

Las Pulgas Estan Escondidas en las Flores

Michael Lamport Commons
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- Part I. Mexico, Flores, Pulgo
- Part II. Stanford
Near San Diego near the atomic power plant
Berkeley, The professors
- Part III. The Beach, The discovery
- Part IV. Everyone meets at the beach

Part I. **Baja Mexico**, West of Tijuana

There is no dialog here and is somewhat slow paced.

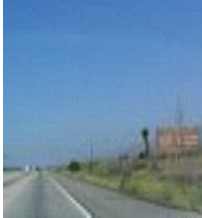
The opening shot is of the groups of Fisherman off the coast west of Highway 1D west of Tijuana of loading up there boats just as the dawn breaks. There is only one boat that has just one man. The titles to the movie flash on the screen as this shows. The titles consist of the highway signs on Route 5 south on the way to San Diego. They are: Las Pulgas; Escondido; Las Flores.

Las Pulgas Road provides access to the center of the Camp Pendleton Marine Base. Photo taken 05/22/04



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Northbound Interstate 5 at Las Pulgas Road, Exit 62. La Pulgas Road serves the Marine base, and it connects a staging area for those who wish to bike Old U.S. 101. The original alignment of U.S. 101, although located on Marine property as part of Camp Pendleton, may be bicycled between Las Pulgas Road and San Clemente (via San Onofre). Old U.S. 101 is a fascinating bike ride, as it once served as the primary route between Los Angeles and San Diego. See [The Lost Highway](#) for a complete photo journey of Old U.S. 101 in Camp Pendleton. Photo taken 05/22/04.



http://www.westcoastroads.com/california/i-005nc_ca.html

Slowly the camera moves back as the boats move out into the ocean. Just as the they reach the horizon, or disappear because the are too small to see, the scene ends.

Flores looks like a very young Mexicana Natalie Woods

Flores is leaving the elementary school. She is about to graduate. It is one of those typical two story, multi-building Baja California schools, built out of concrete, with the sloping concrete roof. She quickly walks down the hall, her head slightly down. The outside concrete is painted white and the rains have splashed mud on the bottom of the walls.

She walks up the steep asphalt road until it runs out. A path leaves the end of the road through the trash and dumped building materials to the left. She climbs the steep path from the road through the scrub on the inland side of the hill. She is carrying two gallon sized bottles full of water.

From the top of the hill, one can see out into the Pacific 40 or 50 miles. There almost always is a constant breeze. The hillside is steep on both sides. There are no roads, just two paths, one from the east and one from the west, from the little two-room concrete-block house that sits on top and an outhouse. There is a large window on the front and two small windows on the back.

Flores sits in the open doorway, waiting for her father to come up the path from the fishing village down below and West of ID, Playas Tijuana .

Tijuana

When you go down the bar along the main street in old Tijuana, you might see Senior Pulgo [what is his last name] sitting outside smoking. The building is two stories and looks old. It is a very nice bar. Part of the bar is dark. Men sit inside drinking beer. While sitting at the end of the bar, Senior Pulgas (the Flea who is around 35, is short, thin, light and good looking) is having a conversation with the owner on corruption. It is in Spenglish, and easily understood by Americans. They are decrying the violent drug wars and what it is doing to Tijuana and its traditional tourist businesses, like this bar. They are joking about how the traditional corruption of Tijuana, rigged horse racing, sex shows and prostitution really hurt hardly anyone. They joke about how Tijuana is the second largest city on the west coast after LA. Once in a while some women will stop a talk furtively with Senior Pulgo. He stomps out his cigarette and adjusts his straw cowboy hat. The women disappears around the corner. Further up the street there is a modern building with large glass windows. Inside they are selling fancy jewelry.

Senior Pulgo is the flea. The flea is about thirty-five years old. He is short. He is very thin. He has a craggy face and good looking. He is quite light, but has some Indian features. I have various versions of his hair: either short-cropped or long and tied in a ponytail. He has very bright eyes. He dresses very well. He has a cross between a sweet and charming look. He is exceedingly charming. He seems like a nice guy in spite of his work. He has a good reputation. He works as a one of those “pull-in” guys at clubs in Tijuana, off the main street. He sometimes procures to help out, but always the expensive deals, not streetwalker deals, not cheap — not parties with drunken sailors, but much more high-class kind of procure—but he hangs out at this bar, on the side street. So, he is sort of a hustler. His weakness is gambling.

So, he is lecturing — now, remember the Flea is trying to resist corruption, but knows no other way of life. I mean, he really does not want to be corrupt. The Flea is forced into corruption, by his nature — the fact that you cannot work, and we — we have to — maybe he is, maybe he has serious learning disabilities. I do not — we have to we have to make him resist. He has to always be resisting corruption, but, living in a corrupt world as a corrupt man.

In one scenes, you see him the Flea turning down drug deals, and you see him turning down chances to pimp young girls. So, when we first meet him, he is turning down things he does not approve of. And, so, you see that he we have to see that there is conflict as to the corruption, not just that he loves Flores, who is absolutely pure.

Outside of Tijuana Almost on the Coast

Flores waits at home. She waits and waits but her father does not come home. This schoolgirl does not have any money. Because her father has not come back, she's desperate. She goes down to the fishing village and asks about the whereabouts of her father. And no one knows, and no one has seen even his boat. He was sort of unusual in that he went out and fished all alone. And, no one knows. They say “Well, talk to the Coast Guard.” And they haven't ever seen him either. Flores goes into Tijuana. She is walking around on the main street and passes a bar. Standing outside the bar is Senior Pulgo. One of his many jobs is to invite tourists into the bar. He sees Flores.

