps
 in the cellar -

BRONTE
 I'm not going into your cellar
 and break my ass falling down
 a bunch of steps -

OLIVER
 Irena? Are you all right in
 there?

(CONTINUED)

102. CONTINUED:

102.

Irena smiles. She is enjoying this feeling of invisibility.

IRENA
(Whispering; to herself)
Yes - fine -

OLIVER
(didn't hear it)
Irena? Where is she?

Bronte is fumbling his way towards the kitchen.
Irena is standing in his path.
He doesn't see her at all.

BRONTE
You must have matches in
the kitchen - is this the
kitchen? Jesus -

He fumbles his way past her and into the kitchen.
Irena watches Alice and Oliver, still at the table.
Alice is feeling around. She touches Oliver's hand.

ALICE
Who's that?

OLIVER
Me.

He helps her up. They are standing in a near embrace.

ALICE
Where did Irena go?

OLIVER
I don't know - she was
upset -

ALICE
I'm sorry I brought him -
Still friends?

OLIVER
Sure.

She kisses him.
Irena, watching -

(CONTINUED)

102. CONTINUED;

102.

SOUNDS of Bronte fumbling around in the kitchen.

BRONTE (o.s.)
(from kitchen)

Where the hell are the
matches -

OLIVER
In the drawer next to
the ice-box -

TIGHTSHOT ON: Irena's eyes: Watching Oliver and
Alice. Her pupils are enormous. Pulsing.

BRONTE (o.s.)
(from kitchen)
Oh, here -

Suddenly a bright yellow flare fills the screen,
washing out all detail. It subsides.
Irena blinks in the strange light - of the match
Bronte has just struck.
He is looking at Irena.

BRONTE
So that's where you're
hiding -

The match goes out.
He strikes another.

OLIVER
(Seeing Irena)
Why didn't you answer?

Irena shrugs.
Alice is squinting out the window.

ALICE
Looks like they're out all
down the block - I wonder
if the phone's working -

OLIVER
Give me some of those matches.
I'll get the hurricane lamps.

Bronte gives him matches. He exits to cellar.
Alice is at the phone.

(CONTINUED)

102. CONTINUED: 102.

ALICE
(hanging up)

Phone's dead, too -

Irena is staring at her.

103. INT. CELLAR. NIGHT. 103.

Oliver making his way down the steps.

THUNDER.

Heavy rain.

It's leaking in somewhere down here. We can HEAR it
DRIPPING.

104. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 104.

Bronte has discovered a package of birthday candles
in a drawer.

He starts to light them.

105. INT. CELLAR. NIGHT. 105.

Oliver striking matches and using them to find
his way to a cabinet.

He holds the match up to reveal some hurricane
lamps on an upper shelf.

The match goes out.

SOUND OF RAIN.

106. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 106.

Bronte and Irena by the light of birthday candles.
He is heating the ends of the candles and sticking
them to the counter.

Alice comes in.

BRONTE
And one for good luck -

ALICE
Where did you find those?

BRONTE
In the drawer.

Irena is staring at Alice.

BRONTE
Somebody ought to give Oliver
a hand, don't you think?

(CONTINUED)

106. CONTINUED:

106.

ALICE
I'll go -
(seeing
Irena's reaction)
Um - if you don't mind -

BRONTE
We don't mind - go on -

Alice goes.
Irena hesitates, then starts after her.

BRONTE
Ms Gallier?
(Irena stops)
They can handle it.
(Irena looks
at him)
Besides, I wanted to apologize. I hope I didn't offend you.

IRENA
It doesn't matter.

BRONTE
Of course it matters.

107. INT. HALLWAY NEAR BASEMENT. NIGHT.

107.

Alice in the dark making her way down.

ALICE
Oliver?
(No answer)
I can't see a goddamned thing.

She goes down the stairs clumsily, cautiously.

ALICE
Oliver?

108. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

108.

Bronte and Irena, as before.

BRONTE
You know - if you were to help me with this book -
(MORE)

(CONTINUED:)

108. CONTINUED:

108.

BRONTE (cont)

For instance, if you have any authentic documents in your possession - deeds of sale, letters - it could be worth a good deal of money to you -

IRENA

I don't need your money.

BRONTE

That's not what I heard.

109. INT. CELLAR. NIGHT.

109.

Alice now at the bottom of the steps.

ALICE

Oliver?

LOUD CRASH.

ALICE

Oh, shit.

The basement window is open.
Alice sees it.
Rain coming in.
The floor glistening and wet.

ALICE

No wonder I slipped -

She makes her way to the window; manages to close it.
Rain spattering her face.
She turns, wiping her face.

LIGHTNING!

Paul is standing there. Naked. Glistening with rain.
One claw-like hand extended. His eyes, like Irena's earlier, all pupil. His hair dark, slicked back.

Alice screams.

Darkness again.

Alice screaming in the dark.
SOUND of Paul racing up the stairs.

110. INT. GARAGE. NIGHT.

110.

Oliver filling a hurricane lamp with kerosene. He hears Alice screaming, runs back to the cellar through an outside door.

111. INT BASEMENT. NIGHT.

111.

Alice sobbing in the dark.
Oliver enters, with hurricane lamp.

ALICE

A man - he went upstairs -

LOUD NOISE from upstairs. The Parrot SHRIEKS; the
Monkey SCREAMS.
Oliver leaves the hurricane lamp with Alice and
goes upstairs.

112. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

112.

Oliver enters.

OLIVER

Irena?

IRENA

Yes -

OLIVER

Where did he go?

BRONTE

Whatever it was, it
ran upstairs -

Alice enters from basement with hurricane lamp.
NOISE from upstairs.

BRONTE

There - hear it?

They all listen.

OLIVER

Did you see him?

BRONTE

I didn't.

ALICE

I did.

Oliver goes to the desk.

OLIVER

Could you identify him?

(CONTINUED)

112. CONTINUED:

112.

Alice looks at Irena, as if realizing that the man resembled her.

ALICE
I - think so -

Oliver goes to desk, opens drawer, takes out gun.

NOISE FROM UPSTAIRS.

ALICE
Sounds like he's in that
back room -

Oliver loads gun.

OLIVER
Good. We can trap him in
there. Everybody go into
the kitchen. If the power
comes back on, call the
police -

ALICE
What are you going to do?

OLIVER
Close him off in that back
room, if I can -

Irena, at kitchen door, watching Oliver.
She starts to speak.
Can't.

OLIVER
Just keep the kitchen door
locked, okay, Bronte?

BRONTE
Believe it.

Bronte ushers Alice and Irena into the kitchen.
Oliver starts up the stairs in the dark.

113. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

113.

Bronte is carrying the hurricane lamp.
He locks the door.
Looks at Irena. At Alice.
NOISE overhead. They all look up.

(CONTINUED)

114. INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. NIGHT. 114.

Oliver at the head of the stairs.
He looks down the hall - to the room at the end,
the door to which is open.
A NOISE can be heard in the room.
Oliver moves slowly down the hall.

115. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 115.

Irena, Bronte, Alice, listening to OLIVER'S FOOT-
STEPS from above.

116. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 116.

Oliver moving towards the door.
We HEAR the SOUND OF CRYING; low; very soft.
Oliver stops.
Advances another two or three cautious steps.
SOUND OF CRYING continues, from within room.

117. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 117.

Irena - head back; listening -

118. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 118.

Oliver at the door, looking in.
The room is very dark; filled with black shapes;
lots of hiding places.
Oliver reaches over to the doorknob, intending to
pull the door quickly shut towards him.

VOICE (from within)
(barely audible)
Ol - i - ver -

Oliver. Motionless. Hand out reaching for the doorknob.

119. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 119.

Irena. Waiting. Listening. Eyes glittering.

