BEING THE RICARDOS

Written by

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FADE IN:

We meet--individually--three people who are the older versions of three characters we’ll meet shortly. They’re speaking to an off-camera interviewer in three different locations that have been chosen, dressed and lit for a documentary.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

JESS is sitting in the bleachers of a television soundstage.

OLDER JESS
It was a scary week, ‘cause here’s what you gotta understand. You gotta understand a hit television show--today--a big hit television show, what does it get? Ten-million viewers.

We ID the man with a chyron--

Jess Oppenheimer
Executive Producer and Head Writer

OLDER JESS (CONT'D)
Let’s go crazy and say fifteen. Fifteen-million viewers ‘cause this is a big, giant hit. Here’s what you gotta understand. I Love Lucy? Sixty-million. Households.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY

The tables are all set for dinner but the place is empty. BOB is sitting at a table near where a small orchestra would play.

OLDER BOB
Oh yeah. It’s been a long time, but I remember that week.

Bob Carroll
Writer

OLDER BOB (CONT'D)
That was a scary week. It was a very scary week.
OLD MADELYN
Those guys scare too easy. I’m from the Midwest. I lived through the depression and the dust bowl so I don’t scare that easy.

Madelyn Pugh
Writer

OLD MADELYN (CONT’D)
But yeah, it was a scary goddamn week.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS – DAY

OLDER JESS
Now here’s what you gotta understand. Audience share. That’s the percentage of television sets that are turned on--what percentage are tuned to you. That’s audience share.

INT. NIGHTCLUB – DAY

OLDER BOB
Out of the blue.

EXT. HOTEL POOL – DAY

OLDER MADELYN
Everyone almost lost their jobs. And Lucy and Desi, they almost lost their lives.
(beat)
No exaggeration.

INT. NIGHTCLUB – DAY

OLDER BOB
Out of thin air.
INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
So we’re getting our 60-million households at a time when the population of the United States was 155-million, many of whom did not own television sets. Our audience share was consistently in the 70’s. Today? Population 330-million. Your big hit show with the 15-million viewers, maybe 20 if someone’s getting married or killed, audience share? EIGHT!

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
Just like that.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
You’re asking when did they find out? At the same time as everyone else, they were listening to Walter Winchell.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
I’m minding my own business, listening to Walter Winchell, and bam--

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
At the end of the broadcast--

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
Department stores used to be open late Monday nights, then they switched to Thursday nights, you know why? ‘Cause nobody was leaving home during I Love Lucy on Mondays.

(MORE)
Continued: 13

OLDER JESS (CONT'D)
There was a significant drop-off in the number of people using water between 9 and 9:30 on Monday nights. My point is, and this is what you gotta understand, it wasn’t small potatoes when Winchell ended his broadcast by saying--

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY 14

OLDER BOB
Lucille Ball is a communist.
(pause)
Just like that. Lucille Ball is a member of the Communist Party.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY 15

OLDER JESS
Yeah.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY 16

OLDER MADELYN
And she’d already seen the magazine story about Desi when Winchell came on. The magazine came out on Mondays but her publicist brought her a copy Sunday night.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY 17

OLDER BOB
What were they doing when they first heard the news?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY 18

OLDER JESS
What were they doing?
19  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
I don’t know what Lucy and Desi were doing, but it was Lucy and Desi, so they were either tearing each other’s heads off or tearing each other’s clothes off.

CUT TO:

20  INT. ARNAZ HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the foreground--though out of focus--is the back of LUCILLE BALL, sitting on a couch with her bare feet up on a coffee table. She has a drink next to her and lights a cigarette.

In the background--in clear focus—is an RCA RADIO/TURNTABLE CONSOLE as we HEAR an announcer--

ANNOUNCER (FROM THE RADIO)
It’s time America...time for Walter Winchell. Presented to you by Gruen, the precision watch. Gruen, the finest watch you can wear. Gruen, the finest watch you can give, brings you the man who gives America the news...Walter Winchell of the New York Daily Mirror and the Washington Post.

The broadcast continues as we HEAR the front door open. For the next minute or so we’ll see no faces--just out-of-focus arms and legs and other shards of the moment as they pass through the frame, which remains on the radio--the only thing in focus.

DESI (O.S.)
(calling)
Lucy, I’m home!

LUCY (O.S.)
Where the hell have you been ya Cuban dimwit?

DESI (O.S.)
Whoa, easy does it.

LUCY (O.S.)
You philandering bongo player.
Continued: 20

DESI (O.S.)
I was playing cards with--

We HEAR his face being **SLAPPED**--

DESI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ow! Hey! I was playing cards with--

**SLAP**--

DESI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ow, *Goddammit*!

LUCY (O.S.)
Tell me when it starts to hurt.

20A **A FEW MINUTES LATER**--

We’re on the radio again but from a different angle as the Winchell broadcast continues. Again, we won’t see faces--just the occasional slice of someone coming into or out of the frame.

WALTER WINCHELL (FROM THE RADIO)
William L. Markey, Jr., Eisenhower’s top backer in Buffalo, is being divorced very quietly. His wife--

LUCY (O.S.)
The boat?

DESI (O.S.)
We were playing cards on the boat.

LUCY (O.S.)
Since last night?! Since 27 hours ago?!

DESI (O.S.)
Yes!

LUCY (O.S.)
And you couldn’t get to a phone?

DESI (O.S.)
No.

LUCY (O.S.)
Why?
Continued: 20A

DESI (O.S.)
I was passed out a lot of that
time!

20B  A FEW MINUTES LATER--

We’re on the radio but from still a different angle and still
no faces. The Winchell broadcast continues--

WALTER WINCHELL (FROM THE RADIO)
The Vice President, in a
magnificent speech this week, told
the American Legion why we--

A copy of a magazine flies across the room and lands on the
radio console. It’s Confidential Magazine. There’s a photo of
Desi with a woman.

“Desi’s Wild Night Out” reads the headline.

LUCY (O.S.)
That’s tomorrow’s Confidential.

DESI (O.S.)
Why do you even read that magazine?

LUCY (O.S.)
Why do I even--In this case it’s
‘cause my husband’s on the cover
with another woman so it caught my
eye. The story chronicles a night
on the town with you and--

DESI (O.S.)
That’s somebody’s niece.

LUCY (O.S.)
What the hell do I care if--

DESI (O.S.)
From Westinghouse. That’s the
Westinghouse corporate--you were
there--that’s the guy’s niece. That
picture was taken last summer.

LUCY (O.S.)
The story’s about last Wednesday
night.

DESI (O.S.)
Last Wednesday night I was on the
boat.
Continued: 20A

LUCY (O.S.)
Like last night?

DESİ (O.S.)
Yes!

WALTER WINCHELL (FROM THE RADIO)
--with the hall coming to its feet
at the conclusion of his address.

We see LUCY’s hand pick up the magazine...

LUCY (O.S.)
(pause)
You’re right. This was taken at the
Westinghouse corporate retreat.

DESİ (O.S.)
Yes.

LUCY (O.S.)
(beat)
I apologize.

DESİ (O.S.)
Say, “Desi, I apologize for
doubting you.”

No.

DESİ (O.S.)
“For I see now that this picture
was taken--not last Wednesday night--
but six months ago at the
Westinghouse corporate retreat and
I’ll never doubt your love for me
again.” Say that.

LUCY (O.S.)
No. And you’re doing it again.
You’re pronouncing it Westin-gouse.

DESİ (O.S.)
It is Westin-gouse.

LUCY (O.S.)
Westinghouse.

DESİ (O.S.)
Say g-h-o-s-t.

LUCY (O.S.)
Ghost.
Continued: 20A

DESI (O.S.)
You don’t pronounce an “H’ after a “G”. Westin-gouse.

A FEW MINUTES LATER--

We’re on the radio from still a different angle. DESI and LUCY are pulling and tugging at each other’s clothes on the couch.

WALTER WINCHELL (FROM RADIO)
When the G-Men captured the fugitives in the High Sierras last week--

LUCY (O.S.)
So everything in the magazine was made up?

DESI (O.S.)
I haven’t read the magazine, but unless the story’s about me playing cards on the boat--

LUCY (O.S.)
It’s not.

DESI (O.S.)
--then yes, it’s made up. Get it through your head--you’re the only thing I want.

LUCY (O.S.)
Well then you’re an idiot.

DESI (O.S.)
I’m trying to get this off but I think it’s been welded.

WALTER WINCHELL (FROM RADIO)
The House Committee on Un-American Activities is holding secret sessions in California. The most popular of all television stars was confronted with her membership in the Communist Party. And that, Mr. And Mrs. 48, winds up another edition until next Sunday night at the very same--

LUCY (O.S.)
Wait.
DESII (O.S.)
Wait.

LUCY (O.S.)
Wait.

And now we finally move up to see their faces—LUCILLE BALL and DESI ARNAZ like we’ve never seen them. LUCY, half-dressed with her red hair down and flying around her face and shoulders, DESI with his shirt ripped open, both of their faces flush and glistening with sweat. Their breathing is still heavy...

LUCY (CONT'D)
(pause)
What did he say?

DESII
He said the most popular of all television stars was--

LUCY
--was confronted with her membership in the Communist Party.

The two of them just stare at the radio...

DESII
(pause)
Yeah.
(pause)
He coulda been talkin’ about Imogene Coca.

LUCY
Fuck you, he was not talking about Imogene Coca.
Continued:

**Table Read**

FADE IN:

**INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY**

20-odd people sit at a horseshoe of folding tables. They’re the cast and staff of *I Love Lucy* and behind them is the iconic set from the show. The group is largely silent. They smoke their cigarettes, tap their scripts or just wait quietly and nervously. Two seats at the head of the table—reserved with a card for Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, are conspicuously empty.

A woman finally speaks up. The card in front of her reads “Vivian Vance”. We may notice that Vivian is considerably more attractive in real life than she is when she’s playing Ethel Mertz.

**VIVIAN**
This is nonsense.

She lights a cigarette.

**VIVIAN (CONT'D)**
It’s nonsense and it will get worse before it gets better. Little Rusty Hamer? When he signed his contract—or the guardian, whoever signs the contract for him—he had to sign a loyalty pledge. Did anyone know that?

Nobody answers...

**VIVIAN (CONT'D)**
Bill?

She’s talking to WILLIAM FRAWLEY.

**VIVIAN (CONT'D)**
Bill.

**FRAWLEY**
Is she talking to me?

Two of the elderly witnesses we saw in the opening, BOB and MADELYN, are now in their 20’s.

**MADELYN**
Yes.
FRAWLEY
So she knows I’m here, she can see me?

MADELYN
Yeah.

VIVIAN
Did you know little Rusty had to sign a loyalty pledge?

FRAWLEY
I don’t know who the fuck little Rusty is.

VIVIAN
Rusty Hamer from The Danny Thomas Show.

FRAWLEY
That’s not his name.

VIVIAN
It is his name.

FRAWLEY
The littlest kid on Danny’s show?

VIVIAN
Yes.

FRAWLEY
The character’s named Rusty, not the actor.

VIVIAN
They’re both named Rusty. Rusty Williams is played by Rusty Hamer.

FRAWLEY
And Hamer’s a Communist?

VIVIAN
He’s 7-years old.

FRAWLEY
And he’s interested in politics?

VIVIAN
No imbecile! I’m saying he’s 7-years old and they made him sign a loyalty pledge.
FRAWLEY
Uh-huh.

VIVIAN
This is getting out of hand was my point.

FRAWLEY
Why isn’t Danny Thomas’s kid named Rusty Thomas?

VIVIAN
Are you drunk?

FRAWLEY
It’s 10am, Vivian, so...you know...of course.

MADELYN
Bob and Jess and I were up all weekend working on the script you’re about to read and on behalf of all of us I want to say how much we appreciate your respect.

FRAWLEY
Believe me, you do not want me to read this sober.

BOB
I’m starting to get a little tired of your casual insults.

FRAWLEY
Well my insults don’t feel like putting on a fuckin’ tuxedo for you, kid. Jess, why don’t you tell your young writers that I don’t work for them.

MADELYN
Jess, why don’t you tell your supporting cast that we don’t work for him either.

And now we finally hear from the younger version of JESS--

JESS
You all work for me!
(pause)
Look, what you all have to understand is this. Here’s what you have to understand. We’re all tense.
There’s a long silence in the room before--

MADELYN
(pause)
Seriously, that was it?

JESS
We’re all tense, and the cure for
that is to just do the show. Normal
production week.

FRAWLEY
We’re going to need someone to play
Lucy and Ricky, those are critical
roles.

JESS
The two of them are in Desi’s
office meeting with the network and
the sponsor right now. I’m sure
there’s an explanation and that
this’ll be over by show night.

FRAWLEY
One way or the other.

JESS
Yeah. No. I mean--let me be clear--
I said this’ll all be over by show
night and Bill said, “One way or
the other.” Gallows humor. I said,
“Yeah”, but I didn’t mean--

MADELYN
The sooner you stop talking--

JESS
Yeah.

INT. DESI’S OFFICE - DAY

It’s an office befitting the president of Desilu and right
now it’s filled with a half-dozen men plus Lucy and Desi.
DESI’s sitting at his desk and LUCY’s leaning against it.

DESI
I think everyone’s acquainted but
let’s go around. Joe?

JOE
Joe Strickland, CBS.
HOWARD
Howard Wenke, also CBS.

ROGER
Roger Otter, Philip Morris.

IRWIN
Irwin Gotlieb, attorney for Desilu.

SAM
Sam Stein, attorney for Lucille Ball.

TIP
Tip Tribby, V.P. of Public Relations for Phillip Morris.

DESI
Tip? If Winchell had it cold he’d have used her name, it woulda been at the top of the show and not the bottom and this morning we’d be reading about it on the front page of every paper, am I right?

TIP
Yes.

DESI
They don’t have it.

HOWARD
Can you see where CBS might be concerned that there’s an “it” to “have”, do you see that?

DESI
Couldn’t follow you.

HOWARD
Lucy, you need to tell me right here and now what the hell is going on.

DESI
You don’t want to talk to my wife like that, amigo.

HOWARD
Or what, Des, you’re gonna beat me up?

DESI
She will.
LUCY
So we’re done with the introductions?

LUCY’s quieted the room...

LUCY (CONT’D)
I’m not a Communist, I’ve never been a Communist except technically, yeah I am.

JOE
Jesus Christ, do you get what’s happening and do you know that this isn’t funny?

LUCY
Yes, I do get what’s happening and yes, I know that it isn’t funny.

HOWARD
Lucy--
Continued: 23

LUCY
My father died when I was very young and I was raised by my mother and my grandfather, a man named Fred C. Hunt.

DESI
I’d like everyone but Howard to leave the room.

ROGER
Philip Morris pays for this show.

DESI
And they get their money’s worth so give us a minute, would you?

LUCY’s taken a cigarette out--

ROGER
She’s smoking a Chesterfield, could she at least smoke one of the seven brands that Philip-Morris--

DESI
Got it.

Everyone’s gone but LUCY, DESI and HOWARD...

LUCY
Fred C. Hunt, my grandfather, was a member of the party. This was in the early 30’s and I was in my early 20’s. He never used the word “communist” but he cared about workers, the working man. He raised my little brother and me and I wanted to please him so I checked the box. Back then it wasn’t considered much worse than being a Republican.

HOWARD
Have you been to a meeting?

LUCY
No.

HOWARD
Never.

LUCY
No.
HOWARD
You were at a cocktail party and later you found out--

LUCY
No.

HOWARD
Have you ever--

LUCY
My entire relationship with communism is twenty years ago I checked a box.

HOWARD
Why is this coming out now?

DESI
The committee investigated her and cleared her. But then last week William Wheeler convened a special session out here—a private session—called her in again and that’s why we’re sitting here.

HOWARD
(pause)
And nobody’s picked it up.

DESI
Nobody’s picked up the story, not a single paper. Not a single news network, including your own.

HOWARD
Maybe. Maybe we’re outa this. We just don’t know yet.

LUCY
When will we?

HOWARD
If you tape a show Friday night it means you still have a show.
LUCY
(pause)
Okay.

HOWARD
(pause)
Okay.

HOWARD exits...

DESI
You and me, we’ve been through worse than this.

LUCY
(beat)
We have?

DESI
No.

LUCY
That’s what I thought.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Hey.
(beat)
The whole piece was invented out of thin air?

DESI
(beat)
Huh?

LUCY
Four pages, fifteen-hundred words--

DESI
Are you being funny right now?

LUCY
That’s the second time someone’s asked me that this morning. I’m Lucille Ball, when I’m being funny you’ll know it. They invented the whole thing?

DESI
You don’t think we got bigger fish to fry?
LUCY
They invented--

DESI
(over)
Yes, they invented the whole thing!
I was on the boat playing cards.
They invented the whole thing and
I’m angry at them and I’ll do
something about it but right now--

LUCY
Yeah. Got it. Priorities. You’re
right.

DESI
Say that again. “Desi, you’re
right.”

LUCY
No.

DESI takes LUCY in his arms--

DESI
Everything’s gonna be fine.
Nothing’s gonna happen to you. I
won’t allow it. I just won’t.

LUCY kisses DESI...then she takes the handkerchief from
Desi’s jacket pocket and wipes the lipstick off his lips...

DESI (CONT’D)
You’ve never done that before.

LUCY
I know. I’ve seen other people do
it in movies I’ve been in.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

The group is still waiting at the shoehorn of tables.

VIVIAN
For the love of God, old man, this
isn’t hard! Rusty Hamer plays Rusty
Williams on the Danny Thomas show.
He’s in second grade and he had to
sign a loyalty oath when he signed
his contract which I think is ugly.
That’s it. I don’t know why this is
trimming you up. It wasn’t
confusing.
Continued: 24

FRAWLEY
(pause)
There’s no such thing as the Danny Thomas show, it’s called “Make Room for Daddy”, don’t tell me comedy, and if Rusty is a communist then I’m going to beat the shit out of a 7-year old, I have no problem with that.

