

EXT. ARIZONA SKY - NIGHT

A full moon peeks intermittently through crossing clouds.
O.S.: HEAR beating drums and the faint wail of a strange chant.

OVER the vivid, gleaming night landscape of Arizona's "red rock" country. Peculiar, tiny, FLASHING LIGHTS flicker in the distance.

TOWARDS the lights. The wailing rises gently in volume.

EXT. YAVAPAI VILLAGE - NIGHT

The lights are fires burning in a small, native Yavapai village. Shadows from figures around the fires twist against the surrounding rocks. Some TRIBESPEOPLE are in full costume; most wear conventional clothing.

ACROSS horses, people and dwellings towards one large central hut. The wailing keeps rising.

INT. CHIEF'S HUT - NIGHT

The hut's walls muffle the sounds outside.

Inside, a small group stand around the pale CHIEF who lies unconscious on a bed of animal skins in the middle of the floor.

Amongst the group is the tribe's Shaman, JOE; timeless, piercing dark eyes, flowing silver hair, wears a faded denim jacket and blue jeans with an animal skin waist pouch and a tiny amulet around his neck.

Joe pulls a thin reed tube from his pouch. Extracts a pinch of powder from the amulet and shakes it into the tube. Leans over the Chief.

He places the reed to his mouth. The room is SILENT, all eyes glued to his motions. He extends down further, until there is just a tiny gap between the reed and the Chief's mouth.

Joe blows gently. A STRANGE, FAINT BLUE LIGHT wisps from the reed into the Chief's mouth.

The Chief's eyes flutter open.

He moves.

One of the surrounding figures (NATIVE #1) cries out with delight.

EXT. YAVAPAI VILLAGE - NIGHT

A native outside (NATIVE #2) hears. He lets out a shrill cry of joy and leaps to his feet. Others do the same. The village transforms into a happy mob.

NATIVE #3 flings his hand to the sky releasing a fistful of twigs and large nuts. CAMERA FOLLOWS one nut straight up into the night sky.

"TAG" TO:

EXT. BLUE SKY - COMMUNITY TENNIS COURTS - PHOENIX - DAY

A yellow tennis ball spins in the bright sky. A racquet head strikes.

Forty-eight year old, keen, energetic MAX DIMMER, a bucket of balls beside him, practices serves with his life long pal ERNIE.

Both are very good club players but in appearance and demeanor they are opposites; whereas Max sports a two day facial stubble, tattered old shorts and colored T shirt; Ernie is meticulously groomed and properly attired in clean, pressed tennis whites.

Whereas Max is quirky, fun loving and enthusiastic; Ernie is conservative and keeps his emotions in check.

Ernie can't quite handle Max's strong, flat serve. His return smacks into the net.

MAX
WOULD HAVE RETURNED THAT TWENTY
YEARS AGO ERNIE!

Ernie rolls his eyes.

(CONT'D)

MAX

(picking up another ball)
Ten bucks says you can't return my
spinner.

Ernie gives a short, firm, "thumbs up."

Max winds up (with a slightly peculiar service motion - rather than rocking forward and backward in his wind up he rolls from side to side), strikes an "American Twist" second serve and follows it into the net.

Ernie smoothly hits a sharp return which flubs off Max's outstretched racquet.

MAX (cont'd)

Lucky dog. Another ten?

Again the "thumbs up" from Ernie.

MAX (CONT'D)

Try opening your eyes this time.

The cycle repeats. Only Ernie's return is stronger still - Max dives but can't even touch it.

MAX (CONT'D)

((rising)
Holy holy. You collecting horse
shoes or what!

Ernie moves towards Max.

ERNIE

Come on Max. If we're going to
make Happy Hour we have to leave
now.

They collect their racquet covers from beside the net. Walking back to retrieve the ball bucket, Max pulls TWENTY DOLLARS from his pocket. Hands it to Ernie.

MAX

Nice returns Ernie.

ERNIE
Thanks. Now Stevie can go to college too.

MAX
Ha ha. Very funny.

ERNIE
How's Lois?

MAX
Great. She's all over me about Sedona.

ERNIE
What's in Sedona?

MAX
Natives...
plants...vortexes...Ancient
spirits...It's a Lois paradise.

Ernie holds his fingers up to his temples and mimics a high pitched Martian:

ERNIE
Wheeeooo. Wheeooo. Wheeooo.

By this time Max and Ernie have exited the courts and stand beside the chalkboard where players write their names to book court times.