Senior Pulgo would like to meet Flores. He want to get somebody to introduce him to her. He tries to be very proper. But she is still really just a schoolgirl. But this is Mexico, you know. The rules are different as to age. So, the “flea” plans to get an introduction.

He finds one of his aunties who will go up the hill and give Flores some food every day. This aunt looks like the “Flea”. She is thin and short. And, instead of charming, she is warm and genuine and a little bit frightened, just a tiny bit frightened. We do not know why. We do not know why she’s frightened, but just that she’s frightened. She looks a little bit more like an Indian. Not a lot, but just a tiny bit more. And she’s also mysterious. And we don’t know why. Exactly what the nature of the relationship is between the “Flea” and the “aunt”? You never see the aunt’s house.

But the aunt has to now take over the role of the silent father as the protector of Flores. It is the aunt who brings her food. But, on the other hand, you know that she’s working for the “Flea”. So, what happens slowly is the aunt introduces the “Flea” to Flores. The way the introduction goes is the “Flea” observe Flores and follows her. The then sends the aunt with this bogus story.

He concocts this story as to why this aunt of hers should do this. The aunt tells Flores she Flores aunt. And it is complete bullshit. She is totally unrelated to her. Flores is doubtful. But the aunt convinces her that they are distant relatives and that she makes all this bullshit about a will and that in the will it said that she was to take care of her. But it is all a lie.

The Flea gets an introduction to her by the “aunt”. He takes her to a nice restaurant for a lunch on a Saturday. The restaurant is not overly fancy and near her school, so she doesn’t get scared. You know, he has to be very careful because this is just a schoolgirl, who’s just absolutely stunning, but totally innocent, and so, in order to court her, he has to go very, very, very slow.

Senior Pulgo offers Flores help. Flores is quite wary but desperate. She takes his help.

And he’s not thinking of the sex trade for Flores at all. He’s not thinking of her for sex, because he is thinking of her for *him*. Remember, this is the “Flea”, and he has to use everything. He is unable to have a relationship in which he doesn’t use. He doesn’t know *what* he’s gonna to use her for, but he knows he has a gem. So, he takes her to lunch.

The “flea” is in the club, borrowing more money. The “flea” is getting all these debts--Some from borrowing money to help Flores--Some from gambling so that he can buy a house. He owes a lot of money.

The Flea is a weak guy. He is not necessarily evil. He is really only corrupt because he is weak. He is hitting on a very young woman, there is something corrupt about that. That he wants her for himself but he cannot resist using her. Remember, he lives by his wits. A little gambling, a little procurement, for high-class people, and works for a club. He is not a real nice guy. But, anyway, he gets into trouble, and **they** want him to run drugs into the United States. But they do not want to do it themselves. He does not want to do it. They say, “Well, you don’t have to take the drugs into the United States. You just have to pick them up and drive them to the Bay area.”

He tries to get very close to Flores now. And he begins to take care of her a little, buying her clothes. He sometimes picks her up for school, but she still lives in the house and “auntie” brings the food, and leaves. And her life goes on. Later on he gives her a room on a side street near the bar. Later he want her to become his girl friend.

Part II

Stanford

We first see this Stanford assistant professor, Dr. Lobo, finishing up his lecture in his class, the *introduction to moral philosophy*. The Stanford Professor is very handsome, tall and blond, not too muscular, because he is an academic. The professor and the students are worldly. As we walk into class he still lecturing on Kohlberg’s stages of Moral Development and their relationship to corruption. As you hear his lecture, the guy is just a *stunning* orator. He is charming and funny. I mean, he is like Robert Redford or Martin Sheen in his ability to attract an audience. He is *so* charismatic, and you know he is a philosophy professor. As he finishes, all these girls come crowding up to the front to talk to him. And then a gaggle of them walk back across the campus to his office. [again, this as a continuous, Robert-Altman-type shot, where you leave the lecture hall and you walk with him, you know?] Now, the reason the Stanford professor is obsessed with morality and philosophy is a because of his own incredible narcissism

which he tries to hide. Now, he likes young women also but he is not very old maybe twenty-four, twenty-five. And, so, these students really are not out of his range if they were not his students.

His office is in one of the old Spanish looking buildings on the Stanford campus with the tiled roof stretched out over the tiled open hallway. It has these big arches and columns — successive half-circle arches, the latter supported by short columns. As you walk into his office the doorway is broad extremely tall and door is carved. His Spanish style office is really quite large. It has a couple of leather couches. And he has a large desk that is somewhat low in Spanish style. He has some papers stacked on it. There are some reprints of his. And on the wall there are some awards for “best young philosopher” of the year, an award from the Association for Moral Education. We never see the date. It’s very important *not* to show the dates. His office is quite clean and it is full of books. The office has a credenza on which there is this beautiful Italian coffee maker for espresso and one for regular coffee. He has a coffee table for the coffee. And it looks just a little bit too fancy.

As he comes into his office, he drops his notes on his desk and picks up six coffee cups, three with each hand. He offers them to the six students that have come back to ask questions and chat with him. There are all gorgeous looking California blondes and brunettes. It is really good, maybe Columbian or Brazilian coffee. You wonder where he gets this kind of money, but it is really subtle. And he dresses casually, but “Hollywood”, but refined, like expensive polo shirts, expensive shoes comfortable, comfortable athletic shoes. This guy is terribly successful academically. We never find out whether he is rich or not. You never see where he lives.

And what you do not see is that hidden in the exams, is cocaine. You never see the Stanford professor make any drug deals. One of the women taking his classes leaves him cocaine wrapped in an exam. At first he ignores it.

So, you know, the movie has to proceed at multiple levels. All this talk is about the problems of corruption, what it does to people. The Stanford Professor gets an award from the Kohlberg Society–AME. He is giving a lecture on Kohlberg. Then it ends and he leaves to go back to his office with his entourage of young women. I do not know how you show that the guy has one of those rare humanity grants from the Josephson Foundation.

