

ICE

RON BASS AND VINCE GERARDIS
October 24, 2013

INT. ASHWIN SHARMA'S OFFICE, LOS ANGELES DIAMOND DISTRICT - DAY

CLOSE on ASH, 36, elegant. East Indian. A diamond dealer, he is examining a FIVE CARAT ROUND DIAMOND with his LOUPE.

HOBBS (O.S.)
Do you need more time?

Ash shakes his head. Places the diamond back on the LARGE DESKTOP COVERING OF WHITE PAPER beside FOUR MORE STONES of the same cut and size.

ASH
It's not complicated. There is cut, color, clarity and carat weight.

HOBBS
Fascinating.

Opposite him sits HOBBS, 42, six-foot-five, well-built, elegant suit. The voice is smooth South African.

ASH
Any one of these for \$100,000?
The choice can be this one only.

He points to the stone on the left.

ASH
And when you want pave or single cut, I have all manner of smalls.

Ash's eyes are dancing. He unfolds a SMALL ENVELOPE revealing thousands of TINY DIAMONDS, displays the glittering white sand...

ASH
Melee. PK, clean, browns, silvers.
What you want.

HOBBS
As for these five stones. If I wanted a second opinion...?

Ash looks up, wheels turning...

ASH
You must speak with Alvy. Tell him Ash sent you.

HOBBS
Alvy.

ASH
Alvy Simon. Not his partner. Alvy.

INT. SHMUEL'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on SHMUEL, 50, genial and perhaps wise behind the small watering eyes. There are folds of skin creased on his face, like an easy-going hound. PULL BACK to see Hobbes, the five large diamonds.

SHMUEL

These three don't dance. This one, I wouldn't give to my wife.

His voice scrapes bottom, Israeli accent. Points to the stone on the left.

SHMUEL

This one. Highest clarity. You have certificate?

HOBBS (shakes his head)

Much obliged. Someone recommended a dealer named Alvy Simon.

SHMUEL

Alvy. Yes. The Diamond Whisperer. He looks for diamonds like some men look for women. To see the sun shine.

An avuncular open smile.

SHMUEL

We're all blind men compared to Alvy. If Alvy says buy, you buy. Waste no more time. Want me to introduce you?

Hobbes regards him with a smile.

HOBBS

That's very generous of you.

Shmuel shrugs. No big deal.

INT. MOSHE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on MOSHE, 42, tall and wiry, unnaturally thin. A shock of coarse black hair, face lean and stubbled, yet the intensity makes him somehow attractive. His eyes are incapable of smiling. He SCOWLS at Hobbes' stones...

MOSHE

I suppose you make a few pennies on the first one. But I could give you better.

He shrugs.

MOSHE

There is no point in false modesty. No one in this building knows quality stones the way I do.

HOBBS

Not even...Alvy Simon?

Moshe's eyes narrow. Hobbes shows two business cards.

HOBBS

He was recommended by these dealers.

MOSHE

Well, Ash is Indian. Which means he'll say anything if it brings him ten cents in kickbacks. And Shmuel is my brother. He's an idiot.

HOBBS

So. You don't think much of Mr. Simon?

Moshe slides some stones of his own back in front of him, bends over them to work, and lies...

MOSHE

Not so much as he thinks of himself.

INT. DANIEL HOFBAUER'S OFFICE - DAY

DANIEL HOFBAUER, 56, larger than Darth Vader, but less pleasant. Except to a buyer. Points to the stone on the left.

DANIEL

You could get a small profit from this one. You ask for my advice? Let me negotiate for you.

HOBBS

Well, the price has been set.

DANIEL

Anything can be renegotiated. If you have enough influence.

Beat.

HOBBS

Would you recommend we show the stones to Alvy Simon?

A cold flicker of Daniel's eyes. The fake smile fades.

DANIEL

Alvin is a bright boy, full of opinions and arrogance. If your motive is making money...

The smile returns.

DANIEL

I own this market. Ask anyone.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - DAY

ALVY SIMON, 32, on the attractive side of pleasant, gazing down at the stones with a singular intensity...

HOBBS
You can keep them overnight. To study them more closely.

ALVY (a murmur)
That won't be necessary.

His is a youthful face. Except the eyes are knowing and wary.

HOBBS
I've been offered the chance to buy any one of these for one hundred thousand U.S.. They've been evaluated by nine dealers in this building. Consensus is...
(left to right)
110, 100, 85, 90, 85.

Alvy looks up. He's done. No expression.

HOBBS
I'm told you're the best. It's worth five thousand to get your opinion.

ALVY (points to the middle stone)
This one is worth 20 to 30% more than any of the others.

HOBBS
Well. How is that possible? These stones were seen by nine...

ALVY
No they weren't.

Excuse me?

ALVY
My colleagues don't see anything. They are mathematicians. They evaluate diamonds on an algorithm. Cut, color, clarity, carat weight. But that isn't the real value of a stone.

HOBBS
Then what is?

ALVY
The true value of a diamond is the price to be paid by a willing buyer. Standing next to the woman he loves. As she looks down into the light of that stone.

Said with such simple assurance.

ALVY

If you take these five stones to Cartier or Tiffany, and you show them to ten women. I'll bet your \$5000, at least eight will choose this one.

CLOSE ON ALVY'S STONE.

MATCH CUT TO...

INT. CARTIER, BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Alvy's diamond. PULL BACK to reveal all five stones. An elegantly-clad SALESMAN, displaying them to a COUPLE. Or perhaps it's just a very generous grandfather with a very attractive and spirited granddaughter.

The young woman gazes down at the five. Suddenly, POINTS TO Alvy's diamond. Hobbes steps INTO FRAME.

HOBBS

I'm terribly sorry, Miss. That one isn't for sale.

She GLARES at him. How dare he? She can't be more than 19. Points to the salesman...

GIRL

He said that it was. It's the one that I want.

HOBBS

Well. The price on that one isn't 100 thousand. It's 130.

The girl simply looks up at her companion. No smile. Just looks at him.

The old man looks at the salesperson. Nods once. Now looks to Hobbes. Smiles. Fucking jackass.

EXT. DANIEL'S POOL - EARLY MORNING

Daniel, tanned, sits poolside in the shade of an umbrella. Dressed only in a swimsuit, shades, and gold chain. He's drinking a large orange juice, completely ignoring...

Moshe, who sits across from him in an ill-fitting, dark wool suit, crumpled shirt and tie. Hands folded on his lap. Moshe is used to cash, but not opulence. He's also in the shade, stares blankly across the infinity pool surrounded by recently fabricated Roman columns. Coming toward them now...

A stunning YOUNG WOMAN in a string bikini. Her body slender and perfect, soft hair falling well past her shoulders. She could be 21, she could be 16. She could be a model, but she has other ambitions. This is ROCKER GIRL, her face at once angelic, yet hard enough to strike a match on. She turns, revealing a large TATTOO down one side of her torso.

DANIEL

You've met my daughter.

Moshe has no interest, nods. Barely.

MOSHE

Seen her.

She opens a black velvet pouch, withdrawing an uncut 30 carat SLIGHTLY YELLOW CRYSTAL. It catches plenty of sunlight, then she offers it to Moshe palm open, like feeding an apple to a horse. She starts to go, but...

DANIEL

Sit. You'll give an opinion.

Moshe already studies the crystal.

DANIEL

I tell you in front. I need 175.

MOSHE

Maybe get three stones. Nine carats in all.

DANIEL

It yields 14 carats, easily. Three stones, yes.

Moshe shakes his head. Looks with a loupe. It takes a moment.

MOSHE

11 carats, if lucky. 130 thousand.

Daniel looks to Rocker Girl. She shakes her head, no.

DANIEL

Take it with you, study a bit. If you can come back at 165, we can talk. Otherwise, I put it in at auction tomorrow afternoon.

Moshe shrugs, rolls his eyes a little. Is it even worth taking it with him? Daniel chuckles, tells Rocker Girl...

DANIEL

Theatrics. Israeli negotiating technique.

ROCKER GIRL

So subtle, I'd never have guessed.

Moshe stands without smiling. Puts the crystal in its pouch.

MOSHE (to Daniel)

Out of respect for you.

(to Rocker Girl)

Respect. Israeli negotiating technique.

Without another word. Heads off toward the house.

EXT. VENICE BOARDWALK - SAME MOMENT

Alvy jogs on the boardwalk of Venice Beach. A German Shepherd STANLEY lopes beside him. Attentive to his pal, watching only Alvy as they run.

Maybe because Alvy's mind is climbing its wall of worry. The eyes clicking through options. His cell RINGS, and we...

INTERCUT: INT. GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL - SAME MOMENT

See STEPHANIE GOLD, 29, slender and tense in scrubs and stethoscope. Her stomach and mind are churning, as she tells her cell...

STEPHANIE (soft)

Hey.

BACK to Alvy. We CONTINUE INTERCUTTING.

ALVY

Pleasant surprise.

At Stephanie's end, that plays badly. Makes this harder...

STEPHANIE

I want to pick up Stanley while you're at work, and bring him to my place. I mean he was my birthday present.

Alvy absorbs this. Anticipated. A shame.

ALVY

So I guess 'taking a break' actually was that thing you denied it was gonna be.

