



STRANGER THAN PARADISE

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A FILM PROPOSAL

By Jim Jarmusch

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THE ARRIVAL

(Already Completed Section)

SWANGER Than PARADISE Completed Section

Scene 1 : Ext. Day. Airport.

The sound of a jet aircraft is heard passing overhead.

A young woman (EVA) dressed in a dark overcoat is standing, facing the cold, barren landscape of a large airfield.

A suitcase is at her side. Several large planes are visible on the airfield. A low-flying jet passes overhead, then the young woman turns, and walks out of the frame. A plane taxis on the airfield.

Scene 2 : Int. Day. Tenement boarding-house room.

The telephone is ringing. A young man enters (WILLIE) dressed in a hat and coat. He crosses the room and picks up the phone as he sits down on the bed.

WILLIE: Yeah?...Oh, hello Aunt Lotte. Don't speak to me in Hungarian...No, I haven't heard from them--Not for ten years...Yeah, I got your letter. Speak ENGLISH please!...Yeah, my little cousin Eva, yeah I know, she's gonna come here and she's gonna stay overnight. When is she coming?...Today? Straight from Budapest today? Oh, no!...No, I never agreed to that...I can't possibly babysit her for ten days!...No, look, its disrupting my whole life...I don't even consider myself a part of the family, do you understand?...Well, I'm sorry you have to go into the hospital...Yeah...yeah...
Okay, bye-bye.

WILLIE hangs up the telephone, and sighs in frustration.

Scene 3 : Ext. Day. Street.

EVA walks down an empty street carrying her suitcase and a large paper bag. She pauses and puts down the bags. EVA takes a battered cassette player from the paper bag and turns it on. "I Put A Spell On You" by Screamin' Jay Hawkins is heard coming from the tape-player. EVA picks up the bags, and continues down the bleak street.

Scene 4 : Ext. Day. Street.

EVA walks through the city, past a deteriorating gas station, shops protected by steel gates, and walls lined with litter and graffiti. The music continues from her cassette-player.

Scene 5 : Ext. Day. Street.

EVA turns a corner, and walks down still another desolate street. She pauses to look up at a street sign, then at the address of the building on the corner. She approaches the doorway of the building--a dilapidated, wooden rooming-house, its paint chipping off the walls.

Scene 6 : Int. WILLIE's room. Day.

WILLIE is lying on his bed staring at the ceiling. He nervously snaps a rubber band between his teeth. After a pause a knock is heard at the door.

WILLIE: Yeah?

He gets up slowly and crosses the room, and opens the door.

EVA is standing in the hallway outside the door.

EVA: Hello. I'm Eva Molnar.

WILLIE: No kidding.

EVA: Are you Bela Molnar?

WILLIE: No...(pause) I used to be. Call me Willie, if you have to call me something.

EVA: (says something in Hungarian).

WILLIE: Oh! Don't speak Hungarian at all. Only English.

All right? While you're here, only English...

WILLIE moves away from the door, leaving EVA standing in the doorway.

WILLIE: (after a pause) Well, come in!

EVA reluctantly enters the room, and looks around curiously, as WILLIE begins throwing dirty clothes off a bench to make room for her things.

EVA: Tomorrow I must go to Cleveland-in-Ohio by train.

WILLIE: (sitting down on a chair) Yeah, well you can't go to Cleveland-in-Ohio tomorrow. Aunt Lotte has to go into the hospital for ten days. You can stay here tonight and I don't know what you're gonna do after that.

EVA: Ten days?...ten days?

Scene 7 : Int. Morning. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE is in bed asleep. EVA, wearing mens' pajamas which are too large for her, is sitting up on the bench (her bed), smoking a cigarette. Quietly, she stands up and moves to the window, where she looks out, attracted by the strange sounds of this new city. The telephone begins to ring. She turns toward the bed where WILLIE is sleeping.

EVA: Willie? (pause-WILLIE doesn't stir); WILLIE!
There is still no response from WILLIE as EVA cautiously picks up the telephone.

EVA: (into the phone) Hello?...Yes, he's sleeping...
What? Excuse me?...I don't understand....Yeah, I'm his
cousin...I am really his cousin...Excuse me?...Could
you speak a little slower please?...Yes, Courguy?...
Okay, I will tell him.

EVA sits back down on her make-shift bed and lights another cigarette. Eventually WILLIE stirs.

WILLIE: Who rang?

EVA: Yes, the telephone rang.

WILLIE: No, I mean who was on the phone?

EVA: 'Courguy'? He said his name was Courguy.

WILLIE: What?

EVA: He said his name was 'Courguy'.

WILLIE: I don't know anybody named Courguy!

EVA: That's what he said his name was.

WILLIE: Don't answer my fuckin' phone, all right?

'Courguy' (as WILLIE goes back to sleep)

Scene 9 : Int. Day. WILLIE's room.

Eva is standing near the door with her overcoat on. WILLIE approaches her.

WILLIE: Hey, Eva, you goin' out?

EVA: Yes.

WILLIE: Look, uh, Clinton Street is two blocks south of here. I wouldn't go any further south than Clinton Street.

EVA: Why?

WILLIE: Its really dangerous there.

EVA: I can take care of myself.

WILLIE: (very annoyed) Man. Listen, you come here, you don't even know whats goin' on in this city, you'ver never been here before, you come and stay in my apartment--I don't even want you here--and its like, "yeah, I know what's goin' on". You think you're so motherfuckin' together!

EVA: (after a pause, confused by this expression 'together') I'm going alone.

WILLIE: (giving up) Oh...Go alone then.

EVA leaves. WILLIE stands at the door and sighs.

Scene 10 : Int. Evening. WILLIE's room.

