

THE BIG ORANGE

FADE IN:

Night. December in Los Angeles.

An incredible ORANGE MOON has risen over a city sprawl that seems tiny by comparison.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE POTATO- NIGHT

Neon-lit burlesque club. From the parking lot, a jazz trio can be heard playing a languid rendition of BILL EVANS' "*Waltz for Debby*".

INT. THE POTATO- NIGHT

ON STAGE

A BRAZILIAN GIRL, CONCHITA, dances *burlesque* in a rain shower of dollar bills. In the low light of the club, the female form appears *perfect*...

CROWD

Monied VALLEY SLEAZE. One overzealous PATRON treats the stage like a strip club, emptying pocketfuls of dollar bills...

ON STAGE

JAZZ TRIO- PIANO, BASS, DRUMS, led by the PIANO MAN, late 20's, white, gaunt- in dark suit, dark tie, dark glasses. Despite his withered appearance, he plays fiercely.

IN THE CROWD

CRUM sits close to the stage, drinking Hennessey on the rocks. His focus is not Conchita, but the virtuosity of the Piano Man.

CLOSE on CRUM, African-American, handsome, bear-ish, on the steep slide of middle-age.

POST BAND SET- LATER

The Brazilian DANCERS mingle with the patrons.

Crum monitors the behavior of the club OWNER, cajoling two YOUNG WOMEN at his table.

EXT. THE POTATO- LATER

PARKING LOT

Crum P. O. V. -

The club owner drives off. Crum observes he's leaving WITHOUT the girls.

Crum exits the club, past-

The Piano Man- his hands full with a lit cigarette, a highball, and Conchita on his arm. He manages to call over her shoulder-

PIANO MAN
(to Crum)
Thanks for coming!...

EXT. CHOCOLATE BROWN 74' FLEETWOOD CADILLAC- CONTINUING

Crum's car- immaculate- even the steering wheel gleams. He disengages his PISTOL from his waistband and places it in the glove box.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTH LOS ANGELES- LEIMERT PARK- SAME TIME

Degnan Boulevard. Skinny PALM TREES sway in the night winds.

EXT. JAMAL'S BISTRO- DEGNAN BOULEVARD- SAME TIME

Hot spot *soul food* restaurant. A full house inside-

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

LAKER GAME televised at the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. PICO BOULEVARD- WEST LOS ANGELES- SAME TIME

THE BEAST-DRIVING

Crum's rusty Fleetwood- aka THE BEAST- rumbles down desolate Pico Boulevard. The lights continue to flash GREEN, turning Pico into a freeway.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. WEST LA- CONTINUING

The Beast slams to a red light.

Crum, lit cigarette, staring head-on with the AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION BILLBOARD.

The billboard is a "death counter"- the numbers toll for those who have died from smoking in the last minute- 80, 401... 80, 402... 80, 403...

Crum speeds away... *before the 3 turns to 4-*

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD RESIDENTIAL STREET- NIGHT

The Beast parallel parks on a residential street above Santa Monica Boulevard.

The CAR adjacent has a bumper sticker "NO FEAR BE QUEER".

EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - CONTINUING

GAY parade- Mardi Gras style.

PARADE

Floats. Automobile caravans.

ON withered bikini BOYS taunting kisses to the BIKE COPS in their own tight shorts. The cops walk their bikes- the fierce winds making it too difficult to ride.

ACROSS THE STREET-

EXT. HAMBURGER HAVEN- SANTA MONICA BLVD. - SAME TIME

Neon, fern-covered 24 hr. BURGER STAND on the gay club strip.

INT. HAMBURGER HAVEN- SAME TIME

Burgers sizzle on the grill.

STORAGE ROOM

The grill man, HECTOR, scrutinizes a WORK VISA for his WIFE.

CRUM (O. S.)
(over Hector's shoulder)
Pretty girl Hector.

Hector turns, bear hugs Crum..

HECTOR
I pay you in full- next paycheck.

