

The Sound man gives Nicole his headphones and rewinds the tape recorder for her. The first several lines of the last take are heard through the headphones.

INT. OFF THE SET. DAY

Nick follows Palomino behind the set, stopping just beside the fake set window. Palomino whirls on Nick and whispers fiercely.

PALOMINO

I'm out of here, man!

NICK

What's the matter?!

PALOMINO

I like you, but I made a big mistake taking this part. Have someone call me a cab.

NICK

Wait a second, Chad. Just talk to me. What's going on!?

PALOMINO

I can't act with this woman. I know she's a friend of yours but I got to tell you: she cannot act worth a shit! I'm giving her everything! The whole thing I just did with the hair; did you see that? I came up with that on my own because I thought it would help her. But no, she's giving me nothing! I'm out of here.

INT. THE SET. DAY

Nicole listens to the last line of the previous take.

PALOMINO

God, and all this time I thought...
(the muted rustle of
the kiss)

The Sound man stops the recorder at the end of the take, sets the machine in standby mode, and picks up his crossword puzzle. Nicole is just about to take off the headphones when she realizes she can hear Nick and Palomino talking quite clearly. Glancing up, she sees the Boom man has left his boom leaning against the wall, the mike pointing out the open set window.

PALOMINO (V.O.)

Why did you cast her? She sucked in that Richard Gere movie!

NICK (V.O.)

You're right. She is not the best actress in the world. I see that now but you've got to help me, Chad. I'm asking you to please help me here. We've got to get through this somehow.

The camera begins a slow DOLLY in to Nicole's astonished face. This will be intercut with a similar DOLLY in to the microphone leaning against the wall, ending in an ECU of the mike.

INT. OFF THE SET. DAY

Camera is close on Nick and Palomino.

PALOMINO

I'll tell you what this is about, man. You know why she took a cab this morning?

NICK

Something came up.

PALOMINO

No. She was in my hotel room and she didn't want you to know it. OK? I'm sorry it had to come out like this but I told her this morning "thanks a lot, it was a lot of fun last night but let's get something straight -- it was just a one-time deal," and she didn't want to hear that. She wanted more, you see what I'm saying? It's rejection.

INT. THE SET. DAY

The camera reveals Nicole now seated in her spot on the bed. She rises as Nick and Palomino reappear and approach her from behind the set.

NICK

Nicole, listen...

NICOLE

Nick, it's my fault the scene isn't working. I apologize. Chad, I apologize to you too. I'm completely unfocused here and I think you're absolutely right; what we need to do is loosen the scene up somehow.

Nick and Palomino stare at Nicole for a moment.

NICK

What would you like to do?

NICOLE

I was wondering if we could try improvising the scene. More along the lines of what Chad has been doing. Maybe that would help me find