VIVIAN
I’m done.

MADELYN
(to BOB)
That? Right there? Was funnier than anything you’ve written so far this year.

BOB
That’s not--I’ve written plenty of--

MADELYN
No.

A heavy door opens and LUCY and DESI walk in--

DESI
(calling out)
Good morning!

LUCY sees someone at the table--DONALD GLASS, this week’s director--and stops DESI to whisper--

LUCY
(quietly)
Don Glass is directing this week?

DESI knows it’s the wrong week for a director Lucy doesn’t like...

DESI
(beat)
We’ll be fine.
(to the GROUP)
You’re wondering what’s goin’ on.

JESS
No matter what’s going on, we all support you a thousand percent.

FRAWLEY
I’d like to find out what’s going on before I make that commitment.
DESI
Here it is. A long time ago Lucy accidentally checked the wrong box on her voter registration. That’s the first act of a new episode right there.

BOB
“Lucy Gets Blacklisted”.

DESI
That’s not a joke, Bob.

BOB
(chastised)
You made the joke, I just put the button--

DESI
(over BOB)
Last week she testified in a closed session. She was cleared. Yeah? She was cleared. I don’t know where Winchell got his information but it was wrong. And as you can see, it was not picked up by any newspaper. So let’s do our show. Yeah? Let’s just do our show. Jess, it’s your stage.

JESS

FRAWLEY
It took three of you to write this one?

JESS
And directing this week, Donald Glass is back with us so let’s give him a hand.

Everyone CLAPS...

DONALD
It’s good to be back.

JESS
Act I, “Interior, the Ricardo’s living room, night.”
LUCY
Excuse me. Donald?

DONALD
Yes.

LUCY
Good morning, I’m Lucille Ball.

DONALD
I sure know that, Lucy.

LUCY
I wanted to make sure ‘cause you haven’t been here in a while. Is it because you’ve been going through puberty?

DONALD
I look young, yes, but I went through it a long time ago and I haven’t been here because I’ve been directing at Danny Thomas.

FRAWLEY
With the communist kid? Fuck off.

VIVIAN
Jesus Christ.

LUCY
You don’t have to fuck off, but you do have to know that Danny does jokes and few people do it better. I do physical comedy.

DONALD
I’ve seen every episode of the show.

LUCY
So have 60-million other people--
(to JESS)
--are none of them professional television directors?!

DESI
She’s kidding.

DONALD
I can tell.
LUCY
I’m hazing you a little, Donald.
It’s just my way of saying I have
no confidence in you at all.
DESİ
Alright, we haven’t gotten off to a
great start this morning I think--
and I have no idea what the fuck
you were talkin’ about, Bill--

VIVIAN
Ah, Des, I’m beggin’ you, don’t
ask.

DESİ
No problem. I just wanted to say
that this show is made by Desilu
Productions, whose president is
speaking to you right now. And for
the next 30 minutes I don’t want to
hear a word that isn’t in this
script.
(to JESS)
It’s your stage.

JESS
Thank you. “Lucy’s putting the
finishing touches on a fancy dinner
table--good china, silver, etc.”

MADELYN
The table’s set for four but there
are only three chairs, I should’ve
put that in the stage direction.

BOB
It’s two chairs and a piano bench.

MADELYN
For a total of?

BOB
Three chairs.

We’re going to start to go in and out of LUCY’s head as the
reading goes on. She’s imagining what each beat will be like
in its final form the way a chess master can see the board
twelve moves ahead. She can also see and hear what the
audience is going to laugh at.

JESS
Table’s set for four but there are
only three chairs. “The door opens
and Ricky enters. Lucy doesn’t hear
him. Ricky puts his coat down
quietly and tip-toes in back of--”

QUICK CUT TO:
INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)  

LUCY RICARDO is setting the table as RICKY RICARDO enters, puts his coat down and tip-toes up to LUCY--

CUT BACK TO:
INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

LUCY
Why not?

JESS
Sorry?

LUCY
Why doesn’t Lucy hear him?

JESS
Well he’s about to do the thing where you cover someone’s eyes and say “Guess who?”

LUCY
I understand that it’s a set-up, I understand why we need Lucy to not hear him, I just don’t understand why—in an apartment this size—Lucy doesn’t hear—or for that matter, see—the front door open when she’s standing 12-feet from it.

JESS
We’ll work on that.

LUCY
Thanks.

JESS
“Ricky puts his coat down quietly, tip-toes in back of her and reaches around and covers her eyes with his hands.”

*NOTE: All dialogue for I LOVE LUCY will be in italics.*

RICKY
Guess who it is?

LUCY
Bill--Sam--Pat--Ralph?

JESS
“Ricky reacts to this”

QUICK CUT TO:
INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

RICKY

No!

LUCY

George--Julius--Stephen--

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

LUCY

Hang on. Are we supposed to believe that Ricky believes that Lucy really doesn’t know it’s him? That Ricky believes that Lucy is not only unfamiliar with his voice--which let’s not forget has a Cuban accent--but that he really believes there are at least seven other men who routinely walk into their apartment?

DESI

She has a pretty good point. She has four or five pretty good points.

JESS

We’ll write a better joke or Ricky will know that Lucy is joking.

BOB

We can change the names. Pedro, Pablo, Jose.

(beat)

Because they’re Spanish names. I mean Latin names. They’re Cuban names.

MADELYN

Thanks for clearin’ that up, professor.

BOB

I’m just, you know--

JESS

“Ricky takes his hands away and turns her around.”
DESI
No! It’s me.

LUCY
Oh yes of course. Uh...uh...

JESS
“She snaps her fingers and pretends she can’t remember his name.”

DESI
Very funny.

JESS
“Ricky kisses her and then notices the table set-up.”

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM – NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

RICKY
Hey--company for dinner?

LUCY
 Uh-huh.

RICKY
Who is it?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE – SAME TIME

JESS
“Lucy elaborately ignores him.”

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM – NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY
How do you like the water glasses?

RICKY
Who’s coming to dinner, Lucy?

LUCY
Doesn’t the table look beautiful tonight?
INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

JESS
"She tries to make her way past him on her way to the kitchen but he holds out his hands and blocks the way."

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

RICKY
Lucy, who is it?

LUCY
Some people.

RICKY
Whom--whom is coming for dinner here tonight?

LUCY
Whom? You mean besides meem and youm?

RICKY
Never mind that. What are their names?

LUCY
Fred and Ethel Mertz.

RICKY
Wait a minute. What about that big fight Fred and Ethel had? I thought they were mad at each other.

LUCY
They are.

RICKY
I thought they weren’t speaking to each other.

LUCY
They aren’t.

RICKY
I thought he was staying at the Y.

LUCY
He is.
Continued: 33

RICKY
And she wouldn’t let him in the house.

LUCY
She won’t.

RICKY
Well if they are and they aren’t and he is and she won’t--how come?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SAME TIME

LUCY
(guilty)
Well--

DESI
(scolding)
Lucy McGillicuddy Ricardo.

LUCY
Ooooooh. That’s nice, but was the rhythm getting old too early?

JESS
We’ll work on it.

MADELYN
Because we want to live up to the quality of the writing you were used to at RKO.

There’s an awkward silence in the room...

DESI
(pause)
That was gutsy.

MADELYN
(pause)
That was--it was a joke about the writing at RKO and--

DESI
Yeah?

MADELYN
--not--obviously not an insult aimed at Lucy.
Continued: 34

LUCY takes a moment before she laughs a little and we

CUT TO:

35  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
Looking back it may have been an insult aimed at Lucy. Which was very unusual, Lucy and I were close. But Jesus...we always did notes after the table read, after the CBS execs and sponsors had left. Let us hear the whole script, we’re hearing the same things you are, we have a week, we’ll fix it.

36  INT. NIGHTCLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
There was a Broadway show called Too Many Girls and it was terrible.

36A  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
Look, she was always tough on the writing, she pressed down hard on each beat, but that week it was like her life depended on whether a joke was a “B” or “B-plus”.

37  INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
One of the stars of Too Many Girls was Desi. He sang a big rumba number with a drum strapped over his shoulder.

38  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
(shaking her head)
Too Many Girls. RKO decided to make this very bad Broadway show into—and I still can’t believe it—an even worse movie.

(MORE)
OLDER MADELYN (CONT'D)
They kept Desi in the cast but the second female lead was replaced by the queen of the “B” movies--Lucille Ball.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
A couple of days before shooting started, Desi was on a soundstage working with a piano and a drum and Ann Miller. Here’s what you have to understand--A more handsome and charming man than Desi you’ve never met. So all the chorus girls were standing around gawking.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
And standing off away from the pack of chorus girls is Lucy, who was unrecognizable because she was still in the middle of shooting Dance, Girl, Dance where she was playing a burlesque girl who’d just been beaten up by her pimp.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
So she was unrecognizable.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
That’s how they met.

INT. A DIFFERENT SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

DESI is standing by the piano singing “She Could Shake the Maracas” as ANN MILLER improvises some steps and then builds on it. CHORUS GIRLS are standing around watching and in the back is LUCY--her face beaten and her hair all over the place. Unrecognizable.

The music stops and there’s a smattering of applause from the group. A few CHORUS GIRLS step up to say hello to Desi.
ANGIE
Mr. Arnaz?

DESI
My name’s Desidorio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha III, but just my mother
calls me that. Desi.

ANGIE
I’m Angie, I’m in the chorus and I
wanted to say I’m looking forward
to working with you.

DESI
I’m looking forward too, Angie.

PATTY
Patty.

DESI
Short for Patricia?

PATTY
Yes.

DESI
Also in the chorus?

PATTY
Dancing chorus.

LUCY steps in...

DESI
And who’s this?

LUCY
“Do you remember the first time we
met? You were rudely attentive but
now you’re obnoxiously
indifferent.”

DESI
(pause)
What?

LUCY
It’s a line from our movie, dumb-
dumb.

DESI
Do we know each other?
Continued: 43

LUCY

No.

Another chorus girl steps in--

DAISY
Desi--I’m Daisy. People are gonna get confused.

DESI
I don’t see no one confusing you with anyone, Daisy.

The schmoozing continues as LUCY disappears...

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - LATER

The stage is empty except for DESI and the PIANIST. DESI’s playing a lullaby on his guitar and singing in Spanish.

LUCY’s standing in the giant doorway, framed by the setting sunlight. She looks beautiful now.

She enjoys the song for a moment before DESI looks up and immediately stops--stunned by this woman.

LUCY
"Do you remember the first time we met?"

DESI
If we’d met, I’d remember.

LUCY
“You were rudely attentive but now you’re obnoxiously--

DESI
Wait! That was you?!

LUCY
--indifferent”, that was me, yeah.

DESI
This studio has talented make-up artists.
LUCY
“I’m Angie, I’m in the chorus, and I just wanted to say that when I drink I take my clothes off.” I’m so curious I have to ask--how did you know that Patty was short for Patricia?

DESI
I’m Desiderio Alberto--

LUCY
I don’t have that kinda time.

DESI
And you’re Lucille Ball.

LUCY
Use a line on me you’ve never road-tested on anyone else. I dare you.

DESI
Would you like to learn how to rumba?

LUCY
(pause)
Alright nice, and yes I would, but there’s absolutely no chance you haven’t used that before.

INT. CIRO’S – NIGHT

A small Latin band is blaring away, the dance floor is packed and DESI’s showing LUCY how to rumba, which she’s pretty good at.

DESI
(talking over the noise)
I want you to know I’m not trying to be forward. I’m showing you this because it’ll come in handy for your rumba number in the movie.

LUCY
I don’t have a rumba number in the movie.

DESI
No rumba?

LUCY
No.
Continued: 45

DESI
That’s a sign of a poorly written screenplay.

LUCY
Well we should dance to something else.

46  INT. CIRO’S  –  LATER

The band is playing a slow number and LUCY and DESI are dancing close.

DESI
Why did you come to Hollywood?

LUCY
I got kicked out of New York.

DESI
Seriously.

LUCY
I mean it. I got kicked out of my acting school for not being good enough.

DESI
Get outa here.

LUCY
I won’t. I got some modeling work, I was hired and fired as a Ziegfeld Girl but hired as a Goldwyn Girl and that’s what took me out here. Why did you come to Hollywood?

DESI
The Bolsheviks burned my house down.

LUCY
(pause)
So...a different reason.

DESI
Yeah.

47  INT. CIRO’S  –  LATER

The place is almost empty. LUCY and DESI are sitting at a table.
LUCY
I’m older than you are.

DESI
How do you know?

LUCY
I asked. Please don’t do the same. But I’m a full-grown woman. I’m not married. I don’t have children. On
my best days I get cast as the second female lead in forgettable pictures. I don’t mean to insult you, I know this one’s your
Hollywood debut, but Too Many Girls is not...going to be part of the Oscar conversation.

DESI
You never know.

LUCY
No, plenty of times you do. Anyway...I’m several years older than you are.

INT. DESI’S HOTEL SUITE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The doors to the terrace are open and we can see the lights of Hollywood in the distance.

DESI’s sitting in a chair in the room with a guitar on his lap. He’s trying unsuccessfully to write a song.

DESI
(singing and playing)
“Lucille...
(beat--singing)
...there’s not much that rhymes with Lucille...
(beat--singing)
Bastille...but who’d write a song about that?”

LUCY comes out of the bathroom wearing Desi’s white dinner jacket over her bra and underwear. She walks by DESI without looking at him--

LUCY
I borrowed part of your tuxedo.

--and steps out on the terrace.
Continued: 48

DESI stares as she walks by, then stands up, sending the
guitar clanging to the floor.

DESI joins LUCY out on the--

49  

**INT. DESI’S HOTEL SUITE/TERRACE – CONTINUOUS**  

DESI
It comes with pants, but I’m wearing them.

LUCY
Not for long, pal.

DESI
So...

LUCY
Yes.

DESI
Can I call you Lucy?

LUCY
(beat)
No, I think we should keep this professional, don’t you?
(beat)
I was kidding.

DESI
So was I.

LUCY
Oh. That was a nice, dry delivery.

DESI
What’s your ambition?

LUCY
My ambition? For tonight? I wasn’t making that clear?

DESI
I don’t mean ambition. What do I mean?

LUCY
Goals?

DESI
LUCY
What are my future dreams?

DESI
I should’ve stuck with ambition.

LUCY
Are you interviewing me?

DESI
Yeah.

LUCY
(pause)
Okay. I live in a small house.

DESI
And your ambition is to live in a bigger house.

LUCY
My ambition is to live in a home.

DESI
(pause)
Like for old folks?

LUCY
Not a home, not an institution, a home. With a family and dinner time.

DESI
Can I ask an impertinent question?

LUCY
Are you going to ask me why I’m not married?
DESI
No, I was going to ask you why you’re not a movie star. Why are you playing the second female lead in *Too Many Girls*?

LUCY
I’m a contract player at RKO. I play the roles I’m told to play. My career’s gone as far as it’s gonna go, it’s hit its cruising altitude. I’m at peace with that. So I’d like to be at peace. I want a home.

DESI
You have a lot more talent than the roles you play have allowed you to exhibit.

LUCY
Now how would you know I have talent?

DESI
Because I have talent. You could be a serious actress, you should be a star by now. But--

LUCY
(beat)
But what?

DESI
There’s also something about your physicality. You’re--

LUCY
--half naked?

DESI
Sure, but...

LUCY
But?

DESI
There isn’t an English word.
(in Spanish)
Dotada cineticamente.

LUCY
What does that mean?
Continued: 49

DESI
It means you’re “kinetically
gifted.”

(beat)
No one’s noticed that?

INT. DESI’S HOTEL SUITE/BEDROOM - LATER

50

LUCY and DESI are drenched in sweat as they devour each other
on the bed.

INT. DESI’S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

51

DESI’s in bed asleep. LUCY’s standing on the terrace
thinking. She comes back inside and taps DESI on the shoulder
to wake him up.

LUCY
(quietly)
Hi. Sorry. I need to use the phone
to call my fiance.

DESI
Sure.

(beat)
Wait, what?

LUCY
It’ll just take a second.

LUCY dials the operator--

DESI
Your fiance?

LUCY
(into the phone)
Outside line please.

DESI
Not that I haven’t--it’s just that
I got the sense that we--

LUCY
(to DESI)
One sec.

DESI
I thought last night--
Continued: 51

LUCY
(into phone)
It’s me. Hey, you don’t love me, I
don’t love you, you cheat on me
every chance you get and I pretend
I’m stupid. So I’m moving out. I’ll
send someone to pick up my clothes.
Okay? Love you. But, you know, not
really.

She hangs up the phone.

LUCY (CONT’D)
I interrupted you, what were you
saying?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY
The table read is ending--

JESS
And we fade to black. End of show.

There’s light applause around the table--

JESS (CONT’D)
Thank you. Notes upstairs.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Back on stage in an hour.

Everyone gets up and exits except DESI and FRAWLEY, who stay
sitting at the table...

FRAWLEY
(pause)
It’s madness.

DESI
Yeah? I thought you’d be the first
one to refuse to work with her.

DESI gets up to leave--

FRAWLEY
You mean that?

DESI
You’re not fond of Communists.

FRAWLEY
I’m less fond of the Committee.
Continued: 52

DESI nods and starts to go on his way...
FRAWLEY (CONT'D)
Des. When the soldiers came. For your family. How scary was it?
(pause)
You’re giving me that look that says, “I don’t get scared a nothin’.”

DESI
(pause)
They killed all the animals. Not for food, they just killed all the animals. I still don’t know why they did that.
(beat)

(MORE)
DESİ (CONT'D)
It’s six-to-five and pick-em we’ve already done the last episode of this show. This show, everyone who works here, Desilu, Lucy’s whole career--mine too--it may have ended Sunday night and we just don’t know it yet. Are you outa your mind, I get plenty scared.

