

THE STOOPER

Written by

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THE STOOPER

FADE IN.

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

LARRY, a white male in his 40s waits at a Bus Stop on the far-west side of Manhattan. He wears a worn parka and stupid-looking stocking cap. Tell-tale signs of a cheap haircut stick out from under the cap. The weather is bitter cold. His breath is visible as he stamps his feet. A couple other BUS RIDERS mill around. Finally, a bus arrives and Larry glumly steps on board.

INT. BUS (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Larry sits listlessly in the back of the bus, blandly observing dismal scenes along the cross-town ride to the east side: a BAG MAN sleeping on steaming grates, a COUPLE arguing outside a sleazy bar, a DRUNK vomiting into a curb side garbage can.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The bus pulls to the curb in front of a Diner. Larry exits the bus and walks in. Another grim night ahead.

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Larry dons an apron and a pair of yellow rubber gloves and heads to a sink overflowing with dishes. Larry zeroes in on a gruesome plate of half-eaten chili with several cigarette butts sprouting out of it. Disgusted, Larry scrapes the chili into a garbage can, plunges the dish into the sink and commences scrubbing.

Busboys PABLO and ARTURO enter the kitchen through the swinging doors, each carrying a tub of dirty dishes.

PABLO

I think I gonna puke.

Arturo shakes his head in commiseration.

INT. DINER - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

An OLD WOMAN struggles with a vicious nosebleed. Blood drips all over her stack of pancakes. Two WAITRESSES repeatedly hand her napkins which she shoves into her face. Pablo gags.

END FLASHBACK

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - NIGHT

PABLO

(To Larry)

How cum a old mu-fuckin' grifo like you work here in this shitty diner? You fuck a boy in the ass and go to jail maybe?

Larry continues scrubbing, refusing to look at his tormentor.

LARRY

No, I did not fuck a boy in the ass, Pedro. Shit, I'm the one that got fucked in the ass. After fifteen goddamn years I got the boot from a pretty nice job at that big publishing company in Jersey.

PABLO

What'd you do? Steal a paperclip?

LARRY

C'mon. Give me just a modicum of respect for fuck's sake. I never accused you of being a stupid wetback. Not to your face, anyway.

(beat)

Publishing went online and business went south. My lovely wife left me for a Navy Seal she met on a dating site. And now I live in a dump infested with even more rodents than this diner.

Larry raises a dirty glass in a mock toast.

LARRY (CONT'D)

So I say "fuck the internet."

PABLO

And all can do is wash dishes?

LARRY

You got something better?

PABLO

Fuck yeah. Me and Arturo gonna start hangin' at Yonkers Raceway. Pick up tickets. Make big money.

LARRY

The hell are you talking about?

Arturo places a tub of dirty dishes next to Larry.

ARTURO

Pick up horse race tickets. Dudes throw away lots of winners. We gonna pick 'em up and make money.

LARRY

Get the fuck outta here.

PABLO

Hey man. My cousin find a ticket last week. Win 250. Easy. Happen all the time.

Intrigued, Larry stops washing.

LARRY

Damn, Pedro. Seriously? Your cousin, does he find enough winners to make it worthwhile?

PABLO

Hell yeah. And my name is Pablo, not Pedro, old man. You got Alzheimer's or something?

Paying no attention to Pablo, Larry stares into space. Could this be for real? After a moment he reaches into the tub of dishes and grimaces upon discovering a stack of barely-eaten pancakes covered in blood.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

As snow flurries flutter from the sky, Larry waits for the bus. After a moment the bus arrives and Larry climbs aboard.

EXT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Larry ambles haltingly to the front door of the OTB PARLOR. After a moment he musters the courage to go inside.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

The OTB Parlor is a beehive of activity. BETTORS sit around studying tip sheets, watching action on TV screens mounted on the walls. In the background is the SOUND of the familiar "Call to the Post" trumpet fanfare.

Larry slowly walks into the crowd. He spots a STOOPER crawling on all fours picking up discarded race tickets from the floor. Bettors step around the stooper, bitching at him.

INT. OTB PARLOR/WINDOW - DAY

Larry waits on line behind a BETTOR at the window. Childlike, he ogles his new environs. Although the Bettor in front of him departs Larry hesitates. A BET-TAKER waits impatiently for Larry to step forward.

BET-TAKER  
You wanna place a bet?

LARRY  
Uh, yeah. Four horse to win.

BET-TAKER  
What race?

LARRY  
Uh, what are my choices?

BET-TAKER  
Really? OK, the fifth race at Gulfstream is about to start. You wanna bet on that?

LARRY  
Super. Four horse to win at Gulfstream. Fifth race.

Larry pulls two dollars from his wallet and puts the money on the counter. The Bet-Taker sweeps the money and passes Larry a ticket. Larry drifts into the crowd.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Larry watches the TV screen where the fifth race at Gulfstream Park is about to commence. A shot of the starting gate appears. The gate opens, the horses rumble out, and in a matter of seconds Larry's number four horse stumbles and falls, throwing the jockey. Larry sighs, crumples the ticket and tosses it on the floor.

TV coverage of the end of the race indicates the number seven horse wins. Suddenly some ruckus across the room breaks out. Larry turns to catch sight of an irate STOUT MAN in a loud sport coat and fedora, a moist cigar hanging from his mouth.

STOUT MAN  
Goddamned seven!

Larry looks up at the TV screen and sees a replay showing the seven horse nipping the nine horse by a nose. It pays \$8.40. Larry looks back at the Stout Man just in time to see him crumple his ticket and toss it on the floor in disgust. He addresses a COMPANION.

STOUT MAN (CONT'D)  
 Sonofabitch Bockelman - I should  
 kill him and his whole retarded  
 family. Bastard guarantees me the  
 nine horse wins. Fuckin' scumbag.

The Stout Man makes a step toward the window, but freezes when he hears a report over the intercom from an ANNOUNCER indicating that the seven horse has been disqualified which means the nine horse wins after all.

STOUT MAN (CONT'D)  
 Motherfucker!

The Stout Man drops to his knees and frantically searches for the ticket he discarded moments earlier. Larry looks up at the TV screen at the revised race results. The nine horse pays \$103.20.

STOUT MAN (CONT'D)  
 Where the fuck is that ticket!?

Larry reaches down and scoops up a handful of discarded tickets from the floor and walks to a machine labeled "self checker." He scans tickets through the machine.

INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

Inside a smoky Poker Room six men sit around a hexagonal poker table. They are in order VIC, RAY, EYEBROW, CARL, DON and DOUGIE. Vic, a tall, dark-haired, well-dressed man in his late-40s shuffles a deck of cards and places it on the table next to Dougie who sits to his right. Dougie sips from a glass of booze and appears inebriated.

VIC  
 Seven card stud, low in the hole is  
 wild.

Dougie is unaware of his pending duty.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 (To Dougie)  
 Cut the cards, for Chrissake!

Dougie flinches and belated cuts the cards. Vic deals two cards face down and one card face up to each player.

Eyebrow receives an ace. He is called "Eyebrow" because his swarthy eyebrows have grown together, forming a unibrow. Vic gets a nine of hearts.

EYEBROW

Fifty blind on the bullet.

Eyebrow tosses \$50 in chips into the pot. Carl and Don fold their cards. Dougie sees the bet. Vic and Ray also see the bet. Vic deals again.

VIC

A trey to Ray, a King to the man with the unibrow, my nine of clubs to Dougie. Dealer gets a fuckin' jack-off. Ace-King bets.

EYEBROW

Ace-King bets a buck.

Eyebrow throws \$100 in chips into the pot.

DOUGIE

Fuckin' A. I fold.

VIC

Couldn't fold last time, asshole?

Chastened, Dougie turns his cards over.

VIC (CONT'D)

OK. Here we go.

Dougie rises haltingly.

DOUGIE

I gotta get some air. Take a piss. Deal me out for awhile.

Vic deals cards to Ray, Eyebrow and himself. Dougie walks haltingly toward the back door.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Dougie staggers into the darkness. He steps into garbage, slips and falls on his face. Knocked out cold.

INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

The game becomes a big showdown between Vic and Eyebrow. Eyebrow goes all in on his full house only to lose to Vic who shows four Jacks.

RAY

Nice hand, Vic. A real sleeper.

Shocked, Eyebrow fumbles with his cards. Vic reaches for the chips in the pot.

VIC

We good?

Eyebrow fumbles some more, hoping to form a better hand with the wild cards, then resigns, tossing his cards on the table.

EYEBROW

Yeah. Next time be kind enough to apply some Vaseline first.

Everyone laughs as Vic rakes the chips. Vic lights a cigarette and looks around the room.

VIC

Where the hell is Dougie?

CARL

Lookin' for soul food and a place to eat?

Don and Eyebrow imitate the "do-do-do's" of the colored girls on Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side".

DON

He looked sick if you ask me. Probably called it a night.

VIC

Nah, he wouldn't leave before me. Go outside and see what the fuck he's doin', Ray.

Ray stands and walks to the back door. Ray is a beefy goon who speaks with a German accent. He bears facial blemishes and a deformed ear, remnants of past altercations.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Ray's breath is visible in the dim light of the Alley. He hikes the collar of his coat, takes a few steps then stops in his tracks after spotting a lump on the ground that looks vaguely like a body. Ray slowly advances toward the lump and bends down. It's Dougie.



INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

Ray bolts in through the back door.

RAY

Get out here! Dougie's down.  
Blood's coming out his ear!

Everyone jumps up and rushes out the door into the Alley. Vic runs ahead and sees his sidekick Dougie writhing on the pavement, bleeding and convulsing.

VIC

Shit. Call an ambulance, Ray!

Ray runs off. Dougie vomits a bloody dollop. Eyebrow, Carl and Don all turn back to the door in disgust. Eyebrow gags.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

The Paramedics place Dougie's limp body onto a gurney and load it into the back of the Ambulance. Vic climbs aboard.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Ambulance tears down the street, lights flashing and siren blaring.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

The Paramedics roll the gurney through the automatic doors into the EMERGENCY ROOM. A DOCTOR and two NURSES accompany the gurney as it rolls along. Vic walks briskly behind the gurney, and then he sidles up next to Dougie who remains unconscious. A RECEPTIONIST intercedes.

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, you can't go in the ER. Let  
me escort you to the waiting room.

Vic glances back and sees a Nurse pull a curtain around Dougie's gurney.

VIC

Listen, I gotta--

RECEPTIONIST

--Come this way sir.

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Vic sits on a spare chair reading a magazine. The Doctor pokes his head into the room.

DOCTOR  
You can see your friend now.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Vic and the Doctor walk together across the open floor of the Emergency Room toward the area where Dougie, bare-chested, sits upright in bed, propped by a couple pillows.

DOCTOR  
Your friend suffered a pretty nasty blow to his face. He has a concussion and he chipped two teeth. He should be able to leave in a couple of hours, though.

The two men walk a few steps more, then the Doctor abruptly stops and faces Vic.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
(Hushed)  
The police might want to talk to you. They think your friend was beaten up. He was groggy and kept asking "where's my money"? I just wanted you to know that.

Vic nods appreciatively. The two men resume walking until they reach Dougie. A POLICEMAN stands off to the side.

VIC  
Hey, Dougie-boy! How's the head? That'll teach ya for takin' my nine of clubs.

The Policeman takes notice.

VIC (CONT'D)  
The Doc here says you can go home soon. He checked your head and told me there's nothing in there.

Vic laughs. The Doctor and Nurse roll their eyes.

DOUGIE  
(Hoarsely)  
Where's my shirt?

The Policeman approaches Vic. Vic puts a cigarette in his mouth.

POLICEMAN

Sir, do you have a moment? I'd like to ask you a couple questions.

VIC

What about?

POLICEMAN

Do you have a moment?

VIC

Anything for you, officer.

Vic strikes a match, but when he notices the disapproving expression of the Policeman, he shakes it out. Vic and the Policeman walk out of the ER together. The Doctor also departs. Dougie addresses the Nurse.

DOUGIE

Do you know where my shirt is?

NURSE

We cut it off so we could inspect for other wounds. We thought you were stabbed in the chest.

Dougie strokes his jaw gently.

DOUGIE

Jee... fuck!... Jesus. I must look a goddamn mess. So where's my shirt?

NURSE

It's in the medical waste bin.

DOUGIE

Are you kidding me? How can I get it back?

The Nurse shakes her head smugly. Suddenly some commotion O.S. The Nurse looks toward the Emergency Room entrance and sees a CARDIAC VICTIM clutching his chest and stumbling through the automatic doors into the ER. His frantic WIFE accompanies him.

NURSE

Get some rest, sir. Looks like I've got a cardiac to attend to.

The Nurse leaves briskly. STAFF hustle the Cardiac Victim to a bed next to Dougie's. Dougie closes his eyes and is on the verge of nodding off when he hears a NOISE. Opening his eyes he sees MADDIE, a shapely janitor with long, braided, Belgian-chocolate hair bending over a waste basket. The skirt of her uniform is hiked above the backs of her knees revealing a tasty portion of her toned legs. Her sexy ass waggles.

DOUGIE  
Whatcha looking for, nursie?

Maddie spins around startled.

MADDIE  
Pardon me, sir. I'm not a nurse.  
I'm with the hospital's  
environmental services department.

Dougie leers at her legs. Maddie tugs on the hem of her uniform.

DOUGIE  
Well, nice to meet you, Miss  
Environmental whatever.

MADDIE  
Maddie. My name is Maddie.

DOUGIE  
I'm Dougie. Hey, I bet you could  
help me. I'm looking for my shirt.  
The nurse told me they cut it off  
and threw it in the medical waste  
bin. Do you think you could get it  
back for me?

MADDIE  
Ewww. I don't think so. Why do  
you want it anyway? The hospital  
will give you a clean tee shirt  
before you leave.

DOUGIE  
Maddie, I had \$600 in the pocket of  
my shirt. I'll give you 20 bucks  
to get it back for me.

Maddie balks.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)  
C'mon, fifty, then. I'd hate to  
have that much money tossed out  
with some dude's gall bladder.

MADDIE

Alright. Let me see what I can do.

Maddie turns away and crashes into Vic who has returned from the waiting room. Vic accidentally cops a feel.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Excuse me, sir.

Maddie scoots away.

VIC

No need to apologize, doll. It was totally my fault.

Vic stares at Maddie from behind, admiring her curvy figure. He licks his lips. When Maddie leaves the room Vic turns his attention to Dougie.

VIC (CONT'D)

Fuckin' cop thought I mighta beat your ass. Y'know what I told him? That anyone can see I didn't, 'cause you look too damn good.

DOUGIE

Sounds familiar.

VIC

So, pal, feelin' better? Ready to get back to the game?

DOUGIE

(Grinning weakly)

I don't know Vic. Don't you think they broke up by now? Anyway, all my money is in the garbage can.

Vic shakes his head at the bad luck of his loser friend. Wearing latex gloves, Maddie returns with a small trash bag containing a soiled, blood-stained green polo shirt.

MADDIE

I got your shirt from the waste bin, sir. Don't tell anyone. I could lose my job.

She extends the bag to Dougie, who snatches it quickly.

DOUGIE

You're the best, Maddie.

Dougie reaches into the bag, peels off a moist, pinkish \$50 bill and hands it toward Maddie. Vic swats Dougie's arm, causing him to drop the money on the floor.

VIC

Are you out of your fuckin' mind?  
You make this beautiful girl  
rummage through the garbage for  
your ripped up shirt, and you offer  
her blood-soaked money? Do you  
want her to catch Ebola or whatever  
disease you have? And fifty?  
Seriously, what a cheap bastard you  
are, Dougie.

Vic reaches into the pocket of his sport coat and pulls out a sizable roll of hundred-dollar bills, peels off two and hands them to Maddie. She put up her hands in mild protest.

MADDIE

I can't accept that, sir.

VIC

Call me Vic. You can't accept it?

Vic peels off another hundred.

VIC (CONT'D)

Can you accept this, doll?

MADDIE

Well, OK. You're really too  
kind... Vic.

Maddie takes the money and tucks the bills into her bra, secured within the tight confines of her cleavage.

VIC

That's more like it, Maddie.  
Wha'dya do for fun?

Vic and Maddie stroll slowly to a spot in the ER away from Dougie's bed. Although Dougie cannot hear what they are saying, it is clear that they are hitting it off. Dejected, Dougie watches as Vic hands Maddie a piece of paper. She looks at it, smiles and puts the paper in her pocket.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

The sun is just rising. His head bandaged, Dougie shuffles along the sidewalk toward Vic.

VIC

I gotta go look for the Coon sometime this week, Dougie. I don't suppose you wanna come along with me and Ray to OTB. Stake out the joint for that spook bastard?

DOUGIE

I'd like to Vic, but--

VIC

--I know, I know.  
(Pats Dougie's head)  
Your poor head hurts.

Ray pulls the Mercedes to the curb.

DOUGIE

If you really--

VIC

--Just get in the car. It's been a long night.

As Dougie climbs in the back seat, Vic inspects a tiny scratch on the fender.

