

Fat Chicks

by

Gustavo Ott

Translation: Heather L. McKay

GUSTAVO OTT

5093 WHITE PINE CIR NE

Saint Petersburg, FL 33703, USA

gustavott@yahoo.com

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Cast

ANGELA

MARTINA

VALERIE

Also plays Amelia/God

ELLEN

PART ONE

Images of Amelia Earhart, first
woman to fly across the Atlantic.
Sounds of airplanes taking off.

(AMIDST THE SMOKE AND
SHADOW, ANGELA APPEARS)

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE)

There's a commercial airing now on television -- it won all the Clios for
advertising two years ago.

It was produced by a very talented...a creative genius named Angela
Clayton.

(PLAYFUL)

That is to say, by me.

(PROFESSIONAL)

The commercial is for a weight bench, it burns off fat and tones the body.
It's done in two simple takes. The machine and, by its side, a lovely toad.
But the real secret to it all is the ingenious little hook that just came to me

(SPITEFULLY)

"How far we go in life depends upon the distance of our eyes from the
ground."

(SHORT PAUSE)

I really am amazing, aren't I?

Well, actually, the idea wasn't mine, it was Martina's, a friend.

But it's just I'm an Aries and we Aries, we're like shepherds...

We give our lives for our sheep.

Baaaaaaaaa!

GYMNASIUM
MARTINA ON EXERCISE BIKE.
VALERIE EATING
CHOCOLATES.

VALERIE:
Before we get into all this, I just want to tell you two things.

MARTINA:
(PEDDLING) Huf...Huf...Huf...

VALERIE:
Do you want me tell you what the boss has to say first or do you want to hear the opinion of a true friend? What's more important?

MARTINA:
huf...huf...huf...

VALERIE:
Fine. The boss first.

MARTINA:
huf...huf...huf...

VALERIE:
The boss thinks that your problem this morning is just a temporary nervous breakdown. You're worn out from working on the Multiform Diet campaign. I think he's right on that one.

MARTINA:
...huf...huf...huf...

VALERIE:
You want to hear what I think now?

MARTINA:
No.

VALERIE:
Fine. You can't quit advertising and become an astronaut.

MARTINA:
(HANDS HER A PIECE OF
PAPER. GETS UP AND WALKS
TOWARD ANOTHER MACHINE)
It says so here.

VALERIE:

MARTINA, this is an ad!
Who...where did you get this nonsense?

MARTINA:

Read the ad.

VALERIE:

This is for morons. We've written ads like this, we churn them out like an assembly line. You know what kind of crap they are, they're pure crap.

MARTINA:

Maritza Kominsky, mother of three. She was forty already and she made it through all the tests and in fourteen months she was the first woman in space to light a candle and sing Happy Birthday to a monkey named Titî from Tanzania
Today she and the monkey are listed in the Guinness Book of World Records and her home town...they put up her statue in the town square, with her name and everything...

VALERIE:

We make that crap up to sell a load of garbage to a bunch of idiots. But we don't believe in any of it.

MARTINA:

In Tanzania there're two streets and a town named after the monkey.

VALERIE:

I have never ever bought a single product that you have advertised, Martina. I don't even buy the ones that I advertise. Fuck, I don't even know what the products I advertise are.

MARTINA:

Ernestina Weimar, housewife, married, divorced, remarried, redivorced and remarried again. Three kids, one for each turnover. Two suicide attempts. A cat. A dog. And debt. Do you know who she is today?

VALERIE:

The stuff I advertise, I throw it in the trash. Hungry dogs spit it out at the garbage dump and the vultures that smell it there, they die from the carrion we sell. It's that bad.

MARTINA:

World record for orbiting the moon and watching television at the same time. Orbiting the moon and watching channel 2!

VALERIE:

None of them exist, Martina. It's not real. It's advertising. Remember. Advertising. It's not true.

MARTINA:

And Amelia Earhart? The first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. She tried to make it to eternity and she flew thirty thousand miles, nineteen countries, five continents and three times across the equator without a parachute or radio. Two movies and five songs are dedicated to her life. Are you going to tell me she didn't exist either?

VALERIE:

(LOOKS AT THE NEWSPAPER
CLIPPING)

Well, if there's a movie about her, then it's true.

MARTINA:

She was lost in the Pacific Ocean and her disappearance has inspired twelve books and a comic strip.

(SHE STOPS PEDDLING.
FACING VALERIE)

Last night, before I went to bed, before I tuned in to 91.5 FM Top 100 Hits, before I fell asleep thinking about all 250 pounds of me and before I said the rosary dedicated to the miracle of weight loss, going to the gym and eating less, I looked out the window.

VALERIE:

Look who's responsible for this ad! Angela Clayton.

MARTINA:

And I saw the moon, Valerie. I saw the moon. A quarter moon, waning. And suddenly...

VALERIE:

...There's no way I would work in that fucking place, in Angela's agency?...Not even for three times what I make now!

MARTINA:

...Amelia Earhart's plane flew by and it said: "what about you, why not?" To me.

VALERIE:

"Why not?". O.K., I could give you three hundred and forty seven different reasons, but I'll stick to just two
One: You are OVER WEIGHT.

MARTINA:

And two?

VALERIE:

You're overweight.

MARTINA:

That's the same reason.

VALERIE:

Baby, you're so fat you take up two reasons.

MARTINA:

Valerie, I want you to know something that I've never told anyone.

VALERIE:

Martina: I know everything about you. You don't have any secrets from me. Remember I've known you for five... no...eight days already.

MARTINA:

In eight days we've barely seen each other even three times. And I've only told you two or three things about me, that's it.

VALERIE:

You see? You don't have any secrets from me anymore. What more could have happened to a woman like you?

MARTINA:

A lot. Lots of things. Incredible things can happen in under three seconds so of course a lot more happens to you in a lifetime of twenty four years, two husbands and 250 pounds.

VALERIE:

O.K., O.K., O.K.
What's your secret?

MARTINA:

Do you promise not to tell anyone?

(AT THIS MOMENT THE NOISE
OF PEOPLE IN THE GYM STOPS
AND ALL TURN TO LOOK AT
HER)

MARTINA:

I wasn't always fat.

(REGULAR NOISES RESUME AS
THROUGHOUT THE SCENE)

VALERIE:

It came to you as a calling.

MARTINA:

I was studying ballet and I started gaining weight. I couldn't go on with it. All that money down the tubes and my mother got so upset she cried...Not because of me, because of all the money she lost.

VALERIE:

So where would you like the tear? Down this side or do you like this one better?

MARTINA:

Don't laugh.

VALERIE:

I'm not laughing. I'm cracking up.

So you were in ballerina school, you got fat, your mother got divorced, the money...

That's all shit.

First, when one enters into this kind of discussion one must meditate...I mean transcendently and ask oneself

What the fuck am I talking about?

WHAT IS MY PROBLEM?

What does all this shit have to do with right now? Now you are you, you, you, you, you, you.

You're in advertising. You sell things.

Three times you've almost won the Clio Award. They're talking about you.

MARTINA:

They want to screw me over.

VALERIE:

They talk. You have excellent recommendations. A doctorate from the Ivy League. You speak five languages.

MARTINA:

All dead.

VALERIE:

What do you mean?

MARTINA:

Latin, Ancient Greek, Esperanto and Aramaic.

VALERIE:

Four. And the other one? French?

MARTINA:

Braille. For the blind.

VALERIE:

You know your problem? Your problem is you watch too much television and your heart goes right on wanting to be a good girl.

MARTINA:

My heart's a fucking mess, Val. Don't bring my heart into it. I don't even talk about it. It's out of order for life. My heart shouldn't come up in conversation. It doesn't want to have anything to do with this world. It's shut up in its room, with the door locked and the music on as high as it goes.

To my heart this world's a dump.