EVA is seated at the table (the only real piece of furniture in the room). WILLIE crosses, and sits down across from her, placing a TV dinner, still in foil, on the table in front of him. EVA looks at it curiously.

WILLIE: You sure you don't want a TV dinner?

EVA: Yes. I'm not hungry. (pause) Why is it called "TV dinner"?

WILLIE: Uh, you're supposed to eat it while you watch TV....'Television'. (He has removed the foil and is eating.)

EVA: I know what a TV is.....Where does that meat come from? (She stares curiously at the meat.)

WILLIE: What do you mean?

EVA: What does that meat come from?

WILLIE: I guess it comes from a cow.

EVA: (still staring at the meat) From a cow? It doesn't even look like meat!

WILLIE: Eva, stop buggin' me, will you? You know, this is the way we eat in America. (pointing with his fork) I got my meat, I got my potatoes, I got my vegetables, I got my dessert, and I don't even have to wash the dishes.

EVA looks over at this sink (full of dirty dishes) then back at WILLIE and his curious food.

Scene 11 : Int. Afternoon. WILLIE's room.

EVA is sitting on WILLIE's bed reading a comic book, while WILLIE stands at the sink shaving. A knock is heard at the door.

WILLIE: Yeah?

EDDIE, WILLIE's best friend, enters the room wearing a hat very similar to the one WILLIE usually wears.

EDDIE: (to EVA) Hi. (then to WILLIE) Hey Willie, how ya doin'.

WILLIE: Hey, man, how ya doin'.

EDDIE: Pretty good. I didn't know you had company.

WILLIE: That's my cousin. From Budapest.

EDDIE: (looking over at EVA) Yeah? She's cute.

WILLIE: Shut-up, man.

EDDIE: (moving over to EVA, extending his hand) Hi, I'm Eddie.

EVA: Eva.

EDDIE: How do you do? (he sits next to her on the bed)

EVA: Okay.

EDDIE: Hungary...Have you been here in New York long?

EVA: For two days only.

EDDIE: You like it here?

EVA: Yes....I'm going to Cleveland in about a week.

EDDIE: Cleveland! Beautiful city.

EVA: Yeah?

EDDIE: Oh yeah. Its got a big, beautiful lake. You'll love it there.

Scene 11 : -Continued-

EVA: Have you been there?

EDDIE: No.

WILLIE, having finished shaving, crosses over to the bed where they are sitting.

WILLIE: (to EDDIE) Who's runnin' in the second horse race today?

EDDIE: (looking at his racing form) We have 'Indian Giver', 'Face the Music', 'Inside Dope', 'Off the Wall', 'Cat Fight', 'Late Spring', 'Passing Fancy', and, uh, 'Tokyo Story'. 'Tokyo Story' is a good bet.

WILLIE: Yeah, that's a good bet. Get off my shirt, man.

EDDIE: (standing up) Sorry. (sits back down)

WILLIE: (putting on his shirt) What horses are in the third race?

EDDIE: (again consulting the form) 'Song and Dance', 'The Real McCoy', 'Square Deal', uh, some others, and 'The Female Touch'. That one's a good bet--'Female Touch'.

WILLIE: No, I'm not bettin' that race.

EDDIE: We gonna take Eva?

WILLIE: (putting on his coat) No, we're not gonna take Eva.

EVA: (to EDDIE) He bugs me.

EDDIE: You should come with us. You'd have a nice time.

EVA: Is it nice?

EDDIE: Oh its fun, yeah.Yeah.

-Continued-

Scene 11 : -Continued-

WILLIE: (his coat and hat on) Okay. I' ready.

EDDIE: (standing up) why don't we take Eva with us? (WILLIE ignores him) Why don't we take her with us?

WILLIE: I don't want to take Eva with us. (He moves toward the door)

EDDIE: She'd have a good time!

WILLIE: (turns toward EVA) Look, Eva, stay out of trouble, all right? Just stay here while I'm gone, all right? (then to EDDIE) Let's go, man.

EDDIE: (following WILLIE to the door) Why don't we take her with us?

WILLIE: Come on, man. (he goes out door)

EVA: (to EDDIE) Bye.

EDDIE: See you later, Eva....I'll see you again sometime.

EDDIE goes out the door. EVA tosses down the comic book, and lies back on the bed, annoyed by WILLIE's treatment of her.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Completed Section

Scene 12 : Int. Evening. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE and EVA are sitting (on their respective sleeping places) watching a football game on television. As WILLIE reacts to events in the game, EVA observes these reactions as well as what is happening on the TV screen.

WILLIE: So you see the guy that has the ball?

EVA: Uh-huh.

WILLIE: That's the 'quarterback'. He can either hand it to one of the other runners, or he can pass it downfield. He's kind of like, uh, he's like the general, you know? He's in charge of the offense. He controls the offense.

EVA: Oh...So what does the quarterback do when his team becomes the defense?

WILLIE: What?

EVA: What does the quarterback do when his team becomes the defense?

WILLIE: (pause) The...the quarterback's not on the defense ever...I don't know how I can explain this to you. Just watch the game.

EVA: (after a long pause) I think this game is really stupid.

WILLIE sighs and continues watching the screen.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Completed Section

Scene 13 : Int. Night. WILLIE's room

EVA and WILLIE are in the same places as in the previous scene, but they are slouched down a little, and the room is much darker. Silently, they watch a science fiction film on television--the light from the screen casting their shadows on the wall behind them.

Scene 14 : Int. Early morning. WILLIE's room.

