

EXT. SUBDIVISION, VALLEJO, CA - 1963 - DAY

Establish neighborhood with archival footage.

A row of tidy little houses, all the same. HOUSEWIVES are out pushing baby strollers, watering gardens, unloading groceries from station wagons. It appears to be an idyllic suburban neighborhood.

CLOSE ON CAROL DODA (early 20s)

Hurrying towards camera, clutching a worn suitcase. She's young and beautiful but visibly distressed, her face tear-stained, eyes puffy, hair disheveled.

She's rushing away from a house. The yard is strewn with toys. We see the front door open behind Carol. An angry man in a white T-shirt emerges and follows her, walking fast. He kicks a toy truck out of his way.

Carol, glances over her shoulder, then breaks into a run when she reaches the sidewalk. The man following her stops at the sidewalk, letting her go.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Carol, winded after walking a long way, boards a bus. The destination sign reads SAN FRANCISCO.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - NORTH BEACH - ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

Establish San Francisco and North Beach in 1963 with archival footage of the Golden Gate Bridge, cable cars, neon signs, nightclubs, businessmen, beatniks and beehive hairdos.

ROLL TITLES.

INT. BUS STATION RESTROOM - DAY

Carol splashes water on her face, fixes her hair, reinvents herself. She's resilient and determined.

EXT. BROADWAY STREET - NIGHT - LIVE ACTION/ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

CLOSE ON CAROL

Tight shots of Carol are intercut with archival footage as she walks down Broadway Street in awe, amazed by the sights and sounds of the vibrant nightclub life. She's not in Vallejo anymore. She's found a home.

EXT. CONDOR - NIGHT

Carol stops in front of the Condor. We see Carol, the club entrance and the marquee above. It's the happening spot. Stylish COUPLES lean into each other laughing as they enter.

The marquee reads: BOBBY NEWMAN.

INT. CONDOR - NIGHT

Carol enters and takes in the glamorous scene. Cafe tables are arranged in front of a small stage. There's a good CROWD. Men in suits and skinny ties, women in coats and gloves.

Cocktail waitress MARGARET (25), a feminist bohemian in a black leotard, swoops and dives around the tables, deftly balancing a tray of cocktails.

Standing at the dark wood bar, charming his admirers, is NICO MARTINI (32), the handsome, swinging owner of the club, dressed in a sharp suit and wearing an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN on his arm.

NICO

You gotta create an atmosphere. You gotta create a party every night!

A uniformed cop, OFFICER CONTI (30), sits at the bar.

CONTI

(to the Attractive Woman)
Would you believe this guy used to deliver ravioli?

NICO

Now, I deliver champagne.

CONTI

He's just in it for the girls.

NICO

Guilty as charged!

Everyone LAUGHS.

POLLY (23) a flirty redheaded waitress in a black leotard threads through the tables. Nico gives her a playful SMACK on the rear. She's delighted by the attention.

Conti chuckles, downs his drink, drops a few bills on the bar and exits.

BOBBY NEWMAN (25), a Black rock and roll singer with movie star looks, takes the stage along with his band and launches into his hit song, "Betty Lou's Got a New Pair of Shoes."

Carol instinctively starts bopping joyfully to the music. She's a five-foot-two, free-spirited bundle of energy.

Nico notices Carol dancing. People are watching her, cheering her on. Nico makes his way over to Carol.

NICO (CONT'D)

Hey, go-go dancer, can I buy you a drink?

CAROL

(dancing)

I'd spill it.

NICO

(to Bartender)

Hey, Joe, couple of Manhattans.

CAROL

What, do you own the place?

NICO

Yeah, as a matter of fact, I do.
I'm Nico.

Carol takes in the handsome Nico.

CAROL

Do you need a go-go dancer?

NICO

Yeah, and a cocktail waitress.

CAROL

Great! So I have a job?

NICO

Are you over 21? What's your name?

CAROL

Carol Doda.