VALERIE:

But why give up your career and dedicate yourself to astronomy?

MARTINA:

To being an astronaut.

VALERIE:

Fine, whatever it is.

MARTINA:

I want to be like Amelia Earhart, disappear, become a legend.

VALERIE:

Come on!

MARTINA:

And find eternity.

VALERIE:

I do not fucking believe you! You cannot be serious!

MARTINA:

What's it to you?

VALERIE:

All this about the astronauts, it's an excuse.

MARTINA:

Well, you won't think so when I'm setting foot on Mars and planting the flag.

VALERIE:

People don't leave what you've got to run off and play Mrs. Spock in Voyage to the Stars. How much can you make doing this argonaut thing?

MARTINA:

Astronaut. And money isn't everything, Valerie.

VALERIE:

"Or prestige, or success, or admiration, or benefits. Oh no, none of that. That's not important."

O.K., I get it.

You're trying to pretend that you've got a soul, right?

Fine.

Go ahead. Pretend.

But don't come to me with that story about some street with your name on it, the moon, and wanting to float around in space like some kind of pure white Nova.

In your case it would have to be a supernova.

MARTINA:

You can't understand me.

VALERIE:

You saw some ad for women with nothing better to do, who want to pay twenty thousand dollars to become agropauts.

MARTINA:

Astronauts!!

VALERIE:

It doesn't make sense, Martina. It just doesn't. Things like this just don't happen.

MARTINA:

How long has it been since the last time you watched T.V.?

VALERIE:

Since I started in advertising I've been dating two guys at the same time and I never say no.

MARTINA:

Nothing means anything anymore now -- the day isn't made up of hours, it's meals. Or shows. Channels.

VALERIE:

Come back to the agency. I'm asking you myself.

MARTINA:

Why?

VALERIE:

Because the boss says you're a genius. And without you, the war with Angela Clayton is as good as lost. Besides, you could win the Clio this year and an Olympic medal.

MARTINA:

And you?

VALERIE:

Me what?

MARTINA:

What's in it for you?

VALERIE:

O.K. If I convince you to come back, the director's going to give me a bonus.

MARTINA:

And what about outer space?

VALERIE:

Let it wait, Martina

After all, the universe has been here for practically forever and it's not gonna float away just because you don't visit this year. Besides, if you come back to the agency, me, myself, I will sign up for the War of the Worlds Number IV and go with you to Jupiter, O.K.? If you listen to Ellen it's my planet in the Zodiac anyway, so I should have some relatives there. Come back to the agency. Even if it's just for me. Think about my children.

MARTINA:

You don't have children.

VALERIE:

I'll adopt some if I have to.

(VALERIE'S CELLULAR PHONE RINGS)

VALERIE:

It's the boss.....(TO TELEPHONE) Yes...she's right here... No, no she hasn't blasted off yet...

(TO MARTINA) He says if you want to take the day off, there's no

problem. Take two days. He can talk a week. But if this is serious, if you're set on going, if what you really want is to break everything off and start a new life for yourself, then he can go to, say, fifteen days of paid vacation. But that's it.

MARTINA:

I'm sorry...I can't.

(EXERCISES)

VALERIE:

(TO TELEPHONE) She says yes, she'll take the fifteen days and you don't even have to pay her for them... (PAUSE) She'll come back in two weeks like new.

MARTINA:

huf... huf... huf..

VALERIE:

O.K. (CLOSES CELLULAR PHONE) Come on.

MARTINA:

huf... huf... huf...

VALERIE:

I'll treat you to an ice cream.

MARTINA:

(MARTINA STOPS PEDDLING) My last...before going to the moon.
(THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER) In five minutes I've lost four pounds.

VALERIE:

Martina?

MARTINA:

Yeah?

VALERIE:

Tell me a lie.

MARTINA:

A lie?

VALERIE:

The biggest one you can think of.

MARTINA:

O.K.: I'm not leaving the agency for the astronauts.
(PAUSE)

I'm leaving because Angela Clayton offered me the same contract plus 150 thousand for my campaign.

That is...

If you really are my friend, you'll come with me to Angela.

For double what you're making at that dump.

VALERIE

(TERRIFIED)

What about the monkey from Tanzania?

MARTINA:

Shit on him.

VALERIE:

My God. Such language!

2

ANGELA, WITH WHITE BOARD,
MARKERS AND GRAPHS.

ANGELA:

The diet industry spends more than 33 million dollars annually on publicity.

75 percent of the population between the ages of 26 and 45 think about one single thing: That they are fat.

Right down to the skinniest of them all they think they are gaining weight and that they're on the verge of losing their figure for good.

(LIGHTS. ANGELA'S OFFICE. BY
HER SIDE, MARTINA AND
VALERIE)

The campaign is based on a series of interviews with real people. Hidden camera, taped confessions. People -- miserable and destroyed -- who'd give anything to have a different body. Gigantic balls of fat and cellulitis floating around in heart wrenching images, like war photos, to wring a few tears out of the middle class.

Poverty is Fat. Wealth is lean.

People with tears in their eyes, looking at photos of not so long ago, of how unhappy they were before they found our miraculous diet or our fantastic exercise program.

Yesterday -- pitiful specimens, today -- models for Vogue.

To begin with, I think the entire campaign should have a common logo, a type of mascot.

And this mascot, gentlemen, is a Toad.

A toad.

Our product and, by its side, a toad.

You, Mr. Consumer, look like a toad. That's right. If you don't go to the gym and eat fat free, you are no more than a toad. An ugly toad -- green and, yes, slimy."

Any questions?

(ANGELA TURNS AND EXITS)

(GYM. ELLEN EXERCISING.
BESIDE HER, MARTINA)

MARTINA:

So, who are you seeing now?

ELLEN:

My ex.

MARTINA:

Again?

ELLEN:

Not the same ex.

MARTINA:

Another one? What's he do?

ELLEN:

He's a Taurus.

MARTINA:

Right, but what's he do?.

ELLEN:

He has Venus working for him. He doesn't need to do anything.
Everything comes to him.

MARTINA:

But, what's his profession?

ELLEN:

He doesn't have one.

MARTINA:

He must do something.

ELLEN:

He makes money. I don't know how. He makes me laugh. He's a Taurus,
Pisces ascending. They're witty. Fickle. Strange.

MARTINA:

Could you please stop moving and talk like a normal person for just a
second?

ELLEN:

A second? Are you nuts? A second turns into something like five minutes and five minutes means (SHE ADDS ON THE CALCULATOR BUILT INTO THE MACHINE) 2.37 grams.

MARTINA:

You're not going to gain five pounds in a couple of minutes.

ELLEN:

You never know, Martina, you never know. You can be thinking, or watching T.V., or talking to your best friend and all of a sudden boom!!! You're a fat chick on the street. Laugh all you want, but in what I do, five pounds is death.

MARTINA:

Ellen: you're a lawyer. You don't do anything.

ELLEN:

I could be in advertising. I have great ideas.

MARTINA:

Having ideas isn't the same thing as selling a product.

ELLEN:

You always use the stuff I tell you.

MARTINA:

I shape it.

ELLEN:

You copied the one about the toad word for word.

MARTINA:

Well, now it's Angela's.

ELLEN:

She should be thrown in jail for plagiarism.

MARTINA:

In our business the boss has all the ideas.

ELLEN:

Well, of course, with that gut you parade around like some door to door salesman hawking pork rinds, who would think you were capable of coming up with anything?

MARTINA:

Don't be cruel, you know I do what I can.

ELLEN:

Maybe you've got a disease, some kind of mental block.

MARTINA:

My psychologist says that it's something to do with suffering. I don't suffer enough. People who suffer lose weight.

ELLEN:

It's obvious your psychologist isn't a woman!

MARTINA:

That has nothing to do with it.