You might first meet him he is getting off the plane after testifying in Washington on the moral issues surrounding drugs because he has published in this area. Maybe that would be a good establishing shot. He is on the plane with colleagues, and they are discussing it. And, they are all talking and he is sitting there and they are saying how much they liked his testimony. Maybe he is with a Congressman, from his district. I think that this guy appears really well connected, and really, really successful.

Berkeley

The Berkeley entomologist assistant professor is cute and nerdy, tall and lanky with red blond and wavy hair in a ponytail. He looks just somewhat like a rocker. In fact, he is a folk-rocker on the side. He wears red plaid shirts and jeans. He is good-looking in more of a Clint Eastwood way. Not a pretty boy. The character of the Berkeley professor, who is one of the heroes in this story has two main character flaws. These are the important flaws that make him a lovable character. The first is he is apprehensive about acting. For example, if there was a woman who he was interested in, but did not necessarily have a relationship with currently and he knew that she was in some sort of trouble, he would want to help her very greatly. But he would be afraid to do so. He would be apprehensive and he would think twice about doing so, even though it would be in his best interest.

And that is caused by his second character flaw, which is that he is shy. He is extremely interested in the social aspect of life. He just absolutely loves it, but he is so shy that he cannot emotionally handle the social aspect of human, so he is a professor of entomology. He and his students study the social behavior of fleas. Instead of being social with girls, he watches social behavior in bugs. He is so shy that he cannot even watch humans. He has to watch the social behavior of bugs. But if he were less shy, he would be well-versed in the social behavior of humans but they are too overwhelming for him.

His students look very 70's Berkeley although it is now the 80's. They are the usual motley crew of graduate students with a few advanced undergraduates. Like the entomology professor, they are very dedicated students of entomology. The students are also politically sophisticated. But, they are not without their petty faults. And it is

important to show some petty faults that like the stunning blonde with wavy hair, sort of “Meg-Ryan-ish” is somewhat vain and she gets teased because of it. You know, that she constantly has to look at herself in the mirror. Not really constantly, but you do see this once and somebody teases her. Remember she is one of the heroines of the story. She wears no make-up. She is stunning, blonde, She is not very social herself, but dedicated, works in the lab and is really into the stuff. She is highly respected. You do see the beginnings of the relationship. But he does not violate any boundaries in the story. But you see that there is a possibility of this relationship developing, very clearly.

She does not give him trouble. She is very helpful, but she is very strong person. She is the one that has all the strength in the movie. And she is the one who discovers the fleas in the flowers, and that they are high on cocaine. Throughout the movie she is the facilitating character to the Berkeley professor’s strength. Throughout the movie she is the force that gets *him* to become social. She’s the one who socializes him. Has him go to lunch with the students.

There is a sort of an overweight guy. There is somebody who looks a lot like the Flea. He could be played by the Flea’s brother, but is not the Flea. He does not talk. Has no talking role, but is one of the students. That way there are some Mexicans in there. There is a Mexican woman. And she is not to look like Flores. Although Flores has long brown hair, this woman, has to have a more political-looking, stronger kind of look — more like Joan Baez. And she can sing, and so can the professor whereas Stanford is lily white, Berkeley is not. The opening shot in Berkeley is that of the entomology professor and some of his students walking out of the Terrace at the Student Center and through Sather Gate. They are walking back from the Student Union, where they have all sitting on the terrace at the student center. And he was there, and they were all talking about the theories and eating lunch. And then they go into the old Biology Building (sort of shot in an Altmanesque way, because the camera just follows them from the Terrace through Sather gate and in into the biology building).

The entomologist lab is in the old biology building at Berkeley with the huge ceilings and the columns. His office has those old display cases. But everything is meticulous. When you go into this guy’s lab, you know it is a typical entomology lab. The students are all dedicated and there are computer terminals — you know, computers in there. And they are working and they are entering data and field notes. They are photographing specimens. And they are putting their specimens onto slides and they are videoing the slides. Not videoing, but, you know, taking digital pictures and putting them into a database.

The guy is a great devotee of E.O. Wilson. He is really very much like E. O. Wilson. He has that same expansive view that you can learn about all of nature from just studying sand fleas. And he has been all over the world studying sand fleas. But the guy is absolutely unassuming. And absolutely dedicated in this work. The students *love* him, because he is so dedicated and so brilliant and so kind and so helpful.

Everyone is studying sandfleas on the beach at La Pulgas and Fogas, and sandfleas live down in the sand. That is why they are obviously called sandfleas. And they are finding out the various species of sandfleas their social behavior. They are cataloguing them and studying their behavior, how they lay the eggs, how they get fertilized, you know, what they eat. They are cataloging the food sources. Some of the student who did not go to lunch are having the instant soup, Raman. They are making the Raman by boiling the water in beakers in a microwave.

Professor Lucas to Nicole

“Did you see this issue of *The New York Review of Books*? Its got a big article on moral development.” She says:

“Yeah, but they didn’t mention Rawls or Habermas, just the same old junk on Gilligan and Kohlberg.”

You also see that he teaches seminars, and you get to hear his story, which is a miniature version of how fleas live off of other things and suck their blood. And his theory of the sandflea is really the parable for the whole story. And he describes various kinds of fleas, and their transactions, and fleas suck blood. And another kind transmits the disease by sucking the blood. But this is all done very abstractly. You know, abstractly, but he shows the fleas. He has pictures of the fleas and their victims. The Berkeley guy talks about the evolution of human moral judgment, and how it is totally lacking in fleas. And why he was attracted to the study of fleas.

