

"What's the Big Idea?"

by

Steve Cleary

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415.264.0761
steve@stevecleary.com

FADE IN:

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

A swish, sunlit office in Hollywood. Profanity-laden gangster rap fills the room.

A pair of man-children play a video game on the couch:

DICKIE (30), a short, nice kid from back east, bobs and swerves as he manipulates the controls.

His colleague, QUINCY (30), a bit taller, athletic, with a disarming smile, hovers over the edge of his seat.

QUINCY
Eat lead, punkass!

DICKIE
Quincy! On your flank!

He sets his controller down, rips open a bag of potato chips and huffs it.

QUINCY
Ten o'clock, Dickie!

Dickie shoves the chips at Quincy and grabs his controller. Quincy scarfs down a handful.

DICKIE
Dine on this, brain eater! Oww!

He massages his jaw.

QUINCY
What's wrong? You hit?

DICKIE
No, this friggin' tooth's killing me.

QUINCY
I'll yank it out for you.

DICKIE
Yeah, that's not all you wanna yank there, Liberace!

They play-fight elbowing each other. A knock at the door.

QUINCY

Go away!

They continue playing. The door opens. Greasy STAN (early 30s), well-dressed, enters with a smarmy swagger.

STAN

Really guys?

QUINCY

Get lost, *Satan!* We're working here!

DICKIE

Yeah, take a hike, *Stalin!* You're messing up our research!

STAN

Some research. Mr. Levine's waiting-

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Stan! I said get those two turd polishers out here! Now!

STAN

... on you guys.

Dickie and Quincy look at each other and set their controllers down.

DICKIE

The staff meeting!

QUINCY

Oh shit!

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dickie and Quincy rush in. Quincy's attire is business casual, but his waistband hangs low, hip-hop style.

MR. LEVINE (late 50s, rotund), taps his fingers at the end of the table. He swigs from a Maalox bottle.

MR. LEVINE

Nice of you to join us. And pull your pants up, Quincy. This isn't North County.

Quincy adjusts his shirt-tail and belt as he and Dickie look for seats between INTERNS and other STAFF.

DICKIE
Sorry we're late Mr. Levine. We,
uh...

QUINCY
Our conference call ran over.

Dickie finds an empty seat. Quincy motions for an INTERN
next to him to get up.

QUINCY
(sotto)
Thanks for keeping my seat warm.

The intern scuttles off and Quincy sits.

STAN
Yeah, ran over some zombies.

MR. LEVINE
Never mind that.

STAN
Uncle Ira, they were playing video
games on company time.

DICKIE
Shut up, *Stab*.
(to Mr. Levine)
Sir, Zombie Conquistador is on our
dev slate.

QUINCY
Yeah and we just made it to Level
nine!

MR. LEVINE
Never mind, boys.

STAN
You guys are level nine shitheads.

The interns snicker.

QUINCY
You're a level ninety douchebag!

STAN
Good one. That term's so played
out.

QUINCY
Coming from the guy who still wears
cros on his days off.

STAN
They breath. Talentless hacks.

DICKIE
Philistine.

MR. LEVINE
Boys...

STAN
Has-beens.

DICKIE
Sycophant.

MR. LEVINE
Boys...

STAN
Choads.

QUINCY
Bootlickin' lickspittle.

Mr. Levine slams his Maalox bottle.

MR. LEVINE
BOYS! For crying out loud, shut
your holes!

The boys all compose themselves, clear throats, etc.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)
Christ, it's like Romper Room in
here.

QUINCY
Sorry sir.

He sneaks a bird at Stan. Stan scowls back.

MR. LEVINE
Now listen up. We're in a crisis
here. Our last picture, *Prostitute
Teacher*, bombed and now we're
broke. We're all facing the
chopping block.

DICKIE
The chopping block?

QUINCY
But we're about to unlock the
Francisco Pizarro zombie pack!

MR. LEVINE
Zombies are out! Christ, if I see
one more zombie script come across
my desk, I'll eat your brains
myself!

Dickie and Quincy exchange grimaced looks. Mr. Levine pops a
Tums.

MR. LEVINE
We need a hit. All the YA, comic
books, and video games have been
picked clean and every decent
writer in this town is booked into
the next decade. We have to go into
the spec pile.

DICKIE
The spec pile?

MR. LEVINE
Yeah, the spec pile. You two check
the tracking boards. Check the
contests. Check Scriptomania for
Christ's sake.