ELLEN:

How long has it been since he fell in love?

MARTINA:

He's sixty five years old and married.

ELLEN:

Now I get it. The poor guy's dying to do it with a fat chick.

MARTINA:

He's a very serious man.

ELLEN:

But his subconscious stinks. What's his sign?

MARTINA:

Capricorn.

ELLEN:

Beasts. The only thing they do is ruin everyone around them with their good advice.

MARTINA:

Christ was a Capricorn.

ELLEN:

So you see. They crucified him he talked so much.

MARTINA:

What am I supposed to do?

ELLEN:

Change your psychologist.

MARTINA:

You can't just do that.

ELLEN:

Why not? I change'em like T.V. stations.

MARTINA:

This could be taken as a sign of immaturity.

ELLEN:

Immature but happy.

MARTINA:

And crazy.

ELLEN:

And fat.

MARTINA:

I've spent eight years trying to lose weight. I've subjected myself to thirty five different diets. Trips to the gym, sit ups, liposuction, underwater aerobics, girdles, algae lotions, astral meditation, oatmeal, dual personality training, prepared foods, mind over body, hypnosis, jogging, psychoanalysis and next up, spiritual actualization. What else do you want me to do? Synchronized swimming?

(VALERIE ENTERS, RUNNING)

VALERIE:

...He calls the office. Asking for Angela.
I tell him she isn't there. Then he asks me who I am.
I tell him "the new creative...assistant creative director..."
"Assistant -- that's what he heard -- O.K." He says. "I'll be by to pick up some contracts for the diet campaign."
"O.K." he says.
And then he's there and I say
"Hello, I'm Valerie"
And he jumps on top of me.

MARTINA:

What...Who are you talking about?

VALERIE:

Angela's husband.

ELLEN:

Her husband!!!!

(THE WHOLE GYM TURNS TO LISTEN)

MARTINA:

What did you do?

VALERIE:

Nothing. I just said "My name's Vale..." and bam! One hand here, the other one there. And his tongue. I can't his tongue out of my mind. Like a snake.

ELLEN:

You didn't even scream.

VALERIE:

He had his tongue down my throat.

ELLEN:

And then?

VALERIE

Then, when I'm just about to run out of breath, I'm all purple and my heart's stopped beating, then, he lets me go. Picks up his papers. And caio.

ELLEN:

Did you ask him his sign?

VALERIE:

My first day of work. And me all excited to be working with Angela, the woman I've admired for so long, such a talented woman, with such an enviable life. House, husband. You know. And then in comes her husband and does that...

ELLEN:

What can it mean?

MARTINA:

That he wants to sleep with her.

ELLEN:

In the greater scheme of things, on a more astral plane.

MARTINA:

That he wants to sleep with her on Saturn.

VALERIE:

And you know what he said to me?

MARTINA:

He said something?

ELLEN:

He wasn't gone already?

VALERIE:

It's a figure of speech.

MARTINA:

What did he say?

VALERIE:

I can't tell you. It's a secret.

MARTINA:

Then why do you ask if I know what he said?

VALERIE:

It's just...I can't tell you.

MARTINA:

Then don't tell me.

VALERIE:

But it's really important!

MARTINA:

You're dying to tell. Spit it out, chunko.

VALERIE:

Never!

MARTINA:

Fine. If it's really a secret you should keep it to yourself.

VALERIE:

O.K. If you're going to twist my arm like that, I'll spill everything.

(SHE TAKES THEM OFF TO ONE
SIDE. IN SECRET)

They're going to offer you a new agency. A new company. Autonomy, your own budget, a bank loan in the millions. Everything above board. You're what they call an investment. Your talent could sell on the stock market. That's what he said.

MARTINA:

And you got all that out of a little squeeze here, a little fondle there and a bit of tongue?

VALERIE:

He talked fast.

MARTINA:

An agency of my own?

VALERIE:

A small one.

MARTINA:

And?

VALERIE:

And what?

MARTINA:

What about you?

VALERIE:

That all depends.

MARTINA:

Depends on what?

ELLEN:

On her little meetings with Angela's husband.

VALERIE:

Frutti thinks I should be with both of you.

MARTINA:

With both of us?

ELLEN:

Who is Frutti?

VALERIE:

Angela's husband.

ELLEN:

He gave you the once over and you're already calling him Frutti? What are you going to call him when he gives you the full exam? Tutti Frutti?

VALERIE:

Tutti Frutti told me that Angela wants me to be the "General Administrator." Like your right hand.

MARTINA:

I'm left handed.

VALERIE:

That's why. So will you take it?

MARTINA:

I don't know.

VALERIE:

I have to know. Yes or no?

MARTINA:

I'm no good at making decisions. I'll have to see.

VALERIE:

It's like...it's like...like bowling. You have to go cross-eyed to knock down the pins. Seeing doesn't get you anywhere. What do you think, Ellen?

ELLEN:

That you should think it over.

VALERIE:

And who asked you anything, you underfed lizard?
It's the opportunity of our lifetimes. Lots of work and responsibility...Like going to the Moon. Exactly. Even better than the Moon.

(ANGELA, TO AUDIENCE)

ANGELA:

The best way to stay in shape, the only real diet,
The Exercise: Power.

VALERIE:

Yes or no?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) And ambition.

VALERIE:

Plus, they'll give you the Clio.

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) But, above all, vanity.

ELLEN:

Sounds like bait.

ANGELA:

Who is this fool?

MARTINA:

You don't understand, Ellen, because you're not in advertising. But in our line the Clio is like...like eternity.

(TO ANGELA) What do I need to do?

ANGELA:

(WITH THE DOCUMENTS READY) Sign the papers, apply for the loan from the bank, incorporate yourself, and use your ideas. In less than a month you'll be right where you wanted.

MARTINA:

Traveling to Mars was a lot easier...

ANGELA:

Sure, but advertising will take you so much higher.

(ANGELA AND MARTINA EXIT)

VALERIE:

What do you think?

ELLEN:

That you're not a very good right hand.

VALERIE:

No, no, not that. Should I go out with him or what?

ELLEN:

With who?

VALERIE:

Angela's husband.

ELLEN:

And lie to her?

VALERIE:

No. I'm not going to say anything to her about it.

ELLEN:
I mean you'll be doing something behind her back.

VALERIE:
You've never done that?

ELLEN:
Valerie: you know something?.

VALERIE:
What?

ELLEN:
What bothers me the most about all this?

VALERIE:
You mean about Martina and the new agency?

ELLEN:
No.

VALERIE:
That I'm dating a married man.

ELLEN:
No.

VALERIE:
That he's married to Angela? (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD)
The ozone layer?...AIDS?

ELLEN:
None of that.

VALERIE:
So what's bothering you?

ELLEN:
Martina's a Pisces

VALERIE:
Ahah?

ELLEN:
So, you're a Sagittarius.

VALERIE:
What about it?

ELLEN:

They're not compatible.

VALERIE:

She's my best friend.

ELLEN:

Ugh! I'll never understand the Zodiac.

3

(ANGELA BESIDE THE PHONE)

ANGELA:

Sometimes I wish I could be more like them. I like the way they end their love affairs.

The way they argue at the top of their lungs, throw punches, and get worked up over little things,
like baseball and beer.

The way they can live with you, but they're never there.

One Monday afternoon I counted up twenty-three,
twenty-three messages on my answering machine,
all from different people, all who needed me desperately.

But did even one of them ask you, Angela, how are you? or Angela, how's your day? Anything new?

They were all business calls.

Which was fine, because just then that's all that really mattered to me -- my career.

So, what happened?

Well, I got pregnant.

I lost my privileges, those special attentions. I went from being "Executive A-1", ready to travel, to Employee Zero -- A nobody.