VIC (CONT'D)

Fuckin' A.

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

The ceiling lights in the OTB Parlor flash twice. Larry rises from kneeling on the floor. He holds several scraps of paper in one hand and grabs his back in pain with the other. Larry glances up at a clock on the wall. It's 11:00.

LARRY

Fuckin' A.

Holding a broom and dustpan, FREDDIE the janitor sidles next to Larry and nods toward the scraps of paper in Larry's hand.

FREDDIE

You done with those, Larry?

Larry stares for a moment at the scraps of paper, then he stuffs them into his pocket.

LARRY

Nah, Freddie. I guess I'll check 'em tomorrow.

INT. OTB PARLOR/COATROOM - NIGHT

Larry retrieves his worn parka from the coat rack. He reaches into his pockets with both hands and then quickly yanks them out. Dumbfounded, he stares at his hands which are slathered in gooey mayonnaise. After the initial shock Larry glances around the OTB Parlor. He spots Vic and Ray across the room looking back at him, laughing hysterically. Larry sullenly walks to the RESTROOM.

INT. OTB PARLOR/RESTROOM - NIGHT

Larry washes his hands in the sink. Freddie enters the restroom carrying a toilet brush and a bottle marked "lye".

FREDDIE

You still here?

LARRY

Somebody put mayonnaise in my coat.

FREDDIE

No shit? Man, what kind of sick fuck would do that?

LARRY

I'll give you half a guess.

FREDDIE

How come he picks on you so much? What'd you do to deserve his shit?

LARRY

He's just a mean motherfucker.

FREDDIE

I know he's mean. But he seems to really enjoy busting your balls.

LARRY

Maybe it was that time I got in his way and he got shut out of making his big-time bet.

FREDDIE

Maybe it's because you put up with his shit without complaining. You ever think of that?

LARRY

Yeah, well...



Freddie walks to the far end of the Restroom and steps into the last stall. Larry scrubs his hands in the sink.

FREDDIE (O.S.)  
 Hey, remind me to flush the toilets when I'm done, OK? Last week I forgot to flush. Some dude dropped a deuce and splashed lye on his hemorrhoids. I almost got fired.

LARRY  
 (Chuckling)  
 Sure thing.

INT. OTB PARLOR/RESTROOM - NIGHT

Vic walks into the restroom. Larry stops chuckling. Vic locks onto Larry's face in the mirror and smirks.

VIC  
 You jerkin' off in the sink, Ajax?

LARRY  
 Uh, no, Vic. Just washing my hands.

VIC  
 Y'know, you are one filthy bastard, Ajax. Stronger than dirt.

Larry looks down at his hands, ashamed. Vic gets uncomfortably close to Larry and washes his hands as well.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 I can never figure you stoopers out. You spend the whole fuckin' day pickin' up tickets off the floor, right? And outta garbage cans, for Chrissake. And what do you clear? Ten bucks? Less? Do you ever find a winner? Jesus, what a waste.

Vic dries his hands with a paper towel, balls it up and throws it into Larry's face. Vic struts out of the restroom. Freddie steps out of the stall where he had been hiding. He and Larry exchange somber expressions.

INT. MERCEDES - NIGHT

Vic's Mercedes is parked at the curb in front of MADDIE'S BUILDING, a tenement on the Lower East Side.

Vic is in the front seat; Ray is in the driver's seat. Vic adjusts his tie in the side mirror and steps out of the car. He's dressed in a snazzy suit and polished shoes.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Vic looks up at the tenement building.

VIC  
 What a dump.  
 Cover me, Ray. I'm goin' in.

Vic approaches the building as though he were on a SWAT team.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING/FOYER - NIGHT

A circular fluorescent light on the ceiling buzzes. Dead bugs hang in webs around the light. Dozens of doorbells are aligned on a panel on the wall. Vic surveys the names next to the buttons, and finally rings one.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 (Over intercom)  
 Hello. Is that you, Vic?

VIC  
 (Into intercom)  
 Sure thing, doll. Hurry down.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING/STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Maddie is at the top of the staircase. The number "6" is painted on the wall behind her. She is barefoot and dressed in a stylish black cocktail dress. Maddie holds a pair of classy-looking high heels by the back straps. She descends a few steps of the staircase. Later, at the base of the staircase Maddie slips on her heels and walks into the foyer.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING/FOYER - NIGHT

Vic lets out a slow wolf-whistle upon first sight of Maddie.

VIC  
 Wow! You look like a million  
 bucks, Maddie. Good enough to eat.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Vic puts his arm around Maddie's waist and the couple walk toward Vic's Mercedes. Ray waits by the open rear door. Maddie and Vic climb in the back seat. Ray shuts the door and runs around to the driver's side. The Mercedes lurches from the curb and blends into the dark evening.

INT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

MADDIE

This is a beautiful car, Vic. Is it a Cadillac?

VIC

Cadillac? Hell no. It's a Mercedes. I quit drivin' American cars after Ay-rabs cut off the oil and showed what a shitty job Detroit was doin'.

(beat)

German engineering - that's the stuff, Maddie. Ray knows, don't you Ray? Ray's a full-breed Kraut. His grandfather was some badass Nazi, ain't that right, Ray?

RAY

Waffen SS.

VIC

Right. Waffen SS. A real badass. Anyway, Maddie, I hope you like a good steak, 'cause I got reservations at this killer place uptown.

MADDIE

Uh... steak? I'm sort of a non-meat eater, Vic.

VIC

Izzat so? Well they serve seafood too, but they hate to do it. Don't worry, you'll find something good to eat, I promise.

EXT./INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Mercedes pulls curbside in front of the RESTAURANT. Ray gets out and opens the door for Vic and Maddie. Vic and Maddie walk into the restaurant. He addresses the MAITRE D'.

VIC  
Schuyler. Reservation for two.

MAITRE D'  
Certainly, Mr. Schuyler. It's nice  
to have you back with us again.

VIC  
Listen, we're gonna have a drink at  
the bar first.

MAITRE D'  
Certainly, sir. We'll seat you  
whenever you're ready.

Vic leads Maddie to the bar. They sit on stools next to each other. The BARTENDER lays out cocktail napkins. Maddie and Vic order drinks.

VIC  
So, Maddie. You look fantastic.  
Great legs. Do you work out?

MADDIE  
Not really. I guess climbing six  
flights of stairs every day keeps  
me in shape.

VIC  
Wow. Six floors? No elevator?

Vic lights a cigarette.

VIC (CONT'D)  
How come you work in that hospital?  
You shouldn't be doin' janitor  
work. It's beneath you.

MADDIE  
Well, I'd rather be painting and  
having my art hung in the big  
galleries, but this is New York  
City. Artists must suffer, don't  
you know?

VIC  
Suffering is for losers, Maddie.  
It ain't dignified.

The Bartender brings the drinks. Vic raises his glass.

VIC (CONT'D)  
To dignity.

Maddie clinks her glass with Vic's and they both sip their cocktails.

MADDIE

Mmmm. This is the best Cosmo I've ever tasted.

VIC

You stick with me, babe, and you'll sample the best of a lot of things.  
(Sips drink)  
You been livin' in the City long?

MADDIE

I moved to Brooklyn from Vermont a couple years ago. Then a few months ago I moved to the Lower East Side for inspiration and to get closer to the art scene.

VIC

You're not gonna get too close to the art scene workin' in the ER. And you won't get any inspiration either, unless you're lookin' to be one of those fucked up artists like Andy Warhol.

MADDIE

You don't like...  
(Takes a sip)  
...uh, what do you do, Vic?

VIC

Investing. Private equity. Leveraged buy-outs. That sort of thing. Mostly borin' stuff to the idiots who don't understand it.

MADDIE

Do you live in the City?

VIC

Hell, yes. Is there some other place? I got a swell co-op near Gramercy Park. I'll show it to you when the night is over. And you won't have to walk up a single flight of stairs. How about that?

MADDIE

Sounds wonderful.

VIC  
You don't have to get up early  
tomorrow, do you?

MADDIE  
No. I usually work third shift.

VIC  
Good. I wanna take you to this  
jazz club downtown after dinner. A  
buddy of mine plays xylophone, but  
his band doesn't go on until 1.  
(Finishes his drink)  
I'm starvin'. Let's get our table.  
You like steak, right? They have a  
huge Porterhouse for two.

Maddie hesitates.

VIC (CONT'D)  
(To Bartender)  
Hey pal, tell 'em we're ready to  
take our table now.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Vic and Dougie walk into the OTB parlor.

VIC  
That Maddie is a hot number, man.  
What a body. Good thing you're a  
slow mover, Doug, otherwise she  
mighta glommed onto your sorry ass  
instead of makin' the wise choice.

Dougie looks slightly wounded by the remark.

VIC (CONT'D)  
I didn't slip her the pork, though.  
Can't act like a horny teenager on  
the first date.

Vic looks around the OTB parlor.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Get me a pastrami sandwich. I  
gotta find that Coon. Elusive  
motherfucker.

Dougie departs for the FOOD COUNTER. Vic scans the room,  
eventually locking eyes with a muscular BLACK MAN, the  
elusive "Coon". The Black Man is shaken to see Vic. Vic  
smiles and points a trigger finger at him.

When the Black Man makes a move toward a back door Vic starts after him but stumbles over Larry who is stooping on his hands and knees. Larry grabs his hand in pain and looks up at Vic.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Goddamn you Ajax! Get out of my fuckin' way.

Vic boots Larry in the ass which sends him flat to the floor, then looks across the room just in time to see the Black Man running out the back door. Agitated, Vic addresses Larry.

VIC (CONT'D)  
You stupid fuck!

Vic walks around Larry's prone body making sure to step on his hand again. He heads toward the Food Counter where Dougie is waiting with sandwiches and two cups of hot coffee.

INT. OTB PARLOR/FOOD COUNTER - DAY

DOUGIE  
How'd you make out Vic? The Coon pay up?

VIC  
Fuckin' Arnold Schwarzenegro got away thanks to Ajax the cockroach.

Dougie hands a sandwich to Vic who bites into it.

VIC (CONT'D)  
(Chews food)  
Pathetic piece of shit. Why don't you go over there and make Ajax feel unwelcome, Doug?

Dougie walks toward Larry carrying his large cup of coffee.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Larry is down on his knees flipping through a handful of race tickets. He senses Dougie's presence and looks up.

DOUGIE  
Find any winners there, Ajax? A million dollar trifecta maybe? I bet you already know who's gonna win the Kentucky Derby next year.

Just as Larry starts to stand, Dougie dumps hot coffee on his back. Larry screams. Freddie looks over from the sidelines.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)  
 Damn. Sorry about that Ajax.  
 These crappy cups - they really  
 should put handles on 'em.  
 Good luck stoopin', asshole.

Dougie walks back toward Vic who grins approvingly.

INT. OTB PARLOR/FOOD COUNTER - DAY

Vic chomps on his sandwich.

VIC  
 Nice touch. Real grade school.

DOUGIE  
 Next time I'm gonna rub a ticket  
 with dogshit and put it someplace  
 where he'll pick it up for sure.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Larry walks to a self-checker machine. Freddie meets him.

FREDDIE  
 You OK?

LARRY  
 Yeah, yeah. Fucking bastards. I  
 swear, Fred, I'm gonna fuck up Vic  
 one of these days. I don't know  
 how, but I have to do something.

FREDDIE  
 Be careful what you say, man.  
 Someone might hear you. Vic'll sic  
 the Nazi on your ass. Let you know  
 what Auschwitz felt like.

LARRY  
 I have to do something. It ain't  
 right, Freddie.

Larry angrily scans some tickets through the self-checker machine.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
 I'm gonna think of something. You  
 can count on it.



INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY (LATER)

Vic retrieves a NEWSPAPER AD from his pocket.

CLOSE-UP - NEWSPAPER AD

Which reads "ASIAN TEMPTATION NY - Super Hot Asian Girls Come to You for Decadent Pleasure!"

BACK TO SCENE

Vic places a cellphone call.

VIC  
(Into phone)  
You got any new talent?  
(beat)  
Lien, huh? Fresh?  
(beat)  
Nice. Perfect. You know where to  
send her. Have her there at 8.

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SOUND - DOORBELL

Vic opens the door. LIEN, a lithe Asian tart stands in the hallway. She wears a short skirt and a faux-furry jacket.

VIC  
Mmmm. Come in doll. Let me take  
your coat. Make yourself at home.  
What're you drinkin'?

Vic hangs up the coat. Lien scans Vic's place - nice-sized apartment, tastefully furnished, view from the window of rows of similar-looking classic brownstones.

LIEN  
Scotch and soda, if you have it.

VIC  
Do I look like the kind of guy who  
can't summon up a scotch and soda?

Vic walks toward the kitchen

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vic opens the cupboard which contains a bottles of liquor, some sharp tools, a blowtorch, and a length of rope.

Vic removes a bottle of scotch and the rope. He pulls on the rope a bit as if testing its strength.

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lien mills around the apartment, checking out Vic's books and magazines.

VIC (O.S.)  
Here you go, babe.

Vic walks in from O.C. and hands one of two drinks to Lien.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Damn, you oriental chicks stiffen  
my giblets.

Lien smiles uncomfortably. Vic raises his glass. Lien does as well, and Vic clinks it.

VIC (CONT'D)  
You Chinese?

LIEN  
Vietnamese.

VIC  
Nam, huh?  
(beat)  
Say it.

LIEN  
Say what?

VIC  
You know. Full Metal Jacket.  
C'mon, say it.

LIEN  
Oh, yeah. Sure. Okay.

Lien struts around Vic like the chick in "Full Metal Jacket".

LIEN (CONT'D)  
Me so horny. Me so horny. Me  
love you long time. You party?

Vic grabs Lien roughly.

VIC  
Hell yeah, I party.

Vic reaches under Lien's short skirt.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING/FOYER - DAY

Vic presses the button to Maddie's apartment.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 (Over the intercom)  
 Hello?

VIC  
 (Into intercom)  
 Maddie, it's Vic. Buzz me in.

SOUND - BUZZER

Vic opens the door and steps inside.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING/STAIRCASE - DAY

Vic humps his ass up some stairs, then stops and bends over, hands on his knees, puffing and wheezing.

INT. MADDIE'S BUILDING - DAY

As Vic arrives on the 6th floor he bends over again, hands on his knees. He breathes heavily for a few seconds, then walks to Maddie's apartment door and KNOCKS. Wearing a long tee shirt, Maddie opens the door, and hugs and kisses Vic.

MADDIE  
 Vic! What a nice surprise. I  
 thought you were going to Atlantic  
 City today. C'mon in.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Vic doffs his coat and tosses it across a threadbare chair. He continues to breathe hard.

VIC  
 I am going... to AC today. I came  
 by... to see if you... wanted to  
 come along.

MADDIE  
 Really! I'd love to. I've never  
 been to Atlantic City.  
 (Frowning)  
 Wait. Shit. I have a shift at the  
 hospital tonight.

VIC

Oh, for Chrissake. Fuck that stupid job, Maddie. Quit.

MADDIE

That's easy for you to say. Who's going to pay the rent on this palace?

She sweeps her arm in dramatic fashion.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I can't quit, Vic.

VIC

Yes you can. I said so. Listen, I don't like the idea of you hangin' around sick fuckers, and gettin' soylent green all over your hands. I'll pay your fuckin' rent. Maybe you can take one of those art classes you keep squawkin' about.

MADDIE

Are you serious, Vic? Oh my God! That would be fantastic!

Maddie wraps her arms around Vic's neck and kisses him. Vic reaches back to unlock Maddie's grip.

VIC

Whoa. Are you tryin' to kill me, babe? I just humped my ass up six flights. You and your fuckin' walk-up building. I could drop like a stone. My heart could explode. You want that?

MADDIE

Oh dear. No. Please, sit down. Relax. Can I make you a drink?

VIC

I'll do it. Just hurry up and get dressed. And call that fuckin' hospital and put in your notice.

MADDIE

OK, Vic.

Maddie heads for her BEDROOM. Vic sizes up her figure and absentmindedly adjusts his cock.

VIC  
Damn, you remind me of Hyapatia  
Lee.

MADDIE  
Who?

VIC  
Hyapatia... ah, nevermind. Hey, I  
gotta use the head. Hurry up so we  
can hit the road.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Vic drops his trousers and sits on the toilet. He reaches into a magazine rack and begins scanning pages.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Maddie pulls a suitcase from under the bed and throws some clothing in it. She sheds her tee shirt and gets dressed.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Vic sits on the toilet paging through the magazine. Done crapping, he stashes the magazine in the rack. As he stands up the ad falls out of his pocket behind the toilet bowl.

Vic finishes with the toilet paper, flushes the toilet and walks out of the bathroom.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Vic paces around the apartment. Maddie finally comes out of her bedroom. She looks hot in tight jeans, her Belgian-chocolate hair swept back. Vic is visibly impressed.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The Mercedes departs into traffic.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

View of Atlantic City skyline brightly lit at night.

INT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Vic and Maddie sit in the back seat. Ray drives.