QUINCY
Scriptomania? Last years winner was
Mr. Rogers: Neighborly Assassin!

MR. LEVINE
Yeah, don't remind me. We lost that
one in a bidding war.

He pops another pill from a medicine case. Quincy lowers his
head.

DICKIE
Even unsigned writers?

MR. LEVINE
I don't care where they come from!
Get me a tent-pole four-Q by the
holidays or you'll both be next on
Mr. Rogers' hit list!

DICKIE
What about Stan?

QUINCY
Yeah, is he still pushing that gay
James Bond idea?
(heavy European accent)
My name is *Eetzkak*.

DICKIE
(gay Sean Connery accent)
I must be dreaming!

The table cracks up. Stan smirks.

MR. LEVINE
Don't worry about Stan, he's
already got something else in the
hopper.
(to Stan)
Keep up the good work, son. Don't
make my brother regret calling in
that favor.

STAN
Yes sir.

Dickie and Quincy hem and haw as they rise with the rest of
the staff.

MR. LEVINE
Now make Silvergreens great again,
boys!

They grouse at each other as they exit.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY

Dickie and Quincy walk down the hallway.

QUINCY
The holidays? That's only three
months!

DICKIE
Dude, try two. Levine's Jewish and
Hanukkah's early this year.

QUINCY
Shit. Then what the hell are we
sup-

They approach a receptionist's desk. Typing at her keyboard is an artsy, rockabilly gal, HAZEL (20s), in secretary glasses.

DICKIE
Aw Quincy, not now.

QUINCY
Gimme a minute.
(to Hazel)
Hey Hazel.

She doesn't look up and resumes typing.

HAZEL
Hey fellas. You heard the man.
Hanukkah's early this year. Better
get crackin'.

They continue walking.

DICKIE
Shit, does she have the conference
room bugged, or what?

He pats his chest and looks about himself.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
Does she have *us* bugged?

He checks around Quincy's belt. Quincy lets out a wistful sigh.

QUINCY
God, Levine's new secretary is just
so... arty.

Dickie tugs Quincy's sleeve.

DICKIE
C'mon, snap out of it! I can't lose
this job! Penny and I just renewed
our lease!

QUINCY
You can move back in with me. We'll
work at El Pollo Loco during the
day and shoot movies on our phones
at night.

DICKIE
Yeah, between dumpster-diving runs.

QUINCY

I fail to see how people can throw away a perfectly good tostada bowl.

DICKIE

Come on, Paco. We got trabajo to do.

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A modest bungalow in North Hollywood. Dickie sits at the table loaded with Thai take-out studying his iPad.

His girlfriend, PENNY (mid 20s), petite and fit in nurse scrubs, clears the table of containers, etc.

PENNY

Why don't you just turn in one of your own scripts?

DICKIE

Sweetie, my department only finds material. It doesn't create it. Besides, my scripts don't have any car chases or explosions.

Penny puts a couple of containers in the fridge.

PENNY

Oh. I'll never understand how those corporate studios work. Such a shame with all those writing contests you won.

DICKIE

Well they got my foot in the door.

Penny returns to the table and gathers forks and spoon.

PENNY

Yeah, with Quincy's help. Now look at you -- late for dinner in your monkey suit.

DICKIE

Believe me, if this monkey could spend his days in shorts and flip flops, he would.

Penny drops the cutlery in the sink.

PENNY

You guys were gonna take over this town. Whatever happened to the scribe I fell in love with?

Dickie sets his tablet down and stares off.

DICKIE

He learned that honest stories rooted in reality won't put asses in theater seats.

Penny returns to the table and collects dirty plates.

PENNY

Well that's too bad. My ass loves your stories. How long do you have?

DICKIE

Till the holidays. And by that I mean the one with the dreidels and latkes.

Penny comes around and nuzzles up to Dickie.

PENNY

Hmm, maybe Hanukkah would be a good time for us to talk about, you know, making things kosher?

She bats her eyelashes and flexes her left-hand fingers. Dickie doesn't look up.

DICKIE

Sweetie, you know I don't do kosher. I had a bacon cheeseburger today.

He resumes tapping and swiping his tablet. Penny pouts and drops the dishes in the sink. Dickie looks up and watches her exit.

He looks to the bookshelf next to the doorway. On a shelf sits an old shoebox labeled "Dickie's Scripts".