IRENA
(barely a whisper)
Please -

120. INT. HALLWAY BY DOOR. NIGHT. 120.

Oliver as before, hand on doorknob.
He leans forward.

(CONTINUED)

120. CONTINUED: 120.

His hand - enclosing the doorknob.
 Oliver - catching his breath.
 He yanks the door suddenly forward.
 It stops! Suddenly! As if someone had grabbed it
 on the other side.
 Oliver - pulling the door, trying to close it.
 Resistance on the other side.
 Then the door gives, throwing Oliver off-balance,
 and as he struggles to regain his footing, the
 door is yanked open -
 Oliver - falling into the room -
 The gun - rattling away across the floor -

121. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 121.

Irena.
 A sudden intake of breath -

IRENA

No!

She moves for the kitchen door.

122. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 122.

Oliver rolling into the room
 Leaping to his feet.
 The door slams.
 Darkness.

123. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 123.

Irena pulling on the door.

BRONTE

Stay here he said!

She claws at him; pushes at the door.

124. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 124.

Oliver once again on his feet, moving back against
 the wall.
 Looking for the gun.
 HIS POV: The gun glistening on the floor in the dark.
 He bends down to pick it up -
 Freezes.
 Something low to the ground is moving toward him,
 as if crawling on all fours.
 We HEAR the SOUND OF LAUGHTER; low; hoarse; ominous -

125. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT. 125.
Irena struggling with the door.
She gets it open.
126. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 126.
Irena running to stairs.
She stumbles.
Gets up again.
127. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 127.
Oliver standing.
He raises the gun.
SOUND OF RAIN.
HIS POV: Stretching across the floor is a rectangular
spill of gray light coming from the window behind him.
The light ripples as the shadow of the rain on the
glass projects into the room.
Into this light the crawling thing begins to move.
A HUMAN HAND, gnarled, glistening wetly in the dimness,
eases its way across the floor, then part of the
arm, then the shoulder, then the glistening black
head of hair, seen from above.
The head turns upward, pleadingly, and -
Paul's face, half-shadowed, is caught in the incoming
light. His eyes glitter. His mouth is open. We
can make out the arc of his wet teeth. A spidery
strand of saliva hangs from his lip.
128. INT. STAIRS. NIGHT. 128.
Irena climbing the stairs -
129. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 129.
Oliver staring at Paul.
Paul slides his hand across the floor and rests
his fingers on the tips of Oliver's shoes.

PAUL (the same whisper)
Please, Oliver...
130. INT. HEAD OF STAIRWAY. NIGHT. 130.
Irena at the head of the stairs. Running to the
back room.

IRENA
Paul!

131. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 131.
- Oliver looks up at the sound of her voice.
 Something SNARLS at his feet.
 Oliver looks down.
 In the exact pose held a moment ago by Paul, we
 now see the crouched form of the black leopard.
 It springs.
132. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 132.
- A GUNSHOT from the back room.
 Irena freezes.
 SOUNDS of a STRUGGLE.
133. INT. BACK ROOM. NIGHT. 133.
- Oliver and the leopard in a violent struggle.
 A GUNSHOT.
 Sparks from the gun quickly illuminate;
 The Leopard's face - snarling; drooling blood -
 ANOTHER GUNSHOT -
 Paul's face - with leopard eyes, turning away -
 ANOTHER GUNSHOT -
 Paul's arm, with enormous claws -
 ANOTHER GUNSHOT -
 Leopard's claw, digging into Oliver's chest -
 FINAL GUNSHOT -
 Paul's face - opens his mouth to scream - we
 HEAR the Leopard's growl -
- SILENCE.
 Darkness.
134. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 134.
- Irena. Motionless in the dark. Silence.
135. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 135.
- Alice and Bronte.
 Silence.
 Darkness.
136. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE AND NEIGHBORHOOD. 136.
- Dark. Wet from rain.
 Section by section, the lights start to go on.

137. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 137.
 Alice and Bronte.
 The lights go on.
 The living room is a shambles.
138. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 138.
 Irena.
 Lights go on.
 She is staring at the door to the back room.
139. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. 139.
 Bronte at phone.
 He listens: DIAL TONE.
 He dials.
 Alice starts up the stairs.
140. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT. 140.
 Irena as before.
 Alice slowly walks up behind her.
 Passes her.
 Opens door to back room.
 It CREAKS.
 HER POV: Everything is overturned. Oliver sits
 propped against the wall, his clothing torn,
 his body bloodspattered, the pistol in his hand.
 He looks dead.
- ALICE
 Oliver -
- She goes to him.
 He looks up at her.
 Then away from her, at something on the other side
 of the room.
 Alice turns.
 The dead leopard lies in a widening pool of blood.
 Alice stares at it, amazed.
 Irena appears in the doorway.
 She stares at Alice,
 then looks slowly, strangely, over at the leopard.
 She goes to the leopard, kneels beside it, looks
 at it.
 Alice and Oliver watch her.
 Alice embraces Oliver.
 Irena starts to cry.
 She looks at them.

141. EXT. ZOO. DAY. 141.

A sign announces that the zoo is 'Temporarily Closed for Repairs.'

We HEAR CLASSICAL MUSIC -

142. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY. 142.

The MUSIC is playing on an FM radio station.

Oliver (bandaged) and Alice, are assisting YEATMAN BREWER, the zoo pathologist, in a necropsy of the leopard's carcass.

Yeatman is youngish, hip, a gum-chewer, bright.

The leopard's body lies belly-up on a stainless steel table under a bank of fluorescent lights.

[Angles should be selected to emphasize its human aspect.]

Yeatman makes the first incision, starting under the leopard's chin and cutting smoothly down to the base of the tail.

143. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. DAY. 143.

Irena seated, staring out the window.

She shivers as though a fierce pain had rippled through her. She clutches the chair-arms. A closer look shows them to be carved in the likeness of leopard's claws.

She closes her eyes. Sweat covers her brow.

FEMOLLY'S VOICE (o.s.)

I need your help now.

She is standing in the doorway. No response from Irena.

FEMOLLY

I say I need your help.
Now.

Irena shakes her head: No.

Femolly turns disgustedly away.

144. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY. 144.

Necropsy in progress.

Using blunt forceps, Yeatman peels back the skin from the underlying muscle. Bullet holes can be seen in

(CONTINUED)

144. CONTINUED; 144.
 the pelt and in the internal organs. Yeatman laconically points them out with the tip of the forceps.
145. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. PAUL'S ROOM. DAY. 145.
 A row of men's shoes; all worn.
 SOUNDS of COATHANGERS SCRATCHING rack.
 REVEAL Femolly taking Paul's clothes from his closet and putting them into a large cardboard box.
146. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY. 146.
 Necropsy continued.
 The leopard's arm and paw, fascia peeled back to reveal the deeper muscle structure. Yeatman studies the paw, squeezing its digits to force out the long talons.
 Oliver puts his own hand, palmside-up, flat on the table beside the cat's dissected one. They are amazingly similar.
 The cat's dissected arm moves. Oliver pulls back. Yeatman smiles. He is moving it from the shoulder to demonstrate the hydraulics of the muscles.
147. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. DAY. 147.
 Irena, in chair, as before.
 Her eyes are closed, her head lolling slowly from one side to the other, as though she were in some kind of trance.
 Her right hand is bent back at the wrist, fingers stiff, knuckles white, straining as if charged with electricity.
148. INT. PAUL'S ROOM. DAY. 148.
 Femolly is taking the strange charms down from the walls and putting them into the box, which is now filled with Paul's clothes.
149. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY. 149.
 The top of the leopard's skull has been removed. Yeatman examines the brain while Oliver and Alice look over his shoulder.
 THEIR VIEW: (Moving, through magnifier): The wormy,
 (CONTINUED)