Again EVA and WILLIE are in the same places, but now it is lighter--early morning. WILLIE is asleep on his bed, while EVA can barely keep her eyes open to see the TV screen. In contrast, an action-filled cartoon is on television.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Completed Section

Scene 15 : Int. Day. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE is sitting at the table reading a newspaper. EVA is looking for something in the room.

EVA: Do you have a vacuum cleaner? It's really dirty in here. (she continues looking around)

WILLIE: (reading) What?

EVA: Do you have a vacuum cleaner? I want to vacuum the floor.

WILLIE: Vacuum cleaner? Oh, uh, its under the bed.

EVA walks over to the bed, and pulls a cheap upright vacuum cleaner out. She takes it over to the kitchenette, and plugs it into a socket.

WILLIE: (looking up from his paper) You know, its really too formal to say "I want to vacuum the floor".

EVA: Oh. What do you say?

WILLIE: Well, you say " I want to choke the alligator." So if somebody comes in while you're doing that, you say "I'm choking the alligator."

EVA: (smiling) Oh, okay. I'm "choking the alligator".

EVA turns on the vacuum cleaner and begins sweeping.

STRANGER Than PARADISE: Completed Section

Scene 15 : Int. Day. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE is alone in the room, sitting at the table playing solitaire, and humming quietly to himself. After a pause EVA enters the room wearing her large overcoat. She crosses over to the table.

EVA: Hi Willie.

WILLIE: Hello, Eva. How are you doing?

EVA begins to remove cans and various other food items from her pockets and from under her coat. WILLIE watches with mild surprise. She takes out a frozen TV dinner and places it on the table in front of WILLIE.

WILLIE: How'd you get all this stuff? I thought you didn't have any money.

EVA: I got this stuff with no money. This one is especially for you--TV dinner.

WILLIE smiles and watches as EVA produces a full carton of Chesterfield cigarettes.

WILLIE: Thanks...You're all right kid, I think. I think you're all right, kid.....So, I've been losing all afternoon. (referring to his games of solitaire)

EVA: I've been winning.

They both smile.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Completed Section

Scene 16 : Int. Afternoon. WILLIE's room.

EVA is alone in the room, dancing to the music from her cassette recorder ('I Put A Spell On You'). She moves to the music around the room. After a minute, WILLIE enters carrying a shopping bag.

EVA: Oh...hi. (she stops dancing)

WILLIE: (moving toward the tape player) What the fuck is that? (He turns off the music) I really hate that kind of music.

EVA: Its 'Screamin' Jay Hawkins' and he's a wild man, so bug off!

WILLIE: (after a pause) So, uh, I got something for you. (he hands her the shopping bag)

EVA: What is it?

WILLIE: Its a present.

EVA looks in the bag. She slowly takes out a pastel party dress (not the type of dress EVA would ever wear), and holds it up to herself.

EVA: Oh, thank you...(after a pause) I think its kind of ugly, don't you?

WILLIE: No, I bought it! Why don't you try it on.

EVA: I don't really wear this...style.

WILLIE: You know, you come here and you should dress like people dress here.

EVA: (tossing the dress onto a chair) I'll try it on... later.

WILLIE shrugs, and walks away from her.

Scene 17 : Int. Evening. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE is sitting by the table, watching, as EVA is preparing her things, folding them and placing them into her suitcase which lies open on the bed. She is wearing the dress WILLIE gave her in the previous scene. She takes the opened carton of Chesterfields from the table and puts them in the suitcase.

WILLIE: Hey! Leave me some Chesterfields.

EVA: Can I get them in Cleveland?

WILLIE: (laughing) Yeah. Yeah, you can get them in Cleveland.

EVA: Do they taste good there, like here?

WILLIE: Yeah, they're the same Chesterfields. All over America, they're the same.

EVA puts a few packs back on the table, then packs the rest. She continues packing as WILLIE watches in silence.

Scene 18 : Int. Evening. WILLIE's room.

EVA and WILLIE are standing by the door of the room.

EVA's bags are at her sides, and she is putting her overcoat on over the dress WILLIE gave her. WILLIE watches sadly as she fastens her coat.

WILLIE: So, are you sure you don't want me to come with you to the train station?

EVA: Uh-huh. I'd like to go there by myself.

WILLIE: (after a pause) Yeah...So, I don't know. Take care of yourself.

EVA: Goodbye Willie. (she kisses him on the cheek)

WILLIE opens the door for her.

WILLIE: So, Eva?

EVA: Yeah?

WILLIE: Uh, maybe I'll see you again sometime.

EVA: Yeah, maybe.

EVA leaves. WILLIE stands by the door silently, listening to EVA's footsteps fade down the hallway.

Scene 19 : Ext. Night. Street corner.

EVA is standing on a dark street corner, her bags at her sides on the ground. She looks around, and seeing nobody, takes off her overcoat, and puts pants on under her dress. She then takes off the dress and tosses it into a garbage can nearby. As she is doing this, EDDIE is approaching from around the corner. She doesn't notice him until he speaks, after observing her toss the dress into the garbage.

EDDIE: EVA!

EVA: Oh!...Hi. (she looks at the dress in the garbage, then back at EDDIE, realizing he has seen her throw it away) This dress bugs me...I'm leaving. I'm going to Cleveland.

EDDIE: (looking first at the dress then at EVA) Beautiful town, Cleveland!

EVA: (shaking hands with EDDIE) Well, it was nice meeting you.

EDDIE: Yeah, it was nice meeting you too.

EVA walks away, down the street in the direction EDDIE came from. EDDIE pauses, looks once more at the dress in the garbage, then walks away in the opposite direction.

Scene 20 : Int. Night. WILLIE's room.

WILLIE is pacing back and forth in his room. After a pause, there is a knock at the door.

WILLIE: Yeah?