STEPHANIE

I'm 2% of your life, Alvy. It would take a big promotion for me to work my way up to irrelevant.

He keeps running throughout. Maybe a little faster.

ALVY

And after you've worked so hard to bring us closer.

STEPHANIE

That was revenge sex, Alvy, and you know it. That's what women do when they're desperate and ignored.

ALVY

Got it. All my fault.

STEPHANIE

Shut the fuck up, Alvy.

She starts to cry.

ALVY

I'll leave Stanley's things out.
You'll like rooming with him.
He doesn't work 20 hours a day
to earn a living.

Glances down at the friend he'll be losing.

ALVY

When you walk through that door.
You're his world. And he doesn't
care which thoracic surgeon you fuck.

CLICK. She's rung OFF.

ALVY

I miss you.

We see that he does. They run on. Out of FRAME.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT, LOS ANGELES - SAME MOMENT

MARIA SANCHEZ, 24, checks the fridge. An onion, an apple,
Ketchup. A milk carton. She is Filipina, very pretty, almost
afraid to lift the milk carton. Does. Shakes it. Something
left, wish it were more.

The apartment is tiny, sparsely furnished with pre-owned items.
She pours out two bowls of dry cereal. The panic HITS her.
Takes a moment.

Goes to look in on two sleeping children. RAMON is 4, ESTELLA
6. She kisses the girl awake. Speaks low.

MARIA

I have a job today. I'll bring home
lots of food tonight. Hope I remember
all the things you like.

ESTELLA

Don't forget the chocolate cake.

And laughs. Maybe it's been awhile since cake.

MARIA

You stay inside all day and watch your
brother. If there's an emergency, you
run up to Mrs. Lopes. Okay? Never
answer the door. Okay?

ESTELLA

You gonna clean a house in your church
dress?

Maria wears a simple shirtwaist.

MARIA

I'm working in an office. If he likes
me, maybe it'll be a regular job.

Estella checks Mom out.

ESTELLA

In that dress, he'll like you. If you smile.

EXT. DANIEL'S POOL - DAY

Daniel comes from the house with his nephew CHARLIE, 28, gangly, floppy mop of thick hair. Rocker Girl is reading Financial Times on a lounge. She's sucking on some evil thick green juice. Doesn't look up as...

CHARLIE

Honey, it's time to go.

He isn't talking to her. From the pool, climbs SANDRA, an attractive, ripe 23. Far too pretty for Charlie and he knows it. Without looking, Rocker Girl flips her a towel. Charlie's smile grows the closer she gets. He turns to Daniel, puts away his black leather STONE WALLET...

CHARLIE

Uncle, I don't know how to thank you for this.

He pats his Member's Only jacket where the wallet now hides.

DANIEL

I know your father would have wanted you to have every opportunity to prove yourself.

He CLASPS the kid's shoulder.

DANIEL

And so do I. You meet the buyer at 10:30 tomorrow. One stop, one sale. 'Easy money' this time. You hear me?!

Charlie is distracted by Sandra, as she pulls on her clothes.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

DANIEL

He'll low ball. He'll stonewall. But he wants the stone. You have it. You are a merchant. You are a Hofbauer.

He gives Charlie a hearty slap on the back. Turns a frosty gaze toward Sandra. He clearly doesn't like her. As she approaches...

SANDRA

Hello, Daniel.

Daniel openly ignores her and walks off.

Rocker Girl gives Sandra a quick hug. Relaxes the moment...

ROCKER GIRL

I've seen the stone. Congratulations.

Charlie looks at his Sandra. And smiles.

INT. LOBBY, 550 HILL STREET, LOS ANGELES - DAY

AERIAL ANGLE of Alvy moving through the lobby of 550 Hill, the heart of the Los Angeles diamond market. He is approached by colleagues, rivals, buyers and sellers. They could be South African, Hassid, Brit, Indian, Dutch, Russian, Congolese. Even in the lobby, this is a business that radiates energy, tension, usually polite yet adversarial dealings at every level.

AT THE ELEVATOR BANK, Alvy waits next to Maria. When the elevator arrives...

...six MEN PUSH their way in. Alvy holds the door open for Maria, and the men sort of give her an inch or so of personal space. Alvy watches her as the car rises, and Maria stares at the flashing numbers, unaware.

INT. CORRIDOR - MORNING

Maria walks down the endless hallway, checking each nameplate: PRECIOUS DIAMONDS, PRESTIGE DIAMONDS, coming at last to INTEGRITY DIAMONDS. She rings the button.

MOSHE (from the wall speaker)

Yah?

The voice is gruff, at once angry yet bored. Hardly welcoming.

MARIA

Maria Sanchez. I'm sorry that I'm early, but th...

BUZZ. CLICK. She pushes the door open. Enters a tiny space which seems far too small for a reception area. The door CLICKS LOCKED behind her. She goes to the next door. Also locked. This is a MANTRAP. The voice breaks in, surprising her...

MOSHE (second wall speaker)

Empty your purse and pockets for the camera above your left shoulder.

She is rattled, but trying desperately not to appear frightened. Looks around her, sees the SMALL CAMERA peering down. As she complies...

MOSHE (second wall speaker)

Behind the glass, your desk. Answer phone 'Integrity Diamonds.' Use red button to hold, intercom to say who calls. Your lunch is one o'clock.

MARIA

Um. I've already eaten, so I'll work straight through. If that's all right.

But there is only silence.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Alvy in his inner office. The doors of a massive BLACK SAFE stand OPEN. We see STACKS of HUNDREDS and LONG BLACK BOXES. FOUR BOXES are already on his desk. Two are open, revealing...

...dozens of WHITE ENVELOPES. He removes six envelopes, lays them out in an organized fashion, opens one onto the table...

...filled with DIAMONDS.

INT. MARIA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Maria at her tiny desk, getting things organized. The phone RINGS. Her first call, she stares at the phone for an instant before answering...

MARIA

Integrity Diamonds.

ALVY (O.S.)

Alvy Simon for Moshe.

MARIA (to Alvy)

One moment, I'll try to reach him.

(hits intercom)

Alvy Simon for Moshe.

MOSHE (O.S.)

I'm not in.

MARIA (to Alvy)

I'm sorry, Mr. Simon, he'll have to get back to you.

ALVY (O.S.)

I e-mailed a precise description of the ten carats I need. Just tell him I need them in thirty minutes. From someone.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - MORNING

CLOSE on Alvy's partner JAY STERN, 32. Burly, balding, with gorgeous eyes and a perpetual occasionally-genuine smile. He watches from his own desk, as Alvy deals with Shmuel.

ALVY

I don't have ten carats of those in stock. I couldn't get Moshe, so I called Ash who says he can supply them.

SHMUEL

Excellent. Thank you.

ALVY

Wait a day, buy from Moshe directly. Save you my cut.

Unnoticed, Jay just shakes his head. His fucking partner.

SHMUEL

Alvin, if I wanted to be cheated, I would have called my brother in the first place. This way, you'll pick out much better stones than he would ever have offered me.

Yes?

SHMUEL

And since you'll charge an honest price. I might be money ahead, even after your profit.

Simple, huh? He spreads his hands in homage to that simplicity.

SHMUEL

You're always ahead dealing with an honest man. The problem is, we're in the goddam diamond business! Right, Jay?

JAY

That's why this office is so busy. If we're not losing money on the transaction, we're not interested.

Shmuel laughs. Raises himself, ambles to the door.

ALVY

What is it with you and your brother?

SHMUEL

He doesn't like to suffer fools. Luckily I qualify. It spares me his company.

A cheery wave. And gone.

JAY

Why didn't you give him your wrist-watch? Hell, mine, too. You know, if we're gonna be a charity, we should at least apply for a tax exemption.

Alvy leans back. Gazes at him.

ALVY

Don't you ever get tired of chiseling strangers, friends, family for a few extra pennies?

JAY

Never. It's the diamond business. As my partner, you are obligated to cheat people, too.

A shrug.

JAY

And anyway, I don't cheat any family under the age of eight. I have standards.

Alvy doesn't smile. It's not a joke to him.

ALVY

All our years. Before pre-school...

JAY

I was always a prick. I just liked you, God knows why. Maybe I'm queer and it'll all come out in therapy.

Now Alvy has to grin.

ALVY

No chance. The only therapist who won't charge you is me. And the word is 'gay.' And if you want to split up, it can be arranged.

JAY

What, leave Alvy The Diamond Whisperer? My one claim to fame? Okay, reflected respect. Without you, I'd be just like everybody else.

The look holds.

JAY

Whereas, with you. I get every dealer asking why I put up with such a boy scout.

Spreads his hands. Same gesture as Shmuel.

JAY

I tell them you move in a better class of strippers. And my Mom likes you.
(he grins)
Okay, one outta two. Mom can't stand you.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - LATER

A BUZZER SOUNDS.

Alvy and Jay both look to a SMALL VIDEO MONITOR. Instinctively, their hands go to ALARM BUTTONS under their desks, but...

ON THE MONITOR, an image of ASH, looking into the camera. Jay's fingers move to a different button and he buzzes Ash in. They greet him as he enters, takes the chair in front of Alvy.

ASH

You're looking for ten carats.
I brought three parcels to choose from.