NICO

Doda, what kind of name is that?

CAROL

It's a nice Italian name.

NICO

Like mine! Martini. Can you start right now?

CAROL

Right now?

INT. DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret pulls a white leotard from a box. She hands it to Carol and politely turns around while Carol changes into it.

MARGARET

(with back turned)

Ever worked as a cocktail waitress before?

CAROL

No. I worked in an office but they started at 9am. That was too early for me. Then I worked at a store that opened at 10.

MARGARET

Still too early.

Carol nods. They both inspect the sleeveless leotard in the mirror. It's too big.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Hold on, I can fix that.

Margaret finds safety pins and helps Carol pin the fabric. She notices bruises on Carol's arms with finger prints.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Oh, honey. I'm sorry.

CAROL

What? Oh, it's nothing. I'm just clumsy.

MARGARET

Funny how so many women are clumsy.

Margaret finds some makeup and applies it to Carol's bruises. Carol is holding back tears.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

There. No one will know.

CAROL
 (emotional)
 Thanks.

INT. CONDOR - NIGHT

Margaret fills a tray with drinks and hands it to Carol.

MARGARET
 You got it? Take it to that table
 over there. It's six dollars and 65
 cents. If someone buys you a drink,
 let them. Get a rum and coke. No
 rum. Got it? Make sure to clean up
 all the empty glasses.

CAROL
 Got it.

MARGARET
 Don't let anyone get fresh. No
 hands.

Carol nods, looking nervous as she hoists the tray and heads to the table. Suddenly, a CUSTOMER turns and bumps into her. The tray wobbles. Carol looks terrified. The Customer laughs and apologizes.

We see Carol taking orders, serving drinks, entertaining the customers and collecting tips, all while tactfully avoid groping hands. She starts slowly, then gains confidence.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carol, carrying her suitcase, enters a smoke-filled, dimly lit space. A JAZZ RECORD is playing on a turntable.

A racially diverse group of straight and gay BOHEMIANS are making out on cushions and pillows scattered around the living room.

Margaret emerges from a bedroom, buttoning her shirt. She's followed by her BLACK LOVER, zipping up his pants. She spots Carol and greets her.

MARGARET
 Glad you made it.

CAROL
 I didn't know you were having a
 party.

MARGARET
I'm not, it's always like this.

Margaret's Black lover gives her a kiss and leaves.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Is that cool with you?

CAROL
I think I can handle it.

MARGARET
I'll show you the room.

INT. CAROL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Margaret shows Carol the bedroom. Carol looks around.

CAROL
I'll take it!

MARGARET
It's a deal.

Carol picks up something on the floor. It's a drumstick.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
The guy that moved out is the
drummer at Big Al's.

CAROL
Oh, I'll be a lot quieter than a
drummer.

MARGARET
(laughs)
He moved out because *I* was too
loud.

INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Carol, wearing pajamas and a robe, enters the living room where Margaret and her bohemian friends are smoking, drinking and chatting.

Carol joins them, sitting on the floor.

MARGARET
(to a friend)
I like decorating. I like to cook.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)

But I am not cut out to be a mother. I learned my lesson. You got kids, Carol?

CAROL

(unconvincingly)
Me?... No.

MARGARET

Ever been married?

CAROL

No... But I can see myself married and living in a nice little house with a white picket fence. And when my husband comes home from work, I cook him pasta.

MARGARET

And meanwhile, you're a dancer at the Condor?

CAROL

I have to support myself. And I like to entertain people. I imagine I can have both, right?

INT. CONDOR - NIGHT

Bobby and the band are on stage PLAYING a Motown hit. Carol is making her rounds, dancing her way through the tables. The Customers encourage her.

Nico is in the corner talking to a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

BIG DAVEY ROSENBERG (late 20s), a large, loud man with a brash style, wearing a rumpled windbreaker, sits at the bar watching Carol. He signals to her.

Carol bounces over.