DESİ heads off...

FRAWLEY
(more to himself)
Fuckin’ madness.

INT. LUCY’S DRESSING ROOM – DAY

LUCY’s sitting in silence on the couch, looking at a newspaper. There’s a KNOCK at the door--

DESİ (O.S.)
Lucy?

LUCY
Yeah.

DESİ steps in.

DESİ
Madelyn was way outa line and I’ll talk to Jess.

LUCY
No, I don’t care about that.

DESİ
I care about it.

LUCY
You told them I checked the wrong box?

DESİ
Who?

LUCY
Before the table read. You told them I checked the wrong box.

DESİ
(pause)
It takes fewer words to say that than the truth.
LUCY
But it makes me sound like a simpleton who’s ill-equipped to participate in democracy.
DESI
It was simpler and it’s nobody’s
goddam business.

LUCY
Well, no, pretty obviously it’s
everybody’s goddam business.

DESI
You don’t have to keep checking the
papers. I’ve got people who’ll let
me know the moment an editor thinks
about it. There’s something wrong
with the story, they know it, and
that’s why no one’s reporting on
Winchell.

LUCY
No. The Confidential story. That’s
getting picked up.

LUCY puts the newspaper in DESI’s hands as she walks out of
the room. DESI looks at the gossip column headline--

"Does Desi Really Love Lucy?"

BLACK

TITLE:

Tuesday

Blocking Rehearsal

INT. WARDROBE ROOM – DAY

VIVIAN’s being fitted for a dress. It’s more flattering than
what we’re used to seeing Ethel in.

VIVIAN
I like this a lot, Tommy.

TOMMY
It’s a great color for you.

VIVIAN
I really like this.

TOMMY
And I can cinch the back a little.
I can lower the neckline.
VIVIAN
Not on CBS you can’t, but still, now we’re talkin’. Now we’re cookin’ with gas.

TOMMY
Should I bring out some shoes?

VIVIAN
Yes please.

TOMMY disappears. VIVIAN checks herself out in the full-length mirror. LUCY appears in the reflection. She whistles her approval.

VIVIAN (CONT’D)
Yeah?

LUCY
That’s a nice dress.

VIVIAN
I thought so too.

LUCY
Are you borrowing it from wardrobe for a cocktail party?

VIVIAN
(beat)
A dinner party.

LUCY
Where?

VIVIAN
The apartment of Ricky and Lucy Ricardo.

LUCY
This is for the show?

VIVIAN
Lucy’s invited--

LUCY
Viv--

VIVIAN
I know, but listen. I’m thinking Lucy’s invited her to dinner, she thinks she’s being fixed up with an eligible guy.

(MORE)
Continued: 54

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
She’d want to look nice, it’s something new for the character.

LUCY
But the character’s still Ethel Mertz, right?

VIVIAN
(pause)
Yeah.

TOMMY’s come back in with the shoes but heads right to where a newspaper’s sitting on a table. LUCY’s hand casually gets there first.

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
Hey. Don’t.

LUCY looks at the paper and shows it to VIVIAN--

LUCY
“Does Desi Love Lucy Loosely?”
They took time on that.

VIVIAN
Isn’t there enough going on with-- I’d be more concerned about--

LUCY
(reading)
“If neighbors hear screams of rage followed by the sound of breaking crockery coming from the Arnaz house this month, they’ll know what is happening without having to investigate. The red-haired Missus has just finished reading Confidential’s report on--”

VIVIAN
In your life have you ever taken this stuff seriously?

LUCY
I take my marriage seriously.

VIVIAN
And Desi said?

LUCY
(in DESI’s voice)
“Lucy, I ain’t been with no girls since the moment I saw you.”
Continued: 54

VIVIAN
Then believe him.

LUCY
I do believe him. It’s an old picture, we were there together and he was playing cards on the boat Wednesday. You’d be more concerned with what?

VIVIAN
What?

LUCY
You said, “I’d be more concerned with--” and I cut you off. The Winchell broadcast.

VIVIAN
Yeah.

LUCY
I don’t get to choose just one, I’m concerned with both.

VIVIAN
Understood. What about the third? What’d they say?

LUCY
We didn’t think yesterday was the best day to tell ‘em about the third.

VIVIAN
Right.

LUCY
We’re doing it now. Jess first, then the network and Philip Morris.

VIVIAN
Could be worse.

LUCY
How?

VIVIAN
You could be playing Ethel.

LUCY
Got it.
LUCY exits and we

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. WRITER’S ROOM - DAY

JESS, MADELYN and BOB are working at a large table with a writer’s assistant, MARY PAT, taking notes. On the wall are ideas for future episodes.

MADELYN
Is Lucy on the phone too long at the top? We only hear one side of the call, are we staying too long at the fair?

BOB
(to MARY PAT)
You don’t need to write down everything we say in here.

MARY PAT writes that down.

JESS
We’ll know when it’s on its feet.

DESI knocks on the open door and he and LUCY walk in--

DESI
Good morning.

JESS
‘Morning guys.

DESI
(to the Writers’ Assistant)
Mary Pat, would you mind giving us the room for a moment?

MARY PAT
Of course, Mr. Arnaz.

She closes up her notebook, exits and closes the door behind her.

MADELYN
“Of course, Mr. Arnaz.”
Continued: 56

BOB
(to MADELYN)
She’s nice.

DESI
(to MADELYN)
You’re in enough trouble.

LUCY
You’re not in trouble.
DESI
We need to talk.

BOB
No, don’t tell me--

DESI
No, we’re still okay. No one’s picked up the story.

JESS
Alright. Looking at Lucy’s face I thought for sure--

LUCY
I’m pregnant.

JESS
(pause)
That’s not at all what I was gonna say.

DESI
That’s what we came to talk about. We were gonna have this conversation yesterday but other things--

JESS
Sure.

BOB
Well this is a one-two punch.

LUCY
It’s not a punch, I’m having a baby.

MADELYN
What do we do now?

There’s a long silence before LUCY turns to DESI...

LUCY
(pause)
I know it seems like no one said congratulations, but that can not be, as these are three of our closest friends and colleagues.

JESS
Of course. Mazel Tov.

And they all begin congratulating Lucy and Desi at once--
ALL
Congratulations, Des./That’s
wonderful news./
Congratulations./etc.

The congratulating quiets down into silence...

JESS
So---

LUCY
Yeah. With Lucie I was the size of
a phone booth. You’ve got about
seven weeks before you have to
start hiding me behind boxes and
chairs and another seven weeks
after that before I won’t fit in
the frame.

JESS
What do you want to do?

LUCY
Do? Whatever there was to do we’ve
done it.

JESS
Where does that leave us?

DESI
Without a choice. Lucy Ricardo’s
gonna have a baby on television.

JESS
(pause)
Des--

DESI
How many scripts in the bank?

JESS
We’re five ahead of production.
We’re shooting 4 and writing 9.

DESI
Four. No harm done. But whatever
script you’re working on now,
Episode 9, scratch it. Episode 9 is
now “Lucy Tells Desi She’s
Pregnant” and we work from there.
(pointing to a story idea
on the wall)
What’s that one?
JESS
Which one?

LUCY
“Lucy Goes to Italy”.

JESS
We want to send the four of you to Italy.

LUCY
Why?

MADELYN
We think it’d be nice to get off our set.

LUCY
No, why do the Ricardos and Mertzes go to Italy?

JESS
A vacation.

DESI
They don’t vacation in Europe, they go to the Grand Canyon, they go to Niagara Falls.

BOB
Work. Ricky’s got a gig at a club in Rome.

DESI
And what does Lucy do?

MADELYN
She stomps grapes. Lucy and Ethel go to an Italian Vineyard—

DESI
Why?

MADELYN
We don’t know yet—and they stomp grapes.

We start to SLOWLY PUSH-IN on LUCY who’s thinking about how that might work and be funny...

DESI (O.S.)
This vineyard is located in the 19th Century?
Continued: 56

JESS (O.S.)
They don’t stomp grapes anymore?

DESI (O.S.)
No.

MADELYN (O.S.)
Okay, so they find the one vineyard
where they still stomp grapes.

In LUCY’s head, we

CUT TO:

57  INT. ITALIAN HOTEL ROOM SET - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE) 57

LUCY
Come in.

An ITALIAN BELLMAN opens the door--

BELLMAN
Si, signora, you sent for me.

LUCY
Yes, I’d like some information
please. Are there any grape
vineyards around here? I want to
see how they make the wine. How
they pick the grapes--you know--
press the juice out with their
feet.

BELLMAN
There is one little town called
Turo where they still make the wine
that way.

CUT BACK TO:

58  INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY 58

MADELYN
Easy.

DESI
And why does she want to go to a
vineyard?

MADELYN
We don’t know yet.
BOB
She has an audition for an Italian movie.

MADELYN
What does that have to do with stomping grapes?

BOB
The part.

CUT TO:

59
INT. EUROPEAN TRAIN COMPARTMENT SET - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE)

An Italian director is talking to the two couples--

VITTORIO
I should not have been staring at Mrs. Ricardo, but she happens to be just the type I need for a part in my new picture.

LUCY
Who me?!

VITTORIO
Yes. The role of a beautiful Italian red head who--como si dice--steps on the grapes.

CUT BACK TO:

60
INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY

JESS
We’ll get there. The point is, Lucy in a vat of grapes for five minutes.

LUCY
I can see it.

61
INT. VINEYARD SET - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE)

And we see LUCY, dressed in Italian peasant clothing, performing the famous grape-stomping scene and it’s accompanied by AUDIENCE LAUGHTER--

First a WOMAN climbs into the vat and starts stomping on grapes.
LUCY looks over the edge and gives us her queamish face. The WOMAN indicates with a wave of her arm that LUCY should come in. LUCY cautiously climbs in and gingerly puts her foot on the grapes. Her face reflects that this is a very weird sensation. The Italian WOMAN is stoming vigorously and LUCY looks like she’s walking on eggs.

And now we see LUCY’s POV--the bright lights, the cameras and crew and the STUDIO AUDIENCE LAUGHING...

CUT BACK TO:

62  INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY 62

BOB
What can happen in the vat of grapes, what can she do?

JESS
It doesn’t matter right now, we need to get back to--Des, the network isn’t gonna allow it and neither will Phillip Morris.

LUCY’s still thinking about the grapes--

JESS (CONT'D)

Lucy--

LUCY
Just hang on.

63  INT. ITALIAN VINEYARD SET - DAY  (BLACK AND WHITE) 63

But now LUCY’s standing in the vat of grapes by herself, breathing heavy. She’s out of ideas. The AUDIENCE IS SILENT.

CUT BACK TO:

64  INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY 64

LUCY
She loses her earring.

BOB
Yes.

MADELYN
There it is.
JESS
What are you talking about?!

LUCY
In the grapes.

INT. ITALIAN VINEYARD SET - DAY (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY reaches up to check her earring, which is loose, and she
tightens it. Then she checks the other ear and feels that her
earring’s missing. She looks alarmed as she realizes it’s
down in the grapes.

The AUDIENCE HOWLS--

CUT BACK TO:

INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY

DESI
Push it to next year, they’re not
going to Italy while she’s
pregnant.

JESS
I’ll bet you my next paycheck
against your next paycheck that CBS
won’t even allow us to use the word
pregnant.

LUCY
(pointing to another card)
“Lucy Tells the Truth”

BOB
That one’s Madelyn’s idea. She got
it just seconds after I pitched it.

JESS
Folks?

MADELYN
Ricky bets Lucy that she can’t go
two days without lying and we put
her in situations where it’s hard
not to lie.

In LUCY’s head, we

CUT TO:
INT. RICARDO'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY
There! It’s started. For the next 48 hours.

ETHEL
I can hardly wait to hear you tomorrow afternoon, Lucy.

LUCY
Why?

ETHEL
We’re going over to Carolyn’s to play bridge, remember?

LUCY
Oh no! Oh no! I can’t spend the afternoon with three women and tell the truth. I’ll call Carolyn and tell her I’m sick.

INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - SAME TIME

MADELYN
After 41 hours she’s winning, but in the final hour--

BOB
Here it is.

MADELYN
--Ricky gets a visit from the IRS and the guy wants to ask about some questionable things Ricky’s claiming on his deductions. Lucy’s sitting in the living room too and of course when she’s asked by the IRS agent to corroborate, she can’t tell a lie, so--

LUCY
That’s a funny premise.

JESS
Yes it is.

DESI
But lose the IRS scene.

BOB
It could be a good scene.
MADELYN
He’s correct. Once I write it it could be good.

DESI
Ricky Ricardo loves America. He loves being an American. He’s grateful to this country and he’d never cheat on his taxes.

BOB
It’s very relatable. Everyone does.

DESI
I don’t. Neither does Ricky. Especially when his wife is accused of being un-American. Look for something else and start working on the first pregnancy show.

JESS
Listen to me!
(pause)
They’re not going to let us do it.

DESI
Let that be my problem.

JESS
I wish I could, Des, but it’s very much my problem. So instead of talking about goddamn grapes—Look, what you got to understand is—

LUCY
Jess? They’re free to take us off the air for the rest of the year while continuing to pay our contracts and answering questions about why motherhood is too salacious to put on CBS, but something tells me they’re not gonna go that route. Instead, I think Broadcast Standards and Practices will give you a list of insane restrictions, which might even include you winning your bet with Desi, and which I have no doubt the three of you will navigate beautifully.
(to DESI)
You told me to be nice. Good?
DESI
Yeah.

LUCY exits...

DESI (CONT'D)
I don’t care what your first
thoughts out of the gate were, but
your first words out of the gate
were no good.
(to MADELYN)
And what was with you at the table
read?

MADELYN
I’m sorry, she was jumping on every
stage direction.

DESI
It’s her process.

MADELYN
But that process usually happens in
private. And following your advice,
maybe every once in a while, the
first words out of her mouth could
be “good script.”

DESI
Is this the right week for this
shit?

JESS
Hey--

MADELYN
We do seem to be having some
success, no?

JESS
(to DESI)
Look, we’re all tired from working
on this week’s script.

DESI
Are you sleepy? You need a nap?

JESS
Can I talk to you a second, boss?

DESI
Sure.

They step into--
INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--where JESS closes the office door. They speak quietly.

JESS
I’m the executive producer of this show. You can’t manhandle me like that in front of people, you just can’t do it. My show. And Madelyn was a hundred percent right.

DESI
Ricky pays his taxes.

JESS
I get it.

DESI
And we’re having the baby on the show.

JESS
There’s no chance they say yes.

DESI
There’s no chance they say yes to you.

DESI heads off and we

CUT TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE/I LOVE LUCY SET - DAY

We’re in the Ricardo’s living room set where the cast and DONALD the director are in the middle of rehearsal. The actors hold their scripts.

DONALD
Back to right before Vivian’s entrance. “When do we eat?” Settle, and action.

FRAWLEY
When do we eat? I’ve been living on peanut butter sandwiches.

DONALD
Bill, that line’s gotta take you over to the table.

FRAWLEY
Hm?
DONALD
You need to cross to the table on that.

FRAWLEY
Why?

LUCY
So you can see the table, notice that a fourth place is set and say your next line.

FRAWLEY
Somebody else coming?

LUCY
Well Fred, I took the liberty of asking a young lady to be your dinner companion.

FRAWLEY
A young lady?

LUCY
A cute young chick.

FRAWLEY
Oh boy, bring her on.

LUCY
Hang on, let’s go back. After I say “I took the liberty of asking a young lady to be your dinner companion”, Ricky should take a sip from a glass of water on the table to keep from laughing. Then when I say, “A cute young chick”, Ricky can choke on his water a little.

DESI
I like that.

VIVIAN
I like it too. The very idea that Ethel’s a cute young chick should make Desi choke.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(to the DIRECTOR)
That’s 15.

DONALD
Okay.
Continued: 70

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(calling out)
That’s 15 minutes!

LUCY
I’ll be funny by Friday.

FRAWLEY
(to VIVIAN)
And when can we expect you to be funny?

VIVIAN says nothing as we

CUT TO:

INT. LUCY’S DRESSING ROOM – DAY 71

LUCY and DESI walk in and DESI closes the door behind him and
LUCY starts in right away with an opening paragraph she’s
committed to memory--

LUCY
“Exactly what makes a husband leave
home is something that has been
baffling wives since Adam and Eve--"

DESI
Enough.

LUCY
“For an outstanding example, let’s
take one of the nation’s most
famous husbands--”

DESI
You’ve memorized it?

LUCY
I’ve memorized worse writing than
this.

DESI
Yes, it’s a tabloid.

LUCY
“With a curvy, red-haired tidbit
like Lucy waiting for him at home,
would Desi--”

DESI
Stop it.
LUCY
"—be foolish enough to prowl
Hollywood like a bachelor wolf and,
if so, why?"

DESI
It’s made—

LUCY
Twenty-million readers want to
know.

DESI
Lucy—

LUCY
Twenty-million and one.

DESI
How many times I gotta ‘splain
where I was and what I was doing?

LUCY
How many times you gotta ‘splain?

DESI
I can’t get enough of that joke.

LUCY
They document an entire night.
Someone in your gang’s a rat.

DESI
My gang. The night they’re talkin’
about I was with Red Skelton and
Xavier Cugat. Which one of ‘em you
think squealed?

LUCY
They made it up from nothing.

DESI
I heard on Winchell the other night
that you were a Communist.

LUCY
(pause)
That was true, you idiot!

DESI
Yeah. That was a bad example.

LUCY
And I didn’t check the wrong box.
DESİ
Okay, I’m sorry about that.

LUCY
I believe you, I was just messin’ around.

DESİ
Good.

LUCY
No, that gets you outa the woods but it puts you into other woods.

DESİ
What are the other woods.