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Oy vey.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie and Quincy sit at adjacent couches, each leafing through a script. The coffee table in front of them is loaded with piles of screenplays.

DICKIE

What's the coverage of that one?

QUINCY

Pass. Dialogue's too on-the-nose and second act's too short. Yours?

DICKIE

Another pass. Dialogue's too off-the-hip and second act's too long.

He tosses the script aside and rubs his jaw.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

This blows.

QUINCY

I'm telling you, get some string and I'll yank it out for you.

He gets up, crosses to the door and tests the hinge.

DICKIE

No thanks. I'm seeing a professional tomorrow. Where you going?

QUINCY

I've been on my ass all morning. I need coffee. Want anything?

DICKIE

Yeah a new job and an icepack. And hurry back.

Dickie picks up another script. Quincy salutes and exits.

QUINCY

Sure thing, boss.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - COPY ROOM

Hazel flings and bangs cabinet doors, closets, etc. in the copy room. Quincy passes by the doorway. A beat, then he backs up.

QUINCY

Hey Hazel. What's with all the racket?

Hazel checks inside a door in the copier then slams it shut. She rushes to another cabinet.

HAZEL

Oh hey. I have to make ten copies of this report for Levine's lunch meeting and we're all out of stupid paper!

QUINCY

Oh.

Quincy dawdles. Hazel checks under a coffee maker.

HAZEL

If it weren't for all the interns around here making copies of their head-shots... and private parts...

Quincy fidgets then his eyes light up. An idea.

QUINCY

Did you try the store room?

HAZEL

The store room?

QUINCY

Yeah, in the basement. Usually higher-ups take new interns there to-

Hazel cocks her head at him.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Never mind. Come on...

He motions for her to come. She throws her hands up and follows.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - BASEMENT

Quincy nods at and rushes past a JANITOR (60s, black) mopping the floor. He opens the door to the:

STORE ROOM

And scrambles through, kicking over several liquor bottles.

HAZEL (O.S.)
What was that?

QUINCY
Erm, you'd better stay put. It's kinda cramped in here.

He moves to a cabinet and flings it open, checks it, and shuts it. He goes to a shelf full of boxes. There's an old dried-up condom lying on it.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Eew!

HAZEL (O.S.)
What's wrong?

QUINCY
Oh nothing, just a dead mouse!

HAZEL (O.S.)
Eew!

He finds a nearby nudie magazine, flings the condom away, and checks inside the box -- nothing.

QUINCY
Dangit.

He spots another box on the lower shelf, cracks the lid, sweeps his arm through the box.

HAZEL (O.S.)
Are you finding anything?

He pulls out a deflated sex doll.

QUINCY
Nothing useful.

HAZEL (O.S.)
Oh, well maybe...

QUINCY

Hold on...

He sees a bankers box and rushes to it. He undoes the string and opens it.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

What the...

He grabs one of its contents, a script, and holds it up: *The Charge on Siegfried Hill*.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Huh.

He drops it back in the box and picks up another.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Quincy?

He flips through it, his eyes widen. He drops it back in and looks at another one.

QUINCY

Oh my God...

HAZEL (O.S.)

Quincy? Hey forget it, I'll just go to Kinko's or something.

Quincy looks to the door. He puts the scripts back and ties the banker's box back up.

QUINCY

Wait! Wait!

He spots another box of fresh paper in the corner.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Bingo!

He checks under the lid, grins, then picks up the box.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Alright! Here's enough paper for a hundred copies of that intern's ass!

He scrambles out the door, kicking the liquor bottles again.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE

Quincy rushes in with the banker's box.

DICKIE

Where were you? My ice pack in there?

QUINCY

No! But this is way cooler!

He shoos the pile of scripts aside and drops the box.

DICKIE

Easy!

Quincy opens the box, pulls out a script and hands it to Dickie.

QUINCY

Check this out!

DICKIE

(reading)

Attack of the Flying Saucers?

QUINCY

Some good old-fashioned sci-fi right there! Look at this one!

Quincy hands him another script.

DICKIE

The Ballad of Johnny Durango?

QUINCY

Uh-huh! A classic western! And this!

Dickie takes another script.

DICKIE

Even Showgirls Get the Blues?

QUINCY

A musical extravaganza!

Dickie drops the script.

DICKIE

Quincy, where'd you get these? They're like a hundred years old.