I had to teach classes at the university, can you imagine the humiliation, CLASSES in a university. Until I just couldn't...I blew up. And I decided to be more like them.

So I got rid of the kid and everything went back to normal.

A woman like me teaching classes in a university? Forget it.

And that's the way it is -- sooner or later you have to decide.

Because no matter what they say or how you fight it,
you always end up in the same mess.

That's why I wish I could be more like them.

Argue at the top of my lungs, throw punches, get worked up over baseball or beer.

I like the way they end their love affairs.

Bowling alley. On stage, Angela and Valerie.

ANGELA:

Valerie, cherie, but you haven't changed a bit.
ENTERS WITH A BOWLING BALL IN HER HAND)
I've bowled ever since I was a little girl.
(TO AUDIENCE) Now, she's really going to worship me.

VALERIE:

You're so good at everything.

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) See?

VALERIE:

(WITH A BLUE BALL) This one should be o.k. It's not too heavy.

ANGELA:

But it's blue.

VALERIE:

So?

ANGELA:

It's not professional.

VALERIE:

But I'm not a professional.

ANGELA:

You still should look like one.

VALERIE:

Once I start to play I won't fool anybody.

ANGELA:

(GIVING HER ANOTHER BALL) Try this one.

VALERIE:

Thanks...

ANGELA:

I love this game. You know why?
Cause if you want to win you've got to play cross-eyed.

VALERIE:

(TO AUDIENCE) She's going to scratch my eyes out because of what happened with Tutti Frutti.

(ANGELA APPROACHES HER.
VALERIE BACKS AWAY
FRIGHTENED)

I don't even know where to put my fingers.

ANGELA:

In the holes.

VALERIE:

But there're only three. I've got five fingers, right?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Is she playing dumb or is she really an idiot?

(TO VALERIE)

Bowling's like advertising, sweetheart.

Advertising means being up in the air, on the air...in every medium, sweetheart, in the middle of it all. Making decisions, even going cross-eyed to come out on top.

VALERIE:

(MEMORIZED) The medium is the message.

ANGELA:

Fighting it out...

VALERIE:

Yeah, fighting...

ANGELA:

Like for a raise...or...the...ah...for the CLIO. Think of the ball as the Clio. Can you imagine what it would be like to have the Clio in your hands?

VALERIE:

No, no, I can't even imagine.

ANGELA:

What about Martina?

VALERIE:

Well, Martina, of course. She'll win a bunch of them. She's the best.

ANGELA:

And you, what do you want?

VALERIE:

Out of what?

ANGELA:

Everything. Out of your life.

VALERIE:

Out of my life. Whoa! I mean life, that's a big deal.

ANGELA:

So, what do you want?

VALERIE:

I feel like, well, if I could be like Martina sometimes. And say more important things than what I'm saying. Like...ah...like going to the Moon. Or writing. I'd like to write something else besides ads.

ANGELA:

Something like what?

VALERIE:

I mean, like you're just sitting somewhere...a bar, and suddenly you pick up a napkin and all inspired you write down your feelings or something that happened to you. You write down this great idea or a short story or a novel.

ANGELA:

And then you win a prize?

VALERIE:

Right, a prize.

ANGELA:

Like the Clio, for example?

VALERIE:

Like the Clio or something like that.

ANGELA:

Nothing's impossible. It's like ah...bowling. It's your first time, but you can still win.
If I want you can beat me. If you go cross-eyed, if you play in pairs, with the best. On your team. That's how you can win.

VALERIE:

I'd like to win.

ANGELA:

Good, now listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you
We need someone at the agency like you, someone who can work as an
intermediary, a go-between for Martina.

VALERIE:

An intermediary?

ANGELA:

Think of the job as General Management. Salaried, business trips. You
keep an eye on how Martina does things.

VALERIE:

How she does things.

ANGELA:

And you keep us informed, so we can help her out with any problems.
You know how geniuses are -- one page here, another page there and
before you know it, she's in a real mess.

VALERIE:

Passing you information...like...ah...spying on her.

ANGELA:

Signing papers. Extra bank accounts, paperwork that she doesn't need to
see.

VALERIE:

She doesn't need to see...

ANGELA:

Someone I can take into my confidence, who I can talk to. And that's you.
Do you know how to keep score?

VALERIE:

How do I hold the ball?

ANGELA:

(PLAYING) I'll start.

(ANGELA THROWS THE BALL.
SOUND OF BALL ROLLING. IT
GOES INTO THE GUTTER).

VALERIE:

I think I saw the pin on the right move.

ANGELA:

With the breeze.

VALERIE:

It was trembling with fear. Try a heavier one.

ANGELA:

(GIVES A BALL TO VALERIE)

What do you think of my offer?

VALERIE:

You mean, to betray her.

ANGELA:

You'd think this was a soap opera. Betrayal. Where do you come up with these ideas?

VALERIE:

I wouldn't betray my best friend for some prize.

ANGELA:

Valerie you'd sell out your own mother to get your hands on that prize.

VALERIE:

How much do I get for it?

ANGELA:

Immortality.

VALERIE:

I wanted to be a poet.

ANGELA:

And I wanted to be a tennis player.

VALERIE:

My turn.

ANGELA:

Cross your eyes.

VALERIE:

(TO AUDIENCE) She's going to scratch my eyes out because of what happened...

ANGELA:

Then, you see the two arches that makes? O.K. get in between them.
With the ball in front of you.
Now, get the first pin in the center of the two arches. And you move
smoothly. (SHE DOES) Then you kiss the ball just like you kiss my
husband.

VALERIE:

(TO AUDIENCE) Oh God, she knows!

ANGELA:

Then push the ball and throw it right on the mark.
(VALERIE DOES. ROAR OF PINS)

VALERIE:

(YELLS) Strike!!!!

ANGELA:

I hate beginners.

4

VALERIE:
(TO AUDIENCE)

The first time I betrayed someone I was fourteen and she was my sister.
They had told us about eternity.
And I thought eternity was like the first time you took a birth control pill
and you think this is the beginning of Life.

My sister got the pills and she wanted us to take them together. But I
made sure that our mother found them in her night stand. Then, to the
sound of her screams -- my father beat the living hell out of her -- I, bottle
of Evian in one hand, took three deep breaths, closed my eyes, and took it.

Who gives a shit about sisters?

(TAKES THE PILL. LAUGHS)

Winning Martina over was like trying to get a snake to slide across the
floor on its belly.

I love betrayals.
They're so ... how should I put it?... Enticing and shameful. Wouldn't you
say?

It's true, I took the pill for nothing.
Because in the end, the guy just couldn't and I stayed a virgin for five more
years.

The Clio Awards Ceremony.
Party music, people talking.
On stage Ellen and Martina sitting at
a table.

ELLEN:

I can't believe it.

MARTINA:

That's the way it goes.

ELLEN:

Son of a bitch.

MARTINA:

It's her job.

ELLEN:

Don't you think she's a son of a bitch?

MARTINA:

Well, someone who steals your ideas is, generally speaking, ah... yeah, a son of a bitch.

ELLEN:

They didn't just steal your idea for the toad commercial, which was really mine, but now they took your idea for the woman pilot and use it to give the Clio to Valerie. You know, my new boyfriend, the one who's a lawyer, says something fishy's going on in this company of yours.

MARTINA:

You can tell me about it later. (PAUSE) What new lawyer boyfriend is this?

ELLEN:

A new ex.

MARTINA:

The Taurus?

ELLEN:

No, this one's a Leo. Grrrrrr! He likes me to bite and scratch. He's going to show me the papers. These people are mafiosos, Martina.

MARTINA:

Ellen, please, smile. Get pissed off, but smile while you're at it, people are watching. You can tell me all about it later. Smile.

ELLEN:

SMILE? Have you lost your mind? IT WAS YOU that they fucked over. How can you just sit there with that stupid grin on your face?