LUCY
You don’t come home anymore, did you know that?

DESİ
You change subjects faster than--

LUCY
Keep up, it’s not hard. I asked did you know you don’t come home anymore?

DESİ
Of course I come home. Sometimes I go to the boat and play cards. We drink, it goes late, it’s easier to sleep on the boat.

LUCY
That used to be once a week. Then twice and now it’s four or five times. I go home after work and you go to the boat.

(beat)
You once asked me what my ambition was, you remember? And you liked my answer.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
She used the word “home” a lot. She talked about having a home. Lucy owned three houses, but sometimes, when she fell into a funk, she’d say she didn’t have a home.

(MORE)
OLDER MADELYN (CONT'D)
But she wasn’t in a funk that week.
She was on fire.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
They eloped, they bought a ranch in
Chatsworth, they were deeply in
love and deliriously happy.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
What you gotta understand is, they
weren’t very happy.

EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
They never saw each other. Desi and
his orchestra were booked at Ciro’s
and Lucy was under contract at RKO,
playing the same role in every
movie--none of which left much of a
footprint on American cinema. Desi
would be done with work around 4AM
and Lucy needed to be in hair and
make-up at 5AM so they’d meet at
the top of Mulholland.

CUT TO:

INT. CIRO’S - NIGHT

DESI’s singing “Babalu”, backed up by his orchestra. The
women are particularly enjoying it. He finishes with a
flourish and to healthy applause.

EXT. CIRO’S/BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A group of ATTRACTIVE WOMEN are waiting at the back door,
sitting on the hoods of their cars and passing around a few
bottles of champagne with a few of the musicians. DESI comes
out and they start cheering--

DESI
What do we have here?
MUSICIAN
A lot of choices.

DESI
There’s only one choice for me and she’s got a powerful right hook.

DESI’s handed a bottle of champagne--

WOMAN
My friend and I saw the midnight show and the 2AM.

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - DAWN

LUCY’s leaning against her car, waiting with the engine running and the headlights on. After a moment a pair of headlights appear from the opposite direction. DESI pulls up and gets out in his white dinner jacket and untied bow-tie.

DESI
Good morning.

LUCY
I did the calculation. In the course of one week, I see you 1/20th as much as your second trombone player.

DESI
Learn to play the trombone and I’ll give you his job.

LUCY
Well...how hard is the trombone?

DESI
Maybe it’d be better if we didn’t spend the little time we have arguing about why we don’t have more time.

LUCY
Don’t make me feel like a bitch because I want to see my husband.

DESI
I could stay home and be kept by my wife. That’d really complete the picture Americans have of Cuban men.
LUCY
What home are you talking about?

DESI
Or you could quit the film business
and just be my wife, but you ain’t
gonna do that, right?

LUCY
No.

DESI
How ‘bout you come to the club more
to watch the show?

LUCY
I had a new picture open five days
ago--you really want me to come
down to the club?

DESI
Why not?

LUCY
(pause)
Okay.

INT. CIRO’S - NIGHT

DESI’s back on stage performing “Cuban Pete” this time.
LUCY’s sitting at a ringside table and DESI can see that
PHOTOGRAPHERS keep coming and kneeling in front of her to get
her picture.

EXT. CIRO’S/BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The fans are waiting. After a moment, DESI comes out the door
with LUCY and all the fans immediately react to LUCY. They
want her autograph and LUCY hands her purse to DESI. DESI
clocks this turn of events as we go to

BLACK

TITLE:

Wednesday
Camera Blocking
INT. VIVIAN'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

VIVIAN, a dancer by training, is stretching on the floor. There’s a knock on the door--

VIVIAN
Come on in.

MADELYN enters with a plate of food on a tray.

MADELYN
Good morning.

VIVIAN
Hey Maddy.

MADELYN
Some week, huh? Lucille Ball’s a threat to the American way of life? She’s a threat to writers, camera operators and Desi, but it really stops there. Have you ever had a week like this?

VIVIAN
No. But we work in Hollywood and something tells me we’re all gonna have weeks like this before that committee’s done.

MADELYN
(meaning the stretch)
Look what you can still do.

VIVIAN
Still?

MADELYN
I regretted it even before I said it. I can’t do that and I’m just impressed.

VIVIAN
What’s in your hand?

MADELYN
I brought you some breakfast from the commissary. They told me you didn’t have any.

VIVIAN
I did. I had a cup of coffee and half a grapefruit.
MADELYN
Well I have French toast, bacon, eggs and potatoes.

VIVIAN
Enjoy it.

MADELYN
It’s for you.

VIVIAN
That was very sweet but no thank you.

MADELYN
Is it me or have you lost a little weight?

VIVIAN
I have.

MADELYN
Well you look great.

VIVIAN
Thank you.

MADELYN
I’ll see you on stage.

VIVIAN
Madelyn?

MADELYN
Yeah.

VIVIAN
Who told you I didn’t have any breakfast?

MADELYN
I’m sorry?

VIVIAN
You said, “They told me you didn’t have any.”

MADELYN
(beat--shakes her head)
I don’t know. I think-- It was Tino. The tall waiter.
VIVIAN
(pause)
Okay.

MADELYN leaves. VIVIAN sits a moment before--

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
(pause--to herself)
Jesus Christ.

CUT TO:

INT. DESI’S OFFICE - DAY

JOE, HOWARD, ROGER, TIP—the CBS and Philip Morris executives we met earlier, are seated where they were before with DESI leaning against the edge of his desk and LUCY sitting in his chair.

JOE
Day 3 and still no pick-up on the Winchell story. Fellas, I think we might be outta this.

ROGER
 Might be.

TIP
 Might be. Howard?

HOWARD
There’s another shoe and none of us are getting outta this alive.

JOE
Howard--

HOWARD
They’re uncovering something new, they’re chasing the original testimony, something, but there’s another shoe.

LUCY
There’s nothing to uncover, there are no more shoes.

DESI
Lucy’s pregnant.

LUCY
Well that.
There’s a long silence...
JOE
(pause)
What?

DESI
Lucy’s pregnant.

JOE
(pause--then to LUCY)
With a baby?

LUCY
(pause)
Mm-hm.

ROGER
How, uh...I’m not sure what words to use...how much pregnant are you?

LUCY
(pause)
Why did you think you didn’t know what words to use?

HOWARD
He means how far...as a percentage of nine months--where are we on the timeline of--

LUCY
Someone should point a goddam camera at this.

DESI
She’s twelve weeks pregnant.

JOE
(trying to do the math)
So that means...

LUCY
Twelve weeks ago I fucked my husband.

JOE/HOWARD/ROGER/TIP
(simultaneously)
No, no, no, etc./That’s not what we were asking, etc./We don’t need to talk about the details of, etc.

DESI
She’ll start showing in about six weeks and a month after that there won’t be any hiding it.
ROGER
This isn’t a problem.

DESI
It’s not.

ROGER
This has happened before, I won’t say names, but it’s been dealt with.

LUCY
(to DESI)
Is he talking about having me killed?

ROGER
No. You carry a basket of laundry, stand behind chairs, sit with a pillow on your lap--

DESI
And those are great ideas--especially having Lucy carry a basket of laundry in every scene--

ROGER
Or stand behind chairs.

DESI
Where in the Ricardo’s living room are the giant chairs you’re talking about?

JOE
Lucy and Ricky redecorate. The writers can get some fun out of it. And maybe they also get some large ficus trees.

LUCY
They would have to be California Redwoods and I’d have to stand behind them anytime I wasn’t doing the wash.

HOWARD
Well what do you propose?

DESI
That the Ricardos have a baby.
HOWARD
(beat)
What do you mean?

LUCY
(to DESI)
I told you it was gonna be like this.

DESI
Lucy Ricardo will be pregnant on the show. An 8-episode arc starting with Lucy telling Ricky the happy news and ending with the birth of the baby.

ROGER
Noooo, no, no, no.

HOWARD
We can’t have a pregnant woman on television.

DESI
Why not?

HOWARD
Because it’s television. We come into people’s homes.

JOE
Pregnant women often vomit.

LUCY
I know I could any second.

ROGER
May I say something?

LUCY
Frankly, I can’t wait.

ROGER
If Lucy Ricardo’s pregnant, the audience’s mind immediately goes to how did she get that way. Lucy and Ricky sleep in separate beds.

DESI
We’ll be pushing the beds together too.

ROGER
Oh noooo, no, no.
HOWARD
I’m sorry, Des, we’ve gotta put our foot down on this one. You can’t do it. End of discussion.

DESI pushes the intercom button on his desk--

DESI (into intercom)
Miss Rosen, would you come in please with a pad and pen.
(to the others)
My secretary.

MISS ROSEN steps in with a pad and pen--

HOWARD
What are you doing?

DESI (to MISS ROSEN)
To Mr. Alfred Lyons, Chairman of the Board of Philip Morris.

HOWARD
We don’t want to bring Mr. Lyons into this.

DESI
“Mr. Lyons, I guess it all comes down to you. You are the man who is paying the money for this show and I will do whatever you decide.”

HOWARD
Mr. Lyons doesn’t get involved at this level.

DESI
“There’s only one thing I want to make certain that you understand.”

HOWARD
Desi--

DESI
“We’ve given you the number one show on television and up until now the creative decisions have been in our hands. They are now telling us that Lucy and Ricky can’t have a baby on the show.”
CONTINUED: 82

HOWARD
That’s not exactly what we said.

DESI
“All I ask from you, if you agree
with them, is that you inform them
that we will not accept them
telling us what not to do unless,
beginning with our next episode,
they also tell us what to do.

(beat)
Sincerely, etc. Thank you and send
it by telegram please.

MISS ROSEN
Yes sir.

MISS ROSEN exits.

LUCY
And that wasn’t even why I married
him.

LUCY gets up and before she walks out the door with DESI, she
pulls him to her and gives him a passionate kiss for the
benefit of the executives.

LUCY (CONT’D)
That was.

LUCY exits and DESI gives a small “What can I say?” shrug to
the execs before heading out the door and we

CUT TO:

INT. “I LOVE LUCY” SET/RICARDO’S LIVING ROOM – DAY

FRAWLEY and VIVIAN (“FRED” and “ETHEL”) are locked in a coat.
Each has one arm in a sleeve and Lucy’s tied the coat closed
with a scarf. We’re in the middle of camera rehearsal.

ETHEL
Lucy, let me out of here!

FRAWLEY
Untie this coat!

LUCY
I’m not letting you out until you
kiss and make up.
ETHEL
I’ll never make up with him after the things he said.

FRAWLEY
How about the things you said to me? You said my mother looked like a weasel.

LUCY
Apologize, Ethel. Tell him you’re sorry.

ETHEL
Alright. I’m sorry your mother looks like a weasel.

LUCY
Now Ethel.

ETHEL
Well I can’t help it. He should have more consideration. After all, I gave him the best years of my life.

FRAWLEY
These were the best?

DESI
Alright, now you’re even.
(to “ETHEL”)
What are your conditions for making up?

LUCY
We should really go back to the dinner table.

DONALD
What was that?

LUCY
We should go back to the dinner table.

DONALD
I think given the time we should move on. It was good.

LUCY
Yeah, except no it wasn’t.
DONALD

What.

LUCY

Good. It wasn’t good.

DESI

Let’s go back.

FRAWLEY

What’s happening?

VIVIAN

She wants to go back.

FRAWLEY

To where?

VIVIAN

The dinner scene.

FRAWLEY

What?

VIVIAN

(shouting)

The dinner scene, ya drunken yontz!

FRAWLEY

Have we hired someone to play Ethel yet?

DESI

Alright, let’s go.

DONALD

Go forward or go back to the dinner scene?

LUCY

Back.

DONALD

Page 15. This is still Scene A.

From, "You’re right, he’s not going to do me out of dinner." Cameras re-set. Props re-set.

As the cameras re-set and some crew members re-set props over to a beautifully laid-out dinner table--
VIVIAN
Someone’s going to need to tell us
what was wrong with the scene in
the first place.

FRAWLEY
You were in it.
DESI
(knock it off)
Bill.

LUCY
Something fundamental was wrong and
I’ll figure out what.

DONALD
I can figure out what, let’s all do
our individual jobs.

LUCY speaks to DESI quietly and confidentially for a
moment...

LUCY
(whispering)
I hit him in the face till he’s
bleeding, does our insurance cover
that?

DESI
(whispering)
Yeah, I got the platinum plan.

LUCY
(whispering)
Good job.

DONALD
Ready, ready.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Quiet please, rehearsal’s up.

DONALD
From “You’re right, he’s not going
to do me out of dinner.” Settle
and...Action.

VIVIAN
You’re right. He’s not going to do
me out of dinner.

LUCY
Good.

LUCY puts a roast down on the table, then takes a small piano
bench and puts it on the downstage side of the table. The
table now has four place settings but three chairs—one on
each end and one in the middle with its back to the audience.

LUCY sits at one end and motions “RICKY” to quickly sit at
the other end.
Continued: 83

LUCY (CONT'D)

Well sit down everyone.

"FRED" and "ETHEL" both come over and start to take the one chair.
Continued: 83

LUCY (CONT'D)

Oh, we don’t have anymore chairs.
You don’t mind sharing that one do you?

They both sit down gingerly on the piano bench. They indulge in a little jockeying for position. “RICKY” cuts a slice of roast beef--

LUCY (CONT'D)
The roast beef should be pre-cut.

DONALD
It will be dear.

DESI
How is that, Ethel? Not too much fat, is there, Ethel?

“ETHEL” looks at “FRED’S” behind--

ETHEL
There sure is.

LUCY
He means the meat.

ETHEL
Oh no, the meat is fine.

“RICKY” gives “FRED” a serving and “FRED” and “ETHEL” start to eat while “RICKY” serves LUCY’s plate and his own.

“ETHEL” and “FRED” are having trouble eating in such close quarters and that’s where the comedy is supposed to come from. They jab each other with their elbows and vie for more room on the chair until they both fall off.

DONALD
Perfect.

LUCY
Yeah?

DONALD
Moving on.

LUCY
Staying put.

DONALD
Why?
LUCY
We need to work out the moves at the table.

VIVIAN
Bill and I can work out the moves.

LUCY
Viv, it’s not that I’m not confident that you can--

DONALD
This is camera blocking. We can work out the stage business during tomorrow’s run-throughs.

LUCY
I’d strongly prefer we do it now.

DONALD
I have to exercise my directorial authority.

LUCY
(beat)
You have to do what?!

DESI
Let’s take a break.

DONALD
It’s not time for a break.

DESI
Good then, that’s 10 minutes.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(calling out)
10 minutes, we come back to Scene A.

DONALD
No we don’t.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Maybe we don’t, it’s hard to say

People start to scatter...DESI speaks privately to LUCY.

DESI
Tell me what’s happening?

LUCY
Hmm?
DESI
What’s happening right now?

LUCY
You know what occurs to me? At the
top, it should be clear that I’m
setting a nice table, right? There
should be flowers in a vase.

QUICK CUT TO:
INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY arranges flowers in a vase that’s sitting on a well-set table with three chairs.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - DAY

LUCY
And I’m trying to get them just right. And I cut one of the stems but now it’s too short--

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY cuts a stem but now it’s too short, so she cuts the others--

CUT BACK TO:

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - DAY

LUCY
-- so I cut the others but now they’re too short and--

DESI
I get it.

LUCY
What do you think?

DESI
I think you’re having a little bit of a breakdown.

LUCY
I meant about the flowers.

DESI
Tell me what’s happening?

LUCY
Why is this hard to understand? The dinner table isn’t working and we need it to. Right there are the building blocks of drama.

LUCY heads off. We FOLLOW her backstage and into--
INT. DRESSING ROOM CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

LUCY walks down the corridor toward her dressing room and walks past Vivian’s open dressing room door. She stops, thinks, turns around and sticks her head in the door.
Continued: 88

LUCY

Viv.

VIVIAN looks up from her dressing table.

LUCY (CONT'D)
It’s not you or Bill. The dinner scene. It’s Donald Glass.

VIVIAN
Well...it’ll be funny.

LUCY
I’m sure of that.

VIVIAN
Can’t get better till it gets bad.

LUCY
Cross Step One off the list.

VIVIAN
(laughing a little)
Yeah.

LUCY
Okay.

VIVIAN
You hangin’ in there?

LUCY
Look, we’ve made 37 episodes. You do 37 of anything and one of ‘em’s gonna be your 37th best. Ours was directed by Donald Glass.

VIVIAN
Honey...the committee...they’re not gonna base their findings on how this week’s show--

LUCY
Fuck the committee. I said that. I’m talkin’ about the show. And unless you count his wardrobe, Don Glass doesn’t understand the moving parts of physical comedy.

(beat)
That’s all. My point is, you’re not the problem.

LUCY starts to leave--
Continued: 88

VIVIAN

Luce?

LUCY turns back.

LUCY

Yeah.

VIVIAN

Madelyn brought me breakfast this morning. French toast, bacon and
tomatoes. She said someone noticed
I hadn’t had breakfast. She said it
looked like I’d lost some weight.

LUCY

She’s right, you look great.

VIVIAN

Madelyn’s a staff writer. She
doesn’t bring people their
breakfast.

LUCY

(pause)

I’m not sure what you’re asking. It
sounds like she was just--

VIVIAN

How would she know I hadn’t had
breakfast?

LUCY

(beat)

I really don’t know.

VIVIAN

It was you, right?

LUCY

Yes. You have to give me credit.
When I lie, I give up on it pretty
quick.

VIVIAN

It’s admirable.

LUCY

Thanks.

VIVIAN

You told her to bring me breakfast
and remark on my weight loss.
Continued: 88

LUCY
Let me explain why.

VIVIAN
Why?
LUCY
Because I think you should get off this looney diet you’re on.

VIVIAN
It’s working.

LUCY
It’s not good for you.

VIVIAN
I feel great.

LUCY
It’s not good for Ethel.