EDDIE: (entering the room) Hey Willie.

WILLIE: Hey Eddie.

EDDIE: How you doin'?

WILLIE: I'm all right.

EDDIE: So, I saw EVA. She's goin' to Cleveland, huh?

WILLIE: She's gone, man.

EDDIE: (looking down) Yeah...

WILLIE: Did you see the dress I bought her?

EDDIE: Oh, yeah! Yeah.

WILLIE: Its beautiful, right?

EDDIE: Yeah! Beautiful dress.

WILLIE: (after a pause) Want a beer?

EDDIE: Yeah.

WILLIE gets two beers from the refridgerator and gives one to EDDIE. They sit down and drink their beers. It seems like EDDIE wants to say something to WILLIE, but he doesn't, and the two of them sit there drinking silently for several minutes

ONE YEAR LATER

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 21 : Int. Night. NY Tenement Apt.

A poker game around a table in a barren, dim tenement apartment. Among the grizzled faces of the five players are WILLIE (Bela Molnar) and EDDIE (Willie's best friend). Unlike the unhappy faces of the other three, WILLIE and EDDIE are smiling and pulling money toward them on the table. One of the other players glares at WILLIE.

POKER PLAYER : I think there's somethin' funny about the way you been dealin' the cards.

All three of the other players glare at WILLIE and EDDIE as WILLIE gathers the money quickly, and moves toward the door with EDDIE.

EDDIE: Man, you guys are bad losers. Can you believe this guy? We'll know who not to play cards with next time.

As WILLIE and EDDIE leave the room hurriedly, the other players rise from their chairs, their eyes angrily fixed on the closing door.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 22 : EXT. Night. Deserted NY street.

WILLIE and EDDIE stop in the doorway of a building on the deserted street. WILLIE calmly begins counting their money, as EDDIE glances nervously down the street.

EDDIE: We gotta watch those guys.

WILLIE: (still counting the money) Does your brother-in-law still lease used cars?

EDDIE: (again glancing down the street) Yeah, he does. What, you wanna leave town because of those guys? Then they'll really think we're guilty.

WILLIE: No, man, not 'cause of them. (pause) I just want to get out of here. See something else for a few days.

EDDIE: Yeah, I don't know...

WILLIE¹ walks off, and after a pause, EDDIE follows him.

Scene 23 : Int. Car. Day. NY traffic jam.

WILLIE and EDDIE (Eddie driving) are in a large, beat-up American car, stopped in traffic in a run-down neighborhood in New York. Willie is in high spirits, humming to himself.

WILLIE: You think this heap will get us to Cleveland and back?

EDDIE: Yeah. Sure. If not we can just dump it somewhere and take a bus.

A taxi-cab, moving in the other direction, stops next to their car, caught in the traffic. The surly, brutal face of the cab-driver is only several feet away from WILLIE's window. WILLIE rolls down his window and calls jokingly to the cab driver.

WILLIE: Hey, which way is Cleveland?

The driver stares at him without responding, maintaining his cruel, fixed expression. After a pause, both cars begin to move again in opposite directions.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene24 : Int. Car. Day. U.S. Interstate Highway.

EDDIE is still driving, as the car moves toward the mountains of Pennsylvania on a large U.S. highway. There is a pause, as they gaze out at the passing countryside.

EDDIE: So, uh, where we gonna stay in Cleveland? With your aunt, and Eva?

WILLIE doesn't respond, but continues staring out at the landscape. EDDIE looks over at him, then returns his eyes to the road.

WILLIE: (after a pause, still staring out the window) How much money you got?

EDDIE: I got a lot.

WILLIE: (looking over at EDDIE) How much you got?

EDDIE: A lot. I'm rich. (WILLIE still looks at him-- there is a pause) I got almost six hundred dollars.

WILLIE: Ssshhhhh-man! We're rich!

EDDIE: (happily) We're almost millionaires.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 25 : Int. Car. Day. Driving.

EDDIE and WILLIE are on the road. They are quietly drinking beer from cans, listening to a local AM radio station, and watching the passing landscape. A map is on the front seat, unfolded, next to several empty beer cans.

Scene 26 : Int. Car. Late afternoon. Driving.

Still driving, EDDIE and WILLIE are now on the outskirts of Cleveland. On the horizon are smokestacks from steel-mills and factories. As they get nearer to the center of the city the smokestacks become replaced by smaller factories, and the spires of old, eastern-european-looking churches. EDDIE and WILLIE seem blankly mesmerized by this unfamiliar landscape.

EDDIE: Does it look sort of like Budapest?

WILLIE: Shut-up.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 27: Ext. Evening. Outside Aunt Lotte's house.

The beat-up car WILLIE and EDDIE have been travelling in is parked in front of a decaying wooden house on a bleak Cleveland street. The sky is dark, and there is snow on the ground. WILLIE and EDDIE get out of the car and approach the house. They knock, and the door is partially opened by a short, round, aging woman (AUNT LOTTE). She is suspicious of them, and, from what little can be heard, speaks in Hungarian. After some discussion, it is apparent that she finally understands who they are. She greets WILLIE, shaking his hand, then embraces EDDIE-- almost as though she has confused the two of them and thinks EDDIE is her nephew. She then ushers them into her house.

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Scene 28 : Int. Evening. AUNT LOTTE's house.

EDDIE and WILLIE are ushered into AUNT LOTTE's house. They enter the livingroom, decorated with heavy, old-world furniture. In a central spot in the room is a very large television set, turned on. AUNT LOTTE says something in Hungarian, and WILLIE and EDDIE look around the room, then sit down. AUNT LOTTE speaks again, then goes into the adjoining kitchen.