149. CONTINUED; 149.
 maze-like contours of the brain's surface, seen
 VERY CLOSE.
150. INT. PAUL'S ROOM. DAY. 150.
 Femolly cleaning out Paul's dresser drawer.
 The contents of the drawer suggest a life in
 synopsis; There are a couple of family pictures,
 some jewelry, pornographic pictures, an old
 wallet, a small crucifix, some childhood tokens,
 two or three marbles, cat's eyes.
 Femolly looks at the contents for a moment;
 fights her emotion; dumps the drawer into the
 box.
 Slams the drawer shut.
151. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. DAY. 151.
 Femolly descending in elevator, with box.
 It stops.
 She emerges, lugging the filled cardboard box.
 She carries it - drags it - towards the kitchen.
- IRENA
 Wait -
- Femolly stops.
 Irena approaches, carrying her portrait of Paul.
 She puts it in the box.
- FEMOLLY
 I need your help, child.
- IRENA
 I can't -
- She turns and goes; hurrying out the front door.
 Slamming it.
 Femolly staring after her,
 then returning to her task;
 Dragging the box out the back.
152. EXT. STREET. DAY. 152.
 Irena walking, dazed.
 HER POV; FACES OF PEDESTRIANS going by - backlit;
 ominous.
153. EXT. GALLIER COURTYARD. DAY. 153.
 Near a furnace for burning rubbish. Femolly is
 spreading the clothes out on the ground. She
 moves purposefully, working toward a goal.

154. INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. DAY.

154.

Necropsy completed.
Some organs have been placed in jars of preservative.
Others in metal packing containers.
Yeatman strips off his rubber gloves and pours coffee
into a styrofoam cup.

YEATMAN

I'd still like to know what
you thought we were going to
find.

OLIVER

I don't know - nothing -

YEATMAN

Well, I'd say it was def-
initely an ordinary leopard,
Panthera Pardus, history
unknown. Much bigger than
usual, granted, but -
just a leopard.

ALICE

How soon will we get back
the results on the blood
and tissue samples?

YEATMAN

A few days. If you want
them sooner, I can call
the lab and put a fire-
cracker up their ass.

OLIVER

The lab won't find anything.

YEATMAN

It's up to you.

He empties what's left of his coffee into the sink.

155. EXT. GALLIER COURTYARD. DAY. 155.
- A huge fire is now burning in the furnace.
Femolly stokes it with a stick.
- Lying on the paved courtyard behind her, surrounded by a ring of stones, is the effigy of Paul she has built from his clothes and belongings. The portrait by Irena rests at the head. The shirt and pants have been stuffed with other clothes. Lying on top of the chest are the personal possessions: The pictures, childhood mementos, jewelry, etc.
- Turning away from the fire, Femolly places the strange, charm-like objects from Paul's room over the effigy's heart, groin, head.
- She takes out a vial of bright blue powder and casts it over the dummy.
- SOUND OF FURNACE LOUD, BLAZING -
156. EXT. STREET. DAY. 156.
- Irena, walking.
SOUND OF FURNACE, over.
As if the fire were contained within her.
157. EXT. ZOO INCINERATOR. DUSK. 157.
- Oliver, Alice, a KEEPER.
SOUND OF FURNACE, as before, remains.
- They are watching the incinerator: It is a squat, brick building, like a kiln, with a tall smokestack.
- The leopard's remains, along with the remains of various other animals (raccoons, opossums, dogs, cats, etc.) which have been gathered from the roads and highways by the city sanitation department, are placed on the conveyor belt which feeds into the mouth of the incinerator. This massive pile of dead animals - staring eyes, flattened bodies, jaws locked in death's rictus - edges forward on the conveyor belt.
- The doors open briefly to receive the load and we see, within, a sheet of white flame. The doors close.
- Oliver and Alice, watching.
158. EXT. GALLIER COURTYARD. DAY. 158.
- Femolly setting the effigy ablaze. Blue smoke coiling up tornado-like. A SIZZLING SOUND, and then the beginning of a SCREAM -

159. EXT. ZOO INCINERATOR. DAY. 159.
 Black smoke rising from the smokestack.
 SOUND OF SCREAM - high-pitched; building -
 Enormous outburst of smoke from stack; pouring,
 bubbling out -
 The SCREAM seems to come from within the incinerator,
 as if something alive were trapped inside it
160. EXT. STREET. DAY. 160.
 Irena walking.
 She stops.
 Covers her ears.
 SOUND OF SCREAM BUILDING -
161. EXT. GALLIER COURTYARD. DAY. 161.
 The effigy writhing and twisting like a living
 body.
 SCREAM AT ITS MOST INTENSE.
 Rising up from the blue, piling smoke, as if Paul's
 spirit had been suddenly released like a rocket.
162. EXT. ZOO. INCINERATOR. DAY. 162.
 Smoke thinning.
 No scream.
 A bird swoops by, SCREECHES, darts away.
 Oliver and Alice - watching.
163. EXT. STREET. DAY. 163.
 Irena clutching her head.
 Staggering.
 Eyes rolled back.
 Mouth open.
 Breathing heavily, as if having to vomit.
 A MAN stops to help her.
 She pulls away from him, walks unsteadily on.
164. INT. ALICE'S APT. . DUSK. 164.
 Oliver sits on the sofa, glumly petting Alice's dog,
 TRAVELLER. Alice is on the phone. Her apartment is
 modern, small, no-nonsense, like Alice herself.

OLIVER

I don't know what to think.
 I feel like I just looked in
 the mirror - and saw somebody
 else's face.

CONTINUED

164. CONTINUED:

164.

Alice smiles at him.

ALICE

It's the same old face.

He smiles skeptically.

ALICE

(into phone)

Hello? Bronte? Hi, I
didn't think you were home -

(to Oliver)

We got him out of the jacuzzi -

(on phone)

Listen, how would you feel
about having some company?
Tonight. Now. Yeah. We
wanted to ask you some questions.
About voodoo.

165. INT. BRONTE'S APT. NIGHT.

165.

Well-stocked with books and magazines; tastefully if impersonally decorated; expensive stereo components; lots of albums; plush rugs; old engravings of New Orleans on the walls; - lots of work space; IBM typewriter; dictaphone; stacks of paper; - all somehow ostentatiously disorganized.

Bronte wears sandals and a white Moroccan caftan. He is in the kitchen, slicing cheese and cucumber wedges and arranging them on a tray. Alice and Oliver sit in the living room, looking through a pile of old prints and drawings that Bronte has laid out for them.

BRONTE

Voodoo was a response to
oppression; not just slavery,
but the sexual oppression
imposed by a rigid and su-
premely hypocritical double
standard, as well.

He brings the tray of hors d'oeuvres to the table and sits across from Oliver and Alice.

He munches as he sifts through the pictures.

BRONTE

To understand the so-called
Gallier 'curse', you have to
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

165. CONTINUED:

165.

BRONTE (cont)
 go back to - where the hell
 are they? - oh, here - you have
 to go back to Irena's great-
 great-great grandparents,
 Claude and Isabel Gallier -

He spreads out two pictures: Fuzzy daguerrotypes
 of CLAUDE and ISABEL.

TIGHTSHOT: Oliver - recognizing the faces.

CUT TO:

166. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. EVENING [FLASHBACK]

166.