VIC  
What'dya think Maddie?

MADDIE  
It's beautiful. I'm so excited.

VIC  
I'm gonna have to do a little  
business when we get there. I'll  
give you some money. You can play  
the slots.

MADDIE  
I've never gambled before. I hope  
I don't lose the money.

VIC  
Don't worry. Beginners always win  
big.  
(beat)  
When I'm done with business we'll  
hook up with some of my associates.  
You'll like 'em. We always have a  
killer time.  
(beat)  
Um, by the way, have you ever heard  
of bukkake, Maddie?

MADDIE  
No, I don't think so? Is it some  
kind of sushi?

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Larry picks up a crumpled ticket and studies it for a moment. He's about to throw it in the garbage can but changes his mind and stuffs it in his pocket. The ceiling lights flash twice. Larry glances up at a clock on the wall. It's 11:00.

LARRY  
Fuckin' A.

Larry walks to the self checker machine and starts scanning tickets, throwing them one by one in the garbage can. An OTB WORKER walks by.

OTB WORKER  
Closing time, son.

Larry scans the last ticket and throws it in the can. Just about to walk away empty-handed, Larry reaches into his pocket and pulls out the crumpled ticket. He smooths it flat and scans it. He smiles when he sees it's a winner

INT. OTB PARLOR/WINDOW - NIGHT

Larry hands the wrinkled ticket to the Bet-Taker who checks it out. Then he produces money from his cash drawer.

BET-TAKER  
 Congratulations. \$700.

Damn, not bad. The Bet-Taker pays out bills one at a time. Larry scoops the bills and shoves them into his sock. As Larry walks toward the OTB exit he passes Freddie.

FREDDIE  
 See you tomorrow, Larry.

LARRY  
 Nope, I'm taking the day off.

EXT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Larry watches the traffic on the street and the hubbub of people passing on the sidewalk. He walks toward the bus stop, hesitates and then turns and hails a cab.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maddie sits with her friend LISA. Each one holds a glass of white wine.

MADDIE  
 I'm not sure where things are headed with Vic. He's a generous guy, money-wise. He buys me clothes and jewelry, and we go to nice restaurants. He even pays my rent so I could quit the hospital.

LISA  
 Quite the sugar-daddy. So what's the problem?

MADDIE  
 Nothing, I suppose. I'm taking an art course at NYU now.

LISA

OK, let me ask again: what's the problem?

MADDIE

Well, things seem to be changing. He doesn't like being alone together much anymore. Whenever we go out it's always with his buddies and their brassy girlfriends.

LISA

Shocking. Let me guess. You get stuck with the brassy chicks while the boys play with their toys.

Lisa makes a masturbatory gesture.

MADDIE

Sort of. We went to Atlantic City and after making me wait forever in the hotel room, Vic called me down to the bar. When I got there, he and his buddies were debating which strip club to go to.

LISA

Nice.

MADDIE

I protested - mildly, believe me - and Vic got kinda pissed off at me. I decided it was better to go along, but it wasn't my thing. Even the music sucked.

(beat)

Have you ever heard of bukkake, Lisa?

LISA

Um, yeah.

MADDIE

Well I hadn't. Vic mentioned it in passing a couple times. I didn't even know how to spell it, but I eventually Googled the meaning.

LISA

You think your boyfriend wants you to let his buddies, y'know, do that? That's pretty extreme. I suppose he wants to videotape it too. What're you gonna do?



MADDIE

I don't know. I just want things to go back the way they were when we first started going out.

LISA

You and every other woman in the world. Seriously, the next time he makes a plan, tell him you're only interested in a quiet night out alone for a change.

MADDIE

It's too late. He's dragging me to a football game next week.

Maddie drinks her wine sullenly.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Larry wakes up. He sits on the edge of the bed and rubs his face. Larry's piece-of-shit Apartment is furnished with cheap chairs, a card table and spare decoration. Larry proceeds to sit at the card table by the window which faces a sooty brick wall. Holding the \$700 winnings, Larry looks glumly at the pile of delinquent bills sitting on the table, and then at the money, and back again at the bills. He shoves the money in his sock, puts on his new parka, a price tag dangling from the sleeve, and exits.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Larry walks in the drizzle down the bleak avenue and turns a corner. He stops in front of a BODEGA where he spots a stand-up sign which reads: "The New York State Lottery jackpot is now \$21 million!" Larry enters the Bodega.

INT. BODEGA - DAY

The Bodega is tiny yet packed with groceries and sundries. Twangy Asian-sounding music PLAYS in the background. Larry steps to the counter and addresses a KOREAN CLERK.

LARRY

Give me 700 Lotto tickets.

The Korean Clerk speaks with an accent.

KOREAN CLERK

Go away. I too busy for bullshit.

LARRY

It's not...  
 (Imitating the accent)  
 ... bullshit.

Larry takes the money from his sock and plops the wad on the counter. The Korean Clerk responds with a look of amazement.

KOREAN CLERK

Okey-dokey sir. What numbers do you want to play?

LARRY

Just make 'em all quick-picks. My carpal tunnel is a bitch.

The Korean Clerk punches some keys on the Lotto machine. It spits out one ticket after another.

INT. BODEGA - DAY (LATER)

The Korean Clerk retrieves the last group of tickets from the Lotto machine and places them atop a pile sitting on the counter. He squares the stack.

KOREAN CLERK

That is all 700 of them.

Larry gives the money to the Korean Clerk who counts it and puts it in the register. He stuffs the stack of Lotto tickets in a paper bag and hands it to Larry.

KOREAN CLERK (CONT'D)

Goodest of luck to you, sir.

Larry slaps a \$10 bill on the counter.

LARRY

Here's a little something for your effort. Have a drink on me.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Larry picks up a few utility bills from his table. He sits on the edge of his bed and flips through the stack of Lotto tickets. Feeling a case of buyer's remorse he shakes his head at his impulsive behavior. Larry returns the tickets to the paper bag. He lifts the mattress and slides the bag underneath, then dons his parka and walks out glumly.

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Larry stands at the sink piled high with dishes. Trying hard not to laugh, Pablo walks up with a tub full of plates and drops them on the table.

PABLO  
Listen up. Some ruco just dropped  
a cagadota in the men's room.

LARRY  
What the fuck is a cagadota?

PABLO  
The floor, shit all over it.

LARRY  
Get fuckin' Arturo--

PABLO  
--Arturo off tonight.  
(Laughing)  
You gotta clean it.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Larry emerges through the kitchen's swinging doors pushing a bucket of water with a mop handle. He rolls the bucket to the MEN'S ROOM, opens the door and discovers to his horror that the floor of the stall is covered in runny shit.

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ashen, Larry runs in through the swinging doors and rummages in a broom closet. He addresses Pablo.

LARRY  
Jesus H. Christ Why didn't you  
tell me a rhino escaped from the  
zoo and stopped in to take a dump  
before skipping town?

Larry pours Lysol onto a large towel and wraps it around his face which makes him look like "Larry of Arabia".

INT. DINER/MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Larry walks into the Men's Room wearing rubber boots and rubber gloves. He barricades the doorway and heads toward the messy stall, gagging behind the towel as he mops.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Towel draped over his shoulder, Larry trudges from the Men's Room pushing the bucket of water with the mop.

VIC (O.S.)  
Izzat you, Ajax?

He knows he shouldn't look over but he can't help it. He sees Vic, Ray and Dougie sitting in a booth.

VIC (CONT'D)  
What are you doin' here? Don't fuckin' tell me you work here.

Vic clambers noisily out of the booth and approaches Larry who is terrified stiff. A few PATRONS stop eating and look toward the commotion. The DINER OWNER glances up from his stool by the cash register and hustles over to the impending altercation. He steps between Larry and Vic.

DINER OWNER  
What seems to be the problem, sir?

VIC  
Problem? I'll tell you my problem, Jack. This dirtbag workin' in a place that serves food.

DINER OWNER  
I don't underst--

Vic turns his attention toward the onlooking Patrons and points at Larry.

VIC  
--This piece of shit crawls on the floor at OTB for a livin'. He's a fuckin' rat, pickin' up tickets and butts and all sorts a shit.

Larry nervously shakes his head at the accusations.

VIC (CONT'D)  
He's a filthy bastard. The guy has no business workin' in a restaurant.  
(Gazes at the Diner Owner)  
Even in a shit hole like this one.

The Diner Owner gulps. He scans the floor and watches some Patrons put down their utensils and start to get up.

DINER OWNER  
Please everybody. Wait. Listen to  
me. This is all news to me.

Like a commanding officer the Diner Owner faces Larry.

DINER OWNER (CONT'D)  
Larry, please get your things and  
leave. You're fired.

Larry skulks sadly into the kitchen.

INT. DINER/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Larry hangs his soiled apron on a hook and dons his parka as Pablo and COOKS look on. Larry extends his hand to Pablo who decides against shaking it. Then after an awkward moment Larry shoves his hands in his pockets.

LARRY  
Nice knowin' ya, Pedro.

Larry shuffles out the back door.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Seen through the plate glass window of a LIQUOR STORE, Larry buys a bottle of booze. He exits the store holding a brown paper bag, removes a bottle and slugs half of it down.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Accompanied by a glass of beer and a shot of brown booze, Larry sits in a seedy, no-frills neighborhood BAR. The BARTENDER is the only other person in the place. Larry fiddles with the shot glass. Anxious to close, the Bartender noisily stashes glasses on the shelf. Larry lifts the shot glass and takes a tiny sip.

LARRY  
So I... I picks up the ticket,  
y'know from the floor, cause like I  
said, I'm a fuckin' stooper. You  
know, right? I tol' you that,  
right?

BARTENDER  
Yeah, yeah.

LARRY

An' the fuckin' ticket's got like this slime or somethin' on it. Smear'd on it. It gets on my fingers, y'know? Now I shoulda know'd better but I sniffed my fingers. I took the fuckin' bait 'cause I'm a goddamned loser! I took the bait an' sniffed my fingers and got a nice fuckin' whiff of dogshit. So then I look over an' see Vic the Prick laughin' his ass off.

(beat)

That ain't right. Is that right?

BARTENDER

(Checks his watch)

Depends.

LARRY

But I'm gonna get the fucker back. You just wait and see.

The Bartender smirks at Larry's bravado. Larry downs the rest of the booze and chases it with the beer.

LARRY (CONT'D)

So then I--

BARTENDER

--Listen, man. I'm closing. Finish up.

LARRY

Sorry. Can I have just one more?

BARTENDER

Go home, man. Get some sleep.

Larry tumbles off the stool and falls to his hands and knees. He crawls around on the floor, laughing.

LARRY

Gotta be a winner here somewhere.

INT. MEADOWLANDS STADIUM - DAY

Vic, Maddie, Ray, Dougie, RAY'S GIRLFRIEND, DOUGIE'S GIRLFRIEND, Eyebrow and EYEBROW'S WIFE sit in choice seats at the football game pitting the Cleveland Browns and the NY Jets. (Actual game: October 27, 2002).

The scoreboard displays Browns 24 Jets 21 with 16 seconds left on the clock. The teams line up in field goal formation with the Jets preparing to kick. Fans stand on their chairs. The Browns block the kick ending the game in the Browns' favor. Vic jumps up from his seat and cheers.

VIC

Hoo-haw. Browns win! Browns win!  
 (To Eyebrow)  
 You owe me ten grand, pal. They don't call the Jets gangrene for nothin'.

Jet fans spew insults and throw cups down on Vic and his guests.

RAY

Let's get the hell out of here, Vic.

EXT. MEADOWLANDS PARKING LOT - DAY

Vic and his guests stand around a van in the MEADOWLANDS PARKING LOT, drinking and talking. The van is festooned with Cleveland Browns logos and team colors. Cars inch slowly toward the exit. Two JETS FANS walk by the van.

JET FAN #1

Go back to Ohio you brown piece of shit.

Jet Fan #1 high-fives his buddy. Other fans nearby laugh.

VIC

Your New Jersey Jets went down today my friend.

Jet Fan #2 gives Vic the finger.

JET FAN #2

Fuck you, tourist.

Vic raises his glass to Jet Fan #2 as if toasting him.

EYEBROW

Jesus, Vic. Did you have to turn the van into a Macy's Parade float. We're catching serious shit.

VIC

Just drink your drink. All you should be worryin' about is how you're gonna pay me my ten grand.

Jet Fans spew insults and throw stuff at Vic and the others.

RAY  
Let's go, for Chrissake.

Vic and his guests pile into the van.

EXT. MEADOWLANDS PARKING LOT - DAY

Vic's rented van, snarled in a big traffic jam, lurches slowly out of the Parking Lot as angry Jets Fans throw beer cups and bottles at it.

EXT. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

The van pulls in front of a STEAKHOUSE. Vic and his guests get out and step onto the sidewalk. A VALET takes the keys from Ray and drives off. Vic and his guests proceed to the entrance of the Steakhouse. A menagerie of raw meats hangs in a cooler, displayed to pedestrians through a window. Maddie peers in and turns glumly to Eyebrow's Wife.

MADDIE  
I guess he forgot again that I  
don't eat meat.

INT. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

The Steakhouse is crowded, noisy and smoky. Ancient WAITERS in white shirts, black ties and long aprons crisscross the floor carrying trays of sizzling steaks. The clientele consists mostly of men in suits. PATRONS drink at the bar.

Vic and his guests sit at a big round table covered with a white linen tablecloth, each man next to his woman. They have already been served drinks, and now peruse huge menus. At the next table over, six BUSINESSMEN in dark suits eat steaks, talk, curse and laugh loudly.

VIC  
Listen my friends. I'm buying.  
(beat)  
Well, ultimately it's Eyebrow who's  
buying.  
(To Eyebrow, laughing)  
You owe me ten grand, pal!

Ray and Dougie laugh along. Eyebrow smiles wanly as Eyebrow's Wife looks at him with narrowed eyes. Maddie trolls the menu.



MADDIE

Do they serve anything besides  
steak in this place?

VIC

Oh stop whinin', will ya? Order a  
fuckin' potato.

(To the others)

They have a killer Porterhouse, and  
the filet mignon is fuckin' huge.  
It's bigger than the football the  
Browns shoved up the Jets' ass.

Maddie rolls her eyes and snaps the menu shut.

VIC (CONT'D)

I knew my Brownies would come  
through in the end. Right, Mr.  
Eyebrow?

EYEBROW

Shit yeah, Vic. You know how to  
pick 'em. And would you stop  
calling me--

RAY

--Hey, that reminds me. How'd you  
make out with the Breeder's Cup  
yesterday, Vic? Please don't tell  
me you had big money on Volponi.

VIC

Of course. Paid off sweet too,  
man. 43 to 1.

EYEBROW

Are you shitting me? No one I  
talked to had any money on him.

DOUGIE

I lost a shitload on War Emblem. I  
can't believe he ran eighth.

VIC

That's because you're an asshole.

DOUGIE

I'm an asshole for betting on the  
winner of the Kentucky Derby? And  
the Preakness?

VIC

Listen, moron, you'd do better if you pulled your head out the horse's ass and looked at him from the outside. After War Emblem nearly fell down at the Belmont, I lost all confidence.

DOUGIE

Yeah, you're probably right, Vic. I guess I just can't pick 'em.

RAY

Shit, Doug, I bet Ajax makes more at the track than you do.

Vic laughs and lights a cigarette.

RAY'S GIRLFRIEND

Who's Ajax?

INT. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

Vic speaks while his guests eat their meals.

VIC

So anyways, Ajax picks up the ticket - 'cause Dougie put it right by the checker machine where the cockroach hangs out - and he notices somethin' smeared on it. He looks around the room, y'know, to see if anyone's watchin'. Then he sniffs his fingers. You shoulda seen his face.

(Laughs hysterically)

He sucked in a big whiff of dogshit. I almost pissed my pants.

Everyone but Maddie laughs along loudly. One of the Businessmen sitting at the table next to Vic's leans over.

BUSINESSMAN #1

That's fucking hilarious. Sorry, we couldn't help overhearing. Classic.

Vic nods at the favorable reception from the next table over.

BUSINESSMAN #2

Even funnier than the mayonnaise-in-the-coat-pocket treatment.

DOUGIE

Hey Vic, remember the time I dumped  
a cup of hot coffee on Ajax's back.  
Damn, you shoulda seen him howl.  
Just like a scalded dog.

Vic smirks and looks aside, somewhat embarrassed for Dougie. The others who had been laughing loudly tone down their enthusiasm following Dougie's tale. The Businessmen turn back to the conversation at their own table. An uncomfortable silence, then the guests resume eating. Maddie exhales an audible sound of disgust, stands abruptly, tosses her napkin on the chair.

MADDIE

I'm going to the ladies' room.

Maddie walks off in a huff. Vic turns to the Businessmen.

VIC

Her picture's in the dictionary  
next to the word "cunt".

EXT. KLIT KAT KLUB - NIGHT

The van disgorges Vic and his guests outside what appears to be an abandoned warehouse. There are no signs or windows. The street is dark and the sidewalk empty. The guests are a bit sloshed.