Ash spreads his wares for Alvy. THREE ENVELOPES, each marked with private codes, in pencil, each with a different per-carat price: 650, 750, 850. Each envelope is folded open. On each one, a pile of TINY DIAMONDS aka MELEE, somehow alive.

Alvy looks them over. He is not pleased.

ALVY

The 850s might be worth 775. If I'm buying from Zale's, which I'm not.

ASH

Shmuel doesn't know the difference. Pay the 850, I clear 75 as you say. Then tell him you paid 900 and you need 50 profit, charge him 950, he is happy.

Alvy looks up.

ASH

Because he trusts you.

JAY

Boy, did you come to the wrong place.

ALVY

I'll give you 800 for the 850s, you'll clear 25, which on ten carats, is plenty.

ASH

Is it.

ALVY

I'll tell Shmuel the truth, charge him 825, and I'll clear 25, too.

Ash GLARES at Alvy. Starts to scoop up his merchandise.

ASH

You are a crazy person. Shmuel is floating in a sea of cash. You are taking food from my family's table. I have young children. I have people who depend on me in Mumbai. I will not do this!

He heads for the door.

ALVY

Have a peaceful day.

ASH

God DAMN it! Jay! Fix him!

He STORMS back. DROPS the goods down in front of Alvy. Looks helplessly to Jay for support...

JAY

Hey, I'm just enjoying the drama. I need some reason to come to work.

ALVY

By the way, Ash. Shmuel is your friend.

Really.

ASH
 Why else was I giving him the friend's
 discount?

INT. INTEGRITY DIAMONDS - END OF DAY

Alvy enters Moshe's outer office. Maria works on the laptop behind the glass partition. She glances up. Smiles professionally.

ALVY
 Alvy Simon for Moshe.

She hits the intercom. He's noticing the well-worn paperback beside her laptop.

MARIA (to Moshe)
 Mr. Simon is here.
 (then to Alvy)
 It'll just be a minute.

ALVY
 So what do you think?

She blinks at him. He lifts the book. The Great Gatsby.

MARIA
 I think he fell for the wrong girl.

ALVY
 It happens.

MARIA
 In fiction. Hardly ever in life.

ALVY
 Lucky thing.

She nods. They smile at each other.

ALVY
 I always had a soft spot for
 Fitzgerald. Not sure why.

MARIA
 Really. My professor was a
 Faulkner girl. She had standards.
 Thought Fitzgerald was shallow.

ALVY
 Ah. That's why I like him.

Now the smiles are broader.

MARIA
 Standards. Are so limiting.

PULL BACK down the hall. Unseen by Alvy and Maria...

Moshe is watching their encounter. With interest.

INT. MOSHE'S OFFICE - LATER

CLOSE on Alvy, examining the crystal Daniel gave to Moshe. He sets down his loupe. Smiles at his dour host.

MOSHE
You're insane. How could it ever
be worth that much?

ALVY
You cut it here. And here.

Moshe looks down at the crystal.

MOSHE
What if you're wrong?

ALVY
We wind up with dust and lose every-
thing. That's why it's good that I'm
not wrong.

MOSHE
So. What price do we offer?

ALVY
The moment you come back at what-
ever figure, he knows you want it,
the price goes to the moon.

Moshe looks at him. Then, what?

ALVY
We let him go to auction and we buy
it there. For the minimum bid.

MOSHE
What if you don't get it?

ALVY
Then we lose out. That's why it's
good that I'm going to get it.

Moshe thinking. Thinking. Nods. Go for it. Alvy grins, goes to the door. Opening it, he can see Maria in distance at her desk.

ALVY
By the way. Good hire.

Moshe doesn't understand. Alvy points toward Maria.

MOSHE
That girl? She's here just today.

ALVY
She's better than that.

MOSHE (shrugs)
Pretty girl.

ALVY

She studied American Lit in community college. She wanted to teach it.

MOSHE

I'm supposed to be impressed?

ALVY

You're supposed to be less predictable. Anyway, you and this girl are a perfect match.

MOSHE

How is that?

ALVY

The two of you put together make one sense of humor.

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We are CLOSE on a steel SAFE. Charlie's HAND turns the dial. PULL BACK to see the safe on a closet floor, beneath female garments. Sandra stands directly behind him, peering over his shoulder.

CHARLIE

This is a big step for us. Daniel's never trusted me with anything like this before.

SANDRA

Charlie, your uncle doesn't trust anybody, he doesn't help anybody. He is the scariest prick alive.

The safe is OPENED. From his STONE WALLET, Charlie removes a square plastic container. Turns it over to reveal...

A large CUSHION DIAMOND.

He stops, can't resist. Opens the container, gently picks the stone out, holds it up in the dim light of his bedroom...

CHARLIE

It's perfect. Seven carat thirteen. S I two. J color. EGL. And I only owe Daniel 50 thousand.

His eyes are dancing. He's holding the Ark of the Covenant.

CHARLIE

Here. Put out your hand.

She holds out her right hand. He takes her left hand, turns it over, palm down. Places the rock in the groove between her ring and middle finger. It takes on the impression of her wearing it as a ring.

SANDRA

It's so big. Hardly seems real.

He takes it back, prepares to put it in the safe.

CHARLIE

We make fifteen thousand. Start thinking of something nice you want.

She kisses him. She smiles her first smile. He falls into it.

SANDRA

I have something nice already.

He seals the safe, beaming, and walks from FRAME. We HOLD on Sandra. Staring at the safe.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREETS - NIGHT

ALVY walks past bums and other trouble. He never minds the predators. He talks on the phone with...

INTERCUT: JAY working late in the office.

ALVY

Your protege called me tonight.

CONTINUE INTERCUTTING throughout.

JAY

Protege?

ALVY

Charlie Hofbauer.

JAY

Very funny. I passed Charlie on to you, long, long ago.

Alvy really grinning now.

JAY

Hey. You love to teach. The kid wanted to learn. And we're doing Daniel a favor. Which can never hurt.

ALVY

You're saying Daniel loves his nephew so much, he's grateful for all we do.

JAY

I'm saying. When Daniel's brother died under, y'know...not-fully-explained circumstances. He felt a little...

ALVY

Guilty? For whacking a brother who stole from him. That's not in Daniel, believe me. Although...

Although.

ALVY

I could be wrong. He gave Charlie a large cushion-cut. Even set up the sale. Charlie's gonna clear a few bucks for himself. The kid's over the moon.

JAY

That kid couldn't get laid in a whore-house with a fistful of hundreds. Trust me, he'll screw this up.

Alvy enters a DECO APARTMENT BUILDING, and we DISSOLVE TO...

INT. CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

CLOSE on Charlie sleeping. He stirs, restless. WAKES with a start. A dream? A premonition? There is on the pillow beside him...

...a folded NOTE. He unfolds to read: I'M SORRY.

His eyes DART to the closet. It stands EMPTIED of her things. Needless to say...

The safe. Is open.

He stares. This can't be happening. His iPhone has a VOICE-MAIL. He grabs it up...

CHARLIE (praying)

Sandy, Sandy, Sandy, Sandy...

DANIEL (O.S.)

Good morning. The buyer called me, he can't see you this morning.

Oh thank god, thank god.

DANIEL (O.S.)

He expects you for drinks tonight. Seven o'clock, Top of the Ritz Carlton. And there is good news...

No. No, there isn't.

DANIEL (O.S.)

I softened him up. He's already at 68, I think you can muscle another couple of thousand. Get him to 70 at least. Just one thing...

Charlie dazed, beyond panic.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Don't spend your profit on that whore you call a girlfriend. She's only using you.

CLICK. Charlie alone in silence. A trapped hamster.

INT. LOBBY, 550 HILL - 11TH FLOOR - MORNING

At the 11th floor elevator bank, Rocker Girl stands, almost as if waiting for something. She is dressed in leopard print jeans and a black tank. Doc Martens. Her lazy dark eyes pass over the crowd. And from a side entrance comes...

...UPS GUY, 24, black, good-looking, well-built. He pushes a TROLLEY stacked with BOXES of varying sizes. As he approaches...

Rocker Girl hits buttons for both up and down. When the empty elevator arrives, she smiles, holds the door open for him. They ride together. She clocks his wedding ring.

ROCKER GIRL
I love married men.

He looks over with a pleasant, insincere smile.

ROCKER GIRL
You don't have kids.

Said as if she knew this. That does make him slightly uneasy. He looks away. She rests her hand on one of the BOXES.

ROCKER GIRL
Do you know which of these has
the really choice shit?

He looks her over.

UPS GUY
Would it make a difference?

ROCKER GIRL
Oh, yeh. To all concerned.

It's his floor. He throws her a quick, polite smile. As he wheels his trolley out...

ROCKER GIRL
You. Me. All two of us.

He turns back.

ROCKER GIRL
See you soon.

The doors CLOSE.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jay leans over Alvy's shoulder, looking at a large ROUND DIAMOND on the laptop screen.

ALVY
Okay, this is our decoy.

Description detail SCROLLS DOWN.

ALVY

Four point seven seven, D, VVS2.
Ideal cut. Hearts and arrows.
G.I.A..

JAY

So they'll start bidding at, what,
180?