Well, you know he ends up after his student graduates, the post-story, which you do not see, is after the woman graduates, they have a relationship.

But he is single he drives a van because he has all his equipment for digging and collecting.

Part III Tijuana and the Beach

Exit 51A, Las Flores Avenue followed by Exit 51B. Photo taken 05/22/04.



Northbound Interstate 5 approaches Las Flores Drive (Exit 51A) and Junction California



Northbound Interstate 5 next reaches Oceanside Harbor, Exit 54C. This is the last exit along northbound until about midway through the Camp Pendleton reserve (Las Pulgas Road). Photo taken 05/22/04.

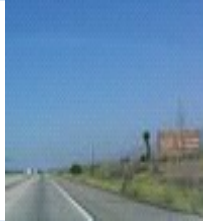


Las Pulgas Road provides access to the center of the Camp Pendleton Marine Base. Photo taken 05/22/04



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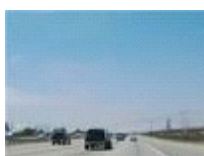
At the end of Pulgas Road, the road rapidly becomes a dirt road.
There is a dirt trail down to the beach. On the way there are these ice plants with purple flowers.



And then you go down on this road and it becomes dirt and they park on the side of the road. There really is not anything around. You really could not witness somebody coming in or out.

Once in a while you see a fisherman along the beach, but it is pretty, pretty deserted. There are fisherman off shore in small fishing boats. They come up from Mexico. Now, we have to motivate how the canister breaks open. But it is clear that the father is killed basically for no reason, because he's just coming to fish, and he comes upon this but doesn't really understand it. So, the people — Now, the drug-runners from Mexico, —I think we wanna use American fishermen I don't know. I surely don't want to use Mexican fishermen, as the drug-runners. I really would like to use —but, you see, that would not — I don't know how to do it, because who would?—I guess they have to be fishermen leaving from Mexico.

You know their atomic generating plant there and I do not know how to fit that in, but that's sort of like the symbol of how this whole thing blows up.



These yellow signs of the running family are placed in the vicinity of the Border Patrol checkpoint to ensure that motorists are aware that people may be fleeing authorities at the checkpoint. In particular, these signs are located north of the checkpoint just before passing the San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant. The San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant is adjacent to San Onofre State Beach on the west side of the freeway, as seen in this picture along northbound. As one of the few nuclear power plants in California, San Onofre generates a significant share of electricity for Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas and Electric. Electricity transmits to the grid via the wires that cross the freeway ahead. The twin domes that contain the reactors were made famous in the movie *Naked Gun* when Sergeant Frank Drebbin said, "Everywhere I go, something reminds me of her." Photo taken 05/22/04.

Lobo teaches Flores to drive. Flores is taught how to drive the van. She is the one that goes to the beach in her gorgeous bathing suit, and goes swimming. Then she lies on the beach. After the sun has just gone down, she goes out a little ways into the water and snags a coated Styrofoam buoy. She has the buoy that really is a canister full of cocaine.

The Stanford girls and the philosophy professor are having a party on the beach. Flores walks by and casually drops the bag. And she takes it to the professor who is in the van. He politely thanks her. He is in many ways considerate, The professor, who is also the drug-dealer on campus, the big coke-dealer drives the coke back. At Stanford, there are all these self-important women. One of the Stanford professors is just a "knock-out", sort of a brunette. And one an undergraduate blonde, and — they look like Hollywood actresses. They are to look just like Hollywood actresses, but they go to Stanford.

And now there are three men: the flea the Stanford professor, and the Berkeley professor. You know, in movies one of the things that is very hard to do is have all the characters. And, in Altman's case, he is very good at this. You

know, you wanna like them, The Flea has this real charm, and he does have some concern for Las Flores. He does take care of her. So he, in some sense, is good, and —the tragic part is that he has to use her to pick up the canisters from the beach.

Part IV

The Beach

At the beach, the assistant professor is on his knees collecting samples of insects near the water. Everyone is carrying collection equipment. There is the wreckage of the Flores father's boat washed way up on the beach sort of hidden in the dunes and succulents..

Nicole finds some sand fleas among the purple flowers that grow in the succulents that are growing on the way to the road where the van is parked. You see the fleas in the flowers. They are jumping a lot. They really look sort of bizarre even for fleas.

She collects them and writes down where they were found. She walks back to the professor and tells him. "How come there were fleas in the flowers over there." He looks at the flowers and he looks puzzled.

Another student watches some fleas crawl erratically up the beach away from the water. This is very unusual.

The Final Day

Back in the lab, they are analyzing the insects and some of the surrounding material. Nicole had noticed that the fleas were acting erratically. Because of the odd behavior, they test out the samples for any possible cause including drugs. She finds cocaine has affected the fleas. They go back to the beach. It is night by the time they get there. They want to take more samples to be sure.

The Beach

They discover that a party is going on and they also observe Flores bringing in the canister to the Stanford professor. After the Stanford party has left, Flores is preparing to drive back to Tijuana. Nicole had seen Flores picking up the canister and points it out to the professor. They talk a few seconds

Nicole: "What do you think is in that canister? Why would this woman be bringing it out of the water and to a van? She looks very different from the party goers. They look at each other and say at the same time, "Cocaine"

The professor calls immediately the police on the cell-phone. The police set up a bust. But they know that the courier is not the one they want. The professor's group confront Flores
Nicole

"What are you doing? What was in the canister?"

Flores, in Spanglish

"I no know" I told jus come here get canister. Bring to van"

They show her the wreckage that they have found. She cries out Ahh! when she recognizes it is her father's boat which is way up in the dunes.