EYEBROW

What's this place, Vic?

VIC

Oh, just a private nightclub. They  
hide it pretty well.

EYEBROW

Yeah. You'd never know it was a  
nightclub from the outside. What's  
it called?

VIC

Klit Kat Klub.

EYEBROW'S WIFE

Kit Kat Klub? I've heard of that.

RAY

It's Klit.

Ray luffs his tongue like Hannibal Lechter.

RAY (CONT'D)  
With a Kluh.

Overhearing this, Maddie steps close to Vic.

MADDIE  
This isn't a strip club is it Vic?

VIC  
No, it ain't a strip club, Maddie.

Vic presses a button on the wall next to the dented steel door. A slot in the door at eye-level slides open. Vic holds a card in front of the slot. The door opens revealing a huge BOUNCER. Pounding music BLASTS from inside the club. Vic presents his card to the Bouncer.

BOUNCER  
Nice to have you back, Mr. Schuyler. How many guests are with you tonight?

VIC  
Seven. Give me a table with a good view of the action.

Vic hands the Bouncer a few big bills.

BOUNCER  
Thank you sir. Right this way.

Vic walks into the dark club in lock-step behind the Bouncer, followed by his guests.

INT. KLIT KAT KLUB - NIGHT

MADDIE  
You said this wasn't a strip club.

VIC  
It's not. It's a dance studio. Now be a good girl and enjoy yourself.

The Bouncer nears the dance floor and hands the group off to a tall BLONDE in a teddy. She escorts the four couples to a table right next to the elevated dance floor.

MADDIE  
Can't we sit along the wall, Vic?  
I don't want to be so close.

VIC  
Cool it, Maddie. I can't see the  
action from back there.

Maddie looks to the other women in the party for some moral support but receives none. Vic and his guests settle into the seats at the table at the foot of the dance floor. Three STRIPPERS dance and gyrate on the platform to loud disco music. Eyebrow gazes at the surroundings.

EYEBROW  
Nice place, Vic. Real swanky.

Two WAITRESSES wearing just a G-string and ultra-high heels, bring two liquor bottles to the table along with some mixers and eight glasses. Vic peels off five one-hundred dollar bills and hands them to one of the Waitresses.

VIC  
Take good care of me, sweetheart.  
(To everyone)  
This is on Eye... Earl.  
(To Eyebrow)  
You owe me ten grand, pal.

EYEBROW  
I know, I know. You don't have to  
keep reminding me.

Stripper #1 thrusts her pussy in the face of a DRUNK MAN sitting along the opposite side of the elevated dance floor. He hoots and waggles his tongue. She takes him by the hand and leads him onto the stage. Stripper #1 and Stripper #2 wrap their legs around the Drunk Man's face. He struggles. His bachelor party BUDDIES cheer and holler.

RAY  
Get a load of that shit, will ya.  
They're gonna kill that guy.

DOUGIE  
Not a bad way to go.

DOUGIE'S GIRLFRIEND  
I read somewhere they're going to  
put pole dancing in the Olympics.

EYEBROW'S WIFE  
Really?

RAY  
Get the fuck outta here. Where did  
you read that?

DOUGIE'S GIRLFRIEND

I don't remember. I'm pretty sure.

RAY'S GIRLFRIEND

They made that swimming thing - oh, what is it called?

DOUGIE'S GIRLFRIEND

Synchronized swimming?

RAY'S GIRLFRIEND

Yeah, that's it. They made that into an Olympic sport. Pole dancing looks harder than that.

Stripper #2 hangs upside-down on the pole supported only by her legs. Her face is pressed against Drunk Man's crotch.

INT. KLIT KAT KLUB - NIGHT (LATER)

A Waitress removes empty glasses and vodka bottles from Vic's table while another pours a bottle of champagne into new glasses. Maddie notices Vic whispering in the Waitress's ear. Vic lifts a glass in a toast, and everyone but Maddie lifts up a glass as well.

VIC

Champagne for my real friends and real pain for my sham friends.

All but Maddie clink glasses. Vic addresses Maddie.

VIC (CONT'D)

What's your problem?

MADDIE

I've got a stomach ache.

VIC

Well, that's your fault for eatin' just a fuckin' potato for dinner.

MADDIE

Can we go? I'm sick of this place.

VIC

Calm down. We'll leave soon enough. Have some champagne. It'll give you a headache - make you forget your stomach ache.

Maddie sits back in her chair, disgusted.

Stripper #1 and Stripper #2 come over to Vic's table. One hops on Ray's lap, the other on Dougie's. They both proceed to perform an erotic lap dance. Ray's and Dougie's girlfriends giggle and exchange whispers.

VIC (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Maddie - I didn't buy one for myself.

MADDIE

How magnanimous of you, Vic. A real gentleman.

Vic sneers and walks away. Maddie slouches back and paws through her purse. Vic returns to the table, followed by STRIPPER #3 who looks a lot like Maddie - same color and length of hair, similar body type. Vic indicates with a nod of his head to the Stripper that Maddie is her target. Stripper #3 steps directly in front of Maddie who at first doesn't notice her presence. Just as Maddie glances up, Stripper #3 straddles Maddie's lap and presses her breasts into Maddie's face. She performs a lap dance on Maddie who struggles unsuccessfully to get out from under her. The Drunks across the floor hoot and holler. Stripper #3 plants a gooey kiss on Maddie's lips and finally releases her. Maddie stands and bolts for the exit. Vic gets up, runs after her and grabs her by the arm.

VIC

Where're you goin', babe?

MADDIE

Take me home, you bastard!

VIC

No-can-do. I got guests to attend to. Now, be a good girl and come back to the table. We'll leave in a little while.

MADDIE

Go fuck yourself.

VIC

Funny you should say that. That's what it looked like you were doin' back there.

Furious, Maddie turns and heads for the door. Drunk, Vic takes a feeble step after her, then stops and shuffles back to the table. With both hands he takes Stripper #3 by the waist and pulls her onto his lap.

EXT. KLIT KAT KLUB - NIGHT

Vic and his guests pour out of the Klit Kat Klub. They are visibly inebriated. Dougie throws up in a storm drain. Dougie's girlfriend kneels next to Dougie, her arm draped over his shoulder as he pukes his guts out.

VIC

Take him home, will ya? I don't want his sick ass in the van.

Eyebrow sidles next to Vic and the two shake hands.

EYEBROW

Vic. Thanks, man. It was a sincere sensation. I think me and the wife will just take a cab home. No need for you to drive out of your way.

(beat)

And, yes, I know. I owe you ten grand.

Vic chuckles and pats Eyebrow on the back. Eyebrow and Eyebrow's Wife stumble into a cab waiting at the head of a line of other cabs waiting by the curb.

VIC

Ray, get the fuckin' van.

Ray walks O.C. Vic takes out his wallet and looks inside. He fiddles with some papers, then thrusts the wallet back in his pocket. He fumbles in the pockets of his pants and coat in futile search for something.

SOUND - HORN HONKING

Vic walks to van.

INT. VAN (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

VIC

Drive slow.

Ray advances the van as Vic scans the sidewalk out the window. Soon he spots a red newspaper box.

VIC (CONT'D)

Pull over.

Ray pulls over to the curb and Vic jumps out of the van.



EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Vic opens the newspaper box, pulls out a paper, opens to back page. He scans the page and when he finds the ad he tears it out, stuffs it in his pocket, and climbs into the van.

INT. VAN (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Vic makes a cellphone call.

VIC  
 (Into phone)  
 Can you send me Lien?  
 (beat)  
 She's available? Outstanding. She  
 knows where to go.

Vic hangs up the phone.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 Take me home, Ray. I got some  
 business to attend to.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maddie walks into her apartment. She drops her keys and purse onto a chair, and walks into her bathroom.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maddie strips off her clothes. She turns on the bath water. As she tests the temperature of the water she glances over toward the toilet. She sees a folded piece of paper behind the toilet bowl, picks up the ad and reads it.

MADDIE  
 That son-of-a-bitch.

She rips the ad angrily, throws the pieces into the toilet and flushes them down.

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Vic tosses a towel to Lien who sits naked on the bed. Her face is wet.

VIC  
 Here. Wipe off your face.

Lien catches the towel and wipes her face. She massages her wrists which are reddened. Ropes dangle from the bed posts.

Vic buttons his shirt.

VIC (CONT'D)

You were great, my little chinky-chink. I wanna introduce you to some friends. You don't care if we record some action, do you?

LIEN

Um--

Vic walks out of the bedroom.

VIC (O.S.)

--Great. Now, I'm sorry to say, you have to get your chinky ass out of here. There's a sweet-roll for you on the table.

Lien quickly slips on her slacks and shirt, grabs the roll of money off the table, and hustles to the door.

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT - DAY

Vic spansks Lien's ass as she walks by. When she's gone he dials a number on his cellphone.

VIC

(Into phone)

What're you doin'? You naked?

INTERCUT with Maddie's Kitchen. She stirs a pot on the stove and cradles the receiver with her shoulder.

MADDIE

(Into phone)

No, Vic, I'm not naked. I'm making dinner and I look like shit. I didn't sleep at all last night. And I'm still really pissed about that stripper thing.

VIC

(Into phone)

Ah, c'mon, Maddie. Don't be sore.

MADDIE

(Into phone)

What do you want?

VIC  
(Into phone)  
Well, I just finished up some  
business. Now I'm comin' over to  
tend to your needs.

MADDIE  
(Into phone)  
Don't. I'm not up to it.

VIC  
(Into phone)  
Don't say don't, Maddie.

MADDIE  
(Into phone)  
What's the big business you had to  
conduct, anyway? Returning the  
rental van?

VIC  
(Into phone)  
Funny. Look, just have some dinner  
ready for me. I'll be over in a  
half hour.

Vic hangs up the phone.

MADDIE  
(Into phone)  
No. Don't.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Maddie hangs up the phone. She pours some more rice into the  
pot and continues stirring.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY (LATER)

Maddie dishes food from a pot onto a plate. Vic walks in,  
stamps his feet on the rug.

VIC  
Fuckin' cold out there.  
(beat)  
Damn, that smells good Maddie.

Vic throws off his overcoat.

MADDIE

I didn't want you to come over,  
Vic, but knowing you are German and  
would come over anyway, I made that  
mussels dish you like.

VIC

You're a doll.

Vic sits at the table. Maddie returns to the kitchen.

VIC (CONT'D)

Ain't you eatin'?

MADDIE (O.S.)

I'm not hungry anymore.

VIC

Not even a potato?

MADDIE (O.S.)

Very funny.

VIC

Look, don't be sore about the lap  
dance. It was just a joke.

MADDIE (O.S.)

I don't want to talk about it.

SOUND - RUNNING WATER AND CLINKING OF DISHES O.S.

Vic digs into the plate of mussels.

VIC

These mussels are frickin' great.  
I don't know how you do it.  
They're even better than the ones  
at that joint in the Village. Not  
a hint of shit in the sauce.

MADDIE (O.S.)

Gee, thanks Vic. It's amazing the  
results you can achieve when you  
actually clean the food first.

Vic stuffs a roll in his mouth.

VIC

(Muffled by bread)

Hey, you wanna hear a funny story?  
Me and Ray were at the OTB a few  
weeks ago. There's this stooper  
there I call 'Ajax'.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Maddie looks up from washing dishes. She stands idly in front of the sink wearing yellow rubber gloves as the water runs into the sink. She holds a dish in one hand and a soapy sponge in the other.

VIC (O.S.)

I call him Ajax 'cause he's stronger than dirt, y'know, 'cause he has to be. 'Cause he's a stooper who grovels on the filthy floor. Anyways, Ajax is always gettin' in my way. The fucker crawls around pickin' up tickets and makin' people step around him. Selfish bastard.

Maddie squeezes the sponge in anger.

VIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So I tell Ray, "Fuck him up a bit - make him wish he didn't come here".

SOUND - SLURPING FOOD O.S.

VIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Well, Ray's a natural son-of-a-bitch. His grandfather was a Nazi, y'know. Not one of those regular army guys but a real Jew-burner. So Ray gets some of those Hellman's mayonnaise packets and squeezes 'em into the pockets of Ajax's moth-eaten parka.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

VIC

You shoulda seen the look on the fucker's face when he stuck his hands in his pockets. All fulla mayo. He looked like he just reached into a horse's asshole. I nearly pulled a muscle from laughing so hard.

MADDIE (O.S.)

That's just cruel. Why do you pick on this poor Ajax guy? What did he ever do to you?

Vic drops his knife and fork onto his plate and wipes his mouth with a napkin.

VIC

Are you serious? Ajax is a dirty fuckin' parasite. He deserves the shit I lay on him. He's lucky I don't fuck him up for real.

Vic spears a mussel and inserts it in his mouth, masticating the rubbery amorphous blob.

VIC (CONT'D)

I don't like your attitude, cunt?

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

MADDIE

Cunt!? Did you just call me a "cunt"? You - you're the one, you're the one who's a cunt! All the guy does is pick up some tickets off the floor. And what's wrong with your memory? You told that same lame story last night? It wasn't funny then either.

Vic storms into Maddie's kitchen.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

And making your pet monkey Dougie spill hot coffee on the guy--

VIC

--That's enough out of you, bitch!

Vic closes in on Maddie but she stands firm. He towers over her.

MADDIE

That's right, Vic, I'm a bit--

Vic clocks Maddie in the jaw, dropping her to the floor like a rag doll. The dish in her hand shatters on the tiles.

MADDIE'S P.O.V. - Vic standing over her.

Darkness encroaches from the edges of the screen. He looks like a ghostly apparition.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maddie regains consciousness and finds herself on the kitchen floor precisely where she had fallen. Pieces of the broken plate impale her forearm. She sits up slowly, gingerly touching the side of her head to assess the damage. She carefully plucks shards from her arm.

SOUND - TELEVISION PLAYING O.S.

Maddie stands up, braces herself on the handle of the oven door. Water continues to run in the sink. She splashes some on her face, then she pulls a long chef's knife from a wooden block on the counter and shuffles out of the kitchen.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Facing away from the kitchen, Vic sits on the couch watching TV. Maddie steps quietly toward Vic from behind. A floorboard creaks and Vic looks over his shoulder at Maddie. He doesn't notice the knife.

VIC

How was your nap?

Vic turns back to watching TV.

MADDIE

Go to hell.

VIC

Listen, babe. You gotta learn to behave yourself. I'm the lord of the manor, king of the castle, if you get my drift. I'm payin' the fuckin' rent here in case you forgot. But I know you're sorry, so I forgive you.

Vic stands and steps toward Maddie.

VIC (CONT'D)

Wha'dya say we go to that movie you wanted to see - Fat Fuckin' Greek Wedding, or whatever it's called.

Maddie brandishes the knife.

MADDIE

I said, go to hell. I want you out of my house and out of my life.

VIC  
 (Laughing)  
 Ooo - look at you. Who are you  
 supposed to be, Mrs. Bill the  
 Butcher?

MADDIE  
 Laugh all you want, Vic. Give me  
 back my keys and get out of here.  
 And don't ever call me again. I'm  
 through with you.

VIC  
 Bitches like you aren't through  
 with me until they leave in a box.

MADDIE  
 Mr. Big Talk. Get your ass out of  
 my house!

Maddie assumes an offensive position with the knife.

VIC  
 Cut the drama, Maddie. Give me the  
 goddamned knife right now.

Vic reaches for the knife.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 Give it to me, Maddie.

Maddie makes an inelegant, unbalanced sweeping motion with  
 the blade and slices Vic's outstretched thumb. Vic wraps the  
 fingers of his left hand around the wounded digit.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 Jesus Christ! Are you out of your  
 fuckin' mind!?

Maddie looks on momentarily stunned. Vic runs past Maddie  
 into the kitchen as Maddie rushes to the door. She fumbles  
 with the lock.

VIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 You're dead bitch! Dead!

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vic runs water over his bloody thumb.

SOUND - DOOR OPENING O.S.



VIC

Go ahead and run away. I'll find you and fuck you up good for this, bitch. You can count on it.

SOUND - DOOR SLAMMING SHUT O.S.

Vic continues to nurse his wound under the faucet.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD STORE - DAY

Hungover and looking like shit, Larry stands next to a self-checker machine for Lotto tickets. He holds the thick stack of 700 Lotto tickets and blandly scans one after another. Each time he scans a ticket, he morosely tosses it in the garbage can. This goes on for a few scans.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD STORE - DAY (LATER)

The trash can is full of spent tickets. There are just a few tickets left in his hand. Now Larry is antsy about suffering a total loss.

LARRY

Please, please, please. Let me win something back. Just a few bucks.

Larry scans a ticket, looks at the screen, then angrily crumples the ticket.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Damn it!

A YOUNG CLERK and some CUSTOMERS look over at Larry. Unconcerned about the sensitivities of others in the store, he continues to scan.

LARRY (CONT'D)

C'mon baby, c'mon.

(beat)

Damn it!

(beat)

Damn it!