ALVY

I told Moshe to start just under 200.
Once I bid Daniel past 210, there'll
be no other bidders. He'll beat me.
I'll look pissed.

Jay nodding, he's there.

ALVY

Then you push me to bid on his
crystal, but I couldn't care less.
I walk. You bid the minimum like
you fear my wrath.

JAY

Ah. That's where the acting comes in!

He grins at his buddy.

JAY

Seriously. You teaching me how to
lie?

INT. MOSHE'S OFFICE - DAY

Moshe's safe is open, the cash, the boxes of diamonds clear to see. He opens a RECTANGULAR PLASTIC CONTAINER full of medium sized diamonds. Turns them upside-down on the desktop's bright white PAPER. Hits the INTERCOM.

MOSHE

Come here.

When Maria arrives, he is peering at a stone. His smoke dangling from his lips, one eye through the loupe, the other eye on Maria. She can't tell, just stands inside the doorway.

MOSHE

I'm Moshe.

He puts a ten dollar BILL on the table. Still not looking up.

MOSHE

Tuna sandwich. Shop across the
square. Bring the change and the
receipt.

She hesitates. He ignores her. She approaches cautiously.
Takes the ten dollars.

MARIA

Do you like mayo or...

MOSHE

Carlos knows how to make a sandwich.

Says no more. She opens her mouth, but doesn't know what to say. She backs out through the doorway.

MOMENTS LATER.

Moshe at his window, watches Maria hurry across the square.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

The place is crowded, noisy. Fast food for those who eat only so they can get through the afternoon. She waits at the pick-up line. Carlos looks to her.

CARLOS

\$7.45

She steps up. He hands her a wrapped sandwich. She hands him the ten. He gives her \$2.55 change.

CARLOS

Moshe likes the receipt.

He hands it to her. She glances. It says: \$8.70. She starts to call out. Thinks again. Pockets the receipt and change.

INT. MOSHE'S OFFICE - DAY

Maria sets down the sandwich, the \$8.70 receipt, and \$1.30 worth of change. Moshe looks up from his work. Ignores the sandwich. Ignores the receipt. A dollar, a quarter, a nickel. He still has never looked at her.

MOSHE

Is this my change?

We can feel her heart POUNDING from here. He looks up now. To her eyes.

MOSHE

Maria. I know what the sandwich costs.

She is frozen to stone.

MOSHE

I paid Carlos twenty dollars. To give you the wrong receipt.

His eyes never blink. Just dead and direct.

MOSHE

Now that I know I can never trust you. Go home, Maria, there is no money for you today. Only the \$1.25 bus fare you have stolen from me.

He picks up his loupe and goes back to work, as if she has gone. But Maria hasn't moved. Except for the trembling.

MOSHE (not looking up)
 Are you waiting for a second chance?
 Around here, even first chances are
 very precious, very rare.

And then he glances up. As if a stray thought has occurred. He
 cocks his head to one side.

MOSHE
 But if. If there was such a thing.

He turns the glance her way.

MOSHE
 There would be, I suppose, no need
 to discuss the consequence of another
 betrayal?

MARIA
 Oh no, sir, there...

MOSHE
 There is no 'sir' in the diamond
 business. I am Moshe.

He studies her. She tries not to fidget.

MOSHE
 But if you proved of value. Why
 then, Maria, your life would change.

Yes. Yes, it would.

MOSHE
 I could help you finish school.
 While you work.

He nods. She would like that.

MOSHE
 One day. There would be a car. In
 your name. Would you like a Cadillac,
 Maria? Or would you prefer a Mercedes?

Looking in her eyes. As if he could read an answer there.

MOSHE
 And there would be a home. Small,
 but in a good neighborhood. A deed
 in your name. A place to raise your
 children. And a bank account to do
 it with.

She can scarcely breathe. It is a cruel trick.

But now the stern face has softened. There is nothing lascivious in his eyes. It seems more like kindness. From his pocket, a thick ROLL of HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. He peels one off. Hands it to her.

MOSHE

Go buy yourself a nicer dress.
One that fits you.

She is truly a fawn in headlights. This can't be happening.

MOSHE

Bring it with you to work. Tomorrow.

Tomorrow.

MOSHE

We'll be working late.

INT. BONHAM'S - DAY

CLOSE on an array of SEVENTEEN STONES of widely-varying size and color. Some are uncut CRYSTALS, others are polished DIAMONDS. We CLOSE on #15, Hofbauer's crystal, the one he loaned to Moshe at the pool.

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)

We move on to item #14, a 4.77 carat diamond, as described in your pamphlet. Shall we begin bidding at \$190,000?

REVERSE ANGLE. The room holds THIRTY or so DEALERS. We recognize Alvy next to Jay, Moshe across the room, then Ash, Shmuel, Daniel. First bid comes from Moshe...

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)

Can we see 195, please?

Alvy's hand raises slightly. As Moshe moves to respond...

DANIEL

Don't trouble yourself, Moshe. 200.

And Moshe's hand disappears.

AUCTIONEER

Thank you, Daniel.

ALVY (calmly)

Two oh five.

Daniel regards Alvy. Really? The dealers stir a bit at the challenge.

DANIEL

Two ten.

Alvy determines if Daniel is committed, then...

ALVY

Two fifteen.

DANIEL (looks fierce at Alvy)

Two hundred, sixteen thousand. Plus one dollar, for Alvy Simon.

Alvy's poker face slips a little. Shit. The auctioneer looks to Alvy. So does Daniel. So does everyone.

Alvy gives the slightest shake of his head.

The gavel BANGS DOWN. Sold to Daniel. Jay leans to Alvy...

JAY

Now will you look at crystal #15?

ALVY

I looked.

JAY

You don't see it?

ALVY

I don't.

Alvy stands. Walks out, acting the loser. Moshe follows...

AUCTIONEER (O.S.)

Crystal #15, presented for sale by Daniel Hofbauer. Shall we start at 150 thousand?

Jay looks around, uncertain. Hesitantly raises a hand. Daniel looks at him. Nobody else bids. The gavel rises.

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE

Alvy behind his desk. Across from him, a panicky Charlie.

ALVY

How hard can it be to find Sandra?

CHARLIE

I wouldn't know where to start, and there's no time. If I miss my meeting at the Ritz, the guy calls my uncle.

Almost in tears...

CHARLIE

Hide me, Alvy. Save me.

Alvy stares in his eyes.

ALVY

Why me, Charlie?

CHARLIE

You're like...my mentor.

ALVY

Really.

Uh-oh.

CHARLIE

I mean. I always thought you liked me.

ALVY
Nicest guy in your family.

Charlie sighs. Nods.

CHARLIE
And you're the nicest guy downtown.
Which isn't saying that much, either.

All his heart in this. His only chance.

CHARLIE
He's going to kill me, Alvy. You
know he will. And you're the only
one in this building who'd care.
(beat)
That's why it's you.

ALVY
How very flattering.

Alvy dials the phone. Doesn't look at Charlie.

ALVY
This is Alvy Simon. Please tell
Mr. Hofbauer that I have his nephew.

CHARLIE
ARE YOU FUCKING INSANE??

Alvy WHEELS on him with eyes that are harder than we could have
imagined. Charlie shuts the fuck up.

ALVY
Mornin', Daniel. Congratulations
on your D, VVS...

DANIEL (O.S.)
No hard feelings, I hope.

ALVY
I'm saving up my pennies, I'll get
you next time.
(beat)
Thing is. I've got Charlie with me.
He has something to tell you.

Charlie's eyes WIDEN. Alvy hands him the phone, covering the
mouthpiece...

ALVY
Tell him straight and fast. No spin.

Take the fucking phone. And Charlie does.

CHARLIE
Uncle. The diamond. It's missing.
And so is Sandy.

Deep. Silence.

CHARLIE

I'm worried maybe a thief broke in.
Maybe kidnapped her.

Alvy can't believe he did that. He reaches out and GRABS Charlie's face in his hands. You moron!

CHARLIE

But I guess. I guess she stole it.

DANIEL (O.S., very quiet)

I guess she did.

Beat.

CHARLIE

So Alvy and I are gonna straighten everything out.

DANIEL (O.S.)

I see. Well, that's good. Put Alvy on the phone.

Charlie terrified, but foolishly hopeful. Hands Alvy the phone.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Alvy, this is not your problem. Do not make it your problem, I say this in all friendship.

It is the scariest voice we've ever heard.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Give. My nephew. To me.

ALVY (a sigh)

Daniel. I can't do that.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Save your humanity, Alvy. Your guilt, your generosity. Save them for another occasion.

ALVY

You think I would call you with some bullshit and waste your time? With \$50,000 missing?

DANIEL (O.S.)

Sixty.

Alvy looks at Charlie. Fifty or sixty? Charlie is confused.

ALVY

Charlie told me it was fifty. We'll clear that up. Tomorrow, twelve o'clock. Diamond Club. Everyone will be there. You'll have every penny that's on the memo.

DANIEL (O.S.)

There was no memo.

CHARLIE

There was no memo.

DANIEL (O.S.)
The price was sixty.

Alvy can't believe this is happening. Before he can know what to do, he hears a CLICK. The line is dead.

CHARLIE
My god, Alvy you...you won't be sorry.
I'll work for...