QUINCY

We optioned them back in the forties and fifties. There was so much good material back then, they couldn't produce it all!

DICKIE

No one's made money on a musical since *Psych Ward Shimmy*.

QUINCY

We ditch the songs!

Quincy picks the script back up.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Look, the guy's a newspaper reporter. We just make him a blogger!

DICKIE

Well that's an upgrade.

QUINCY

His adversary is an industrialist -- we make him a web entrepreneur!

DICKIE

Right, and let me guess, the showgirl becomes a stripper?

QUINCY

Bingo!

Dickie picks up another script and flips through it.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

That one's a war movie. We change the Ardennes to Afghanistan!

DICKIE

Sure, and just swap out Panzers for camels.

He drops the script and picks up another.

QUINCY

Now you're getting it! And that western we just, well, keep it western!

DICKIE

(reading)

*Now look here, ya lousy mugs, I
said scram before you all get the
works, see!*

He tosses the script aside.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Somehow I don't think that's how
they really talked in the old west.

QUINCY

No, man! We keep the story and the
characters and just re-write the
dialogue!

DICKIE

You mean, *I'LL* re-write the
dialogue. And we both know I'm no
good in a room.

QUINCY

Right! We give 'em the ol' Quincy
Dickie combo -- I beat it out...

(jabs)

You write it...

(hook)

Then I pitch it!

(uppercut)

It'll knock their socks off!

Dickie slumps on the couch and massages his jaw.

DICKIE

I don't know...

QUINCY

Ever hear someone say "they don't
make 'em like they used to"? Well
here's our chance to make
Silvergreens great again!

DICKIE

Quincy.

Quincy's smile fades.

QUINCY

But we're a team, Dickie. I feed
the beast, remember?

DICKIE
The beast has been tamed, Quincy.

Dickie rises.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
See you in the morning. I'll be in
late.

Dickie leaves. Quincy flings the script into the box.

QUINCY
Aw nuts.

EXT. BUILDING - MORNING

A basic, brick-face storefront. A HIPSTER (30s) leans against the wall, smoking a hand-rolled cigarette. He's got the artisanal look going: rolled-up sleeves, suspenders, beard, man-bun and twirly mustache.

Dickie walks up and rests against the wall himself.

HIPSTER
What's up.

DICKIE
Hey.

The hipster flicks his butt away.

HIPSTER
Ready?

He leads Dickie through a door.

REVEAL:

Above the door, an ornate stenciling of an open jaw flanked by steampunk dental tools:

"SILVERLAKE MOUTHWORKS"

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The hipster wears a white lab coat and mask, at work on Dickie with a whirring tool.

HIPSTER
I feel for you bro. Of course, I'm not exactly your target market. I prefer the cutting edge shit from the seventies -- back when Hollywood took risks.

DICKIE
(garbled)
Uh-huh.

HIPSTER
Yup. They just doesn't make 'em
like they used to.

The dentist goes in with an extraction tool.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Quincy saunters down the hall. Hazel looks up and beams at him.

HAZEL
Morning!

Quincy makes a hat-tip gesture.

QUINCY
Hiya dollface.

Hazel widens her eyes.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Don't call HR! It's this script I'm
reading. It's got me in an
old-fashioned mood.

Hazel smiles.

HAZEL
In case you hadn't noticed, I'm an
old-fashioned kinda gal.

Quincy leans in on her desk.

QUINCY
Well say, I think you're a peach.
The bees knees, the cat's pajamas!

Hazel giggles.

HAZEL
That'll do. But hey, thanks again
for finding that copy paper. You
really saved my hide, you know.

Quincy smiles back at her.

QUINCY

Don't mention it, sister. Skip it.

Hazel squeaks.

HAZEL

Okay, do another one!

He thinks, then straightens up.

QUINCY

Say sugar... are you rationed?

EXT. CAFE - DAY

A swanky alfresco hot-spot. Dickie slurps on a smoothie and walks along the seated PATRONS.

Stan sees him approach. He's seated with two young adults, much younger-looking than they actually are:

MELISSA (21), who looks like she just won class president, and CALEB (21) with black hoodie, scuffed shoes and missing his skateboard.

STAN

I'd invite you to join us, but it looks like you're off solid foods.

Dickie turns and notices them.

DICKIE

(garbled)

Oh hey Stan. Aren't your kids a little young to be feeding them mimosas?

Stan scoffs.