DAVEY

You know you're adorable?

CAROL

Thank you, aren't you sweet.

DAVEY

I'll have a Tab.

CAROL

A what?

DAVEY

Tab. It's a diet soda. Gotta watch my figure.

Davey pats his enormous belly.

CAROL

Coming right up.
(referring to the band)
These guys are incredible!

DAVEY

That's Bobby Newman. I discovered him. He was parking cars at Hippo Burger. Now he's the talk of the town. Ever since I got him in Herb Caen's column.

(extends his hand)
Dave Rosenberg, publicist.

CAROL

Carol Doda, cocktail waitress.

DAVEY

Doda? Like the bird?

CAROL

That's DO-DO. I'm DO-DA.

DAVEY

Nice to meet you, Miss Dodo. You from around here?

CAROL

Doesn't matter where I'm from. What matters is where I'm going.

DAVEY

Ooh, I like that. Where are you going?

CAROL

When I was fifteen, I had a vision. I knew I would be in the entertainment business. I didn't know what.

DAVEY

Music to my ears. How 'bout I help you figure out what.

CAROL

I love that, Davey. Let's do it!

Carol thrusts out her hand and they shake. She smiles and shimmies away. Davey watches, inspired.

Carol returns to the bar with her order and dances the Twist while waiting for the Bartender to make the drinks.

Officer Conti is sitting on the closest barstool, finishing his drink.

OFFICER CONTI

I haven't seen you before.

Nico arrives.

NICO

You're doing great, doll! The customers love you.

OFFICER CONTI

Did you check her id, Nico?

NICO

Of course. You think I'm stupid?

OFFICER CONTI

(to Carol)

Are you 21? 'Cause if you're not, I'd have to shut the place down.

NICO

Come on, Conti.

CAROL

Yes, I am.

OFFICER CONTI

Glad to hear it. Let me buy you drink, sweetheart. What'll it be?

Carol sizes him up. He's got a charming smile.

CAROL

Rum and coke.

Nico nods, approvingly.

NICO

Atta girl.

OFFICER CONTI

(to Bartender)

Rum and coke.

NICO
Go easy on her, Conti, she's new in town.

Nico moves on.

OFFICER CONTI
New in town, huh? How 'bout I show you around? What time do you get off?

CAROL
You want to show me around at night?

OFFICER CONTI
I'll walk you home.

CAROL
OK, sure.

Bobby Newman launches into another SONG.

After serving the drinks, Carol puts down her tray and starts dancing in front of the stage, facing the audience. The CROWD CHEERS her on. The place is jumping.

Davey, Conti and Nico, with ATTRACTIVE WOMAN #2 on his arm, watch Carol.

OFFICER CONTI
She's such a fox!

NICO
Is she a waitress or a dancer?

DAVEY
She's Carol Doda. That's why you can't stop looking.

Carol says something to the PIANO PLAYER, who then motions for her to climb on top of the baby grand piano.

Carol makes a CUSTOMER stand up so she can use his chair to climb on top of the piano, where she continues to dance, really cutting loose.

The crowd loves it. Nico, Davey and Conti APPLAUD wildly.

EXT. CONDOR - NIGHT

It's late when Carol emerges from the club. Officer Conti is waiting for her.

OFFICER CONTI
Hi, Carol.

CAROL
Hi...

OFFICER CONTI
Anthony.

CAROL
Anthony.

OFFICER CONTI
Not Tony.

CAROL
Not Tony.

They start walking down the street, which is deserted except for a few STRAGGLERS.

OFFICER CONTI
So, where are you from, Carol?

CAROL
Out in the boons. I was a prune picker.

OFFICER CONTI
A prune picker?

CAROL
It's slang for a California farmer.

OFFICER CONTI
I'm from right here, North Beach. This is a tight-knit Italian neighborhood. Big extended families. Very traditional. I've known Nico since Galileo High.

CAROL
What was Nico like in high school?