VIVIAN
It’s not.

LUCY
We’re best friends, Viv, I don’t want to fight. I just sent over some breakfast.

VIVIAN
You didn’t just send it over, you sent it over with Madelyn and a message. And now a new message, which is that I look too good.

LUCY
We just want you at the weight you were when we cast you.

VIVIAN
Otherwise it’ll be bad for Ethel?

LUCY
Yes.

VIVIAN
Or bad for you?

LUCY
Alright--

VIVIAN
No one’s gonna stop loving Lucy when you’re pregnant. GI’s don’t have your picture in their barracks.

LUCY
Thanks for that, Viv.
VIVIAN
I’m saying take it easy, that’s all. Everyone here stands shoulder to shoulder with you and no one feels funny ‘cause we’re scared to death and you’re not helping by jumping up and down on everyone who works here and doing it in front of-
Continued: 88

     LUCY
     Goddamit, Viv, most American women
     look like you, not me, and they
     want to see themselves on
     television!

     There’s a tense silence before FRAWLEY opens his dressing
     room door--

     FRAWLEY
     What the hell are the two of you
     screaming about?!

     LUCY
     Nothing.

     VIVIAN
     Nothing.

     FRAWLEY
     I’m in my room taking my mid-
     morning nap.

     VIVIAN
     Don’t you usually do that while
     we’re rehearsing?

     FRAWLEY
     I’d love to see more of that Moss
     Hart wit on the show.

     VIVIAN
     (to LUCY)
     Don’t worry about it. The weight
     always comes back. I can’t keep it
     off anymore.

     LUCY
     (beat)
     This conversation went poorly.

     VIVIAN
     I thought it was great. I
     definitely feel like performing for
     tens of millions of people now.

     LUCY
     Alright, so...okay.

     LUCY steps out into--
INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

LUCY starts to head down the hall--

FRAWLEY
Lucille.

LUCY
Yeah.

FRAWLEY
Come with me for a drink.

LUCY
It’s 10am.

FRAWLEY
I’m sure it’s 10:15 somewhere.

LUCY
We have to be back on stage.

FRAWLEY
I wonder if they’ll wait for you.

LUCY
Bill--

A young P.A., Scott, is walking by--

FRAWLEY
Kid. Tell the stage Mrs. Arnaz is taking some personal time and she’ll be back when she’s back.

SCOTT
Copy that.

LUCY
(to Scott)
Probably 15 minutes.

SCOTT
Yes ma’am.

LUCY
And you should remind props that I’ll need garden shears for the opening scene.

SCOTT
Copy.
Continued: 88A

FRAWLEY

Let’s go.
LUCY
(still to Scott)
We have to establish right away
that I’m setting a fancy table.

FRAWLEY
You don’t need to explain it to
him.

LUCY
(still to Scott)
We’ll have flowers in a vase and
I’ll cut one of the flowers--

FRAWLEY
He doesn’t care.

LUCY
--it’ll be too short. So I’ll cut
the other flowers and then they’ll
be too short and so on.

SCOTT
Got it.

LUCY
So I need garden shears.

SCOTT
Copy.

LUCY
Regular scissors aren’t strong
enough to cut through the stems.

FRAWLEY
He’s thinking a lot about killing
you now.

LUCY
Fine.

FRAWLEY
(to Scott)
Go.

SCOTT
Yep.

SCOTT takes off.

LUCY
Where are we drinking?
FRAWLEY
Across the street.
EXT. ALLEY/STREET - DAY

LUCY and FRAWLEY walk through the alley and across the street.

FRAWLEY
It’s raining. Is your hair gonna be alright?

LUCY
I’m fine. Since I started doing this show, rain bounces off my hair.

FRAWLEY
That’s helpful.

LUCY
I honestly had no idea this place was here.

FRAWLEY
They like to keep a low profile.

LUCY
It’s hard to imagine why.

FRAWLEY
After you.

LUCY
What kind of people go to a bar on a Wednesday morning?

FRAWLEY
It’s an eclectic group.

They walk into--

INT. DIVE BAR - CONTINUOUS

The place is empty except for maybe three people scattered around. LUCY and FRAWLEY head to the bar where they’re met by a BARTENDER.

FRAWLEY
What are you having?

LUCY
I’ll take a tetanus shot.

FRAWLEY
Jim Beam. Two times.
LUCY
I thought you and Desi had a deal.
You don’t drink at work.

FRAWLEY
Desi and I have a deal that I won’t
be drunk at work. Have you ever
seen me drunk at work?

LUCY
Would I know?

FRAWLEY
No.
(raising his glass)
Here’s to your new baby.

LUCY
Alright then.

They drink.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Are they being polite or do they
not recognize us?

FRAWLEY
They don’t own television sets.

LUCY
Why didn’t I think of that?

FRAWLEY
Honey, I read seven newspapers
every day.

LUCY
Seven?

FRAWLEY
Yeah.

LUCY
When do you have time to do that?

FRAWLEY
It’s 30 minutes between races at
Santa Anita, it takes me a minute
and a half to pick a horse.

LUCY
Aren’t you at work?
Frawley
Yeah we have bookies now and telephones.

Lucy
Know all about that. Did a Damon Runyon picture.

Frawley
In none of those seven newspapers have I read anything about Lucille Ball being a Communist. I don’t hear anyone talking about it.

Lucy
Since when do you talk to anyone?

Frawley
I got news for you, the less you talk, the more things you hear and I haven’t heard anything. So... problems at home?

Lucy
Problems at home?

Frawley
Yeah.

Lucy
No, I’d like very much to have problems at home but my problem’s not home that much. A few times a week.

Frawley
He was playing cards on the boat Wednesday night.

Lucy
I know. The picture’s six months old and I was there when it was taken. I’m saying why wasn’t he home? Where I and our daughter were?

Frawley
Your husband, Ricky--

Lucy
Desi.
FRAWLEY
Desi--is in love with America like no man I’ve ever known since George M. Cohan, who loved America so much he wrote the same song five times. Okay? Desi loves America as much as that guy. But that doesn’t mean he’s not Cuban.
LUCY
I know that.

FRAWLEY
The world he’s from has a very narrow definition of manhood.

LUCY
I know that too.

FRAWLEY
The man is the man.

LUCY
Mm.

FRAWLEY
And you know what? Not for nothin’, but the women are happy.

LUCY
You’ve asked them?

FRAWLEY
They look happy.

LUCY
I see.

FRAWLEY
But that’s neither here nor there.

LUCY
It really isn’t.

FRAWLEY
He’s mesmerized by you, Lucille. And he misses you when you’re in two different places, he does, I’m a witness.

LUCY
He doesn’t have to, we live in the same house.

FRAWLEY
He does have to, that’s what I’m saying. He has to spend time away from you so that he can feel like he’s not—

LUCY
—second banana. I navigate male egos for a living, bud.
Then why are you running the set?
(beat)
Why are you running rehearsals?
You’re doing it right in front of him.

I can’t prioritize the director’s feelings over the health of the show.

No, not—I couldn’t care any less about Donald’s feelings if I tried hard. He’s a hack but we’ll overcome that because, frankly, we’re not doing Uncle Vanya.

Got it.
(beat)
But the business at the dinner table has to be precise.

Really? I was only in vaudeville 40 years so I wouldn’t know about these things of which you speak.

I know you know! So why do you care if--

(over)
You did it in front of Desi...is my point.

(pause)
Lemme tell you something about Desi. He runs this show. Every creative decision goes through him. Every business decision—the network, Philip Morris—and if that wasn’t enough, he’s camera ready on Monday. It takes me five days to get a laugh and he’s killing at the table read and that man, believe me, is nobody’s second banana.

How many people know that?
LUCY
Know what?

FRAWLEY
That Desi runs the show. How many people know that?

LUCY
(pause)
There’s me. And I just told you.

FRAWLEY
You get the picture?

EXT. HOTEL POOL – DAY

OLDER MADELYN
There was a minute there when Lucy was gonna be a serious actress in serious movies. She was gonna compete for roles with Crawford and Hayworth. It might’ve been Lucy in All About Eve and you know what—she’d have blown the doors off the place. It was almost like that. For a minute there.

OMITTED

EXT. LUCY AND DESI’S BACKYARD/POOL – DAY

DESI’s sitting by the pool reading a book, and, after a moment, the back door flies open and LUCY runs out with her shoes in one hand and a bottle of champagne in the other. She’s disheveled desperately gasping for breath.

DESI
Lucy?

LUCY tries to say something but doesn’t have the air yet.

DESI (CONT’D)
What happened?

LUCY
(barely audible—breathing heavy)
Flat tire. ‘Bout a quarter mile back.
DESI
You abandoned the car there?

LUCY
Sprinted the last five-hundred yards.

DESI
What’s going on? Also you ran with a bottle of champagne in your hand?

LUCY
Bringing it...more festive. I got it. I got the part.

DESI
Which part?

LUCY
I got the part, Des. *The Big Street*.

DESI
(pause)
You said it was going to Rita Hayworth.

LUCY
Scheduling problems. Then they went to Judy Holliday. Scheduling problems. I’ve got the female lead in *The Big Street*.

DESI
That’s tremendous.
   (beat)
That’s tremendous.

LUCY
(pause)
I’m opposite Henry Fonda.

DESI
When does it start photography?

LUCY
Two weeks. Still can’t catch my breath.
   (pause)
It’s Damon Runyon.
Continued: 93

DESI
I know, I read the script and I'm very--I'm very happy, I was just looking forward to you coming out on tour.

LUCY
Rita Hayworth had scheduling problems.
DESI
So did you.

LUCY takes a moment...then tosses her shoes aside--

LUCY
You don’t think I want to be in the
same city at the same time as my
husband? What do I talk about every-
-

DESI
I know, I know that.

LUCY
Every decision I make is based on
being near you. Every single
decision.

DESI
Well, yeah. But obviously not every
single decision.

LUCY
You know how many years I’ve spent
sticking my head in the frame,
saying something bitchy and going
away? Crappy little roles in
pictures I wouldn’t pay a nickel to
see if the theater had the only
available air conditioning. If The
Big Street is a hit I’ll be getting
the roles that go to Rita and Judy
and Betty.

DESI
Which Judy?

LUCY
Holiday. Who’s the baseball player
you talk about? The one that sat
down and let Lou Gehrig--

DESI
Wally Pipp.

LUCY
--start that streak? Gehrig was his
understudy.

DESI
Backup.
LUCY
And the guy took a rest one day and
Gehrig came in and didn’t come out
for forty years?

DESI
Fourteen years and it was Wally
Pipp.

LUCY
Okay, well, imagine if Wally Pipp
had scheduling problems and Lou
Gehrig, instead of grabbing his
glove, toured with his husband’s
Latin orchestra. It would’ve
changed the course of baseball.

DESI
And the course of Latin music.

LUCY
Rita Hayworth is Wally Pipp. I’m
Lou Gehrig. The Big Street is the
Yankees.

DESI
I understood the metaphor so long
ago.

LUCY
You don’t have to tour. You could
stay in town.

DESI
And do what?

LUCY
Sell out Ciro’s every night.

DESI
We’re not a house band. I’d like to
sell out New York, Chicago and
Miami too.

LUCY
I know. Eight weeks. I’ll come to
wherever you are on the weekends.
So it’ll be important that you not
fall in love with someone else
Mondays thru Fridays.
Continued: 93

DESI
Agreed. And it’ll be helpful if you don’t sleep with Henry Fonda or Joseph Cotton.

LUCY
How did Joseph Cotton get into the conversation?
DESI
I’ve heard rumors.

LUCY
You really want to compare rumors?

DESI
No.

LUCY
Yeah.

DESI
Hey, look at me.

LUCY
I already am.

DESI
They’re rumors. I have never, and will never, have an interest in being with anyone but you.

LUCY
Should we open the champagne, take our clothes off and go skinny dipping in the pool?

DESI
That bottle of champagne is basically a grenade now but all your other ideas were good.

(beat)
Lucy, Jesus. You’re gonna be a movie star.

LUCY
You comfortable with that?

DESI takes LUCY by the shoulders...

DESI
Am I comfortable with that?

And the champagne bottle, which is laying on its side, EXPLODES, with the cork shattering a wine glass.

LUCY and DESI stare at it...

LUCY
That bottle has comic timing.
INT. CHARLES KOERNER’S OFFICE - DAY

LUCY sits on a couch in the waiting area. She takes in the framed posters of classy hit movies and smiles a little to herself. The SECRETARY notices.
Continued: 94

LUCY
I’ve been at the studio for almost ten years and I’ve never been in the president’s office.

SECRETARY
Mr. Koerner isn’t the president, he’s the head of production.

LUCY

The SECRETARY’s phone buzzes and she picks it up--

SECRETARY
Yes sir.
(to LUCY)
You can go on in.

LUCY gets up, straightens herself out and walks into

INT. CHARLES KOERNER’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

KOERNER
Lucille. Charles Koerner.

LUCY
Lucille Ball.

KOERNER
Do you like Lucille or Lucy?

LUCY
Lucy’s fine. I mean either’s fine. Lucy.

KOERNER
Alright.

LUCY
And do I call you Charlie?

KOERNER
Anyone as brilliant as you were in The Big Street can call me Betsy and I wouldn’t care.

LUCY
Thank you.

KOERNER
Sit. Please. Right there.
LUCY

Thank you.

They sit.

KOERNER

That was a whole new side of you we’ve never seen. Where has that been?

LUCY

It’s been buried under bad movies.

KOERNER

I’ve heard you make some form of that joke before.

LUCY

Keep putting me in pictures like Big Street and you won’t hear it again.

KOERNER

We’re dropping your contract, Lucy.

LUCY laughs...

KOERNER (CONT’D)

No, it’s not a joke. RKO’s dropping your contract.

LUCY

(pause)

I don’t understand.

KOERNER

We don’t have anything for you.

LUCY

(pause)

I don’t--This is happening fast. The Big Street was a hit.

KOERNER

It was a critical hit.

LUCY

I get there wasn’t a stampede to the box office, but you didn’t lose money, did you?

KOERNER

No.
LUCY
Do you understand the conditions under which this picture was finished?

KOERNER
It has nothing to do with--

LUCY
Damon Runyon left town before principal photography, our director joined the army during post-production and our editor died. He just flat-out died.

KOERNER
There were a number of obstacles.

LUCY
That’s accurate. Did you read the reviews?

KOERNER
They were very impressive.

LUCY
They were more than impressive.

KOERNER
Lucy--

LUCY
I blew Henry Fonda off the screen.

KOERNER
This has nothing--

LUCY
Henry Fonda, who is very much under contract here at RKO.

KOERNER
As a matter of fact you blew him off the screen ‘cause it was his last picture he owed at RKO and your director couldn’t get him to give a damn.

LUCY
Making my job that much harder.

KOERNER
This has nothing to do with your performance in The Big Street.
LUCY
But it should have everything to do with my performance in The Big Street. I showed what I can do and that’s just the beginning of what I can do. That’s just the beginning of it. I can do comedy too. Are you sure this isn’t a joke?

KOERNER
It’s a tough business.

LUCY
I know that! I’ve been in it since I was fourteen!

KOERNER
But you’re 35 now.

LUCY
(pause)
And that’s the problem?

KOERNER
No, the problem is that you’re really 39, aren’t you?

LUCY
(pause)
Mm-hm. 39-year olds don’t go to your movies? They don’t like seeing stories about themselves?

KOERNER
You came through for us when Judy Holliday and Rita Hayworth were on other pictures and we didn’t want to lose Fonda. This studio has a handshake understanding with Metro and Warner and they’ll loan us Holliday or Hayworth so we just don’t have enough for you that would warrant keeping you under contract.

LUCY
Judy Holliday does one thing very well but it’s just one thing.

KOERNER
I know how you’re feeling right now, I’ve had to have this conversation a hundred times.
LUCY
I’m surprised, ‘cause you’re terrible at it.

KOERNER
Can I make a suggestion?

LUCY
Be younger?

KOERNER
Radio.

LUCY
(pause)
The hell did you just say to me?

KOERNER
You’ve got the voice for it. I’ve noticed there’s a lot you can do with your voice. You should think about radio.

LUCY
You should go fuck yourself, Betsy.

LUCY gets up to leave and we

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCY AND DESI’S BACKYARD – NIGHT

LUCY’s sitting by the pool, reading a script by a hanging lantern and smoking a cigarette. She has a glass of wine and there’s an almost-empty bottle sitting next to her.

After a moment, DESI appears at the door...

DESI
Lucy?

LUCY
Yep?

DESI
What are you doing?

LUCY
I’m reading scripts.

DESI
It’s three o’clock in the morning.
Continued: 96

LUCY
I know. I’m drunk too.

DESI walks over to her...

LUCY (CONT'D)
I know why you like drinking. I didn’t get it until about two hours ago.

DESI
You read any good movies?

LUCY
These are radio pilots.

DESI
Oh yeah?

LUCY
Yeah.

DESI
(pause)
You know there’s nothing wrong with radio. I do it all the time.

LUCY
You’re a bandleader.

DESI takes that in, nods, gets up and heads back to the house. He turns and calls back--

DESI
You know Bataan was a hit too.

LUCY
I didn’t hear you.

DESI
Bataan was a hit. And I was good. The reviews were Valentines. I didn’t bang a drum. It would’ve led to better parts except I had to go--what do you call it--fight World War II. Now those crappy little parts in pictures you wouldn’t pay a nickel to see if it was the only available air conditioning in the--

LUCY
Des--
Continued: 96

DESI
  I can’t get ‘em.

DESI heads into the house. We stay on LUCY a moment before we

BLACKOUT

TITLE:
Thursday
Run Throughs

INT. RICARDO’S LIVING ROOM SET - DAY

We’re in the middle of a dress rehearsal. JESS, MADELYN, BOB
and others are sitting in the bleachers.