STAN

Yeah, funny mushmouth. These kids are the hottest meal tickets in town. Melissa here wrote *The Sense Master*.

DICKIE

Haven't heard of that one.

Melissa straightens in her seat and clears her throat.

MELISSA

New York Times best seller
thirty-two weeks running.

DICKIE

Yeah?

Caleb cocks himself up, but barely makes eye contact.

CALEB

It's about a future where society is broken up into legions by the five senses.

Stan gloats. Dickie cocks his head.

DICKIE

I'm sorry. Did you say by senses?

CALEB

Yes, until one girl from the Feel Legion discovers she can see, hear, taste and smell better than anyone else in her education pod.

Melissa glows. Dickie grins back to her.

DICKIE

Well good for you. Excuse me.

He turns to go.

STAN

Caleb's doing the adaptation. We just optioned the rights today.

DICKIE

Let me guess, it's a trilogy?

Melissa and Caleb smile back.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

So not a pentology then? A movie for each sense? No?

The kids cock their heads. Stan sneers at him.

STAN

Levine's put us on the fast track.

Dickie glowers at Stan then looks at the kids.

DICKIE

Welcome to Hollywood. You kids'll fit right in.

He walks off.

STAN
Have fun in the soup line!

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Quincy sits marking up a script with a red pen, grooving to some hip-hop. Dickie charges in.

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)
It's a proven market, Dickie! The
Sense Master is gonna be a hit! I
sense it!

Dickie slams the door and heads to the couches.

DICKIE
Alright, Mr. Pitch Man. A comedy
first, no supernatural shit and
keep this on the D-L.

He goes to the monitor and disassembles the video game.
Quincy drops the script.

QUINCY
You mean...

DICKIE
You heard me. Dust those old
scripts off. No one's doing another
post-apocalyptic dystopia on my
watch!

He drops the video game gear into a cabinet drawer.

Quincy scrambles through a stack of scripts and selects one.

QUINCY
Well hot dog! I knew you'd come
around!

Dickie narrows his eyes at him.

DICKIE
You been reading these all
afternoon?

QUINCY
Uh-huh! And I got just the ticket.
The story's all broke out.

He hands the script to Dickie.

DICKIE
 (reading)
Is That Your Phone or Mine??

QUINCY
 Yeah, a farce where a regular joe
 gets mixed up with a bigshot
 banker. Research says there's a
 hell of a market for it!

Dickie readies himself at his computer and flips through the script.

DICKIE
 This is good. I'll run with this.
 You run interference.

QUINCY
 I got you covered. I'll take all
 our meetings and say you're working
 a deadline. Just don't stray too
 far off script and it'll be a cake
 walk!

Dickie leafs to a page.

DICKIE
 (reading)
*Now look sister, I'm no wise-head
 but I glommed you nick the cabbage
 from that gumshoe and I ain't goin'
 to the cooler, see.*

He looks up at Quincy.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
 I'll need a pot of coffee to go
 with this cake walk.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

It's a week later. Dickie hammers at his keyboard. Quincy stands over him, reviewing his monitor. Mid-century vibraphone jazz plays over the stereo.

QUINCY
 Hot diggity, we're cooking with gas
 now!

DICKIE
 Whoa, buster. If you keep flapping
 your gums like that, people'll
 think you're screwy.

QUINCY

Aw, applesauce. Hazel's hip to it. I'm taking her to the Brown Derby this weekend. Boy, I bet she's a ducky shincracker.

DICKIE

Well don't be getting all doll dizzy, we got work to do.

QUINCY

Aw nuts.

He grabs his coat, a fedora, and walks to the door, revealing his trousers jacked up to his navel.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Say, I gotta take a powder. I could eat an elephant. You coming?

Quincy opens the door and puts on his coat and hat. The din from the outside office spills in.

DICKIE

You go on ahead. I'm on a tear here. Say, be a pal and pick me up a sandwich from the auto-mat will ya?

QUINCY

Sure thing, boss. Ham salad or liverwurst?

DICKIE

Is there any question?

QUINCY

Liverwurst it is!

Two passing INTERNS (female, early 20s) step out of his way and look slack-jawed at each other.

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dickie enters with a big bouquet of flowers. Penny comes out of the hallway fastening her dress.

DICKIE

Hiya, cupcake!

PENNY

Dickie! Oh my God! They're beautiful.