MARTINA:

They all expect me to be unhappy.

ELLEN:

Because you ARE unhappy.

MARTINA:

In advertising, being unhappy is certain death.

ELLEN:

Well, then, my dear friend, you are a cadaver.

(VALERIE ENTERS, DRUNK.
WITH A VIDEO CAMERA)

VALERIE:

Where's my prize?

MARTINA:

You're in the paper.

VALERIE:

How much is it worth?

MARTINA:

It's 18 karat.

VALERIE:

Gold.

MARTINA:

Pure.

VALERIE:

And it has my name on it?

MARTINA:

First and last.

VALERIE:

Where's Angela? Where? Look into the camera and answer me that huh?
Where is she???????

(ANGELA APPROACHES HER,
OPENING A BOTTLE OF
CHAMPAGNE)

ANGELA:

"The Clio Award for the Most Original Idea in Advertising for the year
goes to the creative director Valerie Battle."

VALERIE:

I want to see it.

ANGELA:

Come this way, you have to give an acceptance speech.

VALERIE:

No, speeches, no Angela. Speeches later. First I want to see. First I see it and then talk. I can't think of anything right now.

ANGELA:

Valerie, you better prepare what you're going to say beforehand. Everyone's expecting to hear you say something intelligent.

ELLEN:

(TO MARTINA) Maybe you could write her acceptance speech too...

VALERIE:

(TO ANGELA) It's the first prize I ever got in my whole life. I know it's dumb, but I think it should be mine, right? Nobody ever talked about me. That's why I should get it. for my...AH...surprise and work...for the campaign and all that. I was...I was the underdog.

Oh my God, I don't believe it...
Now they'll all know who I am.

ANGELA:

And exactly who is that?

VALERIE:

Who is me? How should I know!
I'm...I'm...I'm a lot of people.
Whatever you want. How do I know.
WHERE'S MY PRIZE ????

(ANGELA HANDS IT TO HER)

VALERIE:

(KISSES IT) I must be dead. (TO MARTINA)

I want you to know that I know that...you know that...that you...um...right, that you should get it too and that either one of us could have won it. But then, I did.
Me!!!!

Don't think that I think that...um...I don't think I'm any better than you, o.k. And I know that this stuff doesn't really mean anything between two professionals like me and you...yeah us. But then again, I did win it. I won it.
Fuck good sportsmanship.

ELLEN:

(FURIOUS) Look, sweetheart, let me just set you straight a second the idea for your commercial really belongs...

(VALERIE TAPES HER WITH
THE VIDEO CAMERA)

MARTINA:

(NOT LETTING ELLEN FINISH) Your commercial really belongs among THE BEST EVER...

VALERIE:

Really?

MARTINA:

Really.

(TAPING HER)

VALERIE:

You think so?

MARTINA:

Of course.

VALERIE:

That mine was even better than yours?

MARTINA:

No comparison.

VALERIE:

Funnier, more moving, more professional?

MARTINA:

The award committee thought so.

VALERIE:

And you?

MARTINA:

I do too.

VALERIE:

You heard that!!!! She said that mine was the best!!!!
And it's all on tape. Immortalized for future generations so my children and their children and their children and...they can watch their whole lives and laugh and see how wonderful I am.

(ANGELA DRAWS NEAR HER)

ANGELA:

...the speech.

VALERIE:

(KISSES HER) Thanks.

ANGELA:

You deserve it....

VALERIE:

(HANDING THE VIDEO CAMERA
TO ANGELA)

Get the part where they put it in my hands and I kiss it and I hug it and I...

(READS, TO AUDIENCE)

VALERIE: (CON'T)

I want to thank the awards committee and the agency and especially the very talented, the brilliant, and inspired ANGELA CLAYTON for giving me the opportunity to work in a world as interesting and unique as that of advertising.

An opportunity that has allowed me to develop my talent among the best human beings in the world. (APPLAUSE)

That is us, the advertisers. (APPLAUSE)

Entrusted with the job of handling the most important of all messages in the modern world!

The message of advertising.

But also, I should point out that this year, the favorites to win this valuable prize were all women.

(APPLAUSE AND WHISTLES.
IMAGES OF AMELIA'S
RECEPTION IN NEW YORK)

And today's award is a demonstration of how much women have accomplished in the last years and how we are like them. We are like men.

(SHE BURPS. ANGELA STOPS
TAPING. ELLEN DISAPPEARS)

Excuse me...

(SHE TAKES A DRINK. DROPS
THE PAPER SHE WAS READING)

This prize is eternity.

And it makes me feel just like Amelia Earhart, the first woman to cross the Atlantic. She was a pilot and she wrote poetry. Like me, I'm a poet. A real poet. I think.

(MARTINA DISAPPEARS.
VALERIE SNIFFLES A LITTLE.
PULLS OUT A WRINKLED
PAPER)

"I see the birds go flying
and with them I would fly
to see if the angels have scissors
and how they cut out the rainclouds
to see if my missing teaspoon
is floating around on the moon"
What more can I say?

(ANGELA TAKES THE TAPE
FROM THE CAMERA AND
DUMPS IT IN A VASE FULL OF
WATER. SHE DISAPPEARS.
SPOTLIGHT ON VALERIE ONLY)

VALERIE: (CON'T)

Uh...The medium is the message, hahaha.
The message is the surface.
The surface is the medium.
What the fuck am I talking about.
But, I think the medium is...
(HOLDS UP THE PRIZE)
This year I'm the medium.
Thanks a lot..

DARK.
IMAGES OF AMELIA.
MUSIC. BLACKOUT.
END OF PART ONE.

PART TWO

1

ON STAGE, ELLEN, EXERCISING

ELLEN:

Amelia was the first woman to cross the Atlantic and when she did she got the publicity that until then had been reserved for men, actresses and queens.

She supported every women's liberation movement, she tried to not fall in love and to keep in the public eye with what she said and who she knew.

Amelia became a prisoner of her own publicity.
And when her name was no longer news, she started to plan something extraordinary, something impossible, something that had never been seen before

She attempted to fly around the world, with no radio and no parachute.

Amelia was a heroine because she wanted to break every record possible and prove that a woman could do anything that a man could.

They even made two movies and five songs about her.

(SHE GETS UP, SNORTS A LINE
OF COKE)

My only heroic act so far is renting porno films without the guy behind the counter figuring it out.

I'm not some kind of sicko or anything.

I rent the movies on weekdays, when no one asks me out, when they're with their friends and their wives.

But they don't make movies about women who watch porno flicks, much less write songs about them.

Fuck, they don't even do plays about them, not even a lousy play.

(STARTS TO EXERCISE AGAIN)

But I also rent them to learn tricks, because men always go with their first impressions and I'm not going to spend the next day wondering if I was good, if he liked it, if we'll do it again.

(STOPS EXERCISING)

ELLEN: (CONT)

Although I'd like to think that telling Martina the whole truth was also a heroic act. Well, she found out because of me. In the end, that's what best friends are for. For bad news.
And to never forget.

(LOOKING DOWN AT HER BODY)

God! Sometimes I wish I didn't care what kind of shape I was in and I could eat all the ice cream and chocolate I wanted.
Don't you?

Lights up. Gym. On stage, Ellen and Martina, riding exercise bikes.

MARTINA:

(PEDDLING)...They have this karma workshop where the masters basically teach two things:
One -- ugly people are never right.
Two -- fat women don't go to heaven.

ELLEN:

...Everything I've told you is leading you to just one place: a courtroom.

MARTINA:

What do you think?

ELLEN:

That you should get yourself a lawyer.

MARTINA:

I mean about the Karma workshop and the fat chicks from hell.

ELLEN:

Let me see if you understand what I'm saying

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) And blimpo the big mouth spilled everything.