"Dimmer" is boldly marked on almost every alternate slot. Ernie picks up the eraser brush.

ERNIE (cont'd)
Max. Do you think we can give someone else a turn?

MAX
((sheepish)
I guess so.

On Ernie's hand brushing "Dimmer" off the board:

WIPE TO:

INT. GEORGIO'S SPORTS BAR - DAY

Max, Ernie and a couple of PALS share a pitcher of beer. The Los Angeles Lakers are playing the Phoenix Suns on the bar's big screen. Max bangs the table with both fists as Kobe Bryant misses a "three". He swigs from his beer.

PAL #1
So what happened?

MAX
It was brutal. USC's been State champs for three years running. We've got em five four in the third. Deciding match...

Max pauses. Takes another sip.

PAL #1
And...?

MAX
Well...Do you think Ernie could hold serve?

ERNIE
Hold serve! If you'd watched the ball as hard as that frosh in the polka dot tank top we would have won that game.

The boys look to Max expecting a retort. But Max is oblivious. He sits with an exaggerated blank smile on his face.

Playing along, PAL #2 snaps his fingers repeatedly in front of Max's face.

PAL #2
Max...Max...Wake up Max!

Max feigns coming around.

MAX
Is that the track calling?

Heads shake negative all round.

MAX (cont'd)
 Come on guys. I've got a long shot
 in the fourth...and it goes off
 in...

Max looks at his watch.

MAX (cont'd)
 Thirty six minutes.

Max rises. Throws some beer money onto the table. Looks
 from the basketball game to Ernie.

MAX (cont'd)
 Wanna put that twenty on the Suns?
 I like the Lakers.

Ernie "thumbs up."

PAL #1
 How do you get away with it Max?
 If I'm not at home in thirty six
 minutes I'll be dead meat.

MAX
 (exiting)
 You've just gotta find the right
 woman.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DIMMER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

C/U on LOIS's mouth as she clearly enunciates:

LOIS
 Fox.

Max's wife Lois is conducting speech exercises with their six
 year old daughter BECKIE.

Three years younger than Max, slight of build, wavy
 strawberry hair, Lois's interest in Native American culture
 is evidenced by touches in her clothing and jewelry.

Beckie is shy, cute as a button, has big eyes and soft
 compelling features.

She has speech problems. She never speaks in full sentences,
 barely whispers single words and habitually flips her long,
 braided pigtails in lieu of verbal communication.

ADAM
Aren't the horses running tonight?

LOIS
Yes...they are.

ADAM
Can we eat now?

SMASH TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK/STANDS - PHOENIX - DUSK

Max screaming:

MAX
COME ON YOU HONEY YOU BABY YOU...
COME ON YOU HONEY YOU BABY
YOU...COME ON FOUR! NOW FOUR.
NOW!

Race track. The horses are rounding the final turn. The crowd is on its feet cheering madly. None more madly than Max.

The four horse, neck and neck with two others, lunges at the wire and WINS BY A NOSE!

MAX (CONT'D)
YES!

Losers sit, tear tickets and mutter disappointment. Max remains standing until most around him have settled. He stares at his ticket.

MAX
(sarcastic - loud)
Shucks! Fifty to one and I
only had twenty bucks on it.

The impish grin on Max's face disappears when he spots a figure in the top row of his section. The COLLECTION THUG spots Max at the same time. They both start moving quickly.

Max slips to the tunnel which feeds to the interior concourse.

INT. RACE TRACK/LADIES'S WASHROOM - PHOENIX - DUSK

Max bursts into the ladies washroom.

Surprises two innocent looking TEENAGE GIRLS, gossiping, giggling and touching up their make-up.

TEEN GIRL #1
Wrong door dude.

The girls laugh between themselves and return to their business.

MAX
I'll give you fifty bucks if you help me for two minutes.

Max's proposition gets their attention.

TEEN GIRL #2
Like how?

Max holds out his ticket.

MAX
There's someone I don't want to see. Take my ticket. Cash it. Bring me the money. I'll wait right here.

TEEN GIRL #2
Cool. Like kind of a spy thing.

MAX
Sort of. But no danger.

Girl #1 takes the ticket.

GIRL #1
Alright dude.
(to her friend)
Come on Betts.

The girls exit and head down the concourse to the ticket window at the far end.

Max watches, head poked out the washroom door, looking back and forth for the Collection Thug.

Max's POV: The girls at the window cashing the ticket. They get the money. They both turn to Max, wave and run away!

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
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