That is how they "turn" her. She does not even know what is in the canisters. But that's how they get her to turn against the Flea, is they show her the wreckage. At the end it is clear that when her father died, the cocaine washed up onto the beach. Not only was there driftwood, but the cocaine affected the fleas. She finds out that her father was killed out at sea. The story is he saw something more fishy than fish. He saw them smuggling cocaine. There is a chase and the both boats sink.

The police want the dealer in Tijuana, and they want the seller in Stanford.

Tijuana

The Flea is in the club. He is paying back all but the last payment on this debts. He vows to quit. He is almost out of his troubled gambling past. . The Flea is vain and absolutely sees himself as —I mean, he really loves Flores because her innocence and her incorruption. He's not—it's not that he's trying to become rich , but I—I have to think about, you know, what is the motivation of a—of a corruptor. I mean, he's sort of like those kind of guys that have to control their women. That they have this sort of dependent narcissistic personality; they mean well, but they really don't have enough, development that — they don't control—.

Now, so, you have to—you have to. There has to be a scene where, , where Flores rejects him a little bit. And he has to demonstrate his true love for her . I think. I don't know how to do that. But I—you have to show the Flea a little bit more you have to show him in a little bit more positive light, because you—you—you— He has to have a tragic [climb(?)]. Really it's not that he loves this young girl, and that he is going to help her, because that really—I guess that's enough: that he really is generous with her; and he likes her; and he takes care of her. But the tragic flaw is his gambling. And, , no one smokes. No smoking anywhere in the movie. And, ,

Maybe this is how she gets him to co-operate. But how do they get the suppliers in on the deal? Maybe the flea and the cooperate fisherman have to meet the suppliers.

Part IV 2

Flores is asking questions.

“What here” pointing to the canister.

Professor Lobo thinks that Flores knows that her father has been killed. He realizes he has to kill her. He plans to drown her at the beach. He does not get caught this time but he gets scared. And that is why he has to get the courier. The Stanford professor is very wild and arrogant. So, he does stupid things, but he usually escapes.

Of how the bust comes off

The suppliers in Tijuana never meets the professor from Stanford. So, the bust has to be done in a way that makes the bust of each to occur at the same time or they have to meet for the first time. There is this third beach party, which he attends.

You see, with the close call with the close call they—they — that is where the courier comes in. How much are? Anyway I guess there has to be a close call. Now, these men are all self-important, but in very different ways. Alright, so, —I mean, the Flea has this kind of personality that’s dependent, and super-independent because he does not really have any alliances, but he is looking for “true love”, like many of these sort of dependent narcissistic guys. And, the problem I don’t —

And, so there have to be some shots of the Flea, you know. He is in a very high-class sort of restaurant talking to one of the people who’s going to procure for [*sic*], but you don’t know that is what he is doing. But you see him, and that is what he’s doing. And he speak really good English. And Flores speaks English because she’s a very good student.

The question is, how are they smuggling, you see, without attracting attention? No, the only way you can do that is by making them Mexican fishermen. But they are from a different port than Tijuana — than the one — this guy goes out from Tijuana. I do not even know if there is a port in Tijuana. It doesn’t matter. If there isn’t, we’ll make one up. It’s not the issue.

End of side A
side B

—The beach I thought had ice plants and, , flowers. And, , it’s really right off of this road. Las pulgas. And you drive—you’re driving down through []. You see the sign to(?) Escondido. And then you see—and this is during the titles—you just see the sign to Escondido. And then you see then you see the , , you see the thing, the road Las Pulgas. Or it—maybe that—maybe th—is the—maybe that’s the end shot, Patti. How’s that? Wouldn’t(?) you like that better as end shot to the end of the movie?

PMM: I’m sorry. I wasn’t listening.

MLC: How ’bout showing Escondido Las Pulgas at the end.

PMM: “Las Flores escondidos [*sic*] en las pulgas”? [Should be reversed, no???

MLC: Yeah. No, you show this [*sic*] road signs at the end.

PMM: Never been very clear. Right? [machine-like noises.]

MLC: See how the p[] comes down to us? [Groan???

MLC: .

So, , here we are—in—yeah. Once in a while [yawns] you see a fisherman along the beach, but it’s pretty, pretty deserted. You know their atomic, , generating plant there and I don’t know how to fit that in, but that’s sort of like the symbol of how this whole thing blows up. , , maybe, I don’t know. So, [yawns] you never see the Stanford professor make any drug deals. , things have to be—I mean—you see, one of the problems with most movies is, is they so overstate things that there’s —that you never have any curiosity about anything. Now, the reason the Stanford professor is obsessed with, , moral morality and philosophy is ’cause of his own, , incredible narcissism.

Now, he likes young women also. But he's not very old. I'm gonna say he's an assistant professor or one of the youngest tenured professors, maybe twenty-four, twenty-five. And, so, these students really aren't out of his range.

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Now, don't make the Berkeley professor wear boots. Please! He's—he—but, he is scruffier. But don't make 'im wear boots. I mean, you know, don't make a caricature. He's a real han being.

All the men are involved in these moral issues from very different perspectives. And the Flea, . . . has a conversation with—you know he sits, . . . at this bar. It's a very nice bar. And, . . . he's having this discussion with the bar owner about corruption.

And the entomology guy's gotta have some journals. And he has to talk about evolutionary psychology, and the role entomology has in leading to sociobiology books of Wilson—and there has to be a picture of Wilson in the office with the—with the professor has to . . . You have to see it. But, it—it cannot be too prominent.

, So, there is this talk . . . Alright.

I have a sort of a funny joke maybe to put in about the Stanford guy. Maybe, he gets an award from, the Kohlberg Society. And part of his thing is— is on Kohlberg. I do not know how I would include the scene.