ELLEN:

Angela has competing clients in the diet industry, like Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi.
They're big name clients. International accounts. The best.
But they're the same type of client.

ELLEN (CON'T)

And the order comes from outside: "contracts for similar products cannot be held by a single agency."

That is, Coca-Cola and Pepsi can't work with the same company.
So, then you have to decide. Which of these two gold mines are you going to lose?
Just hand it over to the competition.

ANGELA:
(TO AUDIENCE) Never.

ELLEN:
Angela wouldn't do it. Would you?.

ANGELA:
(TO AUDIENCE) She'd gift wrap her panties for the competition if they asked for them.

MARTINA:
Well, I...

ELLEN:
You'd gift wrap your panties for the competition.

ANGELA:
Hey, I said that!

ELLEN:
Then Angela goes to Plan B and Plan C.

ANGELA:
Actually, I called them "Plan Tiger Lily" and "Plan Bonbon."

ELLEN:
Divide the agency into two companies: the original, which is hers, and a subsidiary. That's you.

MARTINA:
I don't have any top name accounts, Ellen. I don't compete with Angela. We're the same.

ELLEN:
That's what she wants you to think.

MARTINA:
I know. It's MY company.

ELLEN:

Well, YOUR company signs contracts that you never see, with YOUR letterhead, on YOUR records. But the checks are deposited into another account, one with your company's name, an account where you don't have an authorized signature.

MARTINA:

And Angela does?

ELLEN:

Valerie.

MARTINA:

VALERIE?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Betrayal is the best investment.

MARTINA:

Valerie knows about all this?

ELLEN:

From the beginning.

MARTINA:

She's my best friend.

ELLEN:

Right now, your best friend is me. And I'm not really all that interested.

MARTINA:

(TO THE EXERCISE BENCH) Did you know that I advertise this weight bench? With this machine alone you can do more than thirty different exercises plus...

ELLEN:

If you don't want to listen, I'm going.

MARTINA:

O.K. Wait. I don't want to be alone.

ELLEN:

Martina: you are alone.

MARTINA:

And my assistants, the ones that I hired?

ELLEN:

Your assistants work with your ideas, they modify them and then pass them along to Angela.

MARTINA:

Spies?

ELLEN:

Yes, of course.

MARTINA:

Son of a bitch.

(MARTINA STOPS EXERCISING)

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Well, no one gets to choose her own mother.

ELLEN:

But that's not the real problem.

ANGELA:

You're not finished yet!

ELLEN:

It just so happens, Martina, that Angela is absorbing your cash flow little by little and signing all debt over to your company...

All the contracts your company fulfills are officially paid to you, but the money goes to Angela. In a few more months she'll force you to go under, sell low and scare off clients. Then, she'll probably invent another phantom company, maybe with Valerie for a puppet this time. And she'll do the same thing. Two years of that and the business will have unlimited earnings. Zero liabilities, all assets.

Actually, I've got to admit, it's a great scheme.

ANGELA:

I am very intelligent.

ELLEN:

It's slimy, but so well planned.

You come up with the ideas, you split the market, you do the paperwork and get the loan from the bank, but the profits go to another company and you get stuck with the debt.

MARTINA:

What's going to happen to me?

ELLEN:

Bankruptcy and prison. False companies, bilking clients, bank fraud, shifting accounts, acting as a front, tax evasion, false bankruptcy, plagiarism.

ANGELA:

It's not that bad!

MARTINA:

(AFTER A PAUSE) In the ever after it doesn't matter if you look good, it's being better than everyone else that counts.

ELLEN:

WHY DON'T YOU JUST GIVE IT UP WITH ALL THAT FOREVER AFTER CRAP, YOU FAT FOOL!!!!

Don't you get it? They've got you one step away from going to jail, from fucking up your whole life.

You don't get the most basic thing of all: they betray you, use you, and they're going to end up killing you cause a nice little girl like you, with as proud and arrogant as you are, you couldn't even stand to see a prison on T.V. So why don't you cut the crap about the starry heavens, you've got enough problems right here on earth.

(MARTINA CRIES)

And I don't give a shit if you cry. I am not interested. So listen up...I'm speaking as a lawyer now, because as a friend I stopped talking five minutes ago.

You have two options: report it all to the police.

Confess that you've been taken, deny that you knew anything about it.

You'll ruin your credit rating, lose your clients, and you'll have to start all over again from the bottom.

Maybe you'll never make it again. But at least you won't go to jail.

Besides, it's the right thing to do.

What you should do. The law.

MARTINA:

If I do that I'll never work in advertising again.

ELLEN:

I told you to watch out for Aries. They don't stop for anything or anyone. They build, then they destroy. They're ruled by Mars -- they live by the god of war.

MARTINA:

Maybe I could wage a little war of my own, from the inside.

ELLEN:

You're a Pisces. Going up against an Aries is like an elephant fighting an amoeba. The amoeba is you, sweetheart, in case you haven't realized.

MARTINA:

And the other option?

ELLEN:

Go to jail and let them get rich while you rot.

(LIGHTS DOWN)(PAUSE)

You don't have "another option."

What are you going to do?

What are you going to do???

MARTINA:

I'm going to go to outer space, forever and ever.

ELLEN:

Have a nice trip.

MARTINA:

"Forever and ever." Just saying it makes me dizzy - Forever and ever.

ELLEN:

Amen.

MARTINA:

To suffer and lose weight.

ELLEN:

(EXITING) Well, in the last 5 minutes you must've lost 200 pounds already, toothpick.

Your shrink will be thrilled.

(ELLEN EXITS. MARTINA IS
LEFT ALONE ON STAGE)

2

MARTINA:

That night I couldn't sleep, so I looked for something to read. I couldn't find anything but professional journals. When I went to my library I realized that I had filled it up with encyclopedias, with books with pretty covers, with nothing.

I found the Bible in there somewhere, so I read a little, something underlined.

You ever read the Bible?

It's not such a bad book. It says some interesting things.

But it's a lot better if someone else's underlined it, that way you get right to the important parts.

The good man passeth away. In whom shall we place our trust? All men deceive, flatter and are filled with lies.

And I thought "yeah, that's right."

But it's talking about men.

Not about us.

Women are different.

Then, I felt better, I took a pill and I fell asleep. And even if I wasn't dreaming about women in space anymore, I still hoped I'd have some beautiful dreams and get some rest.

SOUNDS OF A BOWLING ALLEY
MIXED WITH ROCKETS BEING
LAUNCHED AND VOICES FROM
THE CONTROL TOWER.

IMAGES OF THE BOWLING
ALLEY, THE GYM, AND
ANGELA'S OFFICE FLASH ON
AND OFF QUICKLY. SMOKE.

NOISE REACHES A
CRESCENDO. THEN, SILENCE.
THE BOWLING ALLEY
REMAINS LIT, IN SHADOWS.

AMELIA:

(OFFSTAGE. WITH INTERFERENCE)

"...we're flying in circles...we can't hear you...we're picking up your signal,
but we're unable to respond...
we're flying north and south...
we're flying north and south..."

(SOUNDS OF INTERFERENCE.
VALERIE APPEARS IN THE
SHADOWS, DRESSED AS
AMELIA EARHART, IN A
PILOT'S UNIFORM FROM THE
THIRTIES)

VALERIE:

God is the symbol of all good, God is thinking good thoughts. God is seeking the good in everything. And this God is not abstract, but a universal force, omnipresent and ready. At all times...
I have a feeling this is going to be my last flight. But other women will follow, with the same conviction to reach heaven... or space.
Martina?
Martina?
And you...what about you?

WE SEE MARTINA DRESSED AS
A BALLERINA. FOR A MOMENT
SHE DANCES ALONE.

ANGELA:

Of course, I knew right away that this wasn't a dream, it was my conscience.
A conscience is all well and good, but it doesn't know the first thing about business.