(Same shot as in Sc. #71): MOVING POV: Looking
 up at the dusty blackening portraits that line
 the walls of the house: Claude and Isabel stare
 down at us.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 Claude was a wealthy slave holder
 and landowner. Isabel was a proper,
 young, Convent-educated Catholic
 girl -

We hear, faintly, the sound of a WOMAN SINGING
 'Plaisir d'amour'.
 We CONTINUE MOVING towards the back of the house
 as Bronte talks. The house looks new to us now,
 and is decorated in elegant nineteenth century
 style. As we approach the source of the singing,
 we pass a statue of the Holy Virgin, arms out-
 spread.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 After they married, Isabel was
 horrified to discover that her
 husband was a libertine who had
 half a dozen slave mistresses
 on the side -

We have now found our way into the -

167. INT. OF THE LIVING ROOM. 1800's. DAY.

167.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 - and who knows how many ille-
 gitimate children, which she -

CONTINUED

167. CONTINUED:

167.

We see ISABEL GALLIER, in ornate, beautiful, nineteenth century costume, seated before the living room window [as was Irena in Sc#73b] playing a musical instrument of the period and singing 'Plaisir d'amour' as she stares out the window.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
- as a proper young wife of
the aristocracy -

We MOVE towards Isabel until we are looking over her shoulder and out the window.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
- was expected to turn the other
cheek to, and ignore -

LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW: We see, in the distance, a MAN (CLAUDE GALLIER) in nineteenth century costume, walking across a field, followed by a YOUNG BLACK GIRL. He gestures to her to catch up and she runs up beside him.

168. INT. ISABEL'S ROOM. 1800's. DAY.

168.

Isabel, now dressed to go out, is being assisted by a BLACK SERVANT. TWO SMALL CHILDREN play in the b.g.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
Once the children were born, she
had served her purpose, and Claude
stayed away from Isabel.

Isabel blesses herself before a crucifix, says goodbye to the children and goes out the door.

169. EXT. GALLIER HOUSE, 1800's. DAY.

169.

A carriage is waiting. A COACHMAN opens the door as Isabel emerges from the house.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
She was not supposed to have any
'improper' thoughts or desires,
and it wasn't unusual for a
woman of her class to go as long
as a year, perhaps two or three,
without any sexual contact what-
soever.

Isabel gets into the carriage.

170. INT. MOVING CARRIAGE. DAY. 1800's. 170.

Isabel staring at the passing scenery. She looks nervous.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 But what could she do? If she'd
 taken a lover, the law would
 have sanctioned her husband's
 right to murder her - and the
 lover - on the spot.

Irena lowers a heavy veil over her face.

171. EXT. LOUIS GLAPION'S HOUSE. DAY. 1800's. 171.

A rundown white house surrounded by a high brick wall. Lots of fruit trees. A well. Chickens and horses in the yard. As Isabel, veiled, crosses from the front gate to the door of the house, she glances at a life-size statue of the Holy Virgin standing in the yard. It has been painted with bright colors: The robes red, the face green, the hands yellow.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 So she did what many other women
 in her situation and of her class
 did - She went to a houngan -
 a voodoo witch doctor. One who
 specialized in love-potions.

172. INT. LOUIS GLAPION'S HOUSE. DAY. 1800's. 172.

Isabel, veiled, seated at a plank table across from LOUIS GLAPION. He is black and smokes a long-stemmed pipe. He wears a black string tie, a frilly white silk shirt and a black frock coat. He is bald, his face intricately tattooed. He wears a gold earring in one ear. He is somehow alluring and hideous at the same time. His fingernails are easily two inches long.

The house is dark and cluttered. There are shelves piled with vials and jars, and astrological charts pinned to the walls. Chickens roam the floor, which is of dirt and straw-covered. One or two SERVANTS furtively prowl the background. Beaded curtains cover the windows, filtering the light. On the walls are also pinned some of the strange charm-like items we saw in Paul's room, as well as brightly painted religious items, and one inverted crucifix. MUTED SOUNDS in b.g.

CONTINUED

172. CONTINUED:

172.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 His name was Louis Glapion -
 Doctor Louie - and he promised
 he would bring Isabel's husband
 back to her on one condition -

Isabel's face - as Louis's hands reach over and start
 to lift her veil. She reaches up to stop him, then
 surrenders and lowers her hands.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
 That she spend one night in Louis's
 bed.

The veil lifted - Isabel's reaction: A complex con-
 fusion of desire and revulsion. She looks down,
 embarrassed, and nods her acquiescence.

DISSOLVE TO:

173. INT. LOUIS GLAPION'S. NIGHT.

173.

- ON A pot of boiling water, surrounded by a ring
 of lighted candles. The candles are all of different
 colors.

DISSOLVE TO:

174. INT. GALLIER BEDROOM. NIGHT.

174.

Claude Gallier, nude, asleep (similar to the position
 of Paul Gallier in Sc # 95).

Isabel approaches the bed. In her hand is a straight
 razor.

We see her hand pull back the sheet. Part of his lower
 stomach is visible. She reaches down slowly with the
 razor and, pinching a tuft of pubic hair, slices it
 neatly off.

175. INT. LOUIS GLAPION'S NIGHT.

175.

As Louis's hand takes the hair and sprinkles it into
 the boiling water.

PULL BACK to reveal Louis, smiling.

Isabel sits on the far side of the room, watching.
 There are TWO BLACK ASSISTANTS in the room as well,
 one of them carrying a bag which jumps in his hand.

CONTINUED

175. CONTINUED:

175.

At Louis's signal, the Assistant reaches into the bag and pulls out a screaming BLACK CAT, its feet tightly bound.

Isabel watches nervously.

Louis takes the Black Cat and, holding it upside down, moves it in a slow circle over the boiling water.

Suddenly he plunges it headfirst into the pot.

Isabel turns away, horrified.

Louis holds the cat until it is still, then quickly pulls it out.

Isabel ventures a look -

As Louis grips the cat's throat in his teeth and rips it open. Quickly, efficiently, he skins the cat using only his teeth.

CUT TO:

Louis's hands crushing the bones of the cat into a mushy powder.

CUT TO:

Louis pouring a glutinous liquid into a vial.

CUT TO:

Isabel, fighting nausea, as she drinks down the thick mixture. Louis watches approvingly, urging her on.

CUT TO:

176. INT. GALLIER BEDROOM. 1800's. NIGHT.

176.

Isabel, naked, in bed, looks up, as -

The door opens and Claude enters her bedroom. He goes to the bed, sits down beside her, staring at her face as if fascinated.

He reaches out to touch her, moving his hand down her face, slowly pulling the sheet away from her breasts.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
Doctor Louie knew what he was
doing.

Isabel reaches up and turns off the bedside lamp.
Darkness.

177. EXT. BY OVERHANGING TREE. DUSK.

177.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
Until he tried to collect his
pay -

Isabel stands by the tree, a parasol open in her hand.
Dr. Louis furtively approaches, bows to her, kisses her hand.
She looks around as if expecting someone, then pushes at Louis, screams, and points an accusing finger at him.
He turns away, and sees -
Claude Gallier, and SEVERAL OTHER WHITE MEN, with guns, bearing down on him.

CUT TO:

178. EXT. NIGHT. BY OVERHANGING TREE.

178.

ON: Louie, beaten and whipped, his face bloody, one eye out. A rope is being pulled tight around his neck.
REVEAL: A group of SLAVES is being forced to watch as Claude Gallier has Louis lynched.
The slaves stare nervously at Louie as he is dragged to his feet.

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
It was a good example, Claude
decided, for all his slaves to
see -

Suddenly Louie begins screaming wildly, shaking his head.
The slaves begin moving restlessly.
Backing away; starting to run -

BRONTE'S VOICE (over)
Until Dr. Louie pronounced his
final curse -

The slaves begin to run.
Claude fires on them.
Louie, screaming -
Slaves running, screaming -
Claude and the Others, firing -
Slaves falling, shot -
Louie laughing and screaming -
- is suddenly yanked hard into the air as we

CUT TO:

179. INT. BRONTE'S APT. NIGHT.

179.