WILLIE: (answering AUNT LOTTE in English) Well, we're not really that hungry. Do you have any beer? (then to EDDIE) Man, I wish she would just speak English.

AUNT LOTTE comes back into the room bringing them a tray of food. She then sits down also. EDDIE and WILLIE sit eating, as AUNT LOTTE returns her concentration to the TV program.

WILLIE: So, you look good, Aunt Lotte. (AUNT LOTTE doesn't respond) Where's Eva?

AUNT LOTTE speaks several sentences in Hungarian, her eyes still fixed on the TV screen.

WILLIE: (between bites of his sandwich, to EDDIE) Eva works in some kind of a hamburger stand.

Again, AUNT LOTTE, watching the TV intently, speaks in Hungarian

WILLIE: (to EDDIE) We have to pick her up from work in an hour or so.

EDDIE: (eating) Oh yeah? Oh. Okay.

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The three of them sit there, AUNT LOTTE staring at the TV, WILLIE, eating and watching AUNT LOTTE, and EDDIE, also eating, and looking around the room with its dark wood and heavy furnishings.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 29 : Int. Night. Hamburger Stand.

EDDIE and WILLIE, with their hats on and their coats pulled tightly around them, enter a dilapidated, dirty hamburger stand probably built thirty years ago. They see EVA (who is working behind the counter, and doesn't seem to notice them). EDDIE and WILLIE sit down at the counter, their faces lowered and partially hidden by the brims of their hats. EVA comes over to them, having still not recognized them.

EVA: Yeah?

WILLIE and EDDIE look up, and EVA slowly smiles as she recognizes them.

EVA: Oh!...Hi! (pause) What are you doing here?

WILLIE: Well, we're not exactly sure.

The three of them look at one another as smiles spread over their faces.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 30 : INT. Car. Night. Parking lot of hamburger stand.

WILLIE and EDDIE sit in their car outside the hamburger stand, waiting for EVA to get off work. After a short while, EVA is seen (through the car window) coming out of the hamburger stand. A boy, about her age (BILLY), is walking with her, talking nervously. BILLY is tall, thin, has acne, and seems typically midwestern-American. WILLIE and EDDIE watch from inside the car, as EVA and BILLY approach.

BILLY: (to EVA) Well, you said yesterday that you could go with me to the movies tomorrow night. Don't you want to see STAR WARS PART FOUR? Or we could see that European movie, DAYS WITHOUT SUN. Come-on, Eva, you told me you could go.

EVA: Oh...Is there a Kung-Fu movie?

BILLY: Well, I don't know. Uh...I'll check, okay?

EVA: (gets into the car) Okay. Bye.

EVA closes the door, and the car pulls out of the parking-lot, leaving BILLY standing alone in the snow.

WILLIE: (driving) Who's that creep?

EVA: Oh, just an admirer.

EDDIE turns around, and gives EVA (in the backseat) a quizzical look, then turns back. There is a pause before EVA speaks.

EVA: So, its pretty strange, you guys coming here to Cleveland.

There is silence as the three look out the car windows at the bleak, snow-covered streets of Cleveland.

SPFANGER Phan PARADISE Continuation

Scene 31 : Int. The Next Evening. AUNT LOTTE's Livingroom.

WILLIE and EDDIE are seated on the large sofa on either side of AUNT LOTTE. AUNT LOTTE is looking straight ahead at the television screen, engrossed in the program. WILLIE and EDDIE are talking, around her, about the quality of the current Cleveland Browns football team. They have to speak loudly in order to be heard over the television sound. EVA enters the livingroom behind them, and checks her make-up in the mirror.

EVA: (still looking in the mirror) So...I'm going to the movies.

EVA turns toward WILLIE, about to say something to him, when AUNT LOTTE, still looking straight at the TV, says something to EVA sternly in Hungarian.

EVA: (to AUNT LOTTE) NO! I don't need them to chaperon me! Aunt Lotte, please!...Oh fuck.

AUNT LOTTE again speaks forcefully in Hungarian. EDDIE is looking back and forth between all three of the others, as WILLIE gets up from the sofa.

WILLIE: (To EVA) Well, we did come all the way here to see you, you know.

EVA: (putting on her coat) Okay, okay, we can all go. EDDIE, still confused gets up from the sofa, looking back and forth between WILLIE and EVA.

EDDIE: What, we goin' to the movies with Eya?

Scene 32 : Int. Movie theater.

WILLIE, EVA, EDDIE and BILLY are in the audience in the movie theater. Their faces are dimly lit from the light from the screen. The violent sounds of a Kung-Fu movie are heard. WILLIE and EDDIE are seated on either side of EVA, with BILLY on the outside, next to EDDIE. BILLY is nervous, and is holding a large container of popcorn in his lap. He looks at the others, all of whom are concentrating on the movie. After a pause, BILLY reaches across EDDIE in order to offer some popcorn to EVA. She takes some, barely moving her eyes from the screen. As the popcorn passes EDDIE (on the way back to BILLY) EDDIE takes some too. BILLY remains somewhat nervous, while the attention of the others is riveted to the screen.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 33 : INT CAR. Night.

WILLIE and EDDIE's car (with EVA and BILLY in the back seat) stops in front of the run-down apartment building where BILLY lives. BILLY is getting out of the car.

BILLY: (to WILLIE and EDDIE in the front) Well, thanks for the ride, guys.

EDDIE: Yeah, well thanks for payin' for us.

BILLY: (to EVA) Uh...Eva, uh, do you want to walk me to the door?

EVA shrugs, then gets out of the car and walks with BILLY to the door of his building, while WILLIE and EDDIE watch through the car window.