He hands the flowers to her and ushers her into the kitchen.

DICKIE

Well not as beautiful as you. Come on, drop that in a fishbowl -- we got reservations!

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Dickie and Penny cozy up with each other in a red leather booth. A candle flickers between them.

PENNY

Okay, I'm floored. What are you up to, Dickie?

DICKIE

Do I need an angle to show my gal a good time?

Penny demurs. A WAITER approaches.

WAITER

Can I start you folks off with something to drink?

DICKIE

Sure, I'll have a Harvey Wallbanger.

PENNY

A Harvey what?

DICKIE

And a...

(to Penny)

Champagne cocktail?

(to waiter)

A champagne cocktail for the lady.

WAITER

Coming right up.

The waiter walks off. Dickie takes in the scene. He notices a stylish COUPLE (30s) enter the bar.

DICKIE

Get a load of this mug.

Penny looks over.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
Must think he's Gary Cooper.

Dickie chuckles at himself. Penny furrows a brow.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - LATER

Dickie and Penny dine on their meals.

DICKIE
How's the linguini?

PENNY
Noodley.

She casts a dour eye at his plate.

PENNY (CONT'D)
How's the, um, pig's feet?

DICKIE
Feety! You know this is the only
restaurant in town that serves
this?

PENNY
I wonder why. So you gonna tell me
why you brought me here?

Dickie leans in.

DICKIE
Penny my dear, I have terrific
news.

Penny leans in.

PENNY
Yeah?

DICKIE
Quincy and I stumbled upon a gold
mine!

PENNY
Oh.

DICKIE
Yeah! We have exclusive access to
the best material in Hollywood
right now. And the one I'm working
on's a real humdinger!

PENNY

Uh huh.

DICKIE

We're pitching to Levine and the heads Monday morning. If we play our cards right, we'll be executive producers!

PENNY

Well what do you know.

DICKIE

Aren't you thrilled?

PENNY

Sure.

She casts a stink-eye at his plate and shovels in another bite.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(garbled)

So much for going kosher.

Dickie's own mouth is full.

DICKIE

Hmm-hmm!

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Swing music blares. COUPLES, young and old, hop, jive and sway in blissful abandon. Out in center, Quincy and Hazel cut a rug with the Lindy Hop. Smiles abound.

They break from the crowd and head to the bar.

QUINCY

Bartender! Two more highballs!

An enthusiastic BARTENDER (40s) responds.

BARTENDER

You got it, mack!

Quincy turns back to Hazel.

QUINCY

Boy, are you having as swell a time as I am?

HAZEL
I'll say! Hee-hee!

QUINCY
Well stick with me kid and we'll go
places!

HAZEL
Golly! Will you take me to gay
Paree?

QUINCY
Oui!

HAZEL
And ol' *Madreeth*?

QUINCY
Si! Anywhere on the planet!

HAZEL
Gee whiz! But we're not on a
planet, silly!

QUINCY
Haha! You mean you believe we're in
seventh heaven right now?

HAZEL
No silly, I mean I believe the
Earth is flat!

Quincy's smile drops.

EXT. LOS FELIZ NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Hazel saunters along, peacefully clutching her purse. Quincy
hounds her.

QUINCY
But what about circumnavigation?

HAZEL
What about it? You rode your bike
around the block as a kid. Did you
live on a ball?

QUINCY
But... but what about the other
planets? They're all spheres!

HAZEL

So are all the balls on a pool table. Does that make the pool table one too?

QUINCY

But... but... what happens when you reach the edge? You sayin' we just fall off the face of the Earth?

HAZEL

No, silly. Antarctica is a giant, beautiful ice ring, encircling all the oceans and continents.

QUINCY

I don't get it! This is screwy!

Hazel stops.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Wait a minute, I'm not saying you're screwy...

HAZEL

I know that. This is where I live. You may kiss me goodnight.

She presents her cheek to him. He obliges.

QUINCY

Boy. When you said you were an old-fashioned kinda gal, you sure meant it.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie taps away at his computer. Quincy paces the room in front of two easels with storyboards on them.

QUINCY

And then our hero drives off into the sunset with the showgirl -- in Conner's Cadillac. Bam.

He walks over to a tiki-themed liquor cabinet and pours a stiff one.

DICKIE

Sounds good, though you might want to tone down the enthusiasm.

He watches Quincy slug a shot.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Say, you hittin' the sauce already?
Your night out wasn't a flat tire
was it?