Bronte biting into a cucumber; SNAP.
Silence for a moment.
Oliver and Alice, waiting.
Bronte enjoying the suspense.

BRONTE

Louie was real disappointed.
But even on the edge of death
he didn't lose his sense of
humor.

ALICE

What was the curse, exactly?

BRONTE

That the act of love would
henceforth turn them into
beasts. And that they would
kill the object of their
affections, unless that
object was one of their own.

OLIVER

What do you mean one of their
own?

BRONTE

A psychologist might call it
a rationalization neatly de-
signed to explain away certain
socially unacceptable desires -
Incest, in particular.

ALICE

Jesus.

BRONTE

There are lots of rumours about
the Galliers. That's one of
the more prevalent ones.

ALICE

What kind of beast - would
they turn into?

BRONTE

Who knows. A lethal one,
certainly.

ALICE

A leopard?

CONTINUED

179. CONTINUED:

179.

BRONTE

Could be. Or a wolf.
Or a snake. Or a bear.
Voodoo mythology makes
reference to all kinds of
lycanthropic transformations,
usually for purposes of
sex or vengeance. The
Gallier curse is a neat
combination of both.
As I said: Louis never
lost his sense of humor.

OLIVER

Can you prove any of this?

BRONTE

Well - how does one prove
such a thing? I think, how-
ever, that if I could gain
access to certain documents -
which I believe still exist -
I could verify the circumstances
surrounding the legend.
I wouldn't have pursued it as
long as I have if it hadn't
been apparent to me that
the Galliers themselves -
for whatever reason - believe
in the legend ..

OLIVER

How do you know that?

BRONTE

I have access - and have had
access in the past - to some
of their medical records -
and let me tell you - they've -

(CONTINUED)

179. CONTINUED:

179.

BRONTE (cont)
 spent more time in mental
 institutions than Presidents
 spend in Washington.
 (smiling)

Not to invoke comparisons.

180. INT/EXT. ALICE'S CAR. (MOVING) NIGHT.

180.

ALICE
 What do you think?

OLIVER
 About what.

ALICE
 You know what.
 That was a man I saw in your
 basement, Oliver. But it was
 a leopard that attacked you.

OLIVER
 I think your friend Bronte
 is seriously full of shit.

ALICE
 That doesn't change what I
 saw. Or what you saw.

OLIVER
 I didn't see anything.

ALICE
 Jesus. You're trying so hard
 to keep your ego intact. To
 believe that you're at the
 world's center and that the
 world is still the way you
 imagined it to be. But
 it isn't, Oliver.

OLIVER
 I don't believe that people
 turn into leopards. Or anything
 else - except older people.

181. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

181.

The car pulls up in front and stops.
 Oliver and Alice sit silently in the car.

(CONTINUED)

182. EXT. BACKYARD. NIGHT. 182.
 A DOG tied to a post.
 He BARKS and HOWLS.
 Above and around him, clothes FLAP like ghosts on a long stretch of clothesline.
183. INT. HOUSE. NIGHT. 183.
 SOUND of DOG BARKING.
 We are looking at a small TV set through two pairs of feet, a MAN'S and a WOMAN'S.
- WOMAN'S VOICE (o.s.)
 Go see what he's up to -
- His feet move away and we see that they are watching 'The Dating Game.' He sits up on the edge of the bed, rising into FRAME.
- MAN
 Tell me if it's Bachelor Number Three.
- DOG stops barking.
- MAN
 He stopped.
- WOMAN'S VOICE (o.s.)
 Go anyway. Y'never know.
184. EXT. BACKYARD. NIGHT. 184.
 The MAN appears silhouetted in the screen door.
 He turns on the back yard light.
- MAN
 Trader?
- He comes out on the steps.
 Walks into the yard.
 His look first puzzled, then appalled.
 The post to which the dog was tied has been splintered in half. The chain lies curled and broken.
 No dog.
 The Man looks up -
 - at the clothes FLAPPING on the line: They are spattered with blood.
185. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT. 185.
 A rectangle of light outlines the closed bathroom door.
 SOUND of WATER from within.

(CONTINUED)

185. CONTINUED: 185.
- Irena's clothing lies strewn about the floor.
Femolly enters.
Gathers up clothing.
Examines it.
It is covered with blood.
She looks fearfully at the bathroom door.
186. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT. 186.
- Irena in the bathtub, veiled in steam.
Eyes closed, head back, she seems transfixed by some unknown ecstasy.
Her hands moving slowly over her body.
Lifting the water over her breasts; the arc of her neck; letting it drip from her hands into her open mouth.
The bathroom walls, mirror, fixtures, all glisten with drops of steam.
187. EXT. ZOO. LATE DAY. 187.
- Closing time.
188. INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE. LATE DAY. 188.
- Oliver dialling the phone.
He listens.
We HEAR it RINGING on the other end.
Alice pokes her head in the door.
- ALICE
See you tomorrow.
- He nods to her. She watches him for a moment.
- ALICE
Remember your promise -
- OLIVER
Yeah - I will.
- Alice nods; goes. Oliver listens to the phone.
189. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. LATE DAY. 189.
- PHONE RINGING.
TIGHTSHOT: Irena, staring. SOUND OF BIRDS.
She is watching the nesting birds; and the descending sun.
REVEAL that she is nude.
A fur coat dangling from one hand.
- (CONTINUED)

189. CONTINUED: 189.

Very slowly, her eyes still on the sky, she begins putting on the coat.
Snuggling into its fur.
PHONE CONTINUES TO RING.

190. INT. OLIVER'S OFFICE. LATE DAY. 190.

He hangs up angrily.

191. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. LATE DAY. 191.

Irena, in fur coat, seen through the metal grillwork of the descending elevator.

SOUND of ELEVATOR.

Irena's POV: Looking out through the door as the elevator comes to a halt.

Femolly stands there, waiting.

Irena opens the elevator door.

Steps out.

Looks at Femolly.

FEMOLLY

Say with me, child -

Irena pulls away from her and walks towards the front door.

FEMOLLY

(following)

l'espoir existe -

IRENA

(covers her ears)

No -

She opens the front door.

Femolly slams it shut, and bolts it.

FEMOLLY

La bête n'existe pas!

Say with me -

IRENA

(turning away)

No -

She runs. Femolly pursues her.

FEMOLLY

La bête - n'existe pas!

(CONTINUED)

191. CONTINUED:

191.

FEMOLLY
Say with me!!

Irena stands with her back to Femolly.

IRENA
Run, Femolly - please -

FEMOLLY
Irena -

IRENA
Hide!!!

Something in her voice drives Femolly back -

IRENA
Please hide!

- back into the elevator. Quickly she slams the door, locking herself in.

IRENA'S VOICE (o.s.)
(Like a hiss)
Hi-i-i-i-i-ide.....

Femolly. In the elevator. Watching something fearful. She backs away, clutching her heart.

192. EXT. PARK. SUNSET.

192.

Peaceful.
A few JOGGERS out for their evening run.
Red sun, sinking.
The Male Jogger comes running along, red-faced, huffing and puffing.
SLAP of SHOES approaching from behind.
He looks:
Alice coming up fast. She waves.
The Male Jogger speeds up.
Alice - catching up - they're neck-and-neck.
The Male Jogger - straining.
Alice passes him by.

MALE JOGGER
(As she passes him by)
You're getting - rusty!

(CONTINUED)

192. CONTINUED;

192.

Alice jogging.
 She is running on a path that borders a small pond.
 Frogs BELCH and SPLASH in the water.
 A DOG HOWLS piercingly; another joins in.

193. EXT. GALLIER HOUSE. SUNSET.

193.