WILLIE: (imitating BILLY) "Do you want to walk me to the door?" Man, we gotta get ou of here. What are we doin' here?

EDDIE sighs, and looks at the surroundings through the car windows. .

EDDIE: (in a flat tone) Cleveland.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 34 : Int. Evening. AUNT LOTTE's livingroom.

EDDIE, WILLIE, and AUNT LOTTE are sitting around a coffee table playing cards. The television set is turned on, but quiet. AUNT LOTTE is having fun, laughing, talking in Hungarian, and beating WILLIE and EDDIE at the card game. WILLIE and EDDIE, on the other hand, are quiet, and seem somewhat bored. Behind them, EVA is talking on the telephone, and walks in and out of the kitchen and the livingroom as she talks.

EVA: (on the phone) No, I can't tonight. (pause) No, I want to see my cousin and his friend. They have to leave tomorrow, so... (pause) I told you I can't! (a longer pause) Look, call me back later, like in a month or two.

EVA hangs up the telephone, then re-enters the livingroom and walks over to the card game.

EVA: (addressing EDDIE) So, Eddie, don't you guys want me to take you to see the big lake?

EDDIE: Oh, yeah! Yeah, we want to.

As WILLIE and EDDIE get up to go with EVA, AUNT LOTTE, in good spirits, pats EDDIE's face affectionately.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 35 : Ext. Evening. The shore of Lake Erie.

WILLIE, EVA, and EDDIE, with coats, hats and scarves, are seated on a bench overlooking the vast, frozen surface of Lake Erie. WILLIE and EDDIE are on either side of EVA, the three almost huddled together against the cold wind. EDDIE takes beer from a paper bag, gives one to WILLIE, offers one to EVA (who declines), and takes one for himself. There is a pause as they look out on the lake.

EDDIE: (looking at the lake) Beautiful. (pause) Its so huge!

There is a very long pause.

WILLIE: (to EVA) So....(pause)

EVA: Well, it was really nice of you guys to come all this way to see me.

EDDIE: It was nice of you to be here.

WILLIE: Eddie...(then to EVA) Uh, yeah. We just decided to come out here...see how you were doin'.

Again there is a long pause as they stare out at the lake.

EVA: Its kind of a drag here, really.

WILLIE and EDDIE drink their beers as the three of them look blankly at the icy, desolate lake.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 36 : Ext. Morning. Outside AUNT LOTTE's house.

The car is outside AUNT LOTTE's house. WILLIE and EDDIE are saying goodbye to EVA.

EVA: (kissing them both goodbye) Okay...well...
goodbye, again.

EDDIE and WILLIE get into the car, having said goodbye. EVA leans down to the window on WILLIE's side (EDDIE is behind the wheel) as WILLIE rolls down the window.

EVA: So, if you guys win a lot of money at the races sometime, you should come back and kidnap me.

WILLIE: Yeah. We should try to do that.

EDDIE: So long, Eva.

WILLIE and EDDIE drive off. EVA waves goodbye, then turns and goes back toward the house.

"Paradise"

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 37 : Int. Car. Morning. On the road.

WILLIE and EDDIE are in the car, leaving Cleveland. EDDIE (driving) occasionally looks over at WILLIE in the passenger seat. WILLIE looks straight ahead, out the front window of the car. Neither one speaks. The car radio is not on. Finally, WILLIE breaks the silence.

WILLIE: (still looking straight ahead) So how much money you got left?

EDDIE: Almost all of it. I've only spent about fifty bucks.

WILLIE: (after a pause) You ever been to Miami?

EDDIE: Florida? Palm trees...girls in little bikinis...

WILLIE: You been there?

EDDIE: No.

There is another pause, during which EDDIE keeps shifting his eyes from the road in front of him to WILLIE.

WILLIE: Turn around.

EDDIE: What? (he pulls the car over to turn around) Why? We goin' to Florida? (pause) We gonna take Eva?

WILLIE: Yeah, we're gonna take Eva.

EDDIE turns the car around, and they begin driving back in the direction of AUNT LOTTE's house.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 38 : Ext. Day. In front of AUNT LOTTE's house.

The car is once again parked in front of AUNT LOTTE's house. WILLIE is carrying EVA's suitcase from the house. He is followed by EVA, then by EDDIE and AUNT LOTTE. AUNT LOTTE is yelling at them in Hungarian. EVA and WILLIE get into the car, as EDDIE attempts to calm AUNT LOTTE.

EDDIE: (to AUNT LOTTE) Its just a vacation. Just for a few days.

AUNT LOTTE speaks angrily in Hungarian.

EDDIE: She's safe with us. Its okay, really. (he gets into the car)

EDDIE waves goodbye to AUNT LOTTE (who is still yelling in Hungarian) as they pull away in the car. EVA watches AUNT LOTTE's animated form recede in the distance. EVA then turns back, facing forward.

EVA: She'll get over it.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 39 : Int. Car. Day. On the road.

EDDIE and WILLIE are in the front seat (EDDIE driving), and EVA is in the back. EVA appears excited by her escape from Cleveland.

EVA: Its going to be great there. Florida.

EDDIE: (turns around to face EVA) So do you have your bikini ready Eva?

WILLIE: Cut it out, Eddie.

EVA smiles. There is a pause.

EVA: They have real alligators in Florida. We can choke some alligators, right Willie?

WILLIE: (laughing slightly) Yeah, yeah. (pause) So what happened to that party dress I gave you? Did you bring it?

EDDIE turns around to look at EVA, wondering how she will respond.

EVA: Oh, uh...I, uh, I lost it at a really wild party.

WILLIE: Oh, yeah?

They all laugh.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 40 : Int. Car. Night. On the road.