OFFICER CONTI
Always chasing girls, always in trouble. Look at him now, Mr. Big Shot. He's married, you know.

CAROL
His wife must be very understanding.

Conti chuckles.

CAROL (CONT'D)

This is me.

OFFICER CONTI

Above the Peppermint Tree?

Carol nods.

CAROL

What?

OFFICER CONTI

It's not the nicest.

CAROL

It's close to work. I live with Margo. She's really nice. Well, I'll see you later. Thanks for walking me home.

OFFICER CONTI

You gonna let me show you around town sometime?

CAROL

Sure.

OFFICER CONTI

Can I get your number?

CAROL

I don't know my number yet.

OFFICER CONTI

I'll see you at the Condor.

Carol waves and disappears into her building.

INT. CONDOR - NIGHT

The club hasn't opened yet. Carol and Davey confer as the Bartender sets up.

Nico and Polly come down the stairs from the dressing room, straightening their clothes. Nico whispers something to Polly and she playfully pushes his shoulder.

They then notice Carol and Davey watching them and suddenly become serious and get to work.

Margaret arrives.

DAVEY
(to Nico)
Ready?

NICO
Give me a minute.

Nico goes to the cash register and counts the cash.

DAVEY
(to Carol)
The competition's stiff. There's
Big Al's. They got girls on swings.
Bimbo's - they got the Girl in the
Fishbowl. The Galaxie's hot right
now with Judy Mac doing the Swim
dance.

CAROL
What's the Swim dance?

Davey demonstrates, moving his arms like he's swimming. For a
big man, he's surprisingly graceful.

CAROL (CONT'D)
I can do that.

Davey pulls up the corner of his windbreaker as if it's a
skirt.

DAVEY
She pulls up her skirt. Pretty
risque. You gotta have a gimmick.

CAROL
What's our gimmick?

DAVEY
I'm working on it.

He puts a wad of bills in his pocket and slams the cash
drawer shut.

NICO
No. No. No! Not good. Everybody's
gonna top us. I want to be number
one! NUMBER ONE. Davey?

DAVEY
Yeah, that's why I called the
meeting. I got an idea.

All look at Davey in anticipation. He holds his hands up, framing his vision.

DAVEY (CONT'D)

Picture this. The piano floats down from the ceiling with the Doda dancing on top.

A beat of stunned silence.

NICO

The piano does what?

DAVEY

It floats down from the ceiling.

NICO

How does it do that?

DAVEY

I don't know, I'm the idea man.

They stare at him, dumbfounded.

NICO

That's the dumbest -

DAVEY

What an entrance! The Girl on the Floating Piano. And at the end of her act, the piano rises back up and she disappears into a hole in the ceiling.

NICO

A hole in the ceiling?

POLLY

The piano weighs a ton.

NICO

Yeah, are you outta your lump?

They all sit there silently for a beat.

CAROL

Can you make the piano lighter?
Take the insides out?

MARGARET

Make it work like an elevator?

CAROL

It's a fantastic idea!

NICO

It's groundbreaking! This is gonna
be a landmark that'll outlast us
all!

(to Davey)

How do you come up with this stuff?

DAVEY

I have a fantasy mind.

EXT. CONDOR - NIGHT

It's late when Carol leaves the club. Officer Conti is
waiting. He suddenly emerges from the shadows.

Carol jumps.

CAROL

Oh, goodness, you scared me.

OFFICER CONTI

I'm sorry, Carol, I didn't mean to
scare you.

CAROL

Then don't creep out of the shadows
like that.

They walk down the deserted street.

OFFICER CONTI

I haven't seen you in a few days.
How have you been?

CAROL

Fine.

OFFICER CONTI

Met any cute guys?

He flashed a grin.

CAROL

(smiling)

Nope, not a one.

Conti fake pouts.

They come upon a couple of BEATNIKS smoking pot in a doorway.
Conti stops suddenly.

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