Bronte pulls up in his car; gets out; goes
 up to the door.
 Knocks.
 Waits for a response.
 Nothing.
 He peers in through the panel of glass.
 HIS POV: No one visible inside.
 Bronte pauses, as if deciding something.
 He goes back down the steps, gets in his car,
 looks at his watch,
 settles back to wait.

194. EXT. PARK. SUNSET.

194.

Alice jogging down a wide path bordered by huge
 trees.
 The branches are filled with the aggravated TWITTERING
 of nesting birds.
 Alice looks up at the branches as she runs.
 HER POV (MOVING): The black knotty limbs extend from
 either side to form an archway over the path. They
 look like fancy grillwork pressed against the red
 sky.
 SOUND OF BIRDS LOUD.
 SUDDEN SILENCE.
 EXPLOSION OF SOUND as birds fly en masse out of trees
 in a rush.
 Alice completely baffled. She runs on.
 Looking at the dark trees from HER POV: They look
 starkly ominous.
 LOUD CREAKING SOUND overhead.
 One of the lower branches moves.
 Another CREAK.
 Alice's POV: (MOVING) The branch coming closer.
 Alice slows, then suddenly veers to the left, cutting
 between two trees, and continues jogging on the grass
 outside of the path.
 She looks back at the receding line of trees: There
 is a flurry of movement in the branches, as if something
 were leaping from tree to tree.

194. CONTINUED:

194.

Alice glances at her watch.
The sun has almost set.

Ahead, a main thoroughfare intersects with a wall of tangled vegetation on her right.

Alice heads for the thoroughfare.

Then, in the vegetation to her right, there is a rapid movement, as if something were running parallel to her, easily keeping pace -

She watches the movement in the bushes; slows - stops -
The movement in the bushes also stops.

She continues jogging toward the thoroughfare.
The movement in the bushes begins again; speeds up, moving ahead rapidly; stops, as if waiting for her to catch up.

Alice stops.
Turns the other way.
Goes back across the park.

195. EXT. CHILD'S PLAYGROUND AREA. DUSK.

195.

Alice cuts across the playground area - running around swings, past a jungle gym - and exits the other side.

She looks back - No one is following.

She looks forward - Across the park, dimly perceived, is the figure of a WOMAN, holding a dark fur coat closed about her neck.

The Woman raises her arm in a very slight gesture of recognition and as she does we see that it is Irena.

Alice stops. She is standing more or less in the middle of an open area.

Irena lowers her arm, very slowly, and as she does so, sidesteps behind a bush, into a pocket of shadow.

ALICE
Irena!

She starts forward; then hesitates -
Her cry ECHDES across the park: 'Irena, Irena, Irena - '

Then, beginning softly and growing LOUDER comes the distinctive SOUND of the LEOPARDS ROAR, filling the park with its ECHOED HOWL.

(CONTINUED)

195. CONTINUED;

195.

It comes from where Irena was standing.
 Alice; Petrified. She runs back in the direction
 from which she came.
 And now we HEAR a steady, soft, CLOPPING SOUND, as
 if something were approaching on the run.
 Alice turns, panicked; And sees TWO MALE JOGGERS.

ALICE

Hey!

She joins them, hurriedly.

ALICE

Hey - do you guys mind if
 I run with you until we
 get to St. Charles?

1st JOGGER

Please do -

ALICE

Thanks -

2nd JOGGER

I'm Father Harn -

1st JOGGER

I'm Father Jessup - what's
 your name?

ALICE

F- Father?

She starts to laugh; continues laughing as they run.

196. EXT. ST. CHARLES AVE. NIGHT.

196.

Alice and the TWO FATHERS approach the Avenue and
 run alongside the streetcar tracks.

FATHER HARN

Here's where we get off -

FATHER JESSUP

Goodnight, Alice -

ALICE

Goodnight - and thanks -

They run on.

(CONTINUED)

196. CONTINUED:

196.

Panting, Alice goes over to the streetcar stop.
She looks anxiously up and down the tracks.
No streetcar. SOUND of CRICKETS.

Alice looks across the street:

On the sidewalk, under the streetlamp, stands Irena,
watching her.

She starts walking down the sidewalk, moving in
Alice's direction, disappearing and reappearing behind
the parked cars.

Alice, watching nervously for the streetcar, begins
moving too, keeping her eye on Irena.

Irena intensifies her pace.

So does Alice.

Irena vanishes behind a van.

Alice waits for her to reappear on the other side.

She doesn't.

Alice looks down the track: The streetcar distantly
approaches.

Alice looks back and forth from the approaching
streetcar to the parked van.

Something is moving under the van - crawling slowly
out from under it.

Alice no longer has time to wait for the streetcar.

She starts to run -

Back toward the park -

She rounds a corner -

Runs alongside an iron fence surrounding one of the
old homes that line St. Charles.

As she runs past the fence, which moves by in a blur,
we see a BLACK FORM loping along on the other side
of the bars.

There is a SLASHING NOISE - Alice screams - something
yanks at her clothes - Only branches - She pulls
them away from her shirt sleeve - the shoulder is
torn - her upper arm is bleeding -

She pauses for a moment, trying to get a grip on
herself, wondering where the leopard is -

She turns towards the fence, and -

WHAM! The Leopard lunges at her, slashing out through
the bars.

Alice screams, runs, - her arm covered with blood -

She looks back: The leopard is scrambling up a tree
on the other side of the fence, as if preparing to
leap down on the other side, behind Alice.

(CONTINUED:)

197. EXT. PARK. POOL. NIGHT.

197.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT: Shows the park's public pool, surrounded by a high, chain-link fence.

CUT TO:

Alice, running; every ounce of strength aimed at getting to the pool -

HER POV: The pool, coming closer -

SOUND of LEOPARD approaching from behind.

ALICE

Oh, God, no - no -

Alice's feet - pounding over the grass.
A black paw lashes out at her ankles, raking them.

ALICE

Noooooo!!!!!!

And suddenly her hand is on the chain link fence - it makes a CHING! sound as she hurriedly begins pulling herself up.

Something tugs her down - She kicks frantically, freeing herself, pulling up - up -

ALICE

Irena!

Alice, pulling herself up the fence, towards the top.
SOUND of LEOPARD CLIMBING after her.

Alice - at the top - swings over the top - hangs there for a moment - drops -

Alice falling through space - landing with a THUD on the grass - groping her way towards the pool -

SOUND of LEOPARD coming over the fence after her.

Alice struggling to get to the pool.

SOUND of LEOPARD jumping from the fence to the ground.

Alice almost to the pool.

LEOPARD ROARING - ready to pounce -

Alice, diving into the pool -

UNDERWATER: Alice, trailing streamers of bubbles, diving a low, deep arc and then re-surfacing -

Alice, popping up in the center of the pool; her head pale in the glistening black water -

(CONTINUED)

197. CONTINUED:

197.

SILENCE.

LAP of water.

Alice dog paddling, pool-center.

HER POV: Scanning the edge of the pool. It's really too dark to see anything.

Alice turns a slow circle, slowly paddling with her arms, looking -

HER POV: (Three quick shots)

The diving board; dim in the moonlight.

The shallow end of the pool; rippling gently.

The fence; towering and black; surrounding the pool.

And then -

SPLASH! A BLACK FACE, grinning, pops up next to

Alice -

And she screams - screams, backing frantically away, her arms churning against the water -

And as she struggles to get away, we MOVE IN on the face and see that it is the face of a YOUNG BLACK BOY, about twelve. He looks very puzzled.

Alice continues to scream.

198. EXT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

198.

Bronte in his car, waiting.

He looks again at his watch.

Then something catches his attention: Through the windshield, he sees Oliver pulling up to the Gallier house and going up to the door.

Oliver knocks repeatedly. Rings the bell. Waits.

Looks around impatiently.

Bronte slides down in his seat, hiding from Oliver's view.