QUINCY

Naw, Hazel's quite a dish, though
she seems to think the Earth is
shaped like one too.

DICKIE

Wowzer. Well, you coulda done worse
in this town. L.A. women.

He whistles and does a looping hand gesture next to his
temple. Quincy scowls at him and shakes it off.

QUINCY

You almost done with that polish or
what?

DICKIE

Yeah. Just a final once-over.

Quincy walks around the desk and looks over Dickie's
shoulder.

QUINCY

Whoa hold your horses, there
cowboy.

DICKIE

What?

QUINCY

Who do you have in the 'written by'
line?

DICKIE

Why, Buddy Weller of course.

QUINCY

No, no, we can't use his name!

Quincy goes in at the keyboard.

DICKIE

Why not? It's his script. I only
tweaked it a little.

He blocks Quincy out.

QUINCY
Dickie, Buddy Weller's long gone.

He goes in again.

DICKIE
Well then his descendants can get
the royalties.

He slaps Quincy's hand and takes over.

QUINCY
I'm sure they're doing just fine.

He elbows in at the keyboard.

DICKIE
Why should we get the credit?

He nudges in.

QUINCY
'Cause it'll put us on the map!
Besides, finder's keepers.

He goes in again and they launch into a mini-battle slapping
each others hands.

DICKIE
Would you stop!

Quincy backs off.

QUINCY
Look, my brother-in-law works in
intellectual property. It's totally
kosher, I tell ya.

DICKIE
But we can't just use my name. Our
contract says we're only here to
polish material, not write new
stuff.

Quincy returns to the bar and refills his glass.

QUINCY
I know! We use a pseudonym, see?
Ever hear of forgiveness being
better than permission? If it's a
hit, we come clean!

Dickie follows him and fixes himself a drink.

DICKIE
And if it bombs?

QUINCY
We lose our jobs anyway!

Dickie knocks back his drink.

DICKIE
Well that's mucus to my ears. So
what's our *nomme de guerre* in this
losing battle?

QUINCY
I don't know... What did the
Breaking Bad guy use in that movie
where he wrote screenplays in the
bathtub?

Dickie refills his glass, and Quincy's.

DICKIE
You mean Dalton Trumbo?

QUINCY
Yeah, Dalton Trumbo.

Quincy crosses to the desk.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
D-O-L... How do you spell Dalton?

DICKIE
How did you ever get a job in
Hollywood?

Quincy looks up at him blankly.

STAN (O.S.)
What, did you guys raid the *Mad Men*
set?

Dickie and Quincy turn to see Stan and Caleb lounging in the
doorway. Caleb scratches his face and chortles.

QUINCY
What are you doing here, *Stain*?

STAN
Same as you. Polishing up our
spiel.

DICKIE
 You're pitching that turkey
 tomorrow?
 (to Caleb)
 No offense.

Caleb sulks. Dickie looks back to Stan.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
 I thought you said Levine put you
 on the fast track.

STAN
 Just a formality. And what you're
 up to is pretty jacked up.

Dickie and Quincy exchange a quick glance.

DICKIE
 Oh and just what are we up to?

Stan squints at Dickie.

STAN
 For one thing, I haven't seen you
 in a staff meeting in weeks.

QUINCY
 Yeah, so?

STAN
 So I know you're still desperately
 scouring every last amateur
 screenwriting board looking for
 scraps. So pathetic.

Dickie and Quincy sigh in relief.

QUINCY
 Well you're wrong! We have the
 hottest new writer in Hollywood...
 (to Caleb)
 No offense.

STAN
 Oh yeah? What's his name?

QUINCY
 Dal-

Dickie steps in front of Quincy.

DICKIE
Who says it's a dude?

QUINCY
Yeah!

STAN
Uh-huh. Then what's her name?

DICKIE
It's Roberta... Roberta Richards.

STAN
Never heard of her.

DICKIE
Of course you haven't. She only works with professionals!

QUINCY
Yeah professionals.

STAN
Right. Well we'll see about that.
Come on Caleb.

Quincy follows them to the door and closes it.

QUINCY
Sayonara, chumps.

DICKIE
You think they're onto us?

QUINCY
Aw, those chuckleheads can't see past their own noses.

DICKIE
I'll drink to that.

They cheers and sip their drinks.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Dickie and Quincy slog down the hallway, lugging poster boards, easels, etc. Both look worse for wear.