EDDIE is still driving. WILLIE and EVA are both asleep. EDDIE looks over at each of them, turns the radio on quietly, and continues to watch the night landscape as he drives.

Scene 41 : Int. Car. Day. Rest-stop parking lot.

The car is parked in the lot of a highway rest-stop. EDDIE is behind the wheel, drinking a beer, while EVA sleeps in the back seat. WILLIE approaches the car from the gas station shop, and gets into the front seat of the car. He is wearing tourist-looking sungalsses. He has bought three pairs of identical sungalsses. He gives a pair to EDDIE, and wakes up EVA to give her a pair.

WILLIE: Here. We can disguise ourselves as tourists. EDDIE and EVA try on their sungalsses. EDDIE checks his appearance in the rear-view mirror.

EDDIE: (looking in the mirror) Hey, pretty classy. They drive off, all wearing their sunglasses.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 42 : Ext. Night. Parking lot of motel. Florida.

The car is parked in front of an old, sleezy-looking Florida motel. The parking lot is illuminated by the the large, flashing neon light from the motel sign. WILLIE is leaning against the car, talking to EVA, who is in the back seat.

WILLIE: So, Eva, you stay down in the back seat until the motel guy is gone. Then come into the room real quickly. Room number Seven.

EVA: (annoyed) You guys said you were rich.

WILLIE: Look, Eva, just do what I say. The three of us can share this room for tonight. Just stay down, okay?

WILLIE walks away, as EVA, still annoyed, hides in the back seat of the car.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 43 : Int. Night. Motel room.

Inside the run-down motel room, EDDIE and WILLIE are organizing their belongings. EVA knocks at the door, and WILLIE quickly pulls her into the room. There are two large double beds, minimal furnishings and depressing decor. EVA puts her bags on one of the beds, and looks around the room.

EVA: (with sarcasm) This looks sort of familiar.

WILLIE: Listen, we thought we might be able to get a cot put in here for you to sleep on.

EVA: Oh, no. I'm sleeping here. You guys get that bed, or the cot, or whatever. I'm sleeping here.

(she sits down on one of the beds)

WILLIE: Okay, okay. (He gets into the other bed, where EDDIE is already lying down) Just go to sleep, EVA, so we can start enjoying our vacation.

EVA: (getting into her bed) Can we go to the beach tomorrow?

WILLIE: Yeah, after we go to the races.

EDDIE: Yeah, they got dog races down here.

WILLIE: Yeah...somehow I don't like the idea of dog races.

EDDIE: No, dog racing is a big thing here. We got to check it out, you know?

WILLIE: Yeah, I guess so...Dog racing....

EDDIE turns out the light, and they settle into sleep, with WILLIE and EDDIE lying uncomfortably on the outside edges of their shared double bed.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 44 : Int. Morning. Motel room.

EVA wakes up in the motel room to the harsh Florida light. She rubs her eyes, and looks around the room, realizing that WILLIE and EDDIE are not there. She gets out of bed, seeing that their personal belongings are still in the room. She goes over to the window and looks out into the parking lot. The car is gone. EVA crosses the room in frustration, and sits back down on her bed. She sighs angrily, and lights a cigarette.

SPRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 45 : Int. Afternoon. Motel room.

It is later the same day. EVA is now dressed and listening to the radio. WILLIE and EDDIE are heard pulling up in the car (in front of the motel). EVA turns off the radio as they enter the room. WILLIE looks very upset. He looks briefly at EVA, then sits down on his bed and looks down at the floor. EDDIE paces back and forth.

WILLIE: (still looking down) I told you there was something funny about dog racing. Those skinny stupid dogs running around the track...

EDDIE: (quietly, to EVA) Yeah, we lost almost all the money.

WILLIE: (upset) I can't believe it! Fucking dog races!

There is a very long, silent pause.

EVA: So what do we do now?

There is another long pause as the three of them stare blankly at the floor.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 46 : Ext. Afternoon. On the beach.

EDDIE, WILLIE and EVA walk along the beach--carrying their winter coats, EDDIE and WILLIE wearing hats, and all three wearing their 'tourist' sunglasses. Their pale white faces contrast with the tanned, overweight bodies of the slow-moving elderly residents inhabiting the beach. The three of them sit down on the sand, looking out at the breaking waves of the ocean.

EDDIE: (after a pause) Well, its nice and warm here, anyway.

EVA: Yeah, but I was expecting it to be ...different, somehow.

EDDIE and EVA look around them at the landscape of old depressing hotels, stunted palm trees, and elderly citizens, while WILLIE stares distantly into the waves.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 47 : Int. Morning. Motel room.

EDDIE and EVA are sitting on their respective beds as WILLIE paces around the room, thinking. EDDIE and EVA watch him for a while, then EDDIE speaks.

EDDIE: Well, we got almost enough money to get back to Cleveland, or to New York.

WILLIE: (upset) oh, man, we were rich.

EDDIE: Yeah, but...I say we go back now.

WILLIE continues to walk back and forth, anxiously.

WILLIE: Listen, we gotta try one more time. But with horses. Horses, not dogs!

EDDIE: Oh, man...

WILLIE: Come on. We're gonna do it.

EVA: Maybe I would be good luck this time, you know?

WILLIE: No! You stay here.

EDDIE: Maybe she's right, Willie.

WILLIE: Shut-up. Come on, let's go.

EDDIE: I think she should come with us.

WILLIE: No. (he goes out the door)

EDDIE: (after a pause, looking at EVA) I think you should come...but...I'm sorry, Eva.

EDDIE leaves the room. EVA is furious, and begins pacing in the room, as the car is heard pulling away.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 48 : Ext. Afternoon. STREET in Miami Beach.