AN ATTRACTIVE MAN
APPEARS. DANCES WITH
MARTINA AROUND THE STAGE.

ANGELA:

I always thought all that subconscious stuff was funny. Well, interesting. The subconscious may be indecipherable, but the truth is it's nothing but a box of rats.

VALERIE:

Dreaming about them all -- Martina, Angela, God and Amelia -- that night made me think that the next day I would find something for me. Something that couldn't wait and was for me.

ANGELA:

Who is that man, Martina?

MARTINA:

I've never seen him before.

ANGELA:

Who do you want him to be? I can make him whoever you want. It's my dream.

MARTINA:

I'd like him to be God.

ANGELA:

Fine. Attention, dream. Change of characters. From now on Martina dances in the bowling alley with God. Anything else?

MARTINA:

That he takes me to space. To eternity.

(THEY DANCE. GOD WHISPERS
SOMETHING TO MARTINA)

ANGELA:

What did he whisper in your ear Martina?

MARTINA:

That I am suffering to lose weight.

(GOD CARESSES MARTINA'S
BUTTOCKS AND BREASTS)

ANGELA:

This looks more like an erotic dream. God, leave her alone!!!

MARTINA:

What do you want?

ANGELA:

Leave her alone!

MARTINA:

Oh my God! Oh my God!

(GOD MOVES HER INTO A
CORNER AND BEGINS TO TAKE
OFF HER CLOTHES)

MARTINA:

Wait, not like that...it hurts...wait...it hurts

ANGELA:

Martina...Martina....

(IMAGES OF SPACE FLIGHTS
AND SOUNDS OF A BOWLING
ALLEY AMPLIFIED TO AN
EXAGGERATED LEVEL.
GOD LEAVES MARTINA LYING
ON THE FLOOR AND
DISAPPEARS)

ANGELA:

Martina..Does it hurt? Does it hurt, Martina? What is God doing to you?
Why? Martina, does it hurt? Does it hurt? Why does your stomach hurt?
Why does your stomach hurt, Martina?

VALERIE:

“...we're flying in circles...we can't hear you...we're picking up your signal,
but we're unable to respond...
we're flying north and south...
we're flying north and south
Those were her last words.

(VALERIE DISAPPEARS
MARTINA MOANS. SHE
CLUTCHES HER STOMACH IN
PAIN)

ANGELA:

Martina...those pills you took...That was a lot.

What did you want to do?

Kill yourself?

Well, you had just better wake up, Martina.

(THE PAIN GROWS)

You're dying, Martina

With that many pills your stomach is going to explode.

(MARTINA SCREAMS. SHE
PULLS HERSELF FROM THE
BED AND VOMITS. ANGELA
DISAPPEARS. WE ARE IN
MARTINA'S ROOM)

MARTINA:

Oh my God!!!!!!
(VOMITS)
I'M DYING!!!!
Get me to a hospital!!!!

3

ANGELA:

They say that the people who come face to face with death and escape are able to make their dreams come true.

Maybe they find a meaning in life that the rest of us will only see when it's too late.

Martina recovered from her suicide attempt.

And a week later, I asked her to meet me at the bowling alley.
To offer her a deal. To offer her a dignified retreat.

At that time, and even now that it's all over with, I could never have imagined what that damned...roly-poly was capable of.

BOWLING ALLEY.

ANGELA:

I asked you to meet me in a public place so you wouldn't be scared.
Although this bowling alley is enough to give anyone the creeps.

(SOUND OF PINS)

What you did...the pills...it got to me...

(PINS)

Did you know that I dreamt about you that same night?

MARTINA:

Guilty conscience.

ANGELA:

Right, my conscience. I want to offer you a deal.

(MARTINA PICKS A BALL AND
PLAYS)

ANGELA:

I rescue your company. We clean it up.
And we go back to the old system: you work on your own, but inside the agency. With me.

MARTINA:

And what do I have to do?

ANGELA:
(ANGELA PLAYS) Forget everything.

MARTINA:
Just like that?

ANGELA:
Of course.

MARTINA:
What about Valerie?

ANGELA:
She's expendable.

MARTINA:
You'd fire her?

ANGELA:
She's not important.

MARTINA:
She won a Clio.

ANGELA:
They win an award and then disappear -- it's nothing new. Not everyone gets over success. Besides, everyone knows that you were the one who deserved the award, the idea was yours, ever since the toad everything's been yours. I promise, the next award is yours. The next Clio goes to you. Your turn.

MARTINA:
You know who I dreamt about that night?

ANGELA:
What?

MARTINA:
Guess who I dreamt about that night when I was dying.

ANGELA:
I don't see what that has to do with...

MARTINA:
I dreamt about God.

(MARTINA BOWLS. SOUND OF
PINS FALLING)

ANGELA:

God?

MARTINA:

It was God. And he told me: The good man disappears, Martina, all men deceive and manipulate. There's no sincerity anymore. In whom shall I place my trust?

ANGELA:

What for?

MARTINA:

And He said: Before you do anything, before you think about the consequences, before you think about what you want to get in this life, you must promise that you will do only what is good. The right thing.

ANGELA:

The right thing for the company...right?

MARTINA:

The right thing. What is good.

ANGELA:

Turn me in? You know you can't...

MARTINA:

I'm not talking about that.

ANGELA:

Then what are you talking about?

MARTINA:

I'm going to do what's right, what should be done, what God wants me to do.

ANGELA:

What, are you going to become a nun or something? What?

MARTINA:

In my dream, God...

ANGELA:

Dream, what? What are you trying to tell me? Stop talking in parables. As far as I know God isn't interested in my company and its little details and particulars. Or is he?

Is he going to go into advertising now?

Besides, how do you know it was him?

MARTINA:

Angela...

ANGELA:

You talked to him, personally, he told you all this in words or symbols...

MARTINA:

When you...

ANGELA:

What? What? What the fuck are you trying to tell me?

MARTINA:

The right thing.

ANGELA:

Martina, look at me carefully

What the fuck do I care about the right thing?

MARTINA:

The right thing is the closest thing to heaven. Angela...The right thing is more important than the recognition or the prestige or any accomplishment.

God told me that and more.

ANGELA:

What was it? The Sunday sermon?

MARTINA:

He told me about eternity.

ANGELA:

No kidding!

MARTINA:

Eternity, he said, is what should be. Good.

ANGELA:

And he told you what you're going to do?

MARTINA:
Yes.

ANGELA:
And that is...?

MARTINA:
To seek him.

ANGELA:
Who, a cop?

MARTINA:
Jesus.

ANGELA:
God and all that?

MARTINA:
Ahah.

ANGELA:
What a bunch of crap! Are you fucking with me or what?

MARTINA:
He will bring me salvation.

ANGELA:
Right, but and the money. Did God tell you where you're going to get the money to save your ass, to post your bail, pay the lawyers. It's all going to cost you.

MARTINA:
Some day we'll all have to pay.

ANGELA:
Sure, but it's a lot easier to pay when you've got money in the bank, sweetheart.
O.K. I get it. You're going to implicate me.
O.K. O.K. O.K.

(PAUSE)
You go to court, fine, in advertising, you're dead. Got it?

MARTINA:
My character means more to me than my profession.

ANGELA:

Right, but no one talks about you because you have character. Oh sure, you may feel good about yourself now thinking you've got a direct line to St. Peter, but forget it, when you're in jail, when you're out on the street, a fat chick on the street, a horrifying dinosaur with thyroid problems like you looking for work and the doors just keep slamming in your face, then you'll know what character is.

MARTINA:

Character means doing what's right.

ANGELA:

No one wants to hear about the people who did the right thing and failed. Forget it. In this world there are 5 billion nobodies with principles, but if they vanish from the face of the earth, who cares? Sweetheart, it's just that evil gets more attention than good. It's a mental thing. Good things just aren't interesting, the only good things that are worthwhile are sex and power. And you know why? Because when they're good they're very good but when they're bad they're better.