“RICKY” is helping “LUCY” through the front door. “LUCY” is
wrapped in bandages.

DESI
Honey--are you sure you’re alright?
Are the bandages really fake?

LUCY
Oh I’m fine. Thank goodness the
Mertz’s had their awnings up.

DESI
The whole thing was my fault.

LUCY
No, it was my fault. Weren’t we
silly?

DESI
Yeah. We’ll never fight again.

They kiss. “FRED” comes in the door looking very sad.

FRAWLEY
You okay, Lucy?

LUCY
Oh, I’m fine.

FRAWLEY
Are you sure?

LUCY
Yeah. Don’t look so sad. I’m really
alright.

FRAWLEY
I wasn’t sad about that. I just saw
Ethel and she’s so mad about what
we did, she’s gone home to her
mother!

LUCY
Oh no!
DONALD
And we cut. Good. Is that lunch?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(calling out)
That’s one hour for lunch.

DONALD
We’ll do notes on stage after and go again.

Everyone starts to leave--

LUCY
(stopping everyone)
One quick thing?

Everyone stops...

DONALD
(beat)
The table scene’s getting good.

LUCY
Yeah, it’s not, but I wanted to circle back and express again my serious concern about Ricky’s entrance at the top. I brought it up at the table read Monday and there haven’t been new pages.

JESS
Because it’s gonna work.

LUCY
Hear me out.

JESS
Okay.

LUCY
Right now Lucy’s trimming the flowers on the table when the front door opens and Ricky comes in.

JESS
We’re gonna have to cut the flowers. I don’t mean “cut the flowers”, I mean cut the flowers.
LUCY
(pause)
I couldn’t understand the
difference between those two line
readings.

JESS
We’re running long. We have to cut
the bit with the flowers.
DESI
How long?

JESS
About a minute.

LUCY
Alright, we’ll get back to the flowers. The door opens, Ricky comes in and Lucy doesn’t see or hear him, which is unusual because the front door is—you know—right there, and in previous episodes we’ve established that Lucy’s eyes and ears are connected to her brain.

JESS
We buy the conceit.

LUCY
I’m sorry?

JESS
We buy it. Lucy’s so focused on making the table nice she doesn’t even notice Ricky coming in the door.

LUCY
Okay, I’ll run with that. Ricky walks up to her quietly, puts his hands over her eyes and says--

She points to DESI--

DESI
“Guess who it is.”

LUCY
And Lucy says, “Bill?, Sam?, Pat?, Ralph?”

JESS
She’s teasing him.

LUCY
Yes. She’s teasing him. That’s clear. But then Ricky responds--

She points to DESI--
DESI
“No!”
LUCY
No! And there’s a stage direction for Ricky that says, “Burning”. No! He’s upset. Lucy continues the teasing--George, Julius, Stephen, Ivan?
BOB
We changed that to “Pedro? Julio? Juan? Guillermo?”
MADELYN
(imitating BOB)
“Because those are Spanish names. I mean Mexican. Cuban. Latin. They’re Brazilian names! Turkish!”
BOB
You good?
MADELYN
Yeah.
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
We’re moving into a meal penalty.
LUCY
Lucy guesses some names.
JESS
Teasingly.
LUCY
And the script indicates that Ricky then takes his hands away from Lucy’s eyes, turns her around and says--
She points to DESI--
DESI
“No! It’s me!”
LUCY
So my question again, Jess, is does Ricky honestly, truly believe that there might be eight different men who routinely walk into their apartment--all of whom sound exactly like Desi Arnaz?
JESS
You think we’re saying Ricky’s stupid?

LUCY
I think we’re saying the audience is. And that’s something for which they won’t soon forgive you.

JESS
Do you charge for these lessons?

LUCY
A ton.

JESS
For the sake of the joke, the audience will take the leap with us.

LUCY
They will, but they’ll need a busload of orthopedists when they land.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Jess--

JESS
Let’s talk about it after lunch.

LUCY
I have an idea.

JESS
I’ve got a crew here. We’re about to run into a penalty.

LUCY
Lucy’s working on the flowers.

JESS
We’re cutting the flowers for time. I don’t mean literally cutting the flowers--

LUCY
I can not go through that again. Ricky opens the door, comes in, shuts the door the way we’ve seen him do in thirty-seven episodes. Lucy doesn’t acknowledge him.
JESS
So far you’re describing the script.

LUCY
Right. But instead of playing the hands-over-the-eyes guessing game, Ricky just stands there.
(MORE)
LUCY (CONT'D)
He can’t understand why Lucy didn’t notice him come home anymore than we can. He stands there for a full beat, and then another, and then merrily and in a slightly exaggerated manner says--as we’ve seen him say a hundred times--

She points to DESI--

DESI
“Lucy, I’m home!”

Everyone LAUGHS, and once the laughter dies down...

LUCY
For Ricky is funny.

JESS
Luce? Let’s talk about it after lunch.
(to the A.D.)
Scott.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
(calling out)
That’s lunch. One hour. Back on stage for notes.

People begin to head off their separate ways. FRAWLEY catches LUCY’s eye and shrugs his shoulders as if to say, “What did we just talk about yesterday?”

LUCY
(calling out)
Hang on!

Everyone stops...

LUCY (CONT'D)
Des. Did that work for you?

DESI
Works perfect.

LUCY
(to JESS)
We’ll talk about it after lunch.

People start leaving again. As LUCY walks past FRAWLEY she quietly says--

LUCY (CONT'D)
It needed to be fixed.
INT. WRITERS’ ROOM - DAY

JESS, MADELYN, BOB and MARY PAT are sitting around the table.

BOB
I think we can get more out of “hypocrite”.

MADELYN
Yeah.

JESS
Like what?

BOB
Like Lucy says, “Well it’s nice to know I’m married to a hypocrite” and Desi gets his back up and says--

MADELYN
“Hypocrite!” then turns to Fred and says, “What’s a hypocrite?”

BOB
Fred tells him-- “It’s a person who says one thing but does another” and Desi says, “Thank you” and turns back to Lucy and says--

MADELYN
“Oh yeah?!”

JESS
Good.

BOB
Yeah, that’s exactly what I was going to pitch.

MADELYN
But I pitched it faster.

BOB
By interrupting me.

MADELYN
How do you think I got to be a woman in a comedy room?

There’s a KNOCK on the door and LUCY sticks her head in--
Continued: 98

LUCY

Hey.
(to JESS)
Is now a good time?
JESS
Madelyn had a good idea. We shoot it both ways and see which one gets the bigger laugh.

BOB
That was my idea.

LUCY
It’s a bad idea.

MADELYN
(to BOB)
It’s just not your day.

LUCY
(to JESS)
Can I have a minute in your office?

JESS
Sure.

JESS gets up and walks out into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

JESS
What’s wrong with shooting it both ways?

LUCY
Well you’ll be on the floor during the show, right?

JESS
I’ll be where I always am.

They step across the hall into--

INT. JESS’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

LUCY
In full view of the audience.

JESS
I suppose.

LUCY
Since we’re doing it both ways, how about we do it once with your pants on and once with your pants off?
JESS
It’s not the same.

LUCY
It is, and I don’t want to do the version with my pants off in front of two-hundred people. But I need to talk to you about something else.

LUCY closes the door.

JESS
You’re not gonna tell me you’re pregnant again, are you?

LUCY
No. I’m still pregnant from before, but no. Jess, you know how much I value you.

JESS
I think I do.

LUCY
You know you do.

JESS
Okay.

LUCY
And you also know what it is Desi does around here.

JESS
Sure.

LUCY
I mean every business decision goes through Desi. In fact most business decisions are made by Desi.

JESS
You married a very bright man.

LUCY
I did. He also makes a lot of creative decisions.

JESS
(pause)
I’m not sure I’d say a lot.
LUCY
Well... I would. I’d say a lot. He devised the camera system we use. He’s the reason the east coast isn’t seeing the show on a foggy kinescope.

JESS
Yeah.

LUCY
And even though we use three cameras, the studio audience can see every scene, that’s him too. And the cast, the four of us, we can see the audience.

JESS
I give him a lot of credit for that.

LUCY
He’s the one who thought up Lucy being pregnant on the show.

JESS
That’s never gonna happen ‘cause no matter what CBS says, Philip Morris is never gonna let it happen, but, like I said, I give him credit.

LUCY
That’s the thing though. You don’t.

JESS
What do you mean?

LUCY
He doesn’t get credit as an executive producer, which, let’s face it, is what he is. You get sole credit.

JESS
I didn’t win my credit in a raffle, I earn it. I’m the show runner, not to mention being the creator of the show.

LUCY
I don’t see how we could do the show without you.
JESS
You absolutely could not.
LUCY
I don’t see how we could do it without Desi either.

JESS
Because he plays Ricky which he does get a screen credit for.

LUCY
Jess--

JESS
Is this something our agents should be talking about?

LUCY
No.

JESS
Because I’m not at all comfortable with this conversation.

LUCY
I’m about to make you less comfortable. I need you to help me save my marriage.  
(pause)  
I need you to help me save my marriage.

INT. WRITERS’ ROOM – DAY

MADELYN and BOB are waiting along with MARY PAT...

BOB
(pause)  
What do you think they’re talking about in there?

MADELYN
I think they’re talking about you.  
I think they want to pay you less because you’re not as funny as I am.

JESS and LUCY step out of JESS’s office--

JESS
Mary Pat, would you ask Desi if I can come see him?

MARY PAT
Sure.
LUCY starts to head off and JESS slams his office door behind him a little too hard. LUCY clocks that and then calls into the writers room—

     LUCY
         Madelyn?

LUCY motions for MADELYN to step outside.

     MADELYN
         Yeah.

MADELYN steps into—

102  INT. CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS  102

--and she and LUCY take a few steps away for privacy. They speak quietly.

     MADELYN
         Was everything alright in there?

     LUCY
         Yeah. So listen, it has to be coherent. If it’s anything goes then nothing’s funny

     MADELYN
         Anything Goes was a hit.

     LUCY
         Not Cole Porter’s Anything Goes, I mean--

     MADELYN
         I know. Why are you telling me?

     LUCY
         The opening, Ricky’s entrance with his hands over my eyes, that was Jess, right?

MADELYN takes a moment before—

     MADELYN
         Outside of that room we make it a point not to talk about who wrote what.

     LUCY
         It wasn’t Jess?
MADELYN
(beat)
Again--

LUCY
You know I’m right about the logic. Why aren’t you backing me up instead of endorsing some plan to shoot it both ways.

MADELYN
Listen, why don’t we get together for a drink or a swim this weekend and we can put it on the agenda.

LUCY
The show’s tomorrow and I’m fine talking about it now.

MADELYN
By all means, let’s unnecessarily add more to what you’re worried about this week.

LUCY
I’m not worried--

MADELYN
Shhh.

LUCY
(quieter)
I’m not worried. I’m saying that I count on you to be the firewall—to be—to make sure--just--logic, okay?

MADELYN
I won’t say who wrote what, but I can tell you that I’m the lady in there trying to make Lucy smarter.

LUCY
(beat)
‘Scuse me?

MADELYN
I’m the one trying, every week, to make--

LUCY
Lucy’s dumb?
MADELYN
(beat)
I didn’t say that.
LUCY
But you’re trying--struggling, it sounds like--to make Lucy smarter.

MADELYN
I created this character with you.

LUCY
And she needs to be smarter.

MADELYN
She sometimes, for the sake of comedy, is infantilized.

LUCY says nothing...

MADELYN (CONT'D)
This is a crazy week, time and place to be having this conversation. This is important to--

LUCY
How is she infant--

MADELYN
She literally says “Waaah”.

LUCY
‘Cause when she does, 60-million people laugh--just like for Lou Costello and Stan Laurel--and you get paid.

MADELYN
When those two grown men play slow-witted five-year olds, I cringe.

LUCY
Then I question your comedy IQ.

MADELYN
No you don’t, you think I’m the funniest writer in the room and that’s why you’re talking to me and not Jess.

LUCY
Many people regard Lucy as clever. She always has a plan to overcome an obstacle.

MADELYN
Yeah, but oftentimes that obstacle is her husband’s permission.
LUCY
You really think this week, right
now, is the best time to talk about
this?

MADELYN
No! I specifically said that 30-
seconds ago.
(pause)
Look, it’s just a female
perspective from another
generation.

LUCY
Another generation? You’re on a
roll.

MADELYN
Bette Davis, Bacall, Hepburn--

LUCY
Funny women.

MADELYN
--Judy Holliday--

LUCY
Judy Holliday? Go to hell.

MADELYN
They are funny women and they’re
smart and tough and they outsmart
the men. Why do you and Gracie
Allen feel like you have to--

LUCY
Okay, stop. Stop stop stop. Maddie,
I love you. You’re like, I guess, a
great-granddaughter to me from
another generation. And it’s my
fervent wish for you that one day
you’re half as funny as Gracie
Allen. In the meantime, please
remember that Lucy and Ricky and
Fred and Ethel, if they live past
tomorrow, have to live in a reality
that accepts the physical laws of
the universe. Ricky knows that Lucy
doesn’t think there are possibly
eight other men in the apartment.

MADELYN
Understood.
Continued: 102

JESS comes out of his office and calls into the writers room--
JESS
Let’s go.

MADELYN
(to LUCY)
But I don’t make that decision.

JESS
Mary Pat, cut the flowers. And to
be clear, by “cut the flowers”--

BOB
She knows exactly what you mean.

MARY PAT nods that she does.

As JESS and BOB walk past MADELYN--

JESS
(to MADELYN)
Let’s go.

LUCY’s left standing there...

LUCY
(under her breath)
Judy Holliday. This isn’t
happening.

INT. DESI’S OFFICE ROOM – DAY

DESI’s pacing a little with a script in his hands, going
through his lines. He tosses the script on the couch and
lights a cigarette. Then paces a little bit.

There’s a knock on the door--

DESI
Come on in.

MISS ROSEN opens the door--

MISS ROSEN
Mr. Oppenheimer is here to see you
with Mr. Carroll and Miss Pugh.

DESI
Nothing from Mr. Lyons yet?

MISS ROSEN
No.
Continued: 103

DESI
Anyone at Philip Morris?

MISS ROSEN
No.

DESI
You think they know something we don’t know yet?

MISS ROSEN
I think if they did, our offices would be empty by now.

DESI
Okay.

DESI calls out--

DESI (CONT'D)
Camina conmigo al escenario!

--as he heads out into--

103A  INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS  103A

DESI
Walk me to the stage. We’re an hour behind.

JESS
Madelyn’s got a new joke for the second act.

MADELYN
I just this minute told Lucy that we don’t talk about who wrote what.

BOB
And Madelyn came up with the joke only seconds after I did.

MADELYN
Isn’t it possible that two comedy writers working on the same script came up with the same joke at the same time?

BOB
It’s possible.

MADELYN
Thank you.
BOB
It’s just not what happened.

DESI
Do I need to be here for any of this?

JESS hands DESI a piece of paper. DESI looks it over...

DESI (CONT'D)
“Hypocrite?! What’s a hypocrite?”

They turn onto--

103B  INT. NEW CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS  103B

MADELYN
That’s to Fred.

DESI reads the rest of the new joke...

DESI
Got it. Good. Was that what you wanted me for?

JESS
The hypocrite joke is for Episode 9, that’s the script we’re working on. If Lucy’s going to be pregnant--Lucy Ricardo--we have to introduce it in 9 according to your timetable.

DESI
Yeah.

JESS
So I just wanted to confirm with you that there’s no chance we’re doing that.

DESI
We are doing that.

They walk through a door and onto--

103C  INT. STAGE – CONTINUOUS  103C

--where a piece of the set is being worked on by a couple of stagehands, lights are being re-focused and a camera is being built.
JESS
You know Phillip Morris won’t let us and even if they did—

DESI
What.

JESS
We don’t want to see this girl pregnant. We don’t want to know that she’s pregnant. We don’t want to know how she got pregnant.

DESI
Do we have viewers who don’t know how women get pregnant?

JESS
Yes, they’re called children.

DESI
Do any of these children have younger brothers or sisters?

JESS
You know what else a lot of our viewers are? Christian.

DESI
I’m way ahead of you. I’m gonna have a priest, a minister and a rabbi review every script.

MADELYN
I’m gonna be re-written by a priest, a minister and a rabbi?

BOB
There’s a joke in there somewhere.

MADELYN
Good, because after being re-written by a priest, a minister and a rabbi there aren’t gonna be many left in the script.

DESI
Good one.

JESS
Des--
Continued: 103C

DESI
Enough. I sent a telegram Tuesday
to Alfred Lyons.

JESS
You did.

DESI
I’ve put the decision in his hands.

JESS
Okay. Okay good. Okay.

DESI
You’re that sure he’s gonna say no.

JESS
I am.

DESI
That it?

JESS
Yeah.

But everyone stands there awkwardly for a moment...

JESS (CONT'D)
Oh, Bob, tell Desi that thing you
were saying before.

BOB’s now on the spot. He doesn’t want to do this.

BOB
(pause)
Me?

JESS
Yeah.

BOB
Really?

DESI
Guys?

JESS
It was interesting. Bob was saying
that you’re really the title
character of the show. Because
you’re the “I” in I Love Lucy.
DESI
(pause)
Hm.

JESS
So strictly speaking, you have top billing.

DESI
(pause)
I’m the “I” in I Love Lucy.

JESS
Yeah.

DESI
I never thought of it that way.

JESS
You like that?

DESI
I like that.

JESS
Alright.

DESI
Jess?

JESS
Yeah.

DESI
(confidentially)
Patronize me again and I’ll stick my hand down your throat and pull your fuckin’ lungs out.

JESS
(pause)
Look--

MISS ROSEN, Desi’s secretary, comes in with a telegram.

MISS ROSEN
Excuse me.

JESS
What is it?