ALVY
Shhhh. He said sixty.

CHARLIE
He's changing it, Alvy! Why?! Why
would he do that...?

Alvy takes a key off its chain.

ALVY
Raise every penny you can on every-
thing you own, whoever you have to
call, whatever you have to do.
(beat)
And I'll make some calls.

Charlie nods, okay, okay, sure. Wiping tears.

Suddenly, JAY enters the room. He's smiling, holding the large CRYSTAL. Sees the scene before him, like...wtf?

ALVY (hands Charlie the key)
My place. He won't go there.

CHARLIE
I love her, Alvy. Fuck me. I
still do. I'm so stupid.

ALVY
You weren't stupid, Charlie, and it's
not your fault. You loved someone who
betrayed you. It's a big club.

Jay watches as Alvy stands, tells Charlie in a voice at once gentle and firm...

ALVY
Time to get moving.

EXT. SANDWICH JOINT - LATER

Alvy exits a neighborhood joint with a tall container of coffee. He stops. There, at one of the sidewalk tables...

...Hobbes is just finishing a sandwich with Jay. Hobbes is jovial, doing all the talking. Jay eats slowly, doing the listening. As Alvy watches, Hobbes finishes. Gives Jay a hearty slap on the shoulder. And leaves him there.

So Alvy ambles over. Sits.

ALVY

What, you got a new boyfriend?

JAY

I'm cheating on you. I warned you to be more attentive.

(chews)

No flowers, no drugs...

ALVY

What's his story?

JAY

Just took an office in the building. South African. High roller, it seems. He sure likes you.

Yeh?

JAY

Says that stone you picked made him a bundle at Cartier.

ALVY (shrugs)

Beginner's luck.

JAY

That's what I told him.

INT. ROSS DRESS-FOR-LESS - DUSK

Maria shops for her dress, as her girlfriend ROSA looks on. Maria considers one that is rather low cut, slit halfway up the thigh. She holds it against her body.

ROSA (Spanish)

I think it's a mistake.

Maria looks over.

ROSA (Spanish)

If you're right about tomorrow night, there is no longer a need to attract the guy.

She has Maria's attention.

ROSA (Spanish)

But if you're wrong. You don't want to impersonate a whore.

Direct words. Maria reflects. Reaches to the rack, withdrawing...

...a little BLACK DRESS.

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Maria hurries in with a double arm load of groceries. Little Ramon is watching TV, he RUNS to her, babbling in a mixture of English and subtitled Spanish...

RAMON

The deer went to the water. And the alligator ate all of it. Even the feet.

ESTELLA (O.S.)

That's no deer, it's a wild-beast.

Maria sets the bags down by the door. Lifts up Ramon for his kiss.

MARIA

Then what did the alligator do?

RAMON

He pooped him out.

MARIA

Good.

Estella is taking a bowl out of the microwave. She calls back without looking...

ESTELLA

It's the last rice, but I'll share.

MARIA

Thank you. Then I'll share, too.

Estella turns. Sees ALL the groceries. She is in shock.

MARIA

You put these away. I'm going to change, and then make us a chicken for dinner.

Maria goes to the bedroom, her smile long gone. She undresses. Takes the little black dress from the Ross bag. Holds it against her body in the mirror. Slips it over her head.

Turns this way and that in the mirror. A cold, appraising look. It'll do. We see a hint of the sadness and regret, that her circumstances have come to this.

ESTELLA (O.S.)

Beautiful, Mama.

Maria's smile flashes into place.

MARIA

It's just for work.

Turns to see if that sold. Hard to tell.

MARIA

Angela will stay with you tomorrow. While I work. If I don't get home, don't worry. If the meeting goes too late, I might even decide to just sleep there.

Turn up the smile. Sell a little harder.

MARIA

It's a good job. It's worth it.

And Estella nods, cautiously. She hopes so.

INT. L.A. ATHLETIC CLUB BAR - SAME MOMENT

As exclusive as Los Angeles gets. Alvy in the burnished bar of privilege sharing a drink with his personal mentor and Consigliere.

DOMINICO SCARLATTI, 77, dressed in dark cashmere, nursing a 30-year-old Glenlivet. Fine snow-white hair, deep tan, handsome features with clear blue eyes that radiate compassion and concern. Behind these eyes, the merciless intellect that has sliced up opposing attorneys for decades.

ALVY

Do you ever give me advice I want to hear?

SCARLATTI

Of course not. That's the advice you can always get from yourself. You only come to me for the pain.

Alvy does adore this old man.

SCARLATTI

All I have to do is tell you the truth. Watch you struggle against it. And talk you down.

Alvy sees Scarlatti's glass is nearly empty. He refreshes it.

ALVY

If I can get Hofbauer his money, he'll be grateful. He doesn't want to kill his nephew.

SCARLATTI

The point is. He doesn't want to not kill his nephew. You have to make a choice. Charlie Hofbauer's life or your profit on that crystal you bought with Moshe.

ALVY

They're connected?

SCARLATTI

By Hofbauer's ego. You fucked him at that auction. Made him overpay for the stone he bought.

ALVY

Maybe I thought the price was fair. Maybe I was wrong.

SCARLATTI

You are never wrong and he knows it.
And when he finds that you and Jay
were playing bait and switch. So you
could walk out as if you were sulking,
leaving Jay to buy Hofbauer's crystal
at the opening bid...

ALVY

You know, you used to be fun.

SCARLATTI

Odd. You never were.

He spreads his hands. Only one solution...

SCARLATTI

Go kiss the ring. Tell Daniel he
gets half your profit on the crystal.
Say it's in gratitude, for his past
business and in hopes of more. He
will assume it's solely because you
fear him.

(beat)

Then, you give Charlie up.

ALVY

What does that give Daniel?

SCARLATTI

Proof of concept. Proof of fear.

He sees his truth has landed.

SCARLATTI

And anyway, Charlie has a better
chance of mercy if Daniel doesn't
feel challenged by you.

The Consigliere sells it with a gentle smile.

SCARLATTI

Fear is the only thing that can make
Daniel Hofbauer comfortable. With a
mind quicker than his own.

ALVY

Making Daniel comfortable with me.
Makes me uncomfortable with myself.
But here's the good news...

(a toast)

You're in my will.

INT. MARCEL'S CUTTING ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE on our large transparent CRYSTAL, as seen through a loupe.
PULL BACK to see MARCEL, 79, diamond cutter extraordinaire.
The resident artist of his trade is bent, wizened, ravaged by
70 years of cheap cigarettes and cutting room dungeons. He
looks once more, to follow...

...a thin black LINE that has been INKED onto the stone. At
Marcel's shoulder...

ALVY

If we use that cleavage plane, we get a sixteen-carat stone, plus two twos.

Marcel still studying the crystal.

ALVY

I had Jay get it for the 150 opener. If we pull a 16 carat out of her...
(a wink)
She's worth 260. Maybe more.

MARCEL

When it doesn't work. You have a pile of worthless fractures. Then, you are talking money.

ALVY

Oh, scuse me. I thought you were a professional. My mistake.

He SNATCHES the crystal from Marcel's wax ball.

ALVY

I'll cut it myself.

MARCEL

Good. Better you fail. And what happens if Daniel finds you played him?

ALVY

He'll have learned a valuable life lesson.

Marcel studies his friend. Shit. Holds out his hand. The crystal goes back into his palm.

MARCEL

I'm going to use the saw. It will take a few hours.

ALVY

If I stay and kibitz?

Alvy smiles. Marcel sighs.

MARCEL

It's a beautiful stone, Alvy. Nicest to pass through my office in years. What you see inside it...I want to see that too. I'll try to get you your 16. I am not so sure about the rest.

ALVY

I know it's possible. I know you will see it, and the two twos. Matching two carat pear shapes! Earrings for...

And then he shrugs.

MARCEL

Giving diamonds is like a drug dealer snorting his own merchandise. Bad habit. And anyway...

Anyway.

MARCEL

I thought there was no girlfriend. Anymore.

A held look. No answer except...

ALVY

Get me the sixteen. And the twos.

Nods to himself. Heads for the door.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND 550 HILL - MORNING

UPS VAN rumbles into an alleyway. Up ahead, an abandoned old KLUNKER is parked, BLOCKING exit in that direction. The van stops by the entrance to the building's underground garage. The driver gets out. He is our UPS GUY.

He walks to the old car, which is LOCKED and empty. He goes to his van and CLIMBS into the back, to arrange his deliveries.

INTO the alley comes a BLACK MERCEDES SUV with tinted windows. It pulls up BEHIND the UPS van, totally blocking it.

The UPS driver sees the situation he's in. Starts to grow uneasy. From the Mercedes steps...

...Rocker Girl. She leaves her SUV door wide open, steps toward the UPS van. Looks past it at the car.

ROCKER GIRL

Wow. That's awkward.

The guy just stares at her.

ROCKER GIRL

I mean, someone could pull up behind you, totally block you in...

Yeh?

ROCKER GIRL

Jack your load.

The look holds.

ROCKER GIRL

Why don't I call security. Have 'em tow that piece of junk.

UPS GUY

It's okay. I got it.

She shrugs. Your funeral. Gets into her SUV, GUNS it backwards like a rocket ship, halfway down the alley. The guy still staring. Then...