EVA is on a littered street in Miami Beach in the district near the motel. She is standing on the street (wearing her sungalsses, and quite out of place with her dark overcoat on) removing a price-tag from a hat she has just aquired (stolen?). It is a straw hat with a dark band, and a broad, flat brim. She puts the hat on, checks her reflection in a shop window, then begins walking down the street. She pauses on the corner, and looks around her. Behind EVA, a gaunt, suspicious-looking man is standing in the shadow of a building observing her. As EVA stands, looking around her in a dazed mood, the man nervously approaches her, continually looking around them. He stands next to EVA, close to her, and speaks without looking directly at her.

MAN: (looking up and down the street) I've been waiting here for forty minutes. Where the fuck have you been?

EVA looks at him, hiding her amazement, and before she can speak, he continues.

MAN: (taking a large, thick envelope from inside his jacket) Here. Tell Mr. Houdini things went smooth. The man hands EVA the envelope, almost twitching, and still without looking at her. Concealing her confusion, EVA puts the envelope under her coat, and turns to the man.

STRANGER Than PARADISE ContinuationScene 48 : -Continued-

EVA: Right.

But just as she speaks, the man is already walking away, turning a corner behind her. EVA walks away quickly in the direction she initially came from. Just as she is out of view, a young woman walks briskly to the corner where the unexpected transaction occurred. She is about EVA's height, also with dark hair, and is wearing sunglasses, a dark raincoat (more currently fashionable than EVA's), and a flat, wide-brimmed straw hat exactly like the one EVA was wearing. She stands on the corner, and looks very nervously around her, her arms folded, her foot tapping on the sidewalk.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 49 : Int. Afternoon. Motel room.

There is no one in the motel room. EVA enters, with her coat, hat and sunglasses on. She locks the door behind her, then closes the curtains. She crosses over to the bed, and takes the envelope out from her coat. She opens it and looks inside in amazement. She empties the contents onto the bed--four large stacks of money, in \$20 dollar bills. She pauses in dazed amazement.

EVA: (to herself) Mr. Houdini?

After a moment, during which EVA stares off in concentrated thought, she quickly gets her suitcase and collects her things. She puts two of the bundles of money into the suitcase, closes it, and puts a third one into her coat. She then takes the last bundle and goes to the desk to write a note. When EVA has finished the note she wraps it around the remaining money, and leaves it on the bed where WILLIE and EDDIE sleep. She picks up her belongings, looks briefly around the room, and leaves.

SPRINGFIELD PARADISE Continuation

Scene 50 : Int. Afternoon. Motel room.

WILLIE and EDDIE stumble noisily into the room. They are fairly drunk, and happy, having won a great deal of money at the horse races.

WILLIE: (staggering slightly) Where is she? Eva?

We're rich again!

WILLIE and EDDIE become very quiet as they look around the room and realize that EVA is gone, along with her suitcases. WILLIE sees the note (and bundle) on the bed, goes over and picks it up. He unwraps the bundle and looks first at the money in amazement, then sits down to read the note. As WILLIE reads silently to himself, EDDIE stands motionless.

WILLIE: (soberly) Its in Hungarian.

EDDIE: What does it say?

WILLIE: (after a pause) It says that she hates America and all Americans, especially us, and that she's gone to the airport to go back to Budapest.

There is a long pause.

EDDIE: Where'd she get the money?

WILLIE: (getting up, and quickly gathering his possessions) Come on, Eddie, we gotta go to the airport.

Having hurriedly collected their things, WILLIE leaves the room. EDDIE, empty-handed, follows him in confusion.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 51 : Int. Afternoon. Airport terminal ticket counter.

EVA is at the airport, at a ticket counter, being assisted by a tanned, synthetic-looking woman employed by the airline company.

AIRLINE WOMAN: (behind the counter) Well, yes, there are openings on the flight to Budapest, but its boarding momentarily. You just have time, if you want to make the seat reservation.

EVA pauses for a moment, thinking.

AIRLINE WOMAN: Well? You don't have much time, and you're holding up the line here.

EVA pauses again, trying to decide.

EVA: No, I've changed my mind. Forget it.

EVA picks up her suitcase, and leaves the airport terminal.

STRANGER Than PARADISE Continuation

Scene 52 : Int. Late afternoon. Airport terminal ticket counter.

It is the same ticket counter, and airline agent, as in the previous scene. EDDIE is in the foreground, and WILLIE is in the background talking with the woman at the ticket counter. After EDDIE stands for a few moments waiting, WILLIE comes up to EDDIE in the foreground with a ticket in his hand.

WILLIE: Look, she must be on this plane. I bought a ticket. You have enough money to get home, right?

EDDIE: Well, yeah, but...

WILLIE: Okay, take care. I'll see you back in New York in a week or so, I don't know.

EDDIE: Okay, but...

WILLIE: So long, Eddie.

WILLIE runs off toward the departure gate.

EDDIE: (yelling after him) But what about your passport?

WILLIE: (his voice is heard as he gets farther away)
I got it with me!

EDDIE stands there, his hands in his pockets, staring after WILLIE, even more confused than before.

STRANGER THAN PARADISE Continuation

Scene 53 : Int. Late afternoon. Motel room.

EVA enters the motel room with her suitcase, and looks around her. They have gone. Their belongings are gone. The car is gone. She sits down on the bed, frustrated, confused, alone.

Scene 54 : Ext. Late afternoon. Airport parking lot.

EDDIE walks toward the car in the airport parking lot. When he gets to where the car is parked, he pauses to watch as a large jet-liner, which has just taken off, passes overhead. He watches for a moment as the plane climbs skyward. EDDIE shakes his head, gets into the car, and drives away.