Just then, Larry stops scanning tickets. He looks at the self-checker machine which indicates he's a winner.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Yes! About effin' time!

Larry walks to the counter. The Young Clerk cracks a paper tube of coins like an egg into his cash register.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I got a winner here. I just hope  
it covers some of my investment.

The Young Clerk takes the ticket and runs it through the  
Lotto machine on the counter.

YOUNG CLERK

8, 15, 16, 33 and 36. Five out of  
six. That's a winner, alright.

(beat)

Holy shit! 70,580 dollars.  
Congratulations, man. Did you buy  
it here?

LARRY

(Stunned)

Huh? Oh, uh, some Korean bodega on  
Ninth Avenue.

(beat)

How much did you say?

YOUNG CLERK

70,580 dollars. Y'know, I can't  
cash that for you here. It's too  
much. You gotta deal with the  
Lotto people. They'll rape you for  
taxes, but what the hell. It's  
still big time money.

Larry fingers the ticket lovingly, practically in a trance.

LARRY

Taxes... Raped... Right.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Larry sits at his table admiring his winning Lotto ticket.  
Then he pulls a pad of paper and a pen from the drawer and  
writes down some to-do's like "pay off bills, get new  
fillings, move South".

Larry picks up the Lotto ticket again and admires it some  
more. Then he holds it closer to his face and really  
examines it. He rubs his thumb on the surface.

LARRY

What a shitty print job.

Larry furrows his brow, then after a moment he picks up the  
pen and with a devious smile on his face writes another to-do  
on the pad of paper: Fuck over Vic the Prick!!!

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SOUND - BANGING ON THE DOOR

MADDIE (O.S.)

Lisa. You there? Let me in! It's  
Maddie. Please! You in there?

LISA

Hang on. I'm coming.

Lisa looks through the peephole in the door and sees Maddie's bruised face. She unlocks and opens the door.

LISA (CONT'D)

Maddie. What's wrong? What  
happened to your face?

Maddie rushes in.

LISA (CONT'D)

It's Vic isn't it?

Maddie nods.

LISA (CONT'D)

What happened?

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)

Maddie and Lisa sit at the kitchen table.

MADDIE

I'm afraid to go back there. He  
said he'd kill me, and I believe  
him.

LISA

You gotta call the police, Maddie.

MADDIE

It wouldn't do any good. Vic would  
send one of goons after me. I  
wouldn't stand a chance.

LISA

So what're you going to do?

MADDIE

I honestly don't know.

LISA

Vic doesn't know who I am, does he?  
I can't have him and his dago  
hitmen coming here.

MADDIE

Oh, no. I've never mentioned your  
name.

(beat)

He's German, not Italian.

LISA

Whatever. Tomorrow, I'll go with  
you to your apartment. You can  
grab some of your stuff.

MADDIE

Oh, I don't know about that. What  
if Vic is waiting there for me?

LISA

Well, that would be bad. But  
what're you going to do? Abandon  
your apartment and all your stuff?

MADDIE

Well, the lease is up next month,  
but I do have some things there I  
need to get back.

LISA

You can stay here for awhile, um,  
but--

MADDIE

--I really appreciate that, Lisa.  
And don't worry - I'm going to  
start looking for a new place right  
away. Maybe Jersey. I gotta get  
out of New York, at least for  
awhile.

LISA

Why don't you take a hot shower and  
get some sleep. We'll check out  
your place tomorrow.

MADDIE

You're the best, Lisa.

INT. TAXI (STOPPED) - DAY

Maddie and Lisa sit in the back seat of an idling TAXI parked around the corner from Maddie's apartment building.

LISA  
It looks pretty safe to me.

MADDIE  
Yeah--

Maddie spots Vic's Mercedes parked down the block.

MADDIE (CONT'D)  
--No, wait. Shit. That's Vic's car. That big black Mercedes. What do we do now?

LISA  
Go home I guess. Try again tomorrow. Driver, 45th and 9th.

The TAXI DRIVER rounds the corner and drives toward Maddie's apartment building.

INT. TAXI (TRAVELING) - DAY

As the Taxi passes in front of Maddie's Building, Maddie spots her suitcase on the entrance steps.

MADDIE  
Stop the cab! That's my suitcase.

The Taxi Driver stops.

INT. TAXI (STOPPED) - DAY

LISA  
OK. You stay here. I'll run out and grab it.

Lisa opens the door, and hustles out.

EXT. MADDIE'S BUILDING - DAY

Lisa grabs the suitcase and runs back to the cab. The brake lights on Vic's Mercedes illuminate. She dives in the back seat.

INT. TAXI (STOPPED) - DAY

LISA  
Get moving.

INT. TAXI (TRAVELING) - DAY

The cab barrels past Vic's Mercedes. Ray is alone in the driver's seat. Ray pulls away from the curb behind the cab and follows it closely. Maddie looks back at the tailing Mercedes through the rear window.

MADDIE  
Oh my God! It's that Nazi Ray.  
He'll kill me, I know it.

LISA  
Don't panic, Maddie. He can't do  
anything while we're in the cab.

MADDIE  
And then what?

LISA  
Not sure.

TAXI DRIVER  
May I suggest something, ladies?

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Taxi Driver makes some distance between himself and the Mercedes. He bolts around the corner out of Ray's sight, and pulls to the curb. The "Off-Duty" light is illuminated.

Moments later Ray parks the Mercedes directly behind the Taxi and runs to it. He opens the back door of the Taxi, and looks in. No one is there, just Maddie's suitcase. The Taxi Driver makes some notes on a clipboard.

RAY  
Where did those fotzes go?

Without looking at Ray the Taxi Driver continues to write on the clipboard.

TAXI DRIVER  
(Motioning with his thumb)  
They jumped out at the corner back  
there.

RAY

That's impossible. I was on your ass the whole time. Where the fuck are they?

The Taxi Driver puts down the clipboard and addresses Ray.

TAXI DRIVER

Calm down, my friend. I turned the corner and they just jumped out. They were scared. When I stopped for a second they jumped out. Do you know them? They beat me for seven-fifty.

RAY

Fuck. Which way did they go?

TAXI DRIVER

They beat me for seven-fifty. You should pay. You made them scared.

RAY

Fuck you. Eat their luggage.

Ray backs away and looks down the crowded street. The Taxi slowly pulls into traffic.

EXT. LISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Taxi pulls to the curb. The Taxi Driver gets out and walks around to the back of the cab. He POPS the trunk. Lisa and Maddie are crammed inside.

TAXI DRIVER

Are you comfortable, ladies? No hanky-panky going on, is there?

MADDIE

Is it safe?

LISA

Help us out of here. Where are we?

MADDIE

Is it safe?

The Taxi Driver extends a hand and helps the girls out of the trunk.

TAXI DRIVER

You're safe now. We're at your apartment. That bad man came looking for you but we tricked him.

MADDIE

You saved my life. I don't know how to thank you.

LISA

Ask him if he knows what bukkake is?

MADDIE

Shut up, Lisa. Sir, How much do I owe you?

TAXI DRIVER

Nothing. I only ask one small favor: can your friend take a picture of you and me together? I have a camera.

MADDIE

A picture? Why?

TAXI DRIVER

I want to show my friends I had Hyapatia Lee in my cab. You're my favorite porn star!

Lisa takes a picture of Maddie and the Taxi Driver standing next to each other, and hands him back his camera. Maddie grabs her suitcase and she and Lisa head inside.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Larry sits in a chair in the corner of the OTB parlor. He checks his watch. Freddie walks in from a back door past Larry. Larry jumps up when he makes Freddie.

LARRY

Freddie! Freddie! Got a second?

FREDDIE

Larry, what's up? How's it going?

LARRY

Not too bad. Did I tell you I found a \$700 ticket the other day?



FREDDIE  
No shit. Congrats, man. You gonna retire from stooping now?

LARRY  
Nah. Times are tough. I already spent it all on overdue bills. Plus I got fired from the diner.

FREDDIE  
Damn. What a drag.

LARRY  
No shit. I started eating Little Friskies. Y'know, the mixed grill ain't that bad. Better than the chicken salad at Applebees.

Freddie chuckles.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
Seriously, I've got a favor to ask.

FREDDIE  
(Cautiously)  
Yeah? What?

LARRY  
Would you talk to Vic for me, on my behalf? Tell him I won 70 grand at Lotto.

Freddie does a double-take.

FREDDIE  
You won 70 thousand?

LARRY  
Yeah, I mean, no. Uh, just tell him I won it at Lotto, OK? Tell him I can't redeem the money. Tell him I have outstanding arrest warrants and that I'm afraid to go to the authorities. Tell him I'm willing to sell him the ticket for 35. Can you do that for me, Fred?

Freddie scratches his head, looking skeptical.

FREDDIE  
What for?

LARRY

No reason.

(beat)

C'mon. I'll pay you a C-note.

FREDDIE

I don't know--

LARRY

--Please. Two hundred?

FREDDIE

Well, alright. I don't get it, Larry, but if that's what you want I'll try to talk to Vic for you. You said 70 grand?

LARRY

Yeah, on Wednesday's Lotto.

Larry digs \$200 from his wallet and hands it to Freddie.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Thanks, man. Don't tell anyone about it, OK? I'll explain it to you later over beers.

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Bored, Larry sits in a chair in the corner of OTB. Finally, Vic and Dougie walk in. Larry hops up and runs to Freddie interrupting his floor sweeping duties.

LARRY

Freddie, hey, Freddie. Vic's here.

FREDDIE

OK, OK. Don't soil yourself. I'll talk to him. Relax.

Larry watches as Freddie approaches Vic. They converse but Larry can't hear them. After a few seconds, Freddie points toward Larry. Vic looks across the room and starts walking toward Larry, followed by Dougie. Larry tenses up as Vic gets closer.

VIC

What's this shit I hear about you havin' a Lotto ticket worth 70 Gs, Ajax? Izzat true?

LARRY

Yes sir, Vic.

VIC  
So, why don't you cash it in?

LARRY  
I... uh... can't. I don't want  
to get into trouble.

VIC  
That's what Freddie said. What'd  
you do?

LARRY  
Uh... um--

VIC  
--Don't tell me. Let me guess.  
You're a Peepin' Tom. No? OK  
then, a child molester.  
(Laughing)  
You got caught porkin' under-aged  
barnyard animals.

Dougie guffaws.

LARRY  
Armed robbery.

Dougie and Vic abruptly stop laughing.

VIC  
You? You're wanted for armed  
robbery? What'd you do? Breathe  
on a bank teller?

Dougie laughs some more. Larry scratches the back of his  
head.

LARRY  
Are you interested in taking the  
ticket off my hands or not?

Vic pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and wipes his lips.

VIC  
Maybe. But not for 35. Not even  
close. You insult my intelligence.  
Anyone who cashes in is gonna have  
to pay half back in taxes. Don't  
you know that, asshole?  
(beat)  
Before I do anything, I wanna see  
this so-called winning ticket.

LARRY

Sure, Vic. Of course. And 35... well, that was just a starting point.

VIC

Startin' point? It's a fuckin' insult.

(beat)

Here's the deal. We all head to the deli around the corner so you can show me your big, fuckin' ticket and I can check it out.

LARRY

Sounds like a plan, Vic.

VIC

You go there now. I'll be by in 15 minutes. I'm not gonna be seen walkin' with you, Ajax.

INT. DELI - NIGHT

Larry paces about, alternately looking out the window and checking his watch. Please show up.

VIC (O.S.)

Get your lame ass back here, Ajax. I ain't got all day.

Startled, Larry turns around. He approaches Vic and Dougie who stand near the rear exit of the Deli.

LARRY

Thanks for coming, Vic.

VIC

Just show me the fuckin' ticket.

The three men walk to the counter. Larry hands the ticket to a DELI CLERK who validates it.

DELI CLERK

70,580 dollars sir.  
Congratulations.

Impressed, Dougie whistles long and slow. The Deli Clerk hands the ticket back to Larry.

DELI CLERK (CONT'D)

And here's a printout with the winning numbers, sir.

The Deli Clerk extends the printout which Vic grabs. Everyone steps off to the side away from the counter. Vic lights a cigarette.

VIC  
So you got a big ticket, Ajax.  
What'dya wanna do about it?

LARRY  
I wish I could cash it in, but I can't. I was hoping you'd take it off my hands. At a significant discount, of course.

VIC  
Tell you what, I'll give you five.

LARRY  
Twenty.

VIC  
Twenty!? Are you fuckin' crazy?  
I'm doin' you a favor, boy. You should be more polite.

Larry looks down at the floor and shuffles his feet.

LARRY  
I just think I could maybe get 20 for it if I shopped it around.

VIC  
You're lucky I don't tear it out of your ratty jacket right now, scumbag!

Vic blows cigarette smoke in Larry's face.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Shop it around. I guarantee you won't get far with that idea, pal.

Vic steps to within a couple inches of Larry, smiles benignly, picks a piece of tobacco off the tip of his tongue, and brushes Larry's shoulder as though he were sweeping off a piece of lint.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Look, Ajax. You came to me because you know I'm the kinda guy who makes things happen, am I right?

Larry nods like an obedient child.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 So, I'm gonna say this just once:  
 ten thousand. Understand?

Larry nods again.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 Good. Now let's get out of this  
 shit hole and go back to OTB.  
 Conduct some civilized business.

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Larry sits across a table from Vic and Dougie. Vic pulls a wad of bills wrapped with a rubber band from his jacket pocket and sets it on the table.

VIC  
 That's five K. I'll give you the  
 rest after I cash in the ticket.  
 (beat)  
 Go ahead, count it out. I bet  
 you've never even seen five  
 thousand, have you Ajax?

Larry hesitates.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 What's the matter, afraid to touch  
 it?

LARRY  
 It's just... uh... I really need  
 the whole ten thousand, Vic.

VIC  
 Didn't I just say I'd give you the  
 rest of it after I cash in the  
 ticket?

LARRY  
 I'd like to get it all now. Before  
 I turn over the ticket.

VIC  
 Jesus, you're a real dildo, Ajax.  
 An insulting, ungrateful dildo.  
 Take the five - right fuckin' now! -  
 or I'll make you regret ever askin'  
 me for a favor.

Larry blanches, then picks up the wad from the center of the table, pulls off the rubber band and fans the bills.

He produces an envelope from his pocket. Vic snatches it from his hands, opens it and plucks out the Lotto ticket. He compares the numbers and date to those on the printout produced by the deli clerk.

VIC (CONT'D)

Not that I don't trust you, Ajax,  
but I don't trust you.

Larry sullenly re-wraps the bills and shoves them into his pocket.

VIC (CONT'D)

After I cash in the ticket, I'll give you the other five. In the meantime, don't talk to me, and don't ask Freddie to talk to me either.

Vic and Dougie depart.

EXT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Vic and Dougie head for Vic's car.

DOUGIE

That Ajax. What a jerk. Plays the lottery even though he knows he can never collect.

VIC

Yeah. Stupid fuck.  
(beat)  
Do you have even one single lead on Maddie? Just one thing that would make me keep you on the payroll?

DOUGIE

Ray thinks she might be hanging with some chick on the west side. Haven't been able to pinpoint it.

VIC

Get in the car. Drive me around Hell's Kitchen.

DOUGIE

Don't you wanna cash in the ticket?

VIC

Tomorrow, after I talk to my lawyer and my accountant.

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Freddie walks over to Larry still sitting at the table.

FREDDIE  
What happened?

LARRY  
Vic bought a Lotto ticket from me.

FREDDIE  
Really? You sold him a ticket?  
How much?

LARRY  
Ten grand.

FREDDIE  
Are you shitting me!? He gave you  
ten grand?

LARRY  
Not exactly. Five now, five later.

FREDDIE  
I don't get it. Why would he do  
that?

LARRY  
I'll explain it later.

FREDDIE  
Jesus, that's amazing. Really  
amazing.  
(beat)  
You know you're never gonna get the  
other five, don't you?

The lights in the OTB parlor flash twice.

LARRY  
I know. Doesn't really matter. I  
fucked him over anyway - he just  
doesn't know it yet. That's all I  
wanted to accomplish.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

INSERT: TITLE CARD "12 HOURS EARLIER"

Larry hunches over his table carefully rubbing a Lotto ticket  
with an eraser.



CLOSE UP - LOTTO TICKET

From which Larry erases the number "1" in the date "December 14" turning it into "December 4". The numbers 8, 15, 16, 33, 36 and 43 are visible.

BACK TO SCENE

Larry blows off some eraser dust, holds up the doctored Lotto ticket and smiles deviously.

INT. DELI - DAY

Vic and Dougie stand at the same Deli counter where Larry's winning Lotto ticket was validated the night before. A SIKH CLERK holds a bucket of ice. He wears a dastar wrapped around his head.

VIC

Hey, Sad'm. Tell me how to cash in this ticket.

The Sikh Clerk puts down the bucket of ice and starts fiddling with the Lotto checker machine.

VIC (CONT'D)

Y'know, Dougie, that Ajax is some piece of work. What a pussy. He deserves the shit I lay on him.

The Sikh Clerk speaks with an accent.