MISS ROSEN
It’s a telegram for Mr. Arnaz. It’s from Mr. Lyons and Philip Morris.
Continued: 103C

DESI
Thank you.

DESI opens the telegram, reads it and hands it to JESS. DESI walks away as he calls out--

DESI (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Let’s go, please, we’re an hour behind!

MADELYN
What does it say?

JESS
“To all Philip Morris and CBS employees: Don’t fuck with the Cuban.”

104 EXT./EST. LUCY AND DESI’S HOUSE – NIGHT
The house is mostly dark with only a few lights on.

105 INT. LAUNDRY ROOM – NIGHT
LUCY has a basket of laundry in front of her. She’s separating whites and colors while working on her lines.

LUCY
(as “LUCY”)
“Well he didn’t come home and he hasn’t called...
(“choking up”)
...not that it makes any difference to me.”
(as “ETHEL”)
“Oh I can see that it doesn’t make any difference to you. Why don’t you call Ricky and tell him you’re sorry.”
(as “LUCY”)
“What?! You think I’d allow my pride--"

LUCY checks her script--

LUCY (CONT'D)
(reading)
“Do you think I’d swallow--
(as “LUCY”)
“What?! Do you think I’d swallow my pride like that?”
DESI appears in the doorway, holding their sleeping TWO YEAR-OLD GIRL on his shoulders.

DESI
(quietly)
Never.

LUCY
Oh, what are you doing up?

DESI
I woke up and you weren’t there. So I went to the nursery to see if everything was okay. She’d kicked her blanket off so I fixed it. That woke her up.

LUCY
Yeah.

DESI
But as you can see, I got her back to sleep and we went searching for mama. You know we pay a housekeeper to do the laundry.

LUCY
I like doing laundry and I never get a chance. Don’t you love the smell?

DESI
I do. They should make a cologne that smells like soap.

LUCY
They do. It’s soap.

DESI
I’m gonna put her back in her little apartment now. You should come to bed.

LUCY
I will.
(beat)
This was a nice date.

DESI smiles and nods...

DESI
Come back to bed soon.

DESI exits.
 Continued: 105

LUCY resumes sorting the laundry and running lines...

LUCY
“Do you think I’d call him and go
crawling back?”
(again)
“What?! Do you think I’d swallow my
pride?! Do you think I’d call him
and go crawling--”

LUCY notices something in the laundry basket...

LUCY (CONT’D)
(mindlessly, as “LUCY”)
“What? Do you think I’d swallow my
pride like that?”

She’s looking at a handkerchief that was in the laundry
basket. We can’t see what’s caught her attention but
something’s bothering her.

106  EXT. LUCY AND DESI’S HOUSE – NIGHT

It’s raining. LUCY walks out the back door, down past the
pool and leans against the gate, looking back at her house.
She stares.

107  INT. SOUNDSTAGE – NIGHT

A cigarette is lit and from the light of the flame we see
LUCY sitting in the Ricardo’s living room.

After a moment, the heavy elephant door opens and headlights
from a car stream into the soundstage. We can see from the
headlights that it’s still raining. The headlights are turned
off and we hear a car door open and then close.

FRAWLEY
(calling)
Lucy?!

LUCY
Over here.

FRAWLEY
(to the SECURITY GUARD)
Thanks, Bobby.

SECURITY GUARD (BOBBY)
Everything alright in there?
Continued: 107

FRAWLEY
We’re fine, thanks.

The SECURITY GUARD takes off as FRAWLEY makes his way to the set.

FRAWLEY (CONT'D)
What the hell?

LUCY
Thanks for coming down.

FRAWLEY
It’s two in the morning.

LUCY
Sorry about that.

FRAWLEY
Kid, what’s goin’ on?

LUCY
I’m gonna re-stage the dinner scene.

FRAWLEY
Let’s go to my dressing room and call Desi.

LUCY
No, Desi’s home with the baby, we can do this.

FRAWLEY
Does he know you’re here?

LUCY
He’s sleeping.

FRAWLEY
Let me take you home.

Another pair of headlights pull up to the open elephant door.

FRAWLEY (CONT'D)
Is that him?

LUCY
That’s Viv.

FRAWLEY
You called her too?
LUCY
I’m re-staging the dinner scene.
This isn’t for beginners, you know,
this isn’t school.

FRAWLEY
I don’t hire the directors.

LUCY
I know, I’m just sayin’.

VIVIAN
What’s happening here?

LUCY
Thanks for coming, Viv.

VIVIAN
Is everything alright?

FRAWLEY
The three of us are on an empty
soundstage at two in the morning,
she’s drunk, I’m not, so, yeah,
everything’s good, why do you ask?

VIVIAN
Your call just said to come to the
stage, that it was an emergency. So
I thought--

LUCY
We need to re-block the dinner
scene, it’s not gonna take long.

VIVIAN
What?

FRAWLEY
You heard her right.

LUCY
It won’t take long, we’re just
gonna make an adjustment.

LUCY pulls the drop cloth off the dining table.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Two people who are fighting have to
share a seat at a dinner table.

LUCY grabs the downstage piano bench--
Continued: 107

LUCY (CONT'D)
First thing, why don’t we take this and move it upstage so the camera can see you.

VIVIAN
Are we really doing this?

FRAWLEY
As a matter of fact, putting the chair upstage makes sense.

LUCY
Sit please.

VIVIAN
Which one of us?

LUCY
Both of you. In the chair.

VIVIAN and FRAWLEY each take half the piano bench.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Now it can’t just be a mish-mash of pushing, it can’t just be a scrum, each move has to be articulate. So Ethel elbows Fred.

(beat)

Elbow him.

QUICK CUT TO:

108  INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

“ETHEL” elbows “FRED” as the AUDIENCE LAUGHS.

CUT BACK TO:

109  INT. SOUNDSTAGE/I LOVE LUCY SET - SAME TIME

LUCY
Fred elbows Ethel a little harder.

QUICK CUT TO:

110  INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

“FRED” elbows “ETHEL” back.
Continued: 110

VIVIAN
Ow.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE/I LOVE LUCY SET - SAME TIME

LUCY
Ethel elbows Fred harder--

She does--

FRAWLEY
Hey--

LUCY
Then Fred--

He does--

LUCY (CONT'D)
Now hit each other at the same time
and fall off the piano bench.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

“FRED” AND “ETHEL” elbow each other and fall to the floor as
the AUDIENCE HOWLS WITH LAUGHTER.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SOUNDSTAGE/I LOVE LUCY SET - SAME TIME

LUCY
And that’s that. Let’s run it a
couple of times at speed.

VIVIAN
Did something happen?

LUCY
I’m sorry?

VIVIAN
At home. Did something just happen?

LUCY
No. I was--no. I was doing some
laundry and--no.

(MORE)
LUCY (CONT'D)
Yeah, I just wanted to fix this beat. I couldn’t sleep. It’s like when you’re not sure if you left the oven unlocked. Door unlocked. Nothing, I wanted to fix this beat. Let’s do it again.

FRAWLEY and VIVIAN stand there quietly...

LUCY (CONT'D)
(pause)
You know I did this show so Desi and I could be together? I had no idea it was gonna be a hit. I just thought...well, the construction department’s gonna build us a little apartment and that’s where we’ll live most of the time. You know? And it worked out. This is where--

LUCY draws the set in the air with her finger...

LUCY (CONT'D)
It’s like a story you’d read a little girl. A witch puts a curse on a woman. She’ll be adored by the man she loves, but only as long as she stays on this patch of ground.
(beat)
It’s still a lot more than most people get. Let’s run it at speed.

FRAWLEY
I’m gonna drive you home.

LUCY
I’m the biggest asset in the portfolio of the Columbia Broadcasting System. The biggest asset in the portfolio of Philip Morris Tobacco, Westinghouse...I get paid a fortune to do exactly what I love doing, I work side by side with my husband who’s genuinely impressed by me, and all I have to do to keep it is kill every week for thirty-six weeks in a row. And then do it again the next year. Kill. So let’s do it again.
114 INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
I thought he’d like the idea that he was the title character. That he was the “I” in *I Love Lucy*. I thought he’d get a kick out of it.

115 INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
No, I knew that wasn’t gonna go well. None of us heard what Desi said to Jess. I still don’t know what he said.

116 EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
After RKO dropped Lucy’s contract, MGM had her in for a Technicolor test, which she didn’t know yet would be one of the most important moments in her life. A man named Sydney Guilaroff was Metro’s chief hair stylist. He looked at Lucy and said, “The hair is brown but the soul is on fire” and he dyed her hair a new color.

117 INT. RADIO STUDIO - NIGHT

A live studio audience is watching the radio broadcast of *My Favorite Husband*. An “On the Air” light flicks to red.

ANNOUNCER
It’s time for *My Favorite Husband*, starring Lucille Ball.

And for the first time, LUCY’s hair is red.

LUCY
(as “LIZ”)
Jell-O, everybody!

APPLAUSE

THEME MUSIC
ANNOUNCER
Yes, it’s the gay family series, starring Lucille Ball, with Richard Denning, transcribed and brought to you by the Jell-O family of desserts.

SINGERS
J-E-L-L-Ooooh! The big red letters stand for the Jell-O family. Oh, the big red letters stand for the Jell-o family. That’s Jell-O!

WOMAN
Yum, yum, yum.

SINGERS
Jell-O puddings!

MAN
Yum, yum, yum.

ANNOUNCER
And now, Lucille Ball with Richard Denning as Liz and George Cooper—two people who live together and like it. As we look in on the Coopers, it’s a beautiful spring day and Liz is just going to the kitchen to talk to Katy, the maid.

LUCY
(as “LIZ”)
Oh Katy?

KATY
Yes, Mrs. Cooper?

LUCY
(as “LIZ”)
Katy, I’ve got some good news for you.

KATY
Uh-oh.

LUCY
(as “LIZ”)
“Uh-oh”. What do you mean, “Uh-oh.” I say I’ve got good news and you say, “Uh-oh”?

THE AUDIENCE LAUGHS--
KATY
Everytime you say you’ve got good
news it’s usually good for you and
bad for me.

LUCY
(as “LIZ”)
Ooooh well...maybe that’s a little
ture.

ANOTHER LAUGH, and we

CUT TO:

118 INT. LUCY’S RADIO DRESSING ROOM – NIGHT

LUCY’s changing into street clothes. There’s a knock on the
door.

LUCY
Come on in.

JESS sticks his head in the door--

LUCY (CONT’D)
That was a good show.

JESS
I thought so too.

LUCY
Pass it on to Maddie and Bob, would
you? Great job this week.

JESS
I’ve got two gentlemen out here
who’d like to see you and you’re
gonna want to hear what they have
to say.

LUCY
(beat)
Did it need to sound ominous, can’t
they just come in?

JESS walks in with two executives--LEVY and HART.

LEVY
Lucille Ball.

LUCY
Yes sir.
LEVY
David Levy, head of comedy development, CBS.

HART
David Hart, head of current programming, CBS.

LUCY
Uhh, well, David...and David, I’ve been working here at CBS for a year and I’ve never heard of either of you.

LEVY
CBS Television.

LUCY
(beat)
CBS does television?

The two executives look at each other...

HART
Yeah. Edward R. Murrow--

LUCY
I’m kidding.

HART
Understood.

LEVY
That was funny.

LUCY
Thank you.

JESS
These men have an interesting idea.

LUCY
Would you like to sit?

HART
Thank you.

LEVY
Lucy, we’ve been here to the show a few times now, and we noticed-- well, David noticed--

HART
You noticed too.
LEVY
We both noticed. We noticed that when you do the show, you use gestures and expressions.

LUCY
(pause)
You mean the acting?

LEVY
Yeah.

LUCY
My face, my body and my voice, that’s all I get to work with.

HART
It’s just unusual because it’s radio.

LUCY
I watched Jack Benny. He plays it for the studio audience and it works pretty well for him.

LEVY
It does, and it works pretty well for you too. Very well. And we think it’s a shame that no one gets to see it.

LUCY
Invent a way to see what’s on the radio.

HART
We did, it’s television.

LUCY
Are you here to sell me one?

JESS
Lucy— they want to put My Favorite Husband on TV.

INT. CBS COMMISSARY - DAY

LUCY’s having lunch with LEVY, HART and JESS, along with HOWARD and ROGER, the two executives we met earlier.

LEVY
I’m very interested.
ROGER
That’s great.

LEVY
Is it too early to raise a glass?

HOWARD
To My Favorite Husband.

LUCY
Yes! Except I don’t want to do My
Favorite Husband.

HOWARD
(pause)
I’m confused.

JESS
Yeah, me too.

LUCY
Don’t panic. It’s simple. I’m
interested in your idea of doing My
Favorite Husband on television, I
just want it to be a different
show.

JESS
What show do you want it to be?

LUCY
One where Desi plays my husband.

INT. CBS CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY
LUCY, JESS and the executives from lunch have now been joined
by more executives, including MACY, an even bigger wig than
the big-wigs she’s been meeting with. They’re all sitting
around a very long table with LUCY at one end and MACY on the
other.

MACY
I understand there’s a casting
issue.

LUCY
(pause)
Was that to me?

MACY
Yes.
LUCY
I wasn’t sure, you’re quite a ways away.

HART
Our casting department has come up with a list of very exciting names we think you’ll like. Could you pass this down to Lucy.

LEVY
These are all very funny men.

HART
I think we have mimeos for everyone.

The casting list starts getting handed out--

LEVY
It’s one of the best lists I’ve seen in a while.

LUCY
Number 12 died last week.

HART
That’s my fault.

LUCY
There’s no issue.

HOWARD
What was that?

LUCY
(louder)
I was answering Mr. Macy. There’s no casting issue. I am ready and eager to do a half-hour domestic comedy for CBS if the role of my husband--let’s call him Shmezy--is played by Desi.

HOWARD
Can I remark on this?

ROGER
Please.

HOWARD
On My Favorite Husband, your husband is the 5th Vice President of a bank.
LUCY
Yes.

HOWARD
Can I ask you, in all candor, do you see Desi as the 5th Vice President of a bank?

LUCY
I can’t see him being the 5th Vice President of anything. I can see him owning the bank.

ROGER
You see the problem?

LUCY
I see what you think is the problem.

MACY
Lucy.

LUCY
Yes.

MACY
I don’t ordinarily come to meetings like this. I don’t pay attention to casting issues. This meeting is several floors below my general interest. I’m here to deliver a hard truth. We can’t have an all-American girl married to a man who isn’t American.

LUCY
He is American. He was a sergeant in the U.S. Army and he served in the war.

MACY
You know exactly what I mean, Lucy, he’s Spanish.

LUCY
Still no. He’s never been to Spain in his life. He speaks Spanish. He was born in Cuba. His father was the Mayor of Santiago, Cuba’s second largest city.

MACY
You know exactly--
LUCY
--what you mean, yes I do. Look, I’m not here trying to get a job for my nephew. Desi Arnaz is a phenomenally talented man. Not just a world-class musician but a very good actor who would be a movie star if there was such a thing as a Cuban movie star. Moreover we work very well together. I go out and meet him when he’s touring and he brings me up for some sketches and it works. Jess?

JESS
It works.

LUCY
Any cultural differences will make for good comedy, am I right Jess?

JESS
You’re not wrong.

LUCY
Now I don’t want to have another meeting like this because I don’t know how many more people will fit around a table. My position’s not going to change. You want me on television and there’s only one television show I’m willing to do, so what’s it gonna be?

There’s silence around the table for a moment, and then--

The *I LOVE LUCY* THEME MUSIC crashes in.

**TITLE:**

*Friday*

*Show Night*

A live orchestra is playing the theme music. The bleachers are filled with an excited audience and there’s pre-show activity from the crew.
We see eight empty seats in the back row with reserved signs being taped on them.

122

**INT. LUCY'S DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME**

LUCY, who’s hair and make-up are now done up as “Lucy”, is finishing putting her costume on with the help of a dresser. P.A. SCOTT pops his head in—

SCOTT
We think it’s about 15 minutes.

LUCY
We think?

SCOTT
We’re holding for something, I’m not sure what.

LUCY
Okay, thanks.

P.A. SCOTT pops back out.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Holding?

JESS taps on the open door.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Yeah, come in.
(to the DRESSER)
Can I have a second?

DRESSER
Sure.

The DRESSER exits.

JESS
I think I know why you want to see me.

LUCY
Do you?

JESS
Hear me out.

LUCY
I asked you a favor, Jess. I asked you to give him an E.P. credit.

(MORE)
LUCY (CONT'D)
Instead, you tried to convince him he was the title character or some--

JESS
Listen--

LUCY
--bullshit. What the hell was that?

JESS
I’m sorry if he was insulted. I mean, I know he’s insulted so I’m sorry.

LUCY
He wasn’t insulted, he was laughing about it. But yeah, he’s insulted. No, he’s offended, I’m insulted. I asked you to do a small favor--

JESS
Yeah.

LUCY
--and it’s not like you don’t owe me a couple.

JESS takes a deep breath before--

JESS
It wasn’t a small favor and I don’t know what you think I owe you.

LUCY
Really?

JESS
It wasn’t a small favor, you asked me to save your marriage.

LUCY
No, I--

JESS
And it’s not the first time you’ve asked me to do that, is it?

LUCY
I asked you to give him an E.P. credit, that’s all.

JESS
No problem. Can my wife play Lucy once in a while?
LUCY
If your wife played Lucy once in a
while, I’d think it would be
appropriate that she be so
credited. And what do you mean it’s
not the first time I asked you to
save—

JESS
“Jess, Jessie, we’ll have Desi play
my husband. It’ll save my
marriage.”

LUCY
Was that supposed to be me?

JESS
Yes.

LUCY
Don’t do voices.

JESS
You’re insulted? Desi’s offended?
You asked me to give away my job
title like it was a parking spot.

LUCY
You’re right, I’m sorry.

JESS
Jesus Christ, Lucy, sometimes I
think, wait, what?