Oliver goes angrily down the steps, gets in his car, drives away.

After a beat, Bronte gets out of his car and goes up to the door of the Gallier house.

Using a credit card, he opens the lock.

And goes in.

199. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

199.

Bronte moving through the house.

Looking at the pictures on the walls.

Smiling at his discovery.

He takes a small camera from his pocket and attaches an electronic flash. He begins taking pictures of the portraits on the walls.

We HEAR a GROAN.

Bronte stops; listens - the sound comes from the elevator. He goes over to it.

(CONTINUED)

199. CONTINUED;

199.

Femolly lies slumped at the bottom of the elevator.
She looks up at Bronte.

FEMOLLY

Heart - need - doctor -
please -

BRONTE

Sure. I'll be right back.

He goes back to the hallway, continues snapping
pictures of the portraits on the walls.
He starts up the stairs.
In the elevator, Femolly struggles to get the door
open.

FEMOLLY

Please - help - me -

She manages to slide it halfway open before
she collapses again.

200. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

200.

Oliver pulls into the driveway, gets out of the car
and goes up to the door. He unlocks it, and goes in.

201. EXT. POOL IN PARK. NIGHT.

201.

Alice, hysterical, huddles on the side of the pool.
The Black boy, ERIC, is trying to comfort her.

ERIC

I'm sorry, lady, I thought
you snuck in like we done -
You OK?

ALICE

Oliver - Christ -

She gets to her feet.

202. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

202.

Oliver downstairs, looking through his mail.
Nothing. He tosses it onto a table and goes into
the living room.
He clucks his tongue at the Monkey and goes on up
the stairs.

203. INT. UPSTAIRS, OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

203.

Oliver walks down the hallway and enters his bed-
room.

204. INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

204.

He turns on the light. He looks up, puzzled. The window is open. He goes to close it.

He looks out: Across from the window is a large tree.

He closes the window.

As he does, we see Irena's reflection in the glass. She moves quickly out of sight. Oliver hasn't seen her.

He goes to the bed; sits; starts to take off his shirt.

Two hands come around from behind him and cover his eyes.

He jumps away, startled.

Irena sits on the bed behind him. She is naked.

OLIVER

Jesus! What the hell are you doing here?

IRENA

I'm sorry -

She lies back against the pillow, holding the sheet over her breasts. She smiles at him. Her hair is tangled, her eyes wild -

He stares at her.

OLIVER

What are you doing?

IRENA

(She laughs)

Come here.

Beside me.

He holds back.

IRENA

Right here.

He sits down on the bed again, staring at her.

IRENA

I want to be like other women. Like Alice.

I want to touch you.

She moves her fingers up and down his arm.

IRENA

I'm not afraid any more -

(CONTINUED)

204. CONTINUED;

204.

OLIVER
 (Lying down next to
 her)
 I've been calling you
 for two days. Where were
 you - ?

She puts her hand on his face, strokes him lightly.

IRENA
 I had to come to a decision.
 That's all.

She reaches up and kisses him, very lightly; quickly -
 She pulls back again.

IRENA
 Take those off -

She is indicating his pants. He continues to stare at
 her, not understanding her at all.
 Her hand falters momentarily, then she reaches down
 and unbuckles his belt.
 SOUND of BELT BUCKLE.

IRENA
 Please, Oliver -

HIS POV: Her mouth -
 Her eyes -

As if hypnotized, he leans slowly forward and kisses
 her. She wraps her arms around him, pulling him
 tightly against her.

Her hand: Fingers spread tautly against his bare back.

Their faces: She pulls back from the kiss; her eyes
 heavy-lidded; lips parted -

IRENA
 Be gentle...

205. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. UPSTAIRS. NIGHT.

205.

Bronte goes into Irena's study.
 He looks at the paintings stacked against the wall.
 Flips them over, one by one, studying them.
 The panthers.
 The plantation scenes.
 He begins taking pictures.
 FLASH!
 CUT TO:

206. INT. ZOO ADMINISTRATION BLDG. NIGHT. 206.
 Alice at phone. Dialling hurriedly.
 Listening.
207. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 207.
 The phone, RINGING.
208. INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 208.
 Oliver and Irena making love.
 Their bodies just visible in the dim light.
 Irena's breathing has taken on the throaty quality
 of a PURR.
 PHONE can be heard RINGING downstairs.
 We glimpse Irena's eyes, glistening in the dark.
- OLIVER
 I love you -
- His hand - moving over her breast.
 Her fingers - digging into his back - drawing blood.
 Oliver winces - sits up in surprise -
 She pulls up towards him -
 Her face - dark; demonic; eyes shining -
 Oliver - pulling away; staring at her -
- IRENA
 Oliver -
- Her hands - on his back - they look like claws -
 She reaches up as if to kiss him, and pushes him
 violently so that he rolls over on his back, with
 her on top, only it's not her anymore, it's
 the BLACK LEOPARD -
 ROARING and SNARLING -
 crouched on his chest -
- OLIVER
 Oh, Gaaaaaa -
- He reaches back, flings the pillow at it - it lashes
 out with its claws -
 - an explosion of white feathers in the darkness -
- Oliver turns to his right -
 The leopard slams its paw down on the right side -
 Oliver turns to his left -
 The other paw comes down, hemming him in-
- Oliver can't move. He stares at the luminous heavy lidded
 eyes in frozen panic -

(CONTINUED)

209. INT. ADM. BLDG. ZOO. NIGHT.

209.

Alice hangs up. Frantically dials another number.

210. INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

210.

Oliver and the leopard.

It brings one enormous paw down on his chest.
The claws unsheath, snapping out like little
switchblades.

Slowly the leopard rakes its claws across Oliver's
chest, leaving a row of bloody scratches.

OLIVER

Irena -

The Leopard SNARLS.

Then begins licking the blood from Oliver's chest.
SOUND of the RASPY TONGUE of the leopard.

Oliver writhes under the leopard's touch as if he
were being fatally tickled.

The leopard's head moves in slow lazy circles as it
licks away the blood.

It looks into his eyes with an almost casual curiosity,
turning its face from side to side as if imitating
Oliver's expression or the angle of his head.

HIS POV: The leopard's eyes are human eyes.

OLIVER

Please -

The leopard butts his chin with its forehead, knocking
his head back with a THUD.

It yawns. Slaps its tail back and forth as if growing
bored.

It lowers its head and rubs the bottom of its chin
against Oliver's chest.

He reaches out his hand to touch it -

- and it clamps its jaws shut on his wrist.

It shakes his arm back and forth, then lets it go.
Oliver's wrist is dotted with puncture marks.

It moves up to his face, opening its jaws and closing
them tenderly on his neck.

It moves its head from side to side, wobbling Oliver's
head against the pillow.

It licks his face - his lips - his nose -

Then slowly pulls back, considering something -

It raises its paw like a weapon, claws unsheathed -

OLIVER

No!

(CONTINUED)

210. CONTINUED:

210.

The leopard pauses, claw upraised -

OLIVER

No -

Then suddenly it lashes out, again, again, quickly, three or four times -

- shredding the pillow, the sheet, scarring the headboard, slashing around Oliver's head but never actually touching him -

- and then it retreats, GROWLING, backing slowly off the bed and slinking away into the shadows of the room -

SOUND OF GLASS BREAKING -

Oliver sits up in time to see the leopard bounding out the window and away across the lawn -

211. INT. ZOO ADMINISTRATION BLDG. NIGHT.

211.

Alice on phone. A rifle is stretched across her lap.

ALICE

Bill - it's Alice - listen,
we have another leopard loose -
yeah - much more dangerous
than the first -

212. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT.

212.