CRUM
Just give me a weekly double with
cheese, we'll be square.

BOOTH BY THE WINDOW- LATER

Crum preps his cheeseburger- extra Walla Walla sweet onions- spreading the mustard, touching up the mayo, etc...

In the next booth, a YOUNG MAN, clearly gay, thin and fey with smooth cheeks, watches the PARADE-

PARADE

"Do you believe in life after love... I can feel something inside me"- Cher's anthem, "Believe".

BURGER JOINT

Hector drowns the music, turning up the volume on the television. He looks up on the game- the Lakers are losing.

HECTOR

Lakers suck. Kobe doesn't pass...
Why can't Kobe be Kobe...

CRUM

Identity crisis...

ON TELEVISION

The game clocks winds down- *five, four, three, two-*
SIREN HORN!

The blast nearly shakes the Hamburger hut off its pilings.

ACROSS THE STREET

GAY NIGHT CLUB, pulsing "Believe"...

HECTOR

(explaining)
...Free shots every Friday at ten.

Crum throws a ten dollar bill on the table. Slurps his soda.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD- CONTINUING

A hot desert gale known as the Santa Anas, drives the DRAG QUEEN parade into a warm swirl.

Crum struggles to keep his balance... *he falls into the parade traffic...*

Blaring horn!

A pink EL CAMINO packed with *LADIES-*

DRAG QUEENS
There's a crosswalk!

Crum staggers, short of breath... He only wants to cross the damn street.

OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET

A heavy frond drops from the palm tree-

SMASHING the convertible roof of "BE QUEER, NO FEAR".

Crum now slick with perspiration, approaching TWO TALL WOMEN leaning on his car-

CRUM
Hey!

THE BEAST

DRAG QUEENS. The slighter queen, a hustler, is demanding money from the beefier queen. She has her hand firmly on the beefy queen's crotch-

CRUM
(running up)
Whoa! Whoa! Whoa-whoa!...
(at his car)
Sir... er', ma'am, could you get
off my car?

The hustler licks her lips. She gestures to the back seat-

ROLLED DOWN WINDOW

Crum stares *on the pearly jizz soiled into the seat cushion-*

HUSTLER
-Softens the seats...

Crum grabs the hustler by the BALLS.

...They fall to the ground... Crum's fist repeatedly slipping, knuckles cracking pavement...

...A HEAVY FIST from his blind side.

Crum lies semi-conscious on his back. A HEEL sticks between his ribs...

Crum glowers at beefy queen- *"is that all you got..."*

The heel kicks keep coming, ribs swollen beef hide...

DRAG QUEEN
Apologize...

His empty WALLET beside him- flipped open to his license-
CHARLIE CRUMLEY- PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR- STATE OF CALIFORNIA...

THE PALM TREES

- rocking omnisciently above the beefy DRAG QUEEN snarling
through smudged lipstick.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAMAL' S BISTRO- SAME TIME

Degan Boulevard desolate.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

A dwindling late-night VIP crowd.

FRONT ENTRANCE

A YOUNG MEXICAN WOMAN busts out of the restaurant-

Wobbling in the wind, she drunkenly strolls down Degan
Boulevard-

Singing gaily in SPANISH-

She walks the block to her car- a BENTLEY with the plates-
LOVIE 69.

She passes a DARK ALLEY.

She unlocks the car.

She starts the engine.

A HEADLIGHT FLASHES her from the ALLEY- forcing her attention-

She rolls down her window...

Her eyes widen in TERROR.

CUT TO:

The PALM TREES swaying violently...

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY- TWO DAYS LATER

Aerial view. Sea of smog.

EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING- TWO DAYS LATER

A three block stretch of MEDICAL BUILDINGS on Van Nuys Boulevard.

INT. MEDICAL BUILDING- CONTINUING

HALLWAY

Crum, bruised hand, knot on his forehead, at the door marked DR. BOB NAZARRIAN, "PEDIATRICIAN".