...climbs INTO the back of his van. To arrange his deliveries.

INT. LOBBY, 550 HILL - LATER

UPS Guy exits a garage elevator into the lobby. He wheels the trolley to the elevator bank servicing the offices. Waiting by an open elevator is Rocker Girl. She sends a sunny smile, which he ignores...

They enter a car alone. Between floors, she...HITS the STOP button. He steps between her and his trolley.

ROCKER GIRL

Here's what's going to happen.

UPS GUY

This is, like, a prank, yeh? You're pledging some...sorority or something?

ROCKER GIRL

Do I look like a college girl to you?

UPS GUY

Like a high school girl. You some tough guy, you're carrying or some such thing?

She just brings a finger to her lips. Shhh.

ROCKER GIRL

There'll be a day when you get in that van. And you'll just keep driving.

UPS GUY (smiles)

Really.

ROCKER GIRL

Uh-huh. I am wired every place you'll need to fence the load.

UPS GUY (is this for real?)

Good to know.

ROCKER GIRL

I'll take 40%. When that day comes, there's no wife, no anyone...

UPS GUY

Just you?

ROCKER GIRL

In your dreams. There's just you going where I tell you. Selling what I tell you. Sending me my slice. And never coming back.

She hits the button. The elevator LURCHES to life.

UPS GUY
You're serious.

ROCKER GIRL
As rectal cancer.

Next floor. He starts to get off. She HOLDS the door open with her leg.

ROCKER GIRL
You won't really have a choice.
When the offer comes, it'll be
clear you can't turn it down.

She moves her leg. The door begins to CLOSE.

ROCKER GIRL
Just relax and enjoy it, big guy.
It won't hurt a bit.

The doors CLOSE. Her face is cold and hard. She hits the LOBBY button.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Rocker Girl enters the alley. She UNLOCKS the klunker blocking the UPS van. Climbs in...

BLASTS off. Gone.

INT. DIAMOND CLUB, 16TH TOP FLOOR - 550 HILL - NOON

The surprisingly modest confines of the DIAMOND CLUB, top of 550, East LA's industrial complex beneath the window. All the dealers of consequence are here, and we see faces we know.

Shmuel enters and sees the only remaining chair is beside his brother. Ambles over and plops down. Moshe doesn't even acknowledge him and that truth also weighs on Shmuel. Finally...

SHMUEL
You should call home more often.

Moshe ignores that. It takes a bit, as men in the room gossip, waiting, but Shmuel decides to get through to his brother.

SHMUEL
Our sister had a baby.

Moshe turns with a layer of surprise, then turns away, says nothing. Contemplates this face from underneath his scowl.

SHMUEL
Another mouth to feed.

MOSHE
You feed it.

Shmuel plans to. Moshe turns away.

MOSHE

Alvy!! How long will this take?!

Across the room, Charlie sits with his face in his hands, drugs haven't dulled his terror enough. Alvy beside him, doing a crossword, looks up.

MOSHE

What are we doing here?

The door FLIES OPEN. Filled with the frame of DANIEL HOFBAUER.

He walks slowly toward Charlie, empowered by being right. And having so much experience at murder.

DANIEL (bland)

Good afternoon, Charlie. You're looking well.

Charlie struggles to his feet, looks like he died a month ago.

ALVY (to the room)

The diamond we are discussing is a 7.13 carat cushion cut. SI2. J color. EGL cert LA53761. If any of you ever hold this stone, whether your money becomes entangled with it or not, it belongs to one of these gentlemen, depending on the outcome here today.

Alvy holds out a photocopy of the diamond's CERTIFICATE. Daniel takes it as Charlie shakes. Reads.

DANIEL

This is the stone.

ALVY

You gave it on memo to Charlie for fifty thousand...

DANIEL

Sixty.

ALVY

You told Charlie 50. That was the agreement.

Daniel reflects. Decides.

DANIEL

Your proposition, Alvy. I want my money, or we address his crime.

CHARLIE

My crime?

DANIEL

You are guilty, as far as these men are all concerned. Being stupid is a crime when men trust you not to be!

ALVY

Charlie agrees that he has taken this stone from you and owes you fifty thousand dollars.

DANIEL (to Charlie)

How will you pay me? Rob from somebody else?!

(to the room)

Will you allow him to remain in the business when you know he's in trouble? He'll rob from every one of you, here, there. To pay me.

Shakes his head in pure disgust.

DANIEL

Give him to me. He's a problem. I will take care of this problem.

CHARLIE (to Alvy)

He'll kill me. He'll just wait to do it. Alvy, please...

ALVY

Charlie has assigned to me everything he owns. Every man in the room has kicked in whatever debt they owe to me.

DANIEL

How short from 60 are you?

ALVY

From 50, we are only \$12,338 short. But if we can shake hands. If we can say this is over. Finished forever. Then 50 can become 60, and this is my personal note for \$22,338, payable in 30 days.

He hands Daniel the note. Daniel looks at it.

DANIEL

How would this boy ever pay you back?

ALVY

He will work for me. He starts tomorrow.

Daniel looks up. Alvy's hand is waiting.

DANIEL

Shrewd. What a coup.

Daniel ignores the outstretched hand. He TOSSES the promissory note to the FLOOR. Takes one step to TOWER over his nephew. An involuntary whimper escapes from Charlie. Daniel RAISES his massive arms, and...

...HUGS his nephew with rough affection.

DANIEL

So good to have my nephew once more.

His eyes flick to Ash, who quickly picks the promissory note OFF the floor, hands it over. Daniel turns to Alvy. Big ice cold smile.

DANIEL

An unexpected pleasure.

Holds his massive hand out. Nearly crushes Alvy's. Their eyes lock for a full beat. Then...

DANIEL (to all)

A joyous Shabbat.

And Daniel is GONE. The room can breathe again. Alvy looks to Charlie, who can scarcely believe he's still alive.

ALVY

And you thought there'd be tension.

Silly boy.

EXT. WATER GRILL RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

A black MERCEDES SEDAN pulls up to the Water Grill, Moshe slides out. Maria waits, wondering if he will open her door. He's already at the entrance. Impatient. The valet opens her door and she steps out in the little black dress.

Stunning.

INT. WATER GRILL

They walk through the lobby. She carries a moleskin notebook.

We approach the table, where ORTEGA sits with his GEMOLOGIST. Waves to Moshe, who slips one arm around Maria's waist. Her eyes cut to him.

MOSHE

So he'll think he knows why you're here.

LONG ANGLE. We watch Moshe and Maria arrive at the farthest table. Ortega RISES, he is quite tall and dashing. He makes a fuss over Maria, flirting in a pleasant and friendly way. The gemologist doesn't bother. We join the table, as they arrive...

ORTEGA (to Maria)

Mei Lin is from Malaysia?

MARIA (slight Asian accent)

Kuala Lumpur. You have seen?

ORTEGA

Oh, yes. I've seen everything.
The curse of global enterprise.

She is impressed, deferent. An Asian girlfriend.

ORTEGA

Moshe says you 'help around the office.' What does he have you doing exactly?

MARIA

Everything, little things, coffee.

She looks to Moshe: Should I go further? Moshe is scary, stone faced. She decides to go for it, anyway.

MARIA (giggles)

Neck rub.

Moshe releases his slightest smile.

ORTEGA (in Spanish)

Excuse my English, dear. I would be more comfortable in Spanish.

She blinks. Shakes her head, embarrassed.

MARIA

I speak Mandarin. And Malay, of course. And...a little bit Francais?

ORTEGA (to Moshe)

You should have her learn Spanish. Then, Mei Lin and I could make the deals and screw you over.

MOSHE

Sounds irresistible.

LATER. The meal is finished. The DIAMONDS are carried in a high tech PORTABLE GEM LAB. The gemologist studies through his loupe.

GEMOLOGIST (to Ortega, in Spanish)

It's one thing to pay 100K for gems worth 90, to launder for the cartel. But these aren't worth 90. Be lucky to resell for 75 to 80.

ORTEGA (smiling, in Spanish)

Doesn't matter, we close at any price. Tonight we have only marked bills.

Maria pulls out her CELL phone, as if it vibrated. Looks curiously at the screen. 'Answers...'

MARIA

Yes? He is just here.

Hands the phone to Moshe. Who 'listens.'

MOSHE (into phone)

One second.

(to Ortega)

Excuse us, please.

(to Maria)

Mei Lin, come and bring your book.

They move out of earshot but still in plain view of Ortega. He watches closely as Moshe talks into the cell, gives Maria notes. As they speak to each other, we CLOSE on them to hear...

MARIA

He said they'll pay any price tonight.
Because all their bills are marked.

Really. Moshe cannot quite resist a smile.

MOSHE

Did they say anything about their
business? Or their dealings with me?

MARIA

No. Did I maybe miss something?

MOSHE

No, no. You did very well.

They return to the table.

MOSHE

Most embarrassing. I'm afraid tonight
I can only offer you supper.

Sees the flicker of reaction.

MOSHE

I've had another offer for these
stones. A very high offer. More,
I think than they are worth. Again,
my apolog...

ORTEGA

Well, as it turns out, my gemologist
here is quite taken with the stones.

(beat)

I would consider increasing our offer.