Bronte at desk, going through various aged documents. He puts them aside, moves on to a filing cabinet. It's locked. He tugs at the drawers.

BRONTE

Shit -

213. INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT.

213.

Femolly, barely breathing, on the floor of the elevator.

She looks up to see Bronte, smiling, bending down as if to help her.

FEMOLLY

Help me - up -

BRONIE

I will, I will - as soon
as you tell me where the
key is to the filing cabinet -

(CONTINUED)

213. CONTINUED:

213.

FEMOLLY
 (clutching his arm)
 She - comin' - back -

BRONTE
 It's all right. I'll get
 you to a doctor, okay?
 But first I need to have
 the key to the filing
 cabinet. You understand?
 The filing cabinet in
 the study. You know the
 one I mean? Pay attention,
 it's very important -

FEMOLLY
 You don't - underst -

BRONTE
 Sure I do. Sure I do. I
 understand. But this is for
 my work. This is even more
 important. Now, if you'll
 help me, I'll help you -
 Isn't that fair? So just
 tell me -

FEMOLLY
 We got to - get out - we
 got to -

BRONTE
 Yes. We will. But I'm
 looking for documents
 - any documents that
 could verify the meeting
 between Isabel Gallier and
 Louis Glapion - letters,
 any kind of documentation -
 Now listen - hey -
 Hey.

She has collapsed face-forward into his arms.
 He turns her over. She is dead. He sets her body
 down on the floor.

BRONTE
 Great.

He gets up.
 Starts back toward the upstairs room.
 Stops. Someone is at the front door.

(CONTINUED)

213. CONTINUED:

213.

SOUND OF DOOR OPENING.

Bronte pulls back into the shadows.

As Irena enters the house.

She is wearing the fur coat.

She leans against the door.

From his hiding place Bronte looks around, wondering what would be his best escape route.

Irena turns away from the door and advances slowly into the room.

Bronte - pulling back into the shadows.

Irena - walking slowly into the house - nearer and nearer to the elevator.

She sees Femolly.

With a cry she kneels and embraces the body, rocking it in her arms.

Bronte shifts his position slightly.

Irena lifts her head - stares into the darkness, in Bronte's direction.

HER POV: The tip of Bronte's shoe juts out into the light.

Irena's eyes - slowly turning upwards - her head stationary - as if she did not want Bronte to know that she had become aware of his location.

She stands up - silhouetted in the vague, incoming light - and walks into the elevator.

SOUND of ELEVATOR RISING.

Bronte - in the dark - watches as the elevator rises to the second floor.

He looks at the front door - only ten or fifteen feet.

Very quickly, he walks towards the front door.

HIS POV: The front door coming closer and closer.

His hand - reaching for the doorknob.

SOUND OF LEOPARD, from above.

Startled, Bronte looks up-

- to see the leopard leaping out of the elevator, down towards him -

- He screams -

- as it drags him to the floor -

His face - screaming -

- as the front of his throat is torn away -

Blood spurting geyser-like into the air -

His outstretched hand -

vibrating with the spasms of death -

214. EXT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

214.

Alice hurries into the house.

(CONTINUED)

215. INT. OLIVER'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 215.
We FOLLOW Alice as she hurries through the living room and up the stairs -
216. INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 216.
- and into Oliver's room.
He is standing at the window, staring out at the night.
He looks at her.
217. EXT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT. 217.
Oliver and Alice pull up in front. They get out of the car and go into the house.
218. INT. GALLIER HOUSE. NIGHT. 218.
Bronte's hand - in a pool of blood.
Alice and Oliver - Their faces, staring at his body.
219. INT/EXT. NEW ORLEANS. NIGHT. 219.
Alice, Oliver, Bill Searle.
AERIAL VIEWS: New Orleans - a searchlight sweeping the terrain below.
220. EXT. FRENCH QUARTER. NIGHT. 220.
As the leopard leaps from the roof of one building to the roof of the next.
A POLICEMAN, below, spots her and speaks into his walkie-talkie.
221. INT/EXT. HELICOPTER. NIGHT. 221.
From the helicopter we pick out the leopard, racing through the streets - We follow it, tracking it AERIALLY -
222. EXT. NEW ORLEANS. NIGHT. 222.
As before; POLICE; DOGS, etc., tracking the leopard.
223. EXT/INT HELICOPTER. NIGHT. 223.
AERIAL VIEW: As the leopard starts to cross the Seven-Mile Bridge.
We see that the bridge is being closed off at either end by POLICE.

(CONTINUED)

223. CONTINUED:

223.

Oliver's face - in the helicopter - watching -
 HIS POV: The leopard races across the bridge -
 but stops, seeing the approach of more POLICE.
 It starts to turn back - but now realizes that
 it is hemmed in from both sides.

Oliver - watching -

Suddenly the leopard leaps up on the railing of
 the bridge - for a moment it hovers; then -
 - it dives -
 into the water -

Oliver's face - stunned. Unable to comprehend
 what is happening.

HIS POV: (ZOOM from helicopter) Closer and closer
 to the dark water -
 We see the struggling form of the black leopard -
 bullets pocking the water -
 It submerges -
 and as it does, the black form, as if shedding a
 skin, turns white - and we see the white form
 swimming away under the surface of the Lake -

224. EXT. BRIDGE. NIGHT.

224.

The helicopter on the ground. Bill, in b.g., talking
 to his MEN.
 Oliver walking away in foreground, gazing out at
 the water.
 Alice comes up behind him.
 They walk along together.

ALICE

She couldn't have survived
 it, Oliver - It's better
 anyway -

(He looks at her)

It is, Oliver - It is.

He turns away.

OLIVER

Yeah.

He walks away, leaving her alone on the bridge.

225. INT/EXT MOVING CAR. NIGHT.

225.

Oliver driving. He stares forward purposefully.

226. EXT. HOUSE ON JETTY. NIGHT.

226.

Oliver parks the car, gets out,
and walks slowly across the jetty to the house.
He pauses at the door, and then goes in.

227. INT. HOUSE ON JETTY. NIGHT.

227.

Dark. Oliver turns on a lamp.
He looks around:
Irena lies shivering on the bed, covered by a
blanket.
She turns to him.
Her face is covered with cuts. So are her arms.
Her nails are now long and tusk-like.
She looks at Oliver with a hopeless smile.
He sits across from her.

IRENA
(Very weak)
I love you, Oliver -

OLIVER
I love you, Irena.

IRENA
I can't - control what
happens to me - anymore -

OLIVER
I know.

IRENA
There's - nothing - I
can do -
Nowhere I - can go -

OLIVER
One place -

She looks at him.
SLOW FADE TO BLACK.

- . BLACK SCREEN.
- . ANIMAL SOUNDS fade-up.
- FADE-UP:

228. EXT. NEW ORLEANS ZOO. DAY.

228.

- On the FACES of a CROWD OF SPECTATORS. We see
them through the bars of a cage.

(CONTINUED)

228. CONTINUED:

228.

Watching from the rear of the crowd are Oliver and Alice.

We see them intermittently at first, as spectators PASS back and forth across FRAME.

FADE UP TITLE: 'December' FADE-OUT TITLE.

And now we see -

THEIR POV: Looking past the crowd at a BLACK LEOPARD in the cage.

Alice says something to Oliver. He doesn't answer. She turns and walks away, glancing back once before exiting FRAME.

ON: The Black Leopard - staring at Oliver.

LEOPARD'S POV: MOVING toward Oliver - through the bars - past the faces of the Spectators, until Oliver's FACE and then his EYE and then the PUPIL of his EYE
FILLS THE SCREEN -

- and in the onyxblack liquid of its center we SEE the image of Irena and a CHILD -

They walk towards us, expressionlessly, as if floating, their hair lifted gently by the wind -

BLACK SCREEN.

END.