SIKH CLERK

This ticket not winner, sir.

VIC

What!? What the fuck d'ya mean  
(Imitating the accent)  
"the ticket not winner"?

The Sikh Clerk stares dumbly at Vic.

VIC (CONT'D)

Fuckin' raghead.

Vic snatches the ticket from his fingers.

VIC (CONT'D)

Give me that back, ya dumb fuck.  
(beat)

Do you believe this raghead, Doug?  
(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

I suppose he thinks I'm just gonna throw the ticket in the garbage so he can take it for himself. Lou Dobbs is right about these fuckin' foreigners.

SIKH CLERK

I am very sorry, sir, but--

Vic turns and walks away.

VIC

--Go back to Iraq, douche-bag.

Vic and Dougie go to a self-checker machine mounted on the wall where Vic scans the ticket. The message: "Results not in." Vic looks at the ticket, confused. He scans it again.

DOUGIE

I don't get it. Results not in where?

Vic scans and re-scans furiously.

DOUGIE (CONT'D)

What's that mean?

VIC

Shut up!

SIKH CLERK (O.S.)

Please to help you, sir.

Vic and Dougie turn toward the Sikh Clerk.

SIKH CLERK (CONT'D)

Your ticket is for Saturday lottery. Not tomorrow... next Saturday.

Vic stares blankly as he processes for a second, then his face contorts in anger.

VIC

Motherfucker! That cocksuckin' stooper sold me a bogus ticket! So help me God, I'll go Mengele on his ass!

Vic storms toward the door.

SIKH CLERK

Please to have a nice day, sir.

VIC  
 Fuck you, raghead!

After the door SLAMS, the Sikh Clerk smirks and dumps the bucket of ice into a soda machine.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Larry struggles to close an overpacked suitcase. When successful, he picks up the phone and dials.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

An OTB worker calls Freddie over the intercom to the phone.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 Hello?

INTERCUT with Larry's apartment.

LARRY  
 (Into phone)  
 Freddie? Larry. What's going on there? How're you doin'?

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 How am I doin'? How am I doin'? Not so well, but way better than you if you even think about coming around here again. I sure hope you're calling from another planet because Vic's looking to flay you alive.

LARRY  
 (Into phone)  
 Fuck him. I only have one regret: not scamming him for more. Well, that and not getting to see the expression on his face when he found out the ticket was worthless.  
 (Chuckles)  
 He must've shit a pant-load of lava.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 Laugh now while you can, my man.  
 (MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Y'know, a micro-second after Vic realized you ripped him off he stormed into the parlor with his hair on fire. He was cursing and screaming like a lunatic. "Where's that fuckin' stooper! I'm gonna fuckin' castrate him!" Shit like that. Security had to keep him from busting into the cage.

LARRY

(Into phone)

Wow. I'm flattered.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Scary. Anyway, I'm sorta glad for you, Larry. Knocking the Prick down a notch. Unfortunately, I'm worried now. Y'know, he's super pissed at me for coming to him with your so-called favor.

LARRY

(Into phone)

Gee, I'm really sorry, Fred. I guess I didn't think of that.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Forget it. I'll be OK - I hope. I only wish I knew how you did it.

LARRY

(Into phone)

Like I told you, I'll explain it over beers.

(beat)

I got an idea. Why don't you meet me at Local West? It's a bar across the street from Penn Station. The gash is high quality, and I'm buying - at least until I have to bolt on the train.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Nice. What time?

LARRY

(Into phone)

Come by at 7. And don't tell anyone.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 Right.

EXT. PENN STATION - NIGHT

Freddie walks up the steps from the subway outside PENN STATION and crosses 33rd street to the entrance of LOCAL WEST BAR, a loud, crowded, popular bar for commuters.

INT. LOCAL WEST BAR - NIGHT

Freddie approaches a sexy GREETER who stands at a podium inside the bar. She wears a short skirt, mesh stockings and a halter top. Freddie ogles her for an uncomfortably long time. She sizes up Freddie like he's a bum off the street.

Freddie scans the barroom packed mainly by BUSINESS TYPES with briefcases and TOURISTS with department store bags. He spots Larry sitting at the bar, accompanied by his beat-up suitcase, his hands wrapped around a Martini. Freddie walks over, takes a stool next to Larry and places an order with the slutty-looking BARTENDER.

FREDDIE  
 Double-shot of Jameson. Hi Larry.

LARRY  
 Freddie! Glad you could make it.

FREDDIE  
 Uh, sure. No problem.  
 (beat)  
 Hey, did you check out that chick at the door? A halter top in December? I think I'm in love.

LARRY  
 Be careful, Fred. Proust says love is a reciprocal torture.

FREDDIE  
 Don't know him. He come to OTB?

LARRY  
 Marcel Proust? I don't think so. Anyway, I'm really sorry you're in Dutch with the Prick.

The Bartender serves Freddie his drink.

FREDDIE  
Don't be. I'm the one who should  
be sorry.

Freddie raises his glass in a toast, as does Larry.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
Titim gan éirí ort.

LARRY  
What's that mean?

FREDDIE  
I think it's Gaelic for "bon  
voyage".

Freddie slugs his drink in one gulp which surprises Larry.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
OK, Larry, tell me how it works.

LARRY  
Uh, sure. You buy a ticket for a  
future game. New York runs Lotto  
on Wednesdays and Saturdays.  
They're always ten days apart.

Freddie flags down the Bartender and points to his empty  
glass.

LARRY (CONT'D)  
For example, there was a Lotto  
drawing on December 4th and another  
one coming up on the 14th. So I  
bought a ticket for the 14th with  
the numbers that won on the 4th.  
And then I erased the 1 from 14.  
The tickets are printed with some  
kind of crappy dot-matrix printer,  
so it's easy to rub off the ink.  
The fake looks just like the real  
winner.

Freddie slugs the drink down.

FREDDIE  
That's pretty ingenious, Larry.  
Where're you headed from here?

Larry takes a sip of his drink.

LARRY  
No offense, Freddie, but that's  
highly confidential.

Freddie glances over his shoulder just in time to see Vic and Ray walk into the bar.

FREDDIE

Doesn't matter now anyway, Larry.  
The game's over. Sorry, man. I  
had no choice.

Larry looks at Freddie quizzically as Freddie sucks the last drops of his drink. Vic steps to the bar, towering over Larry from behind. Sensing a presence, Larry looks up sees Vic. It's his worst nightmare come true.

VIC

Stand up and bring your luggage.

Larry complies. Ray takes Larry by the arm and walks him toward the exit. Larry glances back toward the bar just as Vic hands Freddie some money.

EXT. LOCAL WEST BAR - NIGHT

Ray hustles Larry into the front seat of the Mercedes, throws the suitcase into the trunk and gets in the driver's seat. Vic climbs in back. Larry's terrified face is visible through the window as the power locks engage. The Mercedes bolts through a yellow light across Eighth Avenue.

INT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

LARRY

Wh-where're we going, Vic?

RAY

Keep quiet Mr. Stooper. You'll  
find out when we get there.

LARRY'S P.O.V. - SIGN INDICATING "HOLLAND TUNNEL"

BACK TO SCENE

LARRY

We're goin' to Jersey?

Vic looks at Larry in the visor mirror.

VIC

Maybe.

The Mercedes exits the Holland Tunnel and drives through some gritty urban streets before heading toward dark swampland.

Ray turns onto a narrow, pot-holed side road flanked by tall reeds. He turns off the headlights and continues driving in the dark before pulling to the side of the narrow road. He leaves the engine running.

VIC (CONT'D)

Here's the deal, Ajax. First, you're gonna turn over the real Lotto ticket and give me back my five Gs. Second, you're gonna pay a penalty of another five. Third, never come back to OTB, and D, never, ever tell anyone you tried to scam me. Clear?

Larry gulps but says nothing.

VIC (CONT'D)

Otherwise... well, you really don't wanna know about otherwise.

(beat)

What's it gonna be?

After a lengthy moment of silence from Larry, Ray reaches over, grabs a handful of Larry's hair and yanks him so the two men's faces are separated by mere inches.

RAY

Answer the man, you fucking schwanzlutscher!

LARRY

Owww! OK! OK!

Ray releases Larry. Larry rubs his head.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I don't have the ticket anymore.

VIC

You cashed it in already? Well then, you owe me 80 grand, pal. I'll let you cover the taxes. Now aren't you sorry you fucked with me, Ajax?

LARRY

I mean, Vic, I, uh, lost the ticket. I had it in my wallet, and on my way to meet Freddie, I got mugged. Some big dude ripped me off. It's the truth. I know it sounds bogus, but--



VIC

(Laughing derisively)

--Y'know, Ajax, you're an even lower piece of scum than I had you pegged for. If a chunk of scum walked up to you, he'd call you a scum. I suppose you were at that bar with your luggage because you were goin' to a stooper convention.

Vic lights a cigarette, takes a slow drag, then explodes.

VIC (CONT'D)

You think you can fuckin' try to scam me and then, on top of it, lie right to my face!? I know goddamn well you still have the ticket and you're gonna turn it over right fuckin' now!

(beat)

Ray, remove this piece of shit from my car. I'm through bein' nice.

EXT. SWAMPLAND ROAD - NIGHT

Ray exits the car and opens the door. Larry scoots across the seat, kicking and screaming. Ray grabs at Larry and gets a kick in the knee, but quickly gets the upper hand and pulls Larry out of the car by the ankles. Larry lies on the road while Ray stomps him mercilessly. Vic jumps out of the car and takes Ray by the elbow.

VIC

Jesus, Ray. Don't kill him yet.

(To Larry)

Once more, Ajax. Where's the ticket?

Larry wipes some blood from his mouth.

LARRY

I told you, man, I ain't got it. And if I did, I'd rather burn it than give it to you, Prick.

VIC

(Chuckling)

You say that now, big man. Ray, go get me the tire iron.

Larry's eyes widen in terror - tire iron? Ray walks to the back of the Mercedes, pops the trunk and roots around, producing a long tire iron. A glint of light sparkles on the pointy end. Ray hands it to Vic who addresses Larry.

VIC (CONT'D)

You remember that worthless ticket you sold me?

(Shows ticket to Larry)

Here it is. Now, I'm gonna offer you a trade. My ticket for yours. What'dya say, Ajax?

LARRY

Suck my dick!

VIC

Tsk, tsk. That's not very polite. How about it, Ray?

RAY

Not at all, Mr. Schuyler.

VIC

I said I'm gonna trade you tickets.

(To Ray)

Ray, hold this cocksucker down.

As Ray bends down Larry scrambles, but Ray subdues him with a blow to the face. Larry lies on his stomach, moaning. Vic rips a hole in the seat of Larry's pants and shoves the tire iron into Larry's asshole. Larry screams. Ray averts his eyes as blood pours onto the gravelly road.

VIC (CONT'D)

I got six inches of this tire iron up your ass, motherfucker. There's another 12 left to bury. You wanna trade tickets with me?

LARRY

(Screaming)

Yes! Yes! I'll trade! Stop!

Vic withdraws the tire iron.

VIC

OK, Ajax. That was easy. Where's my ticket?

Larry groans and squirms around on the ground, both hands jammed between his legs.

LARRY

In my luggage. In the shaving kit.

Ray runs back to the open trunk. He rummages around in Larry's suitcase.

RAY

Got it, Vic.

Vic pats Larry on the head.

VIC

Good boy, Ajax. And my money?

LARRY

Inside the lining of my jacket.  
Please, take me to a hospital. I  
beg you, don't leave me out here!

VIC

No-can-do, sport. The hospital's  
not on my way home. But tell you  
what - since I'm in a better mood  
now, I'll let you off the hook for  
the 5K penalty. Merry Christmas.

(beat)

Oh, I almost forgot. Here's your  
ticket back, Ajax. A deal's a deal

Vic slips the ticket into Larry's shirt pocket, then nods to Ray who pulls Larry up by his armpits and drags him off the road. Larry is too wounded to resist.

LARRY

(Whimpers)

Please, no. Please, God. No.

RAY

Shut up.

Larry vomits. Ray tosses Larry into the reeds where he falls face down. Ray produces a pistol, cocks it, aims it at Larry's head and pulls the trigger.

SOUND - LOUD REPORT

RAY'S P.O.V. - BLOOD SPATTERING ON THE REEDS

BACK TO SCENE

Ray nods once to Vic sitting in the front passenger seat of the Mercedes. Vic sticks his head out the window.

VIC  
Let's get the fuck out of here.

Ray runs to the car.

EXT. REEDS - NIGHT

Larry lies face down in the REEDS.

SOUND - TIRES SCREECHING O.S.

LARRY  
(Mumbling)  
F-f-fucking Prick.

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. REEDS - DAWN

Larry lies face down in the mud in the reeds of the swamp area. Snow flakes fall on him and his breath is visible in the cold air.

SOUND - DOG PANTING

A DOG licks Larry's exposed bloody ass.

JOGGER (O.S.)  
C'mon Isabella, c'mon girl.

The dog BARKS vigorously.

JOGGER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
What'd you find in there, Izzy?

More barking. Larry looks over his shoulder. The reeds part like a curtain as the JOGGER steps into the swamp.

JOGGER (CONT'D)  
C'mon out Izzy... Holy shit!

The Jogger rushes in and bends down close to Larry's face.

JOGGER (CONT'D)  
Can you speak, man? What happened?

LARRY  
(Hoarsely)  
Help me.

JOGGER  
Don't move. Don't talk.

The Jogger drapes his jacket over Larry's backside.

EXT. SWAMPLAND ROAD - DAY

A police cruiser idles with its lights flashing. One COP paces while another talks to the Jogger, taking notes. Two EMTS load Larry into an ambulance.

INT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Ray drives north on Park Avenue with Vic. The radio is on and a NEWSREADER summarizes sporting events.

NEWSREADER

(Over radio)

The Knicks on the road lost to the Wizards 100-97, Navy annihilated Army 58 to 12 at Giants Stadium, and in rugby, Leinster upset Montferrand 23 to 20.

VIC

(Claps his hands together)

Clean sweep, Ray.

Radio news banter continues in the background. Vic checks a small pad of paper.

VIC (CONT'D)

Twenty-two grand.

(beat)

Man, I'm starving. Can you speed it up a bit Ray. I gotta get some Asian tuna on my tongue. By the way, I hope you remembered to pack the video equipment.

NEWSREADER

(Over radio)

We have an update on that story we first reported this morning about the body of a middle-aged white man that was pulled from a frozen swamp in an area south of Metuchen.

Vic turns up the volume of the radio.

VIC

Quiet. Listen.

NEWSREADER

(Over radio)

According to one source the man was shot from behind execution style after being sexually assaulted. The identity of the victim has not yet been determined.

VIC

Sweet. Tomorrow we visit Freddie. Make sure he stays in the box.

INT. HOSPITAL/ICU - DAY

Larry lies in a hospital bed. He comes out of a groggy state and sees the blurry outline of someone dressed in scrubs. The image is similar to that which Dougie saw when he awoke in the Emergency Room.

LARRY

(Weakly)

Nurse...

The person turns toward Larry. It's Maddie.

MADDIE

Oh, hello sir. I'm not a nurse. I'm with the hospital's environmental services department.

(beat)

That's a fancy name for cleaning lady. How are you feeling?

LARRY

Not so good. Where am I?

MADDIE

In the ICU.

(beat)

At Raritan Bay Medical Center.

(beat)

In Perth Amboy.

LARRY

Perth Amboy? How long have I been here?

MADDIE

I guess about six hours. They brought you over from the OR.

LARRY

Jesus. I feel like I was run over  
by a tank.

(Chuckles, then winces)

What's your name, miss?

MADDIE

Maddie, sir.

LARRY

Maddie. That's nice. And please,  
just call me Larry. No one ever  
calls me "sir".

A SURGEON walks into the hospital room. Maddie exits.

SURGEON

How are we feeling this morning,  
Mister... uh...

(Flips papers on a  
clipboard)

I guess we don't know your name.  
You came in as a "John Doe".

LARRY

My name is Larry Greco, Doctor.

SURGEON

Well, Larry Greco, you are lucky to  
be alive, my friend. You suffered  
a nasty injury, not to mention a  
serious case of exposure. But  
you're out of the woods now... or  
should I say the reeds, heh heh.  
We'll be moving you from the ICU in  
another day or two to a semi-  
private room on the second floor.  
You've got a catheter and a  
colostomy bag. You know what that  
is, don't you?

Larry gulps.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

Now that you're conscious, the  
police want to talk to you. Do you  
feel up to it?

LARRY

Yeah, I guess so.

INT. HOSPITAL/ICU - DAY (LATER)

Two DETECTIVES stand at the foot of Larry's bed. One takes notes. The Surgeon stands off to the side.

LARRY

I stumbled out of the bar - I can't remember the name - someplace in midtown - when a couple of guys rolled me. They took my wallet. I bit one of them, and that's when they really got rough with me. They dragged me into an alley and shoved something into my asshole - I mean my rectum. I passed out right then and there.