OFFICE WAITING ROOM

Crum maneuvers through hyper CHILDREN waiting impatiently with their MOTHERS.

Dr. Nazarrian's teen DAUGHTER, ASHIA, in her soccer uniform, smiles sympathetically on Crum's bruise.

INT. DR. BOB'S OFFICE- CONTINUING

DR. BOB NAZARRIAN, late 50's, Iranian, searches his medicine stash... He's been speaking proudly of Ashia-

DR. BOB

...We're taking her to *Mi-lano* after soccer season ends... You been?

CRUM

I don't care for Italy...

DR. BOB

What do you mean?

CRUM

They do the Italian thing- *grazi grazzi, prego prego* for the tourists but they don't want foreigners coming to live in their country... I'm not even talking about the racism- what is Italy doing for the greater good of the world?...

DR. BOB

Food-wine-cheese. And the language is most beautiful. You don't speak anything do you, Crum?

CRUM

A little *Espanola-*

DR. BOB

How can you be a lover and not
speak a Romance language?

CRUM

You might just have nailed down my
problem, Doc...

Dr. Bob packs his prescribed dosage.

CRUM

No painkillers, Doc, the hand's a
little sore that's all.

DR. BOB

BiDi l- it's a preventive heart
medication. Your blood pressure's
too high, your cholesterol's too
high. You're high risk.

CRUM

What's it cost?

DR. BOB

It's a drug made by a drug company,
it's not cheap...
(reads bottle)
*It will prolong the time to your
first hospitalization for heart
failure.*"

Crum observes a poster ad for Lipitor- the poster is of a
white man- it reads preventive heart failure medicine.

DR. BOB

That's for white guys.

CRUM

What you mean it's for white guys?

DR. BOB

It's for their heart.

CRUM

I got a different heart than a
white guy?

DR. BOB

It's controversial, but studies
have shown you may benefit from
your own kinds of medicine...

CRUM

Everyone's got the same heart...
(beat)
I want the cheaper- I bet the
Lipitor's cheaper...

DR. BOB
Get some insurance, or it's gonna
start adding up...

CRUM
(disbelief)
Segregated heart medicine...

Dr. Bob packs up the dosage.

DR. BOB
First round's on me- I'll put it
towards your pay...

CRUM
(unappreciative)
Thanks Doc...

DR. BOB
Now, what you got for me...

Crum simply shrugs.

DR. BOB
Go fuck yourself!

CRUM
Easy Doc-

DR. BOB
It's been two days!...

CRUM
What do you want me to tell you- is
he a pig? Yes... He flirts, but
he's disciplined- he knows how to
have fun and still keep it in his
pants...

(to himself)
Maybe the secret to a happy
marriage-

DR. BOB
My wife's sister says he's
cheating! He's cheating!... Just a
picture, that's all the proof we
need.

Ashia stands at the door in her soccer shorts and knee socks,
cleats slung over her shoulder.

DR. BOB
One second Pele...

Ashia nods, disappears.

CRUM

Doc, one more thing-

Dr. Bob stuffs a sample pack in Crum's jacket pocket. He hand gestures with a flick of the wrist- "erection pills"...

CRUM

Oh, no thanks...

DR. BOB

In your line of work, you gotta be on call- you never know when one of those dancing girls might want to ride your pole, and then what?...

CRUM

Doc-

DR. BOB

I told you one of my buddies has been givin' it to Sharon Stone... He's just a regular guy, he's not in the movie biz, he owns a car dealership- balding chubby guy... He came in the other day for a refill...

(shakes his head)

International movie star... That's why LA is LA... It's a beautiful city...

CRUM

...I'm having some trouble seeing it. I can't drive at night.

(beat)

The headlights-

DR. BOB

-Concussive effect from the beating you took. Don't drive for two, three days.

CRUM

I can't drive, I can't work. I can't tail your brother-in-law.

DR. BOB

No private investigators take the bus?

(beat)

0-kay...

CUT TO:

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
info@filmmakers.com