Couple of directorial notes:

There are no flashbacks whatsoever. The story is to be told in series. What I mean by that is, first the Mexican scene, then the Stanford scene, and then the Berkeley scene, and then—but I do not mean “scene”, but “section of the movie”, and only in the fourth part do they come together. No j pping back and forth whatsoever. No updates, nothing. No crosscutting to these things. And I’d like to see it with as few cuts as possible.

The Stanford professor’s office is on the outside of the building, and there is a corridor outside that is, you know, covered by a roof, and has those old Spanish col ns. It is very much—a very traditional Spanish building with the offices on the corridor. And it is nice and cool, even in the s mer. And it is tiled, , with terracotta tile. The walls are whitewashed. The wood is dark.

Near the Atomic Power plant on the Las Pulgas Road above Escondido.

Now, as you—this is the beach scene. The beach is gently sloped. It is not that long—I mean, that deep to the water. It is only, like, thirty or forty feet. It is no hundred feet. And, , you go through a few sand dunes covered with flowers, and, You know, those beach flowers and the ice plants. So, you have to go up a little from the road. But the road cuts through them, so you can, —you’re almost—you only have to walk through, like, one or two rows of these things to get to the beach. And the beach is not that thing. The beach does not drop off in the water that fast, so that, she is able to go out in a swimsuit quite far walking.

It is important that she be able to walk, because you do not want her out there swimming. No one would swim out that far. They walk, and maybe ride a wave in. And, remember, she is alone, when she is doing this. The Flea—I do not have exactly how the canister gets to Stanford. But I think she takes it, and I do not think the Flea is with her.

When she is driving, she has to drive a very “American-looking” car, like a—but, there are no cars. You do not see cars in the thing, but whatever you—you, you know, it is a car. It is like a Honda Civic.

Jokes, irony, repeated symbols. All the characters are to be likeable and even lovable. They are not in any way to have any looks or mannerisms associated with evil or violence. Do we ever see Mr. Big the drug dealer? Probably not. Drugs are a demand form of corruption. So even the flea is corrupted by the demand.

The movie has to proceed at multiple levels. Some of the places are real. One drives down the highway. One goes by Escondido and Las Pulgas Road. The ice plants are a parasite. The flea is a parasite. There are lots of jokes.

Music

I was thinking about the music. I think I have a couple of pieces picked out for it. But they have to be redone as “Boleros”. But this is the sound I want.

At the end, it has to be a “techno-Bolero”. I think it needs to be a “techno-Bolero”. “Techno” is still “in”. But it has to be a love song. It has to be about love. But it is produced in a “techno”—and the singing. The singing is like “Joan Baez,” with the Baez character and the professor do some of the singing. But the singing is never on camera.

Directing and Cutting

What does the film look like? It is *not* a southern California tv “*Rockford*” kind of look at all. The kind of look for the shots is a combination of a sort of Altman look and pacing and “*Chinatown*” look, with some real good long shots. There are only cuts when the scene changes. The camera is continuously running within settings. There is an inexorability to the conclusion. Yet the treads have to be kept apart until the last scene. There are only hints in retrospect that give clues to the intertwining of the 3 stories.

This is a simple humorous tale of love, weakness, narcissism and the resulting corruption. Good people go bad. The out-of-it become empowered. There is a contrast in the “self importance of the three men, the Flea, the Stanford Professor and the Berkeley professor.

One of the possibilities about how to cut the ending of the movie is to cut back and forth among the 3 locations, and as all the players move towards the beach for the finally. The rate of the cuts would slowly increase.

Couple of directorial notes:

There are no flashbacks whatsoever. The story is to be told in series. What I mean by that is, first the Mexican section (Novella 1), then the Stanford section (Novella 2), the Berkeley section, and then only in the fourth part do they come together. No jumping back and forth what so ever. No updates, nothing. No crosscutting to these things. And I’d like to see it with as few cuts as possible.

The ice plants are also chosen symbolically as are the fleas.

Ice Plants

Family Aizoaceae. This family is concentrated in South Africa. It contains shrubs, ground covers, clumpers, and extreme dwarfs that support only one pair of rock-like leaves at any time. The flowers are daisy-like, often with dazzling colors. The ice plants are very popular in California, where one species, the hottentot fig (*Carpobrotus edulis*), has become a serious weed of sand dunes, choking out native plants. Other species are just as attractive, but are better behaved. *Lampranthus* spp. have large, brightly colored flowers. *Delosperma* spp. are often completely covered with flowers in the Spring. Among the dwarfs, the split rock (*Pleiospilos bolusii*) produces its coconut-scented flowers at the end of its summer growing season. Ice plants need little more to thrive than full sun and a lack of extreme cold. A few species (e.g., *Delosperma cooperi*) will tolerate temperatures below 0 if they are dry. The shrubs and ground covers will accept water all year, but the dwarf genera need careful attention to their resting season, when water should be withheld.

Cephalophyllum pillansii

Lampranthus sp.

Glottiphyllum longum

Flores looks like a Mexican Natalie Wood.

The Stanford Professor is very handsome and tall and blond

The Berkeley professor is very lanky, talks a little like E.O. Wilson. He is kind but shy. Lucas had a good description

Remember the beach party. On the way we show the signs
The title to the movie is made of highway signs maybe in a collage or super imposition.

Bring in all the sections from the other versions.

Bring in all the sections from the other versions.

MLC: Well, at the end what happens, of course, is one of the students of the Berkeley professor sees her picking up the cannister and points it out, and, uh, he calls immediately the police on the cell-phone, and they set up a bust. But they know that the courier isn't the one they want. They want the dealer in Tijuana, and they want the seller in Stanford. This is the only part of the story I've never really worked out.

Of how the bust comes off.