DETECTIVE #1

Terrible. Let me ask you something: if these men dragged you into an alley in midtown how did you wind up in New Jersey, Mr. Greco?

LARRY

Uh... um... I vaguely remember them talking about not leaving behind any evidence there. I think they forced me in their car. Yeah, they put me in their car. That's right. I recall going through the Holland Tunnel. Like I said, I was delirious from the pain.

The Detectives exchange wary glances.

DETECTIVE #2

Do you remember getting shot in the ear, Mr. Greco?

LARRY

Uh uh.

DETECTIVE #2

Really? You don't remember anyone shooting you in the ear?

LARRY

I thought it was frostbite.

Detective #1 clicks his ballpoint pen closed and puts it in his shirt pocket.



DETECTIVE #1  
 Look, Mr. Greco. If you have some idea of who did this to you, you should tell us. We'll bring them in, put them in a line-up.

LARRY  
 I don't know.

DETECTIVE #2  
 We can protect you.

Larry fiddles with his covers.

LARRY  
 I'm just not sure. It was dark.

DETECTIVE #1  
 OK, Mr. Greco. We'll have you look at some mug shots later. Please try in the meantime to remember more details. I'm sure you want to help us catch the criminals who violated you and left you for dead.  
 (beat)  
 Best of luck, sir. Get well soon.

DETECTIVE #2  
 (Smirks)  
 Yeah, get well soon.

Larry slumps. After the Detectives leave the room, the Surgeon walks next to Larry's bed.

SURGEON  
 I'll be by tomorrow to check up on you, Mr. Greco. Your belongings are in the drawer. Just some clothes, I think. Try to get some rest. Maybe you'll be able to remember more about last night after some decent sleep.

LARRY  
 I'll try. By the way, Doc. How can I make a phone call?

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Vic and Ray head straight for Freddie who holds a broom as he talks on the phone. He looks up at the oncoming duo.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 They're here now. Get better. I'm  
 really sorry.

Freddie hangs up the phone just as Vic reaches him.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)  
 (Nervously)  
 Hey fellas. What's up?

VIC  
 What's up? Is that all you can  
 ever say? "What's up?" You sound  
 like Bugs fuckin' Bunny. I'll tell  
 you "what's up" Bugs... have you  
 heard from Ajax? I've been lookin'  
 all over for him.

Freddie looks down somberly.

FREDDIE  
 Larry's... dead, Vic. I got a  
 call from some dude in the morgue  
 this afternoon. I guess Larry had  
 me listed as an emergency contact,  
 y'know, a card in his wallet had my  
 name on it.

VIC  
 He had a wallet? You hear that  
 Ray?

Ray scratches the back of his head.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 So, Ajax is dead? Are you sure?

FREDDIE  
 I'm sure Vic. Hunnert percent.

VIC  
 Jesus, that's too bad. Y'know, he  
 disgusted me, but I would never  
 wish the bastard dead. You know  
 that, right Freddie? Ajax pissed  
 me off, but I would never want to  
 see him dead, right?

Vic leans in a bit.

FREDDIE  
 Absolutely, Vic. We all kinda  
 liked Larry around here.

VIC  
So you're sure he's dead?

FREDDIE  
Oh, he's dead. Certifiable. They called me to the morgue to identify the body.

VIC  
That must've been tough... how'd he die? Leprosy?

Ray stifles a laugh.

FREDDIE  
No, someone shot him in the back of the head. A jogger found him lying in a swamp. Larry looked all white, like a ghost, and--

VIC  
--So Ajax is dead. That's a damn shame, but what're you gonna do? Right, Ray?

RAY  
What're you gonna do? As my grandfather would say: Der abschaum der menschlichen gesellschaft.

VIC  
Shit, Ray. You're bad. Don't listen to him, Freddie.

FREDDIE  
I don't speak Polish, Vic.

VIC  
Right.

Vic wraps his beefy arm around Freddie's shoulder.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Anyway, you know I had nothin' to do with this, don't you Fred. Look at me when I talk to you. Nothin' to do with it.

Freddie nods his head meekly.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Good. Me and Ray simply took Ajax for a ride.  
(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

Made him understand I didn't appreciate the trick he tried to play on me. Ajax paid me back my five G's and we dropped him off. He must've run into some coons who didn't like the color of his complexion. That's what I think. What about you, Freddie?

FREDDIE

That's what happened. He crossed some black guys--

VIC

--Coons.

FREDDIE

Right, coons. Some coons blew him away. Good thing you got your money back before they croaked him.

VIC

Cute, Freddie.

Vic removes his arm from Freddie's shoulder.

VIC (CONT'D)

You're a good egg, Fred. It must've been tough to see Ajax's, uh, Larry's body at the morgue. Here, take this.

Vic peels off a couple big bills and hands them to Freddie who accepts the money readily.

FREDDIE

Thanks, Vic. That's real kind.

VIC

OK, so that's the last of it, Freddie. Understand? The story's over, dead. Just like Ajax. You gotta move on. I don't wanna hear any scuttlebutt around OTB, or anywhere else for that matter.

(In German)

Understand? Otherwise I'll have to kill you.

(To Ray, in English)

Did I say that right, Ray?

RAY

(In German)

Perfectly.

INT. HOSPITAL/ICU - NIGHT

INSERT: TITLE CARD "10 MINUTES EARLIER"

LARRY

(Into phone)

Freddie? It's Larry. Don't hang up. I gotta talk to you.

(Silence)

You there, Freddie?

INTERCUT with Freddie in the OTB Parlor

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Uh, yeah, Larry. What's up?

LARRY

(Into phone)

I need your help - and you know you own me one. Let me say right off the bat that I'm not mad at you any more for ratting me out to Vic. I guess I deserved it. But, damn. You really do owe me one, brother.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

You're a big man, Larry. I don't know what to say, except I'm really, really sorry. But you gotta understand. Vic put the arm on me big time after you ripped him off.

(beat)

Where are you now, anyway?

LARRY

(Into phone)

The hospital. Vic tried to kill me.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Holy shit! I thought he was just gonna push you around a bit.

LARRY

(Into phone)

He thinks he really did kill me, and I want to keep it that way. That's why I'm calling.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

If the Prick comes to you to see what you know, or to find out if I contacted you, you gotta tell him I'm dead. It's my only hope.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Why don't you call the cops?

LARRY

(Into phone)

Are you nuts? They'd never get anything to stick to him, and then Vic would kill me for sure. Ray would cut me into little pieces and feed me to his fucking Rottweilers.

(beat)

No chance, Fred, no chance.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

Yeah, I guess you're right.

LARRY

(Into phone)

I am right. Listen, just tell Vic you saw my corpse in the morgue. Tell him you saw a bullet hole in the back of my head. Tell him my body was discovered in a swamp in Jersey by a jogger. Make him believe you, Freddie. Please.

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

I don't know, Larry.

LARRY

(Into phone)

C'mon, man. Just tell the fucker I'm dead. How hard is that, Fred?

FREDDIE

(Into phone)

OK, Larry, OK. Be cool.

(beat)

Hey, I'm really sorry. Vic said he just wanted to get his money back. He said he wasn't gonna hurt you.

LARRY

(Into phone)

And you believed that? Fuck, forget it. Just keep that

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)  
 psychopath away from me. Let me  
 heal in peace.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 Uh, why are you in the hospital.  
 What did he, uh, do to you?

LARRY  
 (Into phone)  
 You don't want to know, but I'd  
 give ten thou to be able to take  
 a crap in a regular toilet again.

FREDDIE  
 (Into phone)  
 They're here now. Get better. I'm  
 really sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY

Larry sits up in bed clicking rapidly through the channels on the TV, disgusted at the dogshit programming in the middle of the afternoon. He stops at a channel broadcasting a commercial featuring a fat man portraying a CHEF. The Chef wears an apron and preposterous toque. He BEATS on a kitchen gadget like he's masturbating vigorously.

LARRY  
 (Mumbles)  
 Chef of the fucking future.

MADDIE (O.S.)  
 Excuse me?

LARRY  
 Uh... eh... Chef of the Future.  
 (Clears his throat)  
 That guy on the TV reminds me of--

Maddie steps around from behind the curtain and glances at the commercial on the TV.

MADDIE  
 --Ralph Kramden. You're right.  
 That's my favorite "Honeymooners"  
 episode.

LARRY  
 Maddie. Am I glad to see you. Can  
 you stay a little while, y'know,  
 keep me company for a bit?

MADDIE  
Mmm, I don't know.

LARRY  
Please? From one "Honeymooners"  
fan to another? Otherwise...

Larry punches his fist into the palm of his hand and points to the ceiling.

... Bang! Zoom!

MADDIE  
Well, just for awhile, then I have to get back. I can't afford to get fired. I just started working again.

LARRY  
Again?

MADDIE  
It's a boring story.

LARRY  
C'mon.

MADDIE  
Nah.

LARRY  
Please.

MADDIE  
What for?

LARRY  
I dunno. I'm interested.

MADDIE  
You mean you're bored.

LARRY  
Sure, I'm bored. But that doesn't mean I'm not intrigued.

MADDIE  
Hmmm, I don't know about you.  
(beat)  
Well, if you're so intrigued, I recently quit my job at a hospital in Manhattan because some jerk told me to.

(MORE)



MADDIE (CONT'D)

He promised to take care of me. He really took care of me, alright, if you get my meaning.

LARRY

A real goon, huh?

MADDIE

I think "psychopath" would be a better description. He turned me into blithering neurotic.

LARRY

Well, as Proust once said, everything great in the world is the product of neurotics.

MADDIE

Oh yeah?

LARRY

My favorite writer.

MADDIE

I'm not familiar with him.

LARRY

French. You should check him out.

MADDIE

French, huh? At least he's not German.

(beat)

Hey, do you remember that episode when Ralph gets the vacuum cleaner stuck to his face?

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Bored, Larry watches an old black and white movie on TV, perhaps Kubrick's "The Killing". Maddie walks into his room.

MADDIE

Hi, Larry. Am I interrupting you?

Glad to see Maddie, Larry clicks off the TV.

LARRY

Not at all! Seeing you is the highlight of my day. My life, even.

As soon as he says it, Larry looks down embarrassed.

MADDIE

That's sweet of you to say.

(beat)

Hey, I'm sorry for laying that silly story on you.

LARRY

Not at all. I wish you'd tell me more, if you don't mind, of course.

MADDIE

You really want to hear about it?

LARRY

Absolutely. I'm interested. And I kinda can tell you want to talk about it, Maddie.

MADDIE

Really? That obvious, huh? Well, I met this guy Jack in the ER a few months ago. In Manhattan. He told me he was some kind of investor, or hedge fund manager.

LARRY

A master of the universe.

MADDIE

Yeah, something like that. In the beginning he treated me like gold. We went to nice places. He even had a chauffeur-type guy who drove us around. Jack paid my rent so I could concentrate on my art.

LARRY

You're an artist, Maddie? What do you do?

MADDIE

Oh, a little painting. Abstract stuff. Oils mostly.

LARRY

You have to show me your stuff sometime.

(beat)

Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt. Go on.

MADDIE

Well, thanks to Jack I was able to quit my job at the hospital and take a class at NYU. I like to paint large canvasses which was impossible in my dinky apartment. Anyway, once Jack decided I belonged to him he changed completely. I discovered later that Jack really wasn't an investor at all. I think he was into some kind of organized crime.

LARRY

Jesus. So you ditched him?

MADDIE

No. I'm ashamed to say it, but I stayed with him.

(beat)

As strange as it may sound it wasn't until he told me about how he tormented someone else that I finally realized how horrible he really was.

LARRY

Interesting. What did he do?

MADDIE

He liked to play sadistic pranks on a guy who picked up tickets at OTB. A stooper is what he called him.

(beat)

Jack had his ass-kissing buddy, Dougie, accidentally...

(Quotes with fingers)

... "spill" hot coffee on the guy's neck. That's the kind of cruel bastard Jack is.

LARRY

(Stammering)

D-d-dougie?

MADDIE

Yeah, sounds like a bratty schoolboy, doesn't it?

LARRY

(Distracted)

Huh? Yeah, a bratty schoolboy. Terrible. I bet Jack wasn't too happy when you blew him off.

MADDIE

Uh uh. He refused to leave me alone so I threatened him with a knife. Can believe that?

LARRY

(Alarmed)

You did?

MADDIE

I think I might have cut him. It happened so fast. I ran out of my own apartment.

LARRY

Good God, Maddie! You mean you actually used the knife? You better be careful. Vi... uh, Jack might come looking for you.

MADDIE

No kidding.

LARRY

(Disturbed)

My god, the thought of you in trouble with a psycho like that--

MADDIE

--You're a sweetie Larry to worry about me like that. It makes me feel good.

She caresses Larry's face which is pained with concern for Maddie's well-being.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I'll be careful, Larry, I promise.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Ray kicks a prone muscular Black Man - the Coon - as Vic stands by smoking a cigarette. Dougie holds a pistol aimed at the Black Man. The Black Man tries to shield himself from the blows. After a moment, Vic signals to Ray who ceases the punishment. Vic bends down to speak to the Black Man but he's unconscious. Vic stands up.

VIC

Fuck, Ray. You musta kicked him in the head.

Breathing heavily, Ray wipes sweat from his brow.

RAY  
 (Huffing)  
 Don't... think so.

Vic bends down again and shakes the Black Man with the hand that Maddie wounded. He grasps his thumb and stands up.

VIC  
 Dougie, do you have even the slightest fuckin' idea where that cunt took off to?

DOUGIE  
 Nothing yet, Vic.

VIC  
 "Nothin' yet." I'm beginnin' to think you're not tryin' hard enough. Understand? Put in some fuckin' effort, for Chrissake. Stretch your limited imagination.

The Black Man moans.

VIC (CONT'D)  
 Put that pistol on his kneecap. Time to amp up the negotiations.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY

After performing a cursory inspection on Larry's ass, the Surgeon nods optimistically. As the Surgeon walks out he passes Maddie who comes into Larry's room with some papers. She hands them to Larry.

MADDIE  
 Here's what they gave me at the employment office.

LARRY  
 You're a peach, Maddie. I have to get my act together. I don't want to sound like a dilettante, but I wasn't cut out to work at a diner.

MADDIE  
 There's nothing wrong with--

LARRY  
 --I have skills, Maddie. Believe me. I'm not what you think I am.

MADDIE

Larry--

LARRY

--In the past couple of years I let myself go. No excuses, really. I... I'm angry and ashamed about it.

MADDIE

Larry, you don't--

LARRY

--Please, Maddie. I want to redeem myself. I want to start over.

MADDIE

Yes.

LARRY

Do you believe me?

MADDIE

Of course. Why wouldn't I?

LARRY

Can you help me with these forms?

MADDIE

Sure.

Maddie picks up a form and scans it.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

What's your social?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Larry and Maddie, who wears street clothes, watch TV. When Larry falls asleep, Maddie starts reading a copy of Marcel Proust's famous "Remembrance of Things Past"

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY

Maddie pulls open the curtain around Larry's bed. A Nurse bathes naked Larry. Maddie expresses shock as does Larry. Maddie hurriedly closes the curtain and retreats.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Maddie and Larry laugh. She pantomimes opening the curtain and feigning shock. She combs his hair and he touches her hand.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maddie stands at the foot of Larry's bed. She holds a large black portfolio from which she pulls a photograph of one of her paintings and holds it up for Larry.

LARRY

Wow. An explosion of colors. It kind of reminds me of Kandinsky.

MADDIE

Really? You think so?

Maddie holds up another photo.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

This is something I finished right before I split up with Jack.

LARRY

Hmmm. Greys and blacks. I can see some anger in there. How big is the actual painting?

MADDIE

Eight by ten.

LARRY

Really? You jammed a lot of detail into a such a small space.

MADDIE

It's eight by ten feet.

LARRY

Oh. Kinda like "Guernica".

MADDIE

How do you know so much about art, Larry?

LARRY

I used to work at a publishing company... at least until the recession and the internet killed me. We did a lot of big coffee table art books.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

(Dejected)

I was... yeah, it was interesting.

Maddie puts the portfolio down on the bed. She studies Larry's sullen face.

MADDIE

Larry, what happened to you? Why did someone attack you like that?

Larry demurs then answers slowly.

LARRY

A senseless random act of violence, I guess.

MADDIE

I just can't imagine how someone could be so cruel to do such a thing to a total stranger. I mean, even Jack couldn't do something that horrible.

Larry smiles wanly.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Hey. Listen to me - Miss Downer. You must be excited to get out of here next week. I'm so glad for you.

LARRY

Yeah. It'll be good to get out. Get back to my elegant apartment by the tracks and resume unemployment. Should be fun pounding the pavement with a bag of shit hanging off my side.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Maddie. I shouldn't have said that.

(beat)

Anyway, I have you to thank for my speedy recovery. All the time you've spent with me - well, I just want to say thank you. Without you I'd probably be in the ICU dying of morbid thoughts.

MADDIE

You'll do fine, Larry. Your luck's going to change. I know it. You're a good person.