INT. MOSHE'S MERCEDES - LATER

Moshe pulls up to a large brick building in an alleyway.
Maria stares at the building, The Edison bar/restaurant.

MOSHE (quietly)

Why did I take marked bills?

Her eyes come over.

MOSHE

I have no trouble fencing 120K of
marked bills for 100. Maria, we
made forty thousand dollars tonight.

He takes the ROLL of HUNDREDS from his pocket, and hands it
toward Maria.

MOSHE

And ten percent of that belongs
to you.

Her eyes flash with SHOCK. What did he say? And in a tone that is almost kind...

MOSHE

Go ahead. Those are hundreds.
Count yourself forty of them.
(no smile)
Then put them in your bag. Next
to my \$1.25 change.

She holds the wad of money. Stares at it.

MOSHE

Don't worry, Maria. Nothing like
you are fearing will happen to you.

MARIA

I'm not afraid, sir.

He cuts her a look.

MARIA

I'm not afraid. Moshe.

MOSHE

Good. After what you've done tonight,
you have a future Maria. If you'll
reach out for it.

She waits. He nods toward The Edison bar.

MOSHE

I don't like leaving my car with the
valet here. Go inside, all right?

He smiles. She nods, slightly hesitant.

MOSHE

Order me a Negroni. I'll be right in.

INT. THE EDISON BAR - NIGHT

Big, dark, hip industrial watering hole, with glowing orange
edison bulbs. Packed with humans. Among whom...

Alvy sits alone. With his beer and his iPhone. He sets the
phone down now, seeing Maria weaving through to the bar. He
smiles, an intriguing surprise. Stands, goes to take the stool
beside her.

MARIA

Oh, hi!

She's clearly surprised. And not displeased.

ALVY

It's good to see you. That's a
very pretty dress.

Said in a friendly way. She is smiling.

MARIA

Moshe is just parking his car.
I was working with him tonight.

ALVY

Yeh? Was it fun?

It was. Yes.

ALVY

Well, good for him. It's an
opportunity, you know. He can
teach you so much.

MARIA

It's very exciting. And a little
overwhelming, I guess.

INTERCUT: EXT. EDISON BAR - NIGHT

Moshe stands silently, watching Alvy and Maria through the
window. He nods slightly to himself. He'd planned this.

INT. EDISON BAR - NIGHT

BACK to the bar, Alvy has drawn a pouch from his inside pocket.
He lifts out...

...two large DIAMONDS. One brilliant WHITE, the other pale
YELLOW. He places one in each of her palms.

ALVY

Which one is worth more? What
do you think?

She is fascinated by everything about this.

MARIA

I've no idea. How do you tell?

ALVY

There are four C's. Cut, color,
clarity and carat weight. Every
dealer knows that. But there's
something they don't.

MARIA

Is it a secret?

ALVY

It's a fifth C. Charisma. It
means...

MARIA

I know what it means.

He has to smile.

ALVY

Sure you do. In fiction. And in
life. Well, in diamonds, it means
a special light coming out of a
stone. That most dealers can't see.

MARIA

But you can.

Conviction in that. He points to the stones in her hands.

ALVY

The white is sparkly. But ordinary.
Ah, but this yellow...

She gazes down at it.

MARIA

Charisma.

(beat)

I knew I liked it better. I
just didn't know why.

She looks up to him but...

...his smile FREEZES. There at the host podium, still dressed
in her hospital scrubs...

...a SHOCKED Stephanie. Anger, hurt, vulnerability. Even fear.
She turns and...

...BOLTS from the bar. Alvy JUMPS UP...

ALVY

Sorry for my unseemly panic.
That was my girlfriend.

He starts to go, then remembers. PLUCKS the diamonds OUT of her
hands.

ALVY

Bye.

And takes off, RUNNING through the place.

EXT. EDISON BAR - SAME MOMENT

Alvy BURSTS through the door and down the street. Moshe watches
him go. A slight smile. Then...

He heads into the bar.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY - NIGHT

In a darkened alley beside the bar, Stephanie faces a wall and
cries her heart out. FOOTFALLS now, clicking on the pavement.
Hands that take her shoulders from behind. Pull her gently to
him.

She lets him hold her in her misery.

STEPHANIE

I'm not crying over that girl.

ALVY

You know Moshe. She works for Moshe.
He wants me to teach her diamonds.

STEPHANIE

How credible. Some random geisha supermodel leering at you in her club dress, while you teach her the tricks of your trade. Then what, she teaches you the tricks of hers?

She turns around. So she can see his eyes.

ALVY

In the building, she's shy and you don't notice her. She does clean up semi-attractive, doesn't she?
(on Steph's look)
Okay, hotter than shit.

STEPHANIE

Fuck all men. Looks aren't everything.

ALVY

Shut up. It's your strong suit.

And he kisses her. She lets him. Kisses back. A little calmer.

ALVY

I thought you couldn't make it.

STEPHANIE

The surgery got cancelled, it happens. They should send emergency texts to all boyfriends to ditch their... 'proteges,' whatever.

He nods. They should.

STEPHANIE

Alvy, I don't like myself.

She looks in his eyes.

STEPHANIE

I cheated on you. And I blamed you for it. So I see you with this girl, and...

It's all so screwed up.

STEPHANIE

And I say, of course. I made this all happen.

He dries her tears.

ALVY

Well. You are very influential.

STEPHANIE

I came here to sleep with you and I don't even know why anymore.
(struggling)
I'm not sure I love you. And I know you don't love me.

ALVY

Of course I love you. You think I'm with you cause I lost a bet?

STEPHANIE

You are addicted to the stones. I knew it the first date, just like little Madame Butterfly in there knows it. And I'm tired of being mad at myself for resenting you for being who you are.

ALVY

Thanks. I think.

STEPHANIE

I'm still a little crazy about you. Are you still a little crazy about me?

ALVY

A lot.

He takes her face in his hands. Kisses her.

STEPHANIE

Can we leave it like this for now? No big official break-up? Is that okay?

He shakes his head. Nope.

ALVY

My place. Cook you some fattening pasta. Have some sex. Go to sleep in your arms.

She thinks it over.

STEPHANIE

Okay. Let's leave it there.

INT. MARCEL'S CUTTING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Marcel staring at someone we can't yet see.

MARCEL

I haven't the slightest fucking idea.

REVERSE ANGLE to see it is...

ROCKER GIRL

Except you do. Alvy Simon bought Daniel's crystal. You're his cutter. Now you've got two choices.

We didn't know Marcel could look this scared.

ROCKER GIRL

You'll tell me. Or I'll send my dad in here so fucking fast.

He's searching her eyes. Not the slightest doubt.

EXT. ECHO PARK - DAY

Rocker Girl in the sunshine. Shorts and big boots. Stretches out those legs. Takes a sandwich from a sack. And...

...a disposable phone. Rips it free from its package. Texts: IF YOU WANT TO BE ALIVE THIS WEEKEND, CALL THIS NUMBER NOW.

Unwraps her sandwich. Starts to eat. Watching children play by the water. Her phone RINGS. Screen says BLOCKED. Lifts the phone...

ROCKER GIRL

Where are you calling from?

SANDRA (O.S.)

A blocked land line. That's all you need to know.

ROCKER GIRL

I've been busting my scrawny ass to cut you a deal. You ready?

No answer.

ROCKER GIRL

You bring that diamond tonight and lay it at Daniel's feet, and you'll be fine.

Still silent.

ROCKER GIRL

Daniel will have been paid twice. Once by Alvy Simon, and now he'll have his diamond back.

SANDRA (O.S.)

That's all I have to do?

ROCKER GIRL

You still have to kiss his ass, show up at his home, pay your respects, apologize. Cry a little. You can manage that can't you, Sandy?

SANDRA (O.S.)

Why his home?

ROCKER GIRL

That was my idea. So he's not inconvenienced, and you'll feel safe. Rather meet him in an empty warehouse or a dark alley?

She can hear Sandra crying softly. Rocker Girl's eyes are hard, but the voice softens...

ROCKER GIRL

Oh, sweetie...

SANDRA (O.S.)
I don't know what I was thinking.
I had this guy in Phoenix...

ROCKER GIRL
Sugar, we've all got a guy in Phoenix.
And there isn't one of them who
wouldn't be better off giving Daniel a
call and turning you in.

More crying. Rocker Girl ROLLS her eyes. At last...

SANDRA (O.S.)
How can I ever thank you?

ROCKER GIRL
We'll think of something. Love you,
girl.

CLICKS OFF. Reflects a beat. TOSSES the phone into a trash-
can.

DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. DANIEL'S MANSION - THAT NIGHT

LONG ANGLE. The butler RAUL lets a visitor into the grand
entryway. It is Charlie, with his leather carrying case.

HIGH ANGLE. Raul walking him down the endless palatial main
hallway. We follow, DOWN a flight of stairs. Raul opens a
door, ushers him into...

INT. GAME ROOM - NIGHT

As Charlie enters, the door closes and softly LOCKS behind him.
He doesn't hear it, for the SHOCK of seeing...

...SANDRA on the sofa. She is equally stunned to see him.
Charlie looks down to find...