Now, I should mention a lot of about the, uh, seller—I mean, about the professor. He's very funny. And the students are very funny. You see, the interesting thing is—this is very interesting—is, of course, the suppliers in Tijuana have never met the professor at Stanford. And, so, the bust has to be done—I do know how to make it as dramatic as you might want it. I mean, you could sort of make them meet for the first time. But, I don't think so. But, —and I don't know how the beach party, where he takes the —you know they go down to(?) Stan—maybe the Stanford professor never really goes down to the beach. I thought in one version I had 'im going to the beach with the beach party. And maybe he has a close call.

PMM: [barely audible] stewardess knew the beach (?). Stuff like that.

MLC: And it must—has to be a close call. And because of the close call they have to get the courier.

PMM: Here. This is that Lucas

MLC: You see, with the close call with the close call they—they, uh, —that's where the courier comes in. How much are ?

Anyway, you—you—he—I guess there has to be a close call. ummm You see, the Stanford professor is very sorta wild. He—I mean—he's arrogant. And, so, he does stupid things, but he—he escapes. He doesn't get caught, the Stanford professor. But, he—he gets scared. And that's why he has to get the courier.

Now, you know, every scene has to have a motivation. And what you—what you find is—he has collected the—these people have the—have at one time the innocence of Flores and the goodness of Flores, but with tremendous curiosity, whereas Flores is quite frightened by the world, and very dutiful. They're extremely excited. And in a way the Flea is worldly, and the professor at Stanford and the students are worldly. The students are political. They're sophisticated. But, they're not without their petty faults. And it's important to show some petty faults that—like the blonde is somewhat vain and she gets teased because of it. You know, that she's [*sic*] constantly has to look at herself in the mirror. Not constantly, yo see this once and somebody teases her. And, ummm, you know, and there's a sort of an over—one of the guys is a little bit over weight. And he, uh, so, it's important—I think maybe a—a touch would be to have somebody who looks a lot like the Flea. Could be played by the Flea's brother, but isn't the Flea. Doesn't talk. Has no talking role, but is one of the students. This way there's gonna be some Mexicans in there. You—you want to have a mix of students for, , the entomologists. You gotta have a couple of Mexicans—couple of Mexicans. A Mexican woman, especially. And she's not to look like Flores. She's to have v—. Although Flores has long brown hair, this woman, ummm, has to, ummm, has to—I don't know, she has to be more political-looking. A stronger kind of look. More like Joan Baez. Sort of a “Baez-look”. That's what I want, a “Baez-look”. And she can sing, and so can the professor.

Ummm, you know, so I never really —I never described the music. But I think it has to be a “techno-Bolero”. I think it needs to be a “techno-Bolero”. “Techno” is still “in”. But it has to be a love song. It has to be about love. But it's produced in a “techno”—and the singing. The singing is—is—the, uh, “Joan Baez” character and the professor do some of the singing. But the singing is never on camera.

Now, I haven't really told you how you know, what the look —I want—I do *not* want a Cali—southern California tv “*Rockford*” kind of look at all. Ummm, the kind of—of—of look for the shots I I mean, more of a—of a combination of a sort of Altman look and “*Chinatown*” look, with some real good long shots, you know, and—but, uh, remember This is a simple tale of corruption and narcissism. The—the—the, uh, There's a contrast in the narcissism between the—the, uh, Berkeley professor —but you see, these all three self-important men.

And there are all these self-important women. One of the Stanford professor, is just a “knock-out”, sort of a brunette. And one a blonde, and — they look like Hollywood actresses. They’re to look just like Hollywood actresses, but they go to Stanford.

And, ummm, white—white we know about them? Ummm . so, then . So the three men, now(?)—. You know, in movies one of the things that’s very hard to do is: you really have to like all the characters. And, in Altman’s case, he’s very good at—at this. You know, you wanna like them, and the Flea has this real charm, and he does have some concern for Las Flores. He does take care of her. So he, in some sense, is good, and —the tragic part is that he has to use her to pick up the canisters from the beach.

Oh, I never told you about, how—how it ends. Well, it ends *maybe* it ends when he discovers—when they discover two things: they discover her bringing in the canister and then earlier they had found the wreckage of the [fath^{er}]er of Flores’s boat on the beach. And then they—they confront her with that wreckage that they have found, and she recognizes it’s her father’s boat, and that’s how they “turn” her. She doesn’t even know what’re in the canisters. But that’s how they get her to turn against the Flea, is they show her the wreckage. And, , now, maybe the movie ends there. ’Cause it’s obvious how it ends. or, if you want a little more action, you know, we can, uh, put in this where they actually set up the bust.

But remember, these are all men, who’re—who have a great deal of self-importance. No, one minute, Patti.

Now, these men are all self-important, but in very different ways. The Flea is vain and absolutely sees himself as—I mean, he really loves Flores because her innocence and her uncorruption. He’s not—it’s not that he’s trying to become rich , but I—I have to think about, you know, what is the motivation of a—of a corruptor. I mean, he’s sort of like those kind of guys that have to control their women. That they have this sort of dependent narcissistic personality; they mean well, but they really don’t have enough, uh, development that —they don’t control—.