(MORE)



MADDIE (CONT'D)

Maybe I can help you, y'know, after you get discharged.

LARRY

Are you a good cook? I'm dying to eat something that requires a knife and fork.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY

Larry lies in bed with his eyes closed. Suddenly he sniffs the air. He smiles and licks his lips. Maddie walks around the curtain holding a wrapped burger.

MADDIE

Room service, Mr. Greco. No tipping allowed - just don't tell the doctor I snuck it in.

LARRY

Oh my, what a surprise. I promise to chew each bite sixty times at least.

Maddie unwraps the burger and puts it on a plate. Larry lies back and closes his eyes again.

LARRY (CONT'D)

(Smacking his lips)

Mmm, you're the greatest, Maddie. Will you marry me?

MADDIE

Sure... I mean, uh... Geez, Larry, I'm sorry.

Maddie turns away.

LARRY

Please, Maddie. Don't be sorry. I'm not talking about, y'know--

MADDIE

--Would you like some water, Larry?

LARRY

You read my mind, Madeleine.

Maddie walks away. Larry bites lovingly into the greasy burger, juice running down his chin.

CLOSE UP - LARRY CHEWING

LARRY (V.O.)

No sooner had the griddled beef touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body. All at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory. I had ceased to feel mediocre, accidental, mortal.

BACK TO SCENE

Maddie returns to Larry's bedside with a glass of cloudy water and studies for a moment the serene smile spread across his kind face.

LARRY

I really like you, Maddie.

(beat)

Would you consider, y'know, after I get out of here, y'know, going out--

MADDIE

--Yes, Larry, I'd be glad to go out with you. How's the burger?

INT. VIC'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Vic watches TV from his sofa.

SOUND - DOORBELL

RAY (O.S.)

It's me, Vic.

VIC

It's unlocked.

Ray steps up behind Vic.

RAY

Ready to go, Vic?

VIC

In a min--

LIEN (O.S.)

--Will you please untie me? Now!  
I have to pee bad!

VIC

Untie her, will ya, Ray?

Ray walks O.C. The TV station begins broadcasting the New York State Lottery drawing.

YOLANDA VEGA

(On TV)

Welcome to the New York Lottery for December 14th. I'm Cho-LAWN-da BAY-ga! Tonight's Lotto jackpot is... forty-five MEEL-yone dollars! Tonight's drawing is audited by an official of KPMG, with proceeds supporting New York State education.

VIC

Yeah, sure.

On the TV, YOLANDA VEGA watches numbered balls fall from a clear automatic mixer machine. A ball numbered '36' drops into the tray.

YOLANDA VEGA

(On TV)

The first number is... 36.

Another ball drops.

YOLANDA VEGA (CONT'D)

(On TV)

The second number is... 16.

Ray returns.

VIC

She didn't piss in my bed did she?

RAY

Almost. You ready to go?

VIC

Yeah. What time does it start?

RAY

8:30.

Vic stands and stretches. He holds the TV clicker.

VIC

Gonna be a long night.

YOLANDA VEGA (O.S.)

(On TV)

Tonight's winning Lotto numbers  
are... 8, 15, 16, 33, 36 and 43.  
Thank you and good night.

Vic points the clicker at the TV, then hesitates. He studies the winning Lotto numbers displayed on the TV screen: 8, 15, 16, 33, 36 and 43. Suddenly he spins toward Ray.

VIC

God Damn! I think some of those  
are the same numbers on Ajax's  
ticket.

RAY

Can't be.

Vic opens his wallet, extracts the receipt and glances back and forth between it at the TV.

VIC

Fuckin' A! They match exactly!  
Sonofabitch. That goddamn ticket  
is worth 45 mil. We gotta get it  
back, Ray. Right fuckin' now!

RAY

Get it back from where?

VIC

Listen. I put the ticket in Ajax's  
shirt pocket that night. I bet the  
morgue still has Ajax's body and  
his clothes. We go there and claim  
it all. Nothin' to it.

RAY

C'mon, Vic. That's a million to  
one shot. They must've buried his  
ass by now.

VIC

Maybe. Maybe not. He had no  
family that I ever heard of. Who  
would've claimed that loser?

(beat)

Shit, Ray, the payoff is 45 mil. I  
ain't passin' up a chance like that  
- we're checkin' it out. Get the  
car. Gotta pay a visit to that  
toilet-jockey Freddie. Find out  
what morgue they took that fuckin'  
stooper to.

INT. OTB PARLOR - NIGHT

Vic and Ray barge into the OTB parlor, scan the room, spot Freddie near the back and march directly for him. Freddie is shocked to see the pair of thugs.

FREDDIE  
Wh-what's up, fellas?

VIC  
What morgue did they take Ajax to?

FREDDIE  
I, uh, hmmm. I'm trying to remember, Vic. It was a while ago.

Freddie shuffles his feet hesitantly.

RAY  
It wasn't that long ago, fuckface. Try harder. How many morgues can there be?

FREDDIE  
I'm trying to remember.

A long pause.

VIC  
Ajax ain't dead, is he? The news assholes on the radio got it wrong, didn't they?

After a moment spent with a guileless look on his face, Freddie shakes his head like a child caught in a lie. Vic grabs Freddie by the throat.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Where the fuck is he!?

Gagging, Freddie struggles against Vic's grip. His speech is garbled by choking sounds. Finally, Vic lets go. Freddie COUGHS and rubs his neck.

FREDDIE  
Hos... pital.

VIC  
What fuckin' hospital?

FREDDIE  
Don't know.

VIC  
 You're comin' with us, you  
 motherfuckin' liar.

Ray takes Freddie by the arm and the three men walk toward the exit.

INT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - DAY

Ray drives, Vic sits in the passenger seat.

RAY  
 I guess Freddie really didn't know  
 what hospital Ajax is in.

VIC  
 Our best chance is one of the  
 hospitals near that swamp. Take  
 the Holland Tunnel.

RAY  
 Risky, Vic, risky. Ajax'll call us  
 out the second we walk in.

VIC  
 I'm surprised at you Ray. Forty-  
 five mil is on the line. All you  
 gotta do is shove a sock in his  
 hole and grab the ticket. Two  
 seconds.

Ray shrugs.

RAY  
 The Raritan Bay Medical Center is  
 the logical place he'd be.

Vic makes a phone call.

VIC  
 (Into phone)  
 Give me the number for the Raritan  
 Bay Medical Center.  
 (beat)  
 Fuck yeah, connect me.  
 (beat)  
 I'd like to talk to my...  
 employee. Ajax, uh, Larry Greco.  
 Is he there?  
 (beat)  
 He is?

Vic hangs up the phone.

VIC (CONT'D)

Okay Ray, let's get over there toot sweet. I'll bet you ten grand the ticket is still in his shirt pocket. Sittin' in a drawer right next to his bed.

RAY

Could be.

VIC

Still is. I have a good feeling. Stop by the gift shop first and buy some flowers.

INT. HOSPITAL/LARRY'S ROOM - DAY

Larry lies on his side in bed, facing away from the door. He rolls over and sees Ray standing tall by the bed holding a bouquet of flowers. Larry is shocked by the presence of his nemesis. Larry goes for the nurse's alarm but Ray pulls it out of Larry's reach.

RAY

Guten Morgen, Ajax. How's it hangin'? Or should I say, is it hangin'? Shit, I can't believe you're still alive. You really are stronger than dirt.

Larry tries to scream but Ray covers his mouth with his hand. Ray drops the flowers, produces a pistol and sticks it in Larry's face.

RAY (CONT'D)

Uh, uh, uh. Contrary to what you might think, I will not miss you from this distance. Besides, I'm not here to fuck you up. I just came by to pick up something that belongs to Vic.

Larry's eyes suggest confusion. Ray slowly removes his hand from Larry's mouth, slips the pistol into his waistband and rummages in the drawer next to Larry's bed.

LARRY

Look, Ray. Vic took everything from me. I can't even shit right anymore. There's nothing here.

Ray takes out a shirt from the drawer and pulls the Lotto ticket from the breast pocket. He holds it up for Larry to see.

RAY  
Nothing... except this ticket.

LARRY  
What?

RAY  
You don't know? It's a forty-five million dollar winner, pal. Your lucky numbers came up again last night. Amazing. Vic was right. I guess I'll have to fuck you up after all. Don't move, du hurensohn.

Ray produces a strap from his pocket and stretches it with both hands. He reaches toward Larry's throat, but Larry rolls off the bed in a panic, disconnecting the IV line, sounding an ALARM. Ray takes another step toward the bed, then deciding other wise abruptly turns and walks briskly from the room, stuffing the strap in his pocket.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Shit.

INT. HOSPITAL/HALLWAY - DAY

Ray walks calmly but quickly down the hallway and around the corner where he encounters Maddie walking toward him. Maddie is shocked to see Ray.

RAY  
Well, well. Maddie the verrückte. Vic'll be glad to see you. He's been lookin' all over for you.

MADDIE  
Fuck you, Nazi.

Maddie tries to pass by Ray but he grabs her and pokes his pistol into her side.

RAY  
Shut up and be nice. We're leaving. Verstehst du?



EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Ray escorts Maddie to the waiting Mercedes. Vic sits in the passenger seat with the window down.

RAY  
Got the ticket, Vic. You were right.

Ray hands the ticket to Vic, and then opens the back door.

RAY (CONT'D)  
Here's something else for you, Vic.

Ray shoves Maddie in and slams the door. Vic leans over the seat and faces Maddie.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

VIC  
Well, isn't this a treat. You look great Maddie. Let's see, last time I saw you, you nearly cut off my thumb. That hurt. But I'm gonna let you make it up to me. You know what bukkake is, doncha bitch?

Ray jumps in the driver's seat.

VIC (CONT'D)  
Let's go Ray.

Ray starts the car.

EXT. MERCEDES - DAY

Larry, dressed in a hospital gown, appears outside Ray's open window and splashes the contents of his colostomy bag onto Ray's face. Ray screams and gags. Vic recoils as well. Larry opens the car door and pulls the debilitated Ray to the pavement. Ray's pistol falls out which Larry recovers. He hops into the idling car.

INT. MERCEDES - DAY

VIC  
What the fuck?

Larry points the pistol at Vic.

LARRY  
Shut up, Prick. Are you alright,  
Maddie?

Maddie nods.

VIC  
You know this bitch?

LARRY  
I said shut up, fucker.

EXT. MERCEDES (TRAVELING) - DAY

Unnoticed by the occupants of the car, Larry backs up the Mercedes over Ray's throat, killing him.

Vic turns in his seat to address both Maddie and Larry.

VIC  
Maddie, have you been bonin' Mr.  
Ajax here? Mr. Dirty Fuckin'  
Stooper?

Maddie looks at Larry quizzically.

MADDIE  
What?

LARRY  
Shut the fuck up.

VIC  
You mean you never told her what  
you do for a livin', Ajax?  
Crawlin' on the floor like a  
cockroach, pickin' up worthless  
tickets, all that shit?

MADDIE  
What?

LARRY  
That's history, Prick.

MADDIE  
You're Ajax, Larry?

LARRY  
Not anymore. I'm starting over,  
Maddie.

(To Vic)  
(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

Maddie and I are starting over together, Prick.

VIC

Yeah, right. No way is this fine piece of ass gonna hook up with a lowlife scumbag like you. You don't even have enough coin to keep her in tampons, bastard.

LARRY

I have 45 million dollars.

VIC

Like hell you do.

MADDIE

What are you talking about Larry?

LARRY

We won the Lotto, Maddie. Forty-five million. Vic tried to steal the ticket from me, but he's gonna give it back. Right, Vic?

VIC

Pull the goddamn car over right fuckin' now, Ajax, or I'll rip you yet another asshole.

MADDIE

Oh my god, Vic! That was you?

VIC

Shut up. Stop the car, Ajax.

LARRY

Right after you hand the Lotto ticket to Maddie, nice and slow.

VIC

Ain't happenin'.

LARRY

Hand over the ticket!

VIC

Stop the fuckin' car!

LARRY

I'm through taking orders from you. I'm calling the shots now.

VIC

You'll always do what I say because I'm better than you. I own you, motherfucker.

LARRY

Stop being a prick just once, Vic. Give me back my ticket and let Maddie and me move on in peace

VIC

What makes you think she even wants to be with you, asshole? Right, Maddie? Why would you go for this fuck-up when you could be with me?

Vic holds up the Lotto ticket

VIC (CONT'D)

This 45 mil could buy a lot of happiness, babe. You know Ajax here would just waste it.

LARRY

Give her the ticket or I'll blow a hole in your knee for starters

Larry aims the pistol at Vic's knee.

VIC

You ain't gonna shoot nothin', pussy. C'mon Maddie, dump this loser and come back to me. Tell Ajax here you admire his perseverance but you're comin' with me. Tell him.

MADDIE

Larry, I admire your perseverance. I'm going with you.

Momentarily Larry looks lovingly at Maddie, and in that moment Vic lunges for the pistol in Larry's hand. They wrestle as Larry tries to maintain control of the Mercedes. The car swerves in and out of the lane. Vic gets the pistol, and as he levels it at Larry's head Maddie gouges Vic's face with her fingernails. The gun fires, blowing out the windshield. The Mercedes crashes into an abutment, the airbags deploy and the trunk pops open. For a moment each passenger lies still. Bloodied, Larry looks over at an unconscious Vic, then back at Maddie who is dazed.

LARRY

Are you OK, Maddie? Can you move?

MADDIE

I think so.

Larry reaches over and snatches the Lotto ticket from Vic's hand. The pistol remains in his right hand.

LARRY

Let's get out of here. Fast.

Maddie exits as does Larry. As Maddie runs around behind the Mercedes she peers into the open trunk where Freddie's dead body lies with a bullet hole in the eye.

MADDIE

Jesus God!

Larry runs to Maddie and likewise sees Freddie's dead body. He puts his arm around Maddie.

LARRY

Oh, Shit. Poor Freddie.

MADDIE

You know him?

LARRY

Yeah.

INT. CONDO - DAY

INSERT: TITLE CARD "ONE YEAR LATER"

Larry sits in a lounge chair on the veranda of a spacious condo overlooking a golf course. He reads the "Palm Beach Post". Spotting an item, Larry writes a note on a pad of paper. Maddie walks in wearing a smock spattered with paint.

MADDIE

Morning, dear. How you feeling?

LARRY

Any better and it'd be a sin.  
How's the painting going?

MADDIE

I'm starting to panic. All my stuff has to be into the jury a week from Monday. I don't know if I can finish it all in time.

LARRY  
Oh, you'll make it. It serves you right though for painting a canvas the size of a billboard.

MADDIE  
Yeah, well...

LARRY  
Don't forget, we have a golf lesson at 2.

MADDIE  
I know. I'll be ready.

Maddie kisses Larry and walks out. When Larry sees that Maddie is gone, he picks up the phone and dials.

LARRY  
(Into phone)  
Western Union? Yeah, is it still possible to send a telegram.  
(beat)  
It is? Wow. Can I send one to a person in prison?  
(beat)  
Inmate Services? OK, I'll hold.

INT. PRISON REC ROOM - DAY

Dressed in prison garb, Vic sits in a wheelchair at a table watching TV. Other INMATES watch TV, play ping-pong and read magazines. A PRISON GUARD arrives with a handful of mail and hands a piece to Vic.

VIC  
A telegram? I didn't know you could still send 'em.

PRISON GUARD  
Neither did I.

The Prison Guard hands the telegram to Vic and moves O.C. toward other inmates. Vic reads.

CLOSE-UP - THE TELEGRAM CONTENTS

LARRY (V.O.)  
Dear Prick; Recommend #7 longshot in 9th at Gulfstream Park. Could payoff bigtime. Worth a sniff. Good luck, fucker.  
(MORE)

LARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

See you in hell.  
A. Jackson Yurface

BACK TO SCENE

VIC

Yurface? What kind of fuckin' name  
is that?

Curious, Vic rolls to a table upon which a pile of magazines and newspapers lie. He rifles through the papers until he finds a copy of the "NY Post". He opens it to the sports section, runs his finger down the page, then stops.

CLOSE-UP - NY POST SPORTS PAGE

Vic's finger is positioned on the heading "Gulfstream Park". He moves his finger down to the 9th race details. ECU of the name of the #7 horse - "Stronger Than Dirt".

BACK TO SCENE

Still puzzled, Vic skims the telegram again.

VIC (CONT'D)

(Mumbling)

A. Jackson Yurface.

(Louder)

Ajax in Your Face.

(Screaming)

I don't fuckin' believe it!

Vic crumples the newspaper in an apoplectic fit.

VIC (CONT'D)

That motherfucker!

EXT. GOLF DRIVING RANGE - DAY

Maddie and Larry stand on the tee box of the Golf Driving Range. They face the yardage markers in the distance. Maddie wears a sexy short skirt and short-sleeve golf shirt. She takes some practice swings. Larry stoops down and tees up a golf ball, lingering in this position for a moment, a smile on his face. Then Larry stands, addresses the ball, takes a big swing and drives it straight and far.

FADE OUT.

THE END