

THE STOOPER

Written by

Herb Schultz

69 Main Street
Saugerties, NY 12477
(212) 242-4520
herbschultz@majorterata.com

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. Shit, I'm the one that got fucked in the ass. After fifteen goddamn years I got the boot from a big publishing company in Jersey.

PABLO

What'd you do? Steal a paperclip?

LARRY

Very fucking funny, Pedro.

(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 almost as many rodents as 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? Does he find enough winners to make it worthwhile?

PABLO

Hell yeah. And my name ain't Pedro, old man, it's is Pablo. Shit, you got the Alzheimer's?

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! Bastard
 guarantees me the nine horse wins.
 I should kill him and his whole
 retarded family.

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 is that fucking ticket!?

Larry reaches down and scoops up a handful of discarded tickets from the floor and starts scanning tickets through a self-check 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, PLAYER #11, PLAYER #2 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 in inattentive.

VIC
 (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. Player #1 and Player #2 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. Deal me out.

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 hand only to be beaten by Vic.

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 make a better hand, then resigns, tossing his cards on the table.

EYEBROW

Yeah. Next time use some Vaseline.

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

VIC

Where the hell is Dougie?

PLAYER #1

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!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Everyone rushes into the Alley. Vic runs ahead and sees his sidekick writhing on the pavement, bleeding and convulsing.

VIC

Shit. Call an ambulance, Ray!

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT (LATER)

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

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 two chipped 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 like 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

Oh! You startled me.

(beat)

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

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

DOUGIE

Well, nice to meet you, Miss Environmental whatever.

MADDIE

Maddie.

DOUGIE

I'm Dougie. Hey, I bet you could help me. My shirt got thrown 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 back anyway? The hospital will give you a clean tee shirt before you leave.

DOUGIE

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

Maddie hesitates.

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?

(beat)

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.

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 one of these days, 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 Vic's 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 9:00.

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.

FREDDIE
You been coming here for six months now. How much have you made stooping so far?

LARRY
If I tell you the IRS might confiscate my Gulfstream.

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?

LARRY
He's just a mean motherfucker.

FREDDIE
Yeah, but he particularly enjoys
busting your balls. What'd you do
to deserve his shit?

LARRY
Maybe it was that time he tripped
over me and got shut out of placing
some 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 time I
forgot to flush. Some dude dropped
a deuce and splashed lye on his
asshole.

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.
 (MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

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. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

The Mercedes pulls curb side in front of the STEAKHOUSE. Ray
gets out and opens the door for Vic and Maddie. Vic and
Maddie walk in. 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.
(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

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.

INT. OTB PARLOR - DAY

Vic and Dougie walk into the OTB parlor.

VIC

That Maddie is a hot number, man.
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. Put you in an oven.

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

LARRY

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

You got any new talent?

(beat)

Lien, huh? Fresh?

(beat)

Perfect. You know where to send her. Make it 8 o'clock.

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.

Lien enters.

VIC (CONT'D)

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 clinks Lien's glass.

VIC (CONT'D)

You Chinese?

LIEN

Vietnamese.

VIC

From '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 pulls Lien close.

VIC
Hell yeah, I party.

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.

MADDIE

Vic. What are you doing here? I thought you were going to Atlantic City today.

Vic enters the Apartment.

INT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Vic doffs his coat and tosses it across a 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

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 the 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 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 for Asian chicks falls out of his pocket behind the toilet bowl.

Vic 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 all your 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 9:00.

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.

Larry is impressed. 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, then changes his mind 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. He's even paying my rent now 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

Classy.

MADDIE

I protested - mildly, believe me - and Vic got kinda pissed off at me.
(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

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

Vic mentioned it in passing a couple times. I didn't even know how to spell it, but I eventually found out what it was on Google.

LISA

You think your boyfriend wants you to let his buddies do that? That's pretty extreme.

MADDIE

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

LISA

Who doesn't? The next time Vic makes a plan, tell him you're only interested in a romantic night 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 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

I wanna buy 700 Lotto tickets.

KOREAN CLERK

Go away. I too busy for bullshit.

LARRY

It's not bullshit.

Larry takes the money from his sock and plops the wad on the counter. The Korean Clerk is taken aback.

KOREAN CLERK

Okey-dokey sir. Tell me your numbers.

LARRY

Just print me out a batch. My carpal tunnel is a bitch.

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

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 of them. 700, sir.

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 something for the effort.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sitting at his table, Larry peruses some bills. He moves to 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. 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 with trepidation 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.

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?

Larry 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 neighborhood BAR. The BARTENDER is the only other person in the place. Larry fiddles with the shot glass before lifting it to his lips and taking 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.

The Bartender mops up spills on the bar with a rag.

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

C'mon.

Irritated, the Bartender grabs a glass and wrings out the rag into it. He slides the glass toward Larry.

BARTENDER

On the house.

Larry guzzles it, and then tumbles off the stool and falls to his hands and knees. He crawls 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.

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 Day 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 the 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.

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 money on Volponi.

VIC

Of course I did. 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 just don't have your touch.

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 heard 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 cruel 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
Did I say that?

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 over there, 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'
nothin' but 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
I'm leaving, you bastard!

VIC
C'mon. It was just a goof.

MADDIE
Take me home - now!

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 and pulls out a paper. He scans the pages 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
 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 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
 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
 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
 Ah, c'mon, Maddie. Don't be sore.

MADDIE
 What do you want?

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

MADDIE
 Don't. I'm not up to it.

VIC
 Don't say don't, Maddie.

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

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

Vic hangs up the phone.

MADDIE
 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.)
 Hilarious.

VIC

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

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"?

(MORE)

MADDIE (CONT'D)

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 Doogie the pet monkey 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?
(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

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 for the time being.

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 in front of Lisa's Apartment. 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.

FREDDIE

I hope you're joking.

(MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Y'know, the mixed grill ain't that bad. Better than the chicken salad at Applebees.

Freddie chuckles.

LARRY

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 in public, 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 some 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

After I talk to 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.

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?
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

Hello?

INTERCUT with Larry's apartment.

LARRY

Freddie? Larry. What's going on there? How're you doin'?

FREDDIE

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

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

Laugh now while you can, my man. 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

Wow. I'm flattered.

FREDDIE

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

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

FREDDIE

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

LARRY

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

Nice. What time?

LARRY

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

FREDDIE

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.

Hearing Freddie's voice, Larry turns around.

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. As Proust once
said, 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 kinda 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, Lare, tell me how it works.

LARRY
Uh, sure. I bought 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
 Owwww! 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 bogus 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.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

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? Ajax was carrying a wallet.

Ray scratches the back of his head like a fool.

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. 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 and Freddie speak to each other on the phone.

LARRY

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

Uh, yeah, Larry. What's up?

LARRY

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

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

The hospital. Vic tried to kill me.

FREDDIE

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

LARRY

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

Why don't you call the cops?

LARRY

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

Yeah, I guess you're right.

LARRY

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

I don't know, Larry.

LARRY
 You don't know!? C'mon, man, just
 tell the fucker I'm dead. How hard
 is that, Fred?

FREDDIE
 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
 And you believed that? Fuck,
 forget it. Just keep that
 psychopath away from me. Let me
 heal in peace.

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

LARRY
 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
 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. 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

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

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 cut him hand. 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.
(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.
(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

(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. 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.
(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

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...
(MORE)

VIC (CONT'D)

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.

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 otherwise, 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.

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.

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

Stronger than dirt. 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
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.

Vic reads the telegram.

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. 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