Awright, so, —I mean, the Flea has this kind of personality that’s dependent , and super-independent [*sic*], ’cause he doesn’t really have any alliances, but he’s looking for “true love”, like many of these sort of dependent narcissistic guys. And, the problem I don’t —

And, so there have to be some shots of the Flea, you know, uh, oh, how does he dress? He dresses very well. Just a hair bit overdone for Mexico. Now, there’s the question of does he have hat? And, uh, and, when we meet ’im. we have to have an establishing shot that, uh, —I think what we want is, he’s in a very high-class sort of restaurant talking to one of the people who’s going to procure for [*sic*], but you don’t know that that’s what he’s doing. But you see him, and , You see him and that’s what he’s doing. And he speak really good English. And Flores speaks English because she’s a very good student. And, ummm, and

Now, so, you have to—you have to. There has to be a scene where, ummm, where Flores rejects him a little bit. And he has to demonstrate his true love for her . I think. I don’t know how to do that. But I—you have to show the Flea a little bit more you have to show him in a little bit more positive light, because you—you—you— He has to have a tragic [climb(?)]. Really it’s not that he loves this young girl, and that he is going to help her, because that really—I guess that’s enough: that he really is generous with her; and he likes her; and he takes care of her. But the tragic flaw is his gambling. And, ummm, no one smokes. No smoking anywhere in the movie. And, ummm,

Now, let me talk about the, uh, the beach. The beach has these ice plants. This is, remember, with the entomologist—has sort of these ice plants, and these flowers. And, you see—you see the fleas in the flowers. And, they are sort of, like, jumping a lot. They really look sort of bizarre. Even for fleas.

Now, we have to motivate how the canister breaks open. But it’s clear that the father is killed basically for no reason, because he’s just coming to fish, and he comes upon this but doesn’t really understand it. So, the people —Now, the drug-runners from Mexico , —I think we wanna use American fishermen I don’t know. I surely don’t want to use Mexican fishermen, as the drug-runners. I—I really would like to use —but, you see, that wouldn’t—I don’t know how to do it, because who would?—I guess they have to be fishermen leaving from Mexico.

PMM: [Why don’t you get (?)] Americans(?) designed, uh,—disguised as Mexicans?

MLC: Whaddaya mean? How could they disguise [chortles] ?

PMM: Well, because they're like, you know

MLC: *How* could they go down there and not sss—? They—they—they have to —The question is, how are they smuggling, you see, without attracting attention? No, the only way you can do that is by making them Mexican fishermen. But they're from a different port than Ti—than the one—this guy goes out from Tijuana. I don't even know if there's a port in Tijuana. It doesn't matter. If there isn't, we'll make one up. It's not the issue.

Ummm, Now, the other thing is the Stanford professor, when we first see him, he's, ummm, —we walk into class with these students and he's in the front No, he's just finishing up the lecture, and all the girls come crowding up to the front to talk to him. And then they walk back across the campus to his office, and, again, I want this as a continuous, Robert-Altman-type shot, where you leave the lecture hall and you walk with him, you know?

PMM: I have no idea what that's about. Did the female release her pheromones?

MLC: Now, as you hear his lecture, the guy is just a *stunning* orator. I mean, he is like Robert Redford in his ability or—or Martin Sheen in his ability to, h, attract an audience. He is *so* charismatic, and you know he's a philosophy professor, and what he's lecturing on is morals.

PMM: [laughs] Of course!

MLC: And corruption.

PMM: And that's what would be Brazilian.

end of side A

side B

So, he's lecturing — now, remember the Flea is trying to resist corruption, but knows no other way of life. I mean, he really doesn't want to be corrupt. The Flea is forced into corruption, by his nature—the fact that you cannot work, and we—we have to —maybe he's, , maybe he has serious learning disabilities. , I don't—we have to we have to make him resist. He has to always be resisting corruption, but, living in a corrupt world as a corrupt man.

So, one of the scenes, you see him turning down drug deals, and you see him turning down chances to pimp young girls. So, when we first meet him, he's turning down things he doesn't approve of. And, , so, you see that he—I don't know how we—we have to see that there's conflict as to the corruption, not just that he loves Flores, who is absolutely pure, and, ummm.

Ummm, I'd like this to be shot where there are no—there's nothing that establishes *when* this takes place. So, if you see a vehicle, you only see part of it. There's no reason, other than for the boats, to—to ever sss—be able to tell *when* this takes place. Ummm, so, the guy—we have to nix the computers, or we have make them so you really cannot tell what they are. So,

So, uh, I'm writing this in Rio. And today is Sunday, August 10th, and it's around, uh, one o'clock here.

Thursday 1:05 p.m.

He has a graduate student. And his graduate student is, ummm—he has a couple of graduate students. And he's very helpful with them. And, um, I think the problem—we—we want—if the clever observer could notice, they have to see cocaine at Stanford, maybe in a newspaper , you know, the—whatever the Stanford newspaper is. the headline of somebody ummm Maybe we don't even want to establish that. Maybe ummm, maybe there are a lot of visitors to his office, and—and he's —he hands out papers. He's handing back exams. And what you don't see is that in the exams, really, are—is the cocaine.

Now, don't make the Berkeley professor wear boots. Please! He's—he—but, he is scruffier. But don't make 'im wear boots. I mean, uh you know, don't make a caricature . He's a real human being.

And, ummm, So they're all involved in—in these moral issues—the professors—from very different perspectives. And the Flea, . , has a conversation with—you know he sits, uh, uh, at this bar. It's a very nice bar. And, ummm, he's having this discussion with the bar owner about corruption. Ummm, . So, you know, the movie has to proceed at multiple levels. All the talk is about the problems of corruption, what it does to people. uh, the Berkeley guy talks about the evolution of human moral judgment, and how it's totally lacking in fleas. And why he was attracted to the study of fleas, you know, ummm, So, whatever talk there is

And the entomology guy's gotta have, ummm, some journals. And he has to talk about evolutionary psychology, and the role entomology has in leading to sociobiology of(?) Wilson—and there has to be a picture of Wilson in the office with the—with the professor has to You have to see it. But, it—it cannot be too prominent.

Now, you know, every scene has to have a motivation. And what you find here is that he has collected these people. They have at one time the innocence of Flores and the goodness of Flores, but with tremendous curiosity, whereas Flores is quite frightened by the world and very dutiful. They are extremely excited. And in a way the Flea is worldly.