MARTINA:

I'd rather fail and be at peace and proud of myself.

ANGELA:

I'll see you teaching classes in a university, good god, what humiliation, an advertising exec teaching classes and earning as little as any professor. That's sickening. It makes my skin crawl.

MARTINA:

Some day you'll find out that power and money aren't everything and it may just so happen that you have them, but they'll never bring you happiness.

ANGELA:

As far as your XXX rated dream about God goes, just let me say this, life isn't like the movies, sugar. And God bless you... you bitch.

MARTINA:

If you see Valerie tell her I forgive her.

ANGELA:

(EXPLODES) WHAT A WUSS!! WHAT A WIMP YOU TURNED INTO!!! 'I forgive her' who the hell do you think you are fatso, the mother of God? So don't come spouting that litany for prisoners and suicides to me.

Good-bye and go lose yourself in paradise if that'll make you happy. I don't want to see you ever again.

(ANGELA TURNS TO LEAVE.
SUDDENLY, SHE STOPS)

ANGELA:

Actually, some of the things you said...

MARTINA:

They touched you?

ANGELA:

No, but I bet you could make a good commercial out of that garbage.

I'm going to get some use out of your words, especially that bit about God and character, eternity and all that crap.

It will work like a charm in a commercial for the new Ford trucks.

(EXITS. PAUSE. MARTINA
CONTINUES LOOKING AT THE
AUDIENCE)

MARTINA:

It's a good idea.

But it'll work better with the Japanese trucks.

Don't you think?

8

(ANGELA'S OLD OFFICE)

ANGELA:

Today makes exactly two years since that afternoon, when she won at the bowling alley.
Two years since Martina chose her path, "between good and evil." Ah, the path to God.
She said God.
She did say God, didn't she?
It's not just me, right?

(ELLEN SEATED, WAITS, LIKE A GHOST)

I ask because a lot of people say I made up the whole scenario in the bowling alley and that Martina, right there where you all saw her, didn't say Heaven, but Hell.

(EXECUTIVE MARTINA ENTERS)

Because after talking with God, or whoever it was that passed himself off as God, Martina chose. And she chose betrayal, foul play, disloyal rivalry, elimination of the competition, plagiarism, deception, extortion, corruption, the payment of commissions, and even revenge.

Subtle, but revenge...

MARTINA:

Angela: do have the reports ready from the new creative consultants?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Now I'm her assistant.

MARTINA:

I want to see what ideas they came up with.

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) She now runs my former company.

MARTINA:

Come on, move your ass.

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) And her language...!!

(LOOKS FOR PAPERS)

That's how God is, all he ever does is reward the strong.

MARTINA:

Where the hell are the tapes of the employees' conversations?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Did you hear that? She ordered us to tape the telephone conversations of everyone in the Agency.

I was bad, but I never taped people's conversations. Never.

MARTINA:

And Valerie? Where is that idiot?

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) Maybe they won't let her into heaven or eternity but, down here, what is evil, if not the most absolute and interminable eternity. Hm?

MARTINA:

(SHOUTS AND THROWS A TYPEWRITER) Valerie, the story board already!!!!

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE) You see? Power gives you character.

(TELEPHONES RING. VALERIE
ENTERS, WORN OUT.
CARRYING PAPERS. SHE'S LOST
ALL HER CHARM)

MARTINA:

Where were you you idiot? What happened to the new proposal?

VALERIE:

We presented it to the client and it went over.

ANGELA:

He didn't even see what we were showing him.

VALERIE:

A lot of complicated drawings, everything outlined, very technical. His head was swimming.

ANGELA:

He even liked it.

MARTINA:

It's the same as the one they had on French television?

ANGELA:

Exactly.

VALERIE:

No one will figure it out. It was on regional television and it only ran for two months. No big deal.

MARTINA:

Valerie, you'll sign it. And the Clio goes to you this year.

VALERIE:

Thanks.

MARTINA:

Don't mention it. Don't forget your camcorder.

(FORCED LAUGHTER)

MARTINA:

Besides, it looks like the one I did for the Japanese trucks and God. Who sends the bill?

ANGELA:

The other company.

MARTINA:

What else do we have on the agenda?

VALERIE:

That's all. Um...Ellen's waiting outside.

MARTINA:

Ellen?

VALERIE:

Ellen.

MARTINA:

Who...?

ANGELA:

You don't remember her?

MARTINA:

Where? Tell me...

VALERIE:

Your friend, the lawyer, astrologer and all that.

MARTINA:

Oh. THAT Ellen. I haven't seen her for...how long now? Five years.

ANGELA:

Two.

MARTINA:

Just two? (THEY NOD) It seems like ages.

VALERIE:

She's gotten a little heavy.

MARTINA:

Well, what does she want?

ANGELA:

To talk to you.

MARTINA:

What for?

ANGELA:

She wants to ask you for a job.

MARTINA:

A job? But that bimbo doesn't think about anything but astrology and eternity.

ANGELA:

Plenty of talent, but no fight.

MARTINA:

(TO ANGELA) You take care of her. I don't have time...

ANGELA:

She been waiting for you all morning.

MARTINA:

I'll go out the back.

ANGELA:

O.k. Tell me: What do I say to her?

MARTINA:

You say "Cherie, it's been so long, but you haven't changed a bit." And then, when Valerie gives you the sign, Emergency Meeting.

ANGELA:

O.K.

MARTINA:

(EXITING) I'll see you at the bowling alley.

ANGELA:

Martina?

MARTINA:

Yes?

ANGELA:

You do look beautiful when you're evil.

MARTINA:

Kiss ass.

(MARTINA EXITS)

VALERIE:

(TO ELLEN) Come on in...

ELLEN:

Angela?

ANGELA:

Cherie, it's been so long. But you haven't changed a bit.

ELLEN:

Could I speak to Martina?

ANGELA:

She's in an important meeting.

VALERIE:

You can talk to us.

ELLEN:

Well, it's just that Martina is such a good friend, I'm sure if you told her that I'm here...

ANGELA:

She knows you're here.

ELLEN:

No, she can't know. She would have met me. You're hiding her.

(ANGELA GIVES THE SIGN)

VALERIE:

Emergency meeting, Angela. We've gotta go...

(SUDDENLY THE PHONE RINGS)

VALERIE:

Yes, Martina?

Yes Martina.

Yes. Martina.

Yes. Martina.

O.k. Martina.

(TO ANGELA)

That was Martina.

(TO ELLEN)

If you want an illegal ghost company to pick up clients with the same products.

ELLEN:

That if I?

VALERIE:

That's all she has to offer.

ELLEN:

Tell her yes, tell her yes, of course...

VALERIE:

O.K.

ANGELA:

(TO AUDIENCE)

Of course, Amelia Earhart didn't complete her flight around the world. In the Pacific Ocean she tried to locate an island where she could land. But she couldn't. They say she was so drunk, she couldn't see it.

Amelia sought desperately for eternity because she didn't belong to this world.

And it seems to me, that after everything, whether she was drunk or not isn't really important, because you don't have to drink too much to lose yourself in the biggest ocean in the world trying to make it to one tiny island.

Honestly I admire them both.
And I'm even trying to talk to God.
To see if there's one more ticket left to eternity.
And I'll take off for space too.

IMAGES OF ARMSTRONG
WALKING ON THE MOON WITH
THE ACCOMPANYING PHRASE:

"One small step for man, a giant leap
for mankind..."

AMELIA:
(OFF, WITH INTERFERENCE)
...we're flying north and south...
...we're flying north and south...

THE FIGURE OF THE TOAD
APPEARS,
IN COMPLETE SILENCE.

BLACK.