...the entire floor of the game room is covered with a thin
sheet of TRANSPARENT PLASTIC. Charlie's eyes shoot UP to see...

Daniel has appeared from the far door. Rocker Girl on his arm.
In his hand...

...a 9mm GLOCK. A frozen instant of eye contact with his
nephew. Daniel RAISES the gun toward Charlie, Sandra SCREAMS,
Daniel turns and EMPTIES FOUR SHOTS into her, BLOWING Sandra out
of FRAME as Charlie SCREAMS.

Daniel looks now into Rocker Girl's eyes...

DANIEL
A disapproving daughter.

ROCKER GIRL (a held stare)
Sorry to break your heart.

Glock still in his hand, Daniel walks slowly to a trembling Charlie. Looks down at him.

DANIEL
Nephew. She was never the girl
for you.

And for the second time. Daniel HUGS Charlie tight. Tears of relief and residual terror fall down Charlie's face.

ROCKER GIRL
I'll get Raul to tidy up.

INT. INTEGRITY DIAMONDS - MORNING

Maria looks up from her laptop. Smiles.

MARIA
What happened to your girlfriend?

REVERSE ANGLE to see Alvy. He holds a big shopping bag.

ALVY
You.

Maria blushes slightly.

MARIA
She's seen you with women before.

ALVY
Take a compliment, Maria. They don't
look like you.

She looks down now. Truly embarrassed.

MARIA
I'm sure it was the dress.

ALVY
She's fine, we're fine, it's all good.
I'm just sorry I had to run off.

He sets before her a large plastic bag stuffed with candies.

MARIA
Very nice. Are those her favorites?

ALVY
Sea-salt caramels. My favorites.
She prefers pastries.

Maria is unwrapping two caramels. Hands one to him. Pops one in her mouth. A look of genuine delight.

MARIA
She's missing out. I'll have a talk
with her.

ALVY
Would you? Oh, and sorry, Amazon
doesn't gift wrap.

From the shopping bag, a stack of books. He sets them before her, one at a time.

ALVY
 Diamonds. Gems and Gemology.
 Handbook of Gem Identification.
 History and Mythology of the
 World's Greatest..

He looks up. She is staring in his eyes so directly.

MARIA (very soft)
 Thank you. Alvy.

The look holds for a telling moment. Then, he reaches into the bottom of the bag. Draws out some PAPERBACK NOVELS. Her eyes dancing as she thumbs through...

MARIA
 Faulkner, Philip Roth, Salinger,
 Bellow, Sinclair Lewis...

She looks up. Grins.

MARIA
 No Hemingway. Cool.

ALVY
 Well. One has to have standards.

She nods. Reading, turning pages.

ALVY
 Why did you quit?

MARIA
 I was accepted at UCLA. But I got
 pregnant. My dad freaked. My mom
 let him cut me off. I went to work...

ALVY
 The child's father...?

She looks at him, like, is that a serious question.

MARIA
 I scrimped and saved, as Mom would
 say, three years. Then, different
 baby, different daddy. And that was
 the end of...

Now she's silent.

ALVY
 Say it. The end of...?

MARIA
 Of everything.

ALVY
 It's not, you know. Not anymore.
 I promise.

She stares in his eyes.

MARIA

How can you say that?

ALVY

Because. I know charisma.

INT. MOSHE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Moshe stands at his desk, excited in a way we could never have imagined possible. Alvy and Jay together, grinning. What the hell is going on? Now Alvy takes from his pocket...

...a MASSIVE EMERALD CUT DIAMOND. He hands it to Moshe, who is transfixed. His voice nearly hushed...

MOSHE

My God, the color. Is it an I?

JAY (better still)

H.

Moshe nods, almost in reverence.

MOSHE

How. How can it be so white?

ALVY

The crystal had a yellow skin.
I had a hunch.

MOSHE

This is worth...?

He shakes his head.

JAY

Whatever you want to ask.

MOSHE

A million?

ALVY

Maybe. Maybe more.

Moshe GRABS Alvy and KISSES him! Jay laughs.

ALVY

Jay thinks we have a buyer.
Right here in the building.

MOSHE

Nobody has that kind of...

JAY

The new guy. Hobbes. He's drowning
in cash, connected everywhere.
Looking to play in the big leagues.

Moshe looks to Alvy. What do you think?

ALVY

Right now, I'm not in a hurry. Just thinking it over.

REVERSE ANGLE to Maria in the open doorway. Unnoticed by the men, she's seen it all.

MOSHE

And the rest?

Alvy removes a small plastic baggie with MATCHING PEAR SHAPED DIAMONDS...

ALVY

Four fourteen total weight. Perfect match. Same color, clean.

Moshe palms the baggie.

MOSHE

So. You pay me and Jay. And give the pair to your girlfriend.

Sees the hesitation. Alvy and Jay glance at each other.

MOSHE

Ah. She's not such a girlfriend anymore.

No answer.

MOSHE

These should be for someone. Truly important.

Maria, still unnoticed, watching Alvy think. He lifts the baggie from Moshe's hand.

ALVY

You know. I'll take them, after all.

And smiles.

ALVY

Just in case.

HOLD on Maria. She would give a great deal to know what's behind those words.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Alvy going to his car, heading out. Someone is leaning against it, waiting for him. In a sleek little dress.

ROCKER GIRL

Hullo, Alvy.

They've never met. So he wears his pleasant smile.

ROCKER GIRL

I'm the girl who had a nice chat with your cutter. But he's been afraid to tell you, yes?

Whoa. He doesn't know which way to jump.

ROCKER GIRL

You're wondering where you've seen me before. Maybe at Daniel's.

ALVY

You're a friend of his.

ROCKER GIRL

Hardly. I'm his daughter. So I know him too well for that.

Ah.

ROCKER GIRL

Sixteen carats. Congratulations.

Wow. A held beat.

ALVY

Some days, you eat the bear. Some days, the bear eats you.

ROCKER GIRL

Not today. I'm never telling my father. Ever. And you don't owe me a fucking thing.

And she just walks off. Without turning...

ROCKER GIRL

Have a lovely day.

INT. HOBBS' OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on the 16-carat white DIAMOND. PULL BACK as Hobbes sets down his loupe. He gazes at the stone. While Alvy gazes at him. They are alone.

HOBBS

It's perfect. Exactly what I'm looking for.

He glances up.

HOBBS

I have a high-end connection in Moscow. I'd like to make a bit of a splash. Did you say an even million?

ALVY

I don't know. I'm only just deciding how to bring it to market.

HOBBS

Shall we say one million two hundred thousand? To take it off that market?

Alvy thinks. Nods once.

HOBBS

Splendid.

He hands the diamond back to Alvy.

HOBBS

I'll bring you a cashier's check in the morning. And pick up the stone.

HOLD on his smile. DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. SWAN POND, BEL AIR HOTEL - DAY

Hobbes alone with his cell phone. Watching TWO ELEGANT SWANS drift along the surface of a green pond.

HOBBS

Hofbauer won't be a problem, I promise you.

INTERCUT: INT. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, LONDON - NIGHT

TRAVERS BLAINE, 48, has stepped into the foyer to take the call. He is an image of perfection. The face hypnotically striking. A manner that suggests power beyond power. The door to his box is still open, we see darkened theater, hear Puccini.

BLAINE

You're certain? Mr. Hofbauer seems like a man who's used to absolute power.

HOBBS (O.S.)

Trust me. I've canvassed everyone in the building. Hell, everyone in the business. Hofbauer is a problem that money can solve.

(beat)

It's the other one. Who puzzles me.

BLAINE

Your diamond whisperer? Independence, integrity, I don't hear anything that would disqualify Mr. Simon.

HOBBS (O.S.)

Normally I don't listen much to that garbage, anyway. But when I'm with him, there's a scent of something...

In the doorway of the box, a BREATHTAKING WOMAN in her gown. Blaine sends the woman a smile, at once charming and instructing her to leave him alone. She does.

BLAINE

Well, think of something that would help him learn...

Heads back toward the door.

BLAINE
...to appreciate our goodwill.

INTERCUT: EXT. SWAN POND, BEL AIR HOTEL

Hobbes' cold smile.

HOBBS
Well, with your permission. I may
have found exactly that.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO...

INT. DIVE BAR, L.A. LIVE - LATE NIGHT

Ultimate jammed, loud, dark space. RACK FOCUS to the farthest corner. Two MEN lean to each other beneath the racket. We can just make out that one of them is HOBBS. As the ANGLE SHIFTS, we suddenly recognize his companion...

Jay. CLOSE on them now, to hear...

JAY
You might say the theory is.
What he doesn't know won't hurt
him. Or us.

Hobbes finds this intriguing.

HOBBS
So Mr. Hofbauer doesn't know.

Jay grins. Nope. HOLD on their look, and...

DISSOLVE TO...

INT. ALVY'S OFFICE - DAY

Alvy enters. Throws his case on his desk, and FREEZES...

The doors of the giant safe are OPEN. All of the cash. All of the diamonds. Are GONE. His eyes FLASH to...

...Jay's desk. His goofy hat rack. Empty. Every item, every photo. GONE. The phone RINGING.

He looks to the screen: DANIEL HOFBAUER.

HOLD on Alvy. And...

SMASH TO BLACK. ROLL END CREDITS.