LUCY
You’re right. And I’m sorry. I was
dead wrong.

JESS
(pause)
I wasn’t expecting that.

LUCY
I know.

JESS
Have you ever said that to me
before?

LUCY
I doubt it. But I’ve thought it if
that means anything.
JESS
It does.

LUCY
It’s just been a compound fracture of a week.

JESS
You want to hear something stupid?
I think I’ve been mad at you this week because you’re not Jewish. If it had been me, I’d have been fired two minutes after the words came out of Winchell’s mouth.
(beat)
I told you it was stupid.

LUCY takes that in...and then decides to make a joke...

LUCY
And you didn’t disappoint.

JESS smiles--

JESS
Good show tonight.

LUCY
Good show.
(then)
Hey, why are we holding?

JESS
I’m not sure.

LUCY
We’re holding, someone must know why.

There’s a KNOCK on the door.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Come in.

P.A. SCOTT sticks his head in--

SCOTT
Desi’s asking to see you in his office.

LUCY
You mean his dressing room?
SCOTT
No, he’s in his office with some
CBS executives and some men from
Philip-Morris.

SCOTT exits...

JESS
Why’s he in his office at show
time?

LUCY
(pause)
Because the evening editions just
came out.

LUCY looks at JESS...They both know this can only mean
trouble.

JESS
(pause)
Listen to me. Memorize this. “It’s
none of your fuckin’ business.”
(beat)
There. Let that be the best thing I
ever wrote.

LUCY smiles...nods...then says--

LUCY
(pause)
Nah. It’s still “vitameatavegamin.”

LUCY heads out and JESS follows her.

INT. DESI’S OFFICE – NIGHT

DESI stands behind his desk and the men are all silent. LUCY
and JESS come in.

DESI
The evening edition.

DESI shows LUCY the front page of the Los Angeles Herald-
Express. There’s a four-inch headline in red ink: LUCILLE
BALL A RED.

LUCY let’s it sink in and then has an involuntary sharp
intake of breath. DESI takes her hand--

DESI (CONT’D)
It’s alright.
LUCY
It’s in four-inch type.

DESI
I’m gonna fix this.

LUCY
That’s Hindenburg type.

DESI
I’ve already made the calls.

LUCY
And they used red ink.

DESI
Yeah.
LUCY
I didn’t even know newspapers had red ink.

DESI
I guess they do.

LUCY
I was cleared.

DESI
Somehow the city editor, a woman named Agnes Underwood, has a photostatic copy of the affidavit showing you registered in 1936 as a voter intending to affiliate with the Communist Party.

LUCY
But I was cleared. After the testimony they stamped “canceled” on the card, I saw the card.

DESI
Other papers are showing the canceled card and they’re running a caption that says, “Note the cancellation at left”, but the Herald-Express took the word “canceled” out of the document altogether.

LUCY
Other papers?

DESI
Yes, but I’ve made calls and we’re taking care of this. (calling)
Miss Rosen!

LUCY
Calls to who?

DESI
Every reporter within 20 minutes of this soundstage. That’s why we’re holding.

LUCY
You’re saying the reporters are coming here?

MISS ROSEN steps in and waits for instructions.
DESI
We’ll seat them in the back of the bleachers.

LUCY
You think we’re still filming a show?
   (to the EXECUTIVES)
Why are none of you talking?

ROGER
It’s Desi’s idea.

DESI
I’m gonna warm up the audience the way I always do, except instead of Cuban Pete and the joke about the turtle, I’m going to tell them what happened. I’m going to explain that you checked the wrong box, I’m going to show them the cancelled document, and then I’m going to bring you out so the press sees them give you a round of applause.

LUCY
Fellas, could we have the room for just a moment?

Everyone steps out but LUCY and DESI. They’re silent for a moment before...

LUCY (CONT'D)
You’re not telling these people I checked the wrong box.

DESI
This is a critical moment.

LUCY
If I’m gonna die--

DESI
You’re not.

LUCY
I’d rather die standing up.

DESI
I don’t have any idea what that--

LUCY
I’m not an idiot, I didn’t check the wrong--
DESI
You saw the headline.

LUCY
You can see that headline from outer space.

DESI
Then please--

LUCY
Grandpa Fred raised me from age eleven. He cared about the little guy, he cared about workers’ rights. It was a tribute to him and to say I checked the wrong--

DESI
Grandpa Fred, Grandpa Fred, Grandpa Fred was wrong, Lucy! ‘Cause he didn’t tell you the part where they throw your father in prison for the crime of being the mayor of a city. I was chased to this country! Believe me, you checked the wrong box.

LUCY takes a long moment...

LUCY
And what if they don’t applaud?

DESI
They will. And the press will write that they did.

LUCY
You’re going to tell them that I was accused of--sixteen years ago--

DESI
They’re going to read it in the morning anyway. We have a sample population of two-hundred people on our stage. (calling out)
Miss Rosen!

LUCY
If they boo me--
Continued: 123

DESI
If they boo you we’re done here tonight.

MISS ROSEN comes back in--

DESI’s gotten a small black address book out of his desk and opened to a page. He shows it to his secretary and points to a name--

DESI (CONT’D)
Call this man. Tell them it’s for me, they’ll find him, he’s expecting my call. Tell me when you have him.

MISS ROSEN takes the phone book and walks out.

124

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

LUCY is leaning against a wall in a private spot, smoking a cigarette. We can see the lit “Desilu” sign in the distance. She takes a deep breath to settle herself.

After a moment, a heavy steel door opens. VIVIAN looks in one direction and then the other and sees LUCY. She steps out--

VIVIAN
Someone said they spotted you going out here.

LUCY
This was our pre-show spot, you and me. All last season, you remember?

VIVIAN
Yeah. We should do that again, I liked that tradition.

LUCY nods...

VIVIAN (CONT’D)
I was just told. Jesus, Lulu. Four-inch type?

LUCY
Red ink.

VIVIAN
How did they get it wrong?
Continued: 124

LUCY
Well...I mean...they didn’t.

VIVIAN
Grandpa Fred?

LUCY nods...

VIVIAN (CONT'D)
You’re the most beloved woman in America. You’re not gonna get blacklisted.

LUCY
Aww, Viv. You know how many brands Philip Morris owns? All it takes is someone calling for a boycott of Marlboros.

VIVIAN
(pause)
I shouldn’t have piled on this week. It just--

VIVIAN shakes her head and waves it off...

LUCY
What?

VIVIAN
None of that matters right now.

LUCY
It may be the last time we’re out here. Say it.

VIVIAN
Lucy Ricardo’s married to a man six years younger than she is and Ethel’s married to her grandfather. And it’s understood, as the underlying premise for a running joke, that I’m not pretty enough for him. It got to me and at the world’s worst time.

LUCY nods her head, she understands...

LUCY
(pause)
That was a knockout dress.

The heavy steel door opens and FRAWLEY steps out with MADELYN...
FRAWLEY
Oh. You two wanna be alone?

VIVIAN/LUCY
Yes./No.

MADELYN hurries over to LUCY and speaks to her privately.

MADELYN
(quietly)
You’re my hero.

LUCY
(pause)
I care about what works, Maddie. I care about what’s funny. I don’t see myself caring about a woman’s perspective from a new generation. I care about you.

After a moment...

FRAWLEY
I’d love for someone to bring me breakfast.

MADELYN
That’s not what we were talking about.

LUCY
Doesn’t a P.A. bring you breakfast every day?

FRAWLEY
Yes.

LUCY
Okay.

FRAWLEY
Never French toast.

LUCY
We’ll look into that.

FRAWLEY
I came out to try to distract you with nonsense but I assume these two beat me to it.

LUCY
Viv doesn’t like the jokes about Ethel being unappealing.
FRAWLEY
Yeah, there’s no one within the
sound of her voice who doesn’t know
that.

VIVIAN
I said what I felt.

FRAWLEY
You’ve been saying what you felt
since the first day of work, it’s
not like you’ve finally given voice
to your feelings. You know what,
sweet ladies? Something dies inside
a man--it just dies--the first time
he hears a girl call him old. So on
the subject of Jess, Bob and
Madelyn writing “Ethel” jokes, I’m
indifferent.

LUCY
The two of you...
(beat)
...are good actors. It’s a
privilege doing this show with you.

There’s a long silence before...

FRAWLEY
Now you’re scaring the shit outa
me.

VIVIAN
(over)
I was just gonna say.

LUCY
Desi’s gonna tell the audience.
He’s invited press. He’s betting
the audience will accept the truth,
give their approval and the press
will write about it.
(beat)
I’d take the other side of that
bet.

The steel door opens and P.A. SCOTT sticks his head out--

SCOTT
Excuse me. Sorry. Mr. Arnaz is
ready to do the warm-up. They told
me you wanted to know.
Continued: 124

LUCY
Thank you.
Continued: 124

VIVIAN
(pause)
Alright, I’ll see you out there.
Good show.

FRAWLEY
Good show.

MADELYN
Good show.

VIVIAN and MADELYN go inside. LUCY starts to head in but
FRAWLEY puts a hand out to stop her...

FRAWLEY
(pause)
The dinner scene is inarguably
better.

LUCY smiles...then heads inside.

125 INT. SOUNDSTAGE/I LOVE LUCY SET - NIGHT

The orchestra’s finishing a number as we see an USHER seating
a few members of the press in the last row where other
members of the press are sitting.

DESI watches the press being seated from backstage.

The audience APPLAUDS at the end of the number...

ANNOUNCER
Now ladies and gentlemen, give a
warm welcome to one of the stars of
I Love Lucy. You know him as Ricky
Ricardo--here’s Desi Arnaz!

A healthy round of applause greets DESI as he walks onto the
set carrying a folded newspaper.

DESI
Thank you, thank you very much.
(pause)
Usually, right now, I’d be doing
the final audience warm-up. I’d
tell you an old joke about a
turtle. I’d point out our
groundbreaking camera system that
allows the studio audience to watch
the show unobstructed and I’d
introduce you to the rest of the
cast.
We see LUCY watching from an off-stage vantage point. At various times we’ll see FRAWLEY or VIVIAN, JESS, MADELYN, BOB, MARY PAT, the network guys or A P.A. watching from various places around the stage.

DESI (CONT'D)
I’m not doing that tonight and here’s why. Last week, my wife, Lucille Ball, was asked to testify in front of a closed session of the House Un-American Activities Committee.

There’s a murmur in the audience...

DESI (CONT'D)
Yeah, the congressmen who investigate Communism. After hours of testimony, the committee concluded, unambiguously, that Lucy was and is in no way involved with the Communist Party. So everything’s swell, right? No. Because this is the evening edition headline in the Herald-Express.

DESI opens the paper and shows them the headline. The AUDIENCE GASPS...

DESI (CONT'D)
So I made some phone calls. I called the editor of the Herald-Express. I called the chairman of the committee. I called all the members of the committee. And I made one more call to someone and I believe he’s still on the line.

DESI is handed a phone by MISS ROSEN. He’ll speak into the phone and then hold the receiver up to the microphone so the audience can hear.

DESI (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Are you still with me, sir?

MAN (V.O.)
Yes.
Yelllow Rev. (03/28/21) 151A.

Continued: 125

DESI
(into the phone)
I’m now standing in front of a
studio audience in Hollywood,
California, and we’re joined by a
number of members of the press.
Continued: 125

MAN (V.O.)
That’s fine.

DESI
(into the phone)
We want to know, sir, does the FBI have any case against Lucy? Does the FBI have any evidence of wrongdoing? Does the FBI have any reason to believe that Lucille Ball is a Communist?

MAN (V.O.)
No. Absolutely nothing. She is one-hundred percent clear.

DESI
(into phone)
Thank you, sir. One more question. Would you tell us your name please?

MAN (V.O.)
This is J. Edgar Hoover.

An impressed reaction from the AUDIENCE...

DESI
Thank you, sir, enjoy your evening.
(he hangs up)
Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome my wife and the star of I Love Lucy, Lucille Ball.

The audience breaks into THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE and CHEERING. Backstage, LUCY breathes a sigh of relief, takes a moment, and walks onto the set.

The audience gives her a STANDING OVATION.

DESI looks up to the last row where he sees the reporters feverishly writing all this down. He cathes the eye of one reporter who’s taking it all in but not writing it down and he pantomimes, “Write it the hell down.”

Backstage, people are shaking hands.

LUCY gives a final wave to the audience and walks off.

DESI shouts over the SUSTAINED APPLAUSE

DESI (CONT'D)
(shouting)
So enjoy the show.
The orchestra crashes into a new number as DESI heads offstage a moment later and takes us--

**INT. BEHIND THE SET - CONTINUOUS**

--where he takes LUCY in his arms. They have to speak up to be heard over the orchestra--

DESI
It’s all over.

LUCY
Thank you.

DESI
It’s over now.

LUCY
Thank you.

DESI
They love you.

LUCY
I love you.

DESI
No one’s gonna mess with you. Ever.

LUCY
I thought they were gonna boo.

DESI
You wanna do a show?

LUCY
(louder)
Have you been cheating on me?

DESI
(pause)
What?

LUCY
Have you been cheating on me?

DESI
Is this a bit?

LUCY
No.
DESI
(pause)
No, I haven’t been.

LUCY
When you stay out all night you’re on the boat playing cards?

DESI
Yes.

LUCY
You haven’t been with anyone else?

DESI
What’s going on with you?

LUCY
Don’t gaslight me.

DESI
Where did this come from? They just cheered for you.

LUCY
They got it right, didn’t they?

DESI
Lucy--

LUCY
They only got the picture wrong. Did they get it right? Did they get it exactly right?

DESI
Jesus Christ, I just proved that the Herald-Express got it wrong, you think Confidential Magazine--we’re about to do a show.

LUCY
Just tell me.

DESI
Tell me why you think--other than this garbage--tell me why you think I’ve--

LUCY takes out a white handkerchief that has a lipstick smudge on it.

DESI takes a long moment...
DESÍ (CONT'D)

(pause)
That’s your lipstick. Remember? At the beginning of the week you kissed me, then took my handkerchief and wiped the lipstick off and put it back in my pocket. And you said you’d never done that before.

LUCY
I hadn’t.

DESÍ
Then what the hell are we talking about?

LUCY takes out another handkerchief that also has a lipstick smudge...

LUCY
This is my lipstick.

There’s a long silence while DESÍ makes up his mind...

DESÍ
(pause)
They were just call girls. They’re hookers. It doesn’t mean anything.

LUCY nods...

DESÍ (CONT'D)

Look--

LUCY
Let’s do the show. Yeah? We’ll just forget this for a half-hour. Yeah? (beat)
Let’s do the show.

LUCY turns to a stagehand with a walkie-talkie--

LUCY (CONT'D)
Jim, let’s go. It’s not gonna get better than this.

We see and/or hear the show revving up--“Quiet Please!” “Picture’s Up!” “Roll Sound!” “Camera’s Rolling!” “Sound speed!” The three camera’s slate.

DONALD
And...action.
127  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
It ended up being a good show that night. We did both versions of the opening but it was the original version that made it on the air. The one with the names. You must’ve gotten a hold of the B-negative ‘cause your original question--

127A  INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
For the record, I won my bet with Desi. CBS wouldn’t let us use the word “pregnant”. But more people watched the birth of Little Ricky than had ever watched a television program before. Your original question--
128  INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
You asked about why Lucy stopped when we were doing the alt. The alternate version.

129  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
We were doing Lucy’s version of Ricky’s entrance first, but Lucy stopped and now I can’t remember why.

130  INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
Honestly, I’m not sure. In all the excitement, with all that drama, I never asked.

131  INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
What happened--she went out, she was cutting the flowers--

132  INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS- DAY

OLDER JESS
She was doing the bit with the flowers, which we couldn’t use ‘cause we were running long--

133  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
It seemed like she just got lost in her own head for second.

134  INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/- NIGHT (BACK AND WHITE)

LUCY trims the stem of one of the flowers.
135 EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
It may have been the only time she went up on a line.

136 INT. I LOVE LUCY SET - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

LUCY clips another stem, puts it back and now all the flowers disappear into the vase to a HUGE LAUGH.

137 INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
She takes the water glass and pours more water into the vase--

138 INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
--which makes all of the flowers come up to the surface--

139 INT. I LOVE LUCY SET - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

The flowers come up to the surface which gets a big LAUGH from the audience.

140 INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

OLDER BOB
And then--I can’t remember the first line but we had to stop and go again.

141 INT. SOUNDSTAGE BLEACHERS - DAY

OLDER JESS
I can’t remember what her cue was, only that Lucy had her back to the audience and from where I was standing I thought I saw her--it was a long time ago, but I thought I saw her smile or even laugh a little and then just get lost.
142  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
(remembering)
It was Desi’s line. It was the new
bit Lucy put in but that version
never made it into the show.
(trying to remember)
What was his line?

143  INT. I LOVE LUCY SET - NIGHT

DESI enters. He stands there, unnoticed by Lucy...then--

DESI
Lucy, I’m home!

And LUCY hears that, smiles and revels in it for a quick
moment and laughs a little...there’s an awkward silence.

LUCY
Sorry about that, I got lost for a
second.

143A  EXT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

OLDER MADELYN
We never went back to do another
take of the alternate opening. Lucy
just wanted to move on.

143B  INT. I LOVE LUCY SET/LIVING ROOM

As the show re-starts, with the audience loving every moment,
we start to slowly PULL BACK and PULL UP.

The show continues semi-MOS as we pull back further and
higher, so that what we’re looking at is obviously a set. A
small set. Three flats and no ceiling. Stagehands are smoking
and talking to each other backstage with LUCY commanding her
small, fictional world.

We’re up above the light grid now--

144  OMITTED
The morning after Lucy and Desi shot their final show together, Lucy filed for divorce.
Continued: 145

The show plays for a moment longer before we

**SNAP TO BLACK**