QUINCY
Remind me never to drink scotch again.

DICKIE
You're telling me.

They approach Hazel's desk. She looks up.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
Hey look, it's Christopher
Columbus.

QUINCY
Shhh.
(to Hazel)
Hiya doll.

He leans in. Hazel braces him with a hand and scans up and down the hallway. The coast is clear but she looks at Dickie.

HAZEL
Sorry, mister. Bank's closed.

QUINCY
Aw baby, Dickie's on the level.

She presents her cheek. Quincy kisses it.

HAZEL
Whooh! Your breath smells like a
basket of dirty laundry!

DICKIE
More like a sanitation plant.

Quincy pops a piece of chewing gum.

QUINCY
Who's up?

She checks her planner.

HAZEL
Stan should be wrapping up now.

DICKIE
Well let's see his closer.

HAZEL
Good luck, boys.

Quincy blows her a kiss. She catches it, holds it to her heart and giggles.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The same conference room as before, but this time instead of younger interns, the table is occupied by astute, senior and middle-aged EXECUTIVES, all watching:

Stan, standing in an open area before his presentation materials. A poster of concept art reads "The Sense Master".

Caleb stands to the side.

STAN

She's surrounded by the guards, and they close in on her. They have her backed up to edge of the chasm.

The door opens and Dickie and Quincy walk in. Quincy fumbles his easel and pitch materials. The executives all turn to see the ruckus.

DICKIE

(whispering)
Sorry! Excuse us!

QUINCY

(whispering)
Sorry!

Stan throws his hands up.

The boy sneak up to the table, fumbling their gear and see all the seats are occupied.

DICKIE

We'll just, ahem, go over here.

Mr. Levine glowers at them then turns to Stan.

MR. LEVINE

Go on, Stan.

Dickie and Quincy make their way to the back of the room.

STAN

But then she closes her eyes and the walls of the compound start melting away. The guards double over, getting sick all over the place. She leaps over them and frees the others.

A studious, diminutive executive, MR. SILVER (60s) raises a finger.

SILVER

How did she do that?

STAN

She manipulated their sense of smell so they thought they were in a sewage treatment plant.

The pass by another executive, burly MR. GLADSTONE (50s, a live-action Mr. Slate) and set their things down by a windowsill.

Mr. Gladstone turns to the table.

GLADSTONE

Wow, that's some pitch. For a second there it actually smelled like a sewer in here.

The executives guffaw and erupt in applause.

Dickie sneers at Quincy. Quincy chews his gum faster and points at his mouth.

Stan smirks.

STAN

Thank you. Thank you.

Caleb simpers and picks his face. Stan smacks his hand down and gathers up his materials.

MR. LEVINE

Good work Stan. Let's see the next draft in three weeks and we'll go over budget and fast food tie-ins.

STAN

Yes sir.

He leads Caleb to the back of the room and smirks at the boys again.

QUINCY

Tough act to follow.

DICKIE

You'll be alright. Come on.

They approach the front of the room and set up the easel and poster boards.

MR. LEVINE

Next up, we have Dickie and Quincy
with *Is That Your Phone or Mine?*

GLADSTONE

Interesting title.

SILVER

Where's the writer?

Dickie looks at Quincy then to the room.

DICKIE

Oh, well she's very reclusive, you
know.

QUINCY

Yeah, very old-fashioned. She lives
up North and works out of her beach
chalet.

The executives look at each other and murmur. Dickie and
Quincy look at each other, then back to the room.

GLADSTONE

Whatever. Go ahead, let's hear it.

Quincy takes a deep breath and steps onto the mound.

QUINCY

Okay, we open in a swanky gin
joint. Thumping music. Sexy
waitresses. Hipsters and
Hip-Hoppers mackin' on crudo...

The executives nod at each other.

SILVER

Okay...

LATER

Quincy's warmed up. He paces the room.

QUINCY

Then in walks Herman, a nerdy
accountant in dockers and a
Member's Only jacket. Totally out
of place...

The executives' eyes follow along.

LATER

Quincy canters around the room, talking with his hands.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

In the corner booth with his hot date, we see Conner. He's a real baller in his Gucci suit...

The executives' eyes track him around the room.

LATER

Quincy leans in like he's telling a ghost story.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

So Herman takes the call not knowing the busboy accidentally switched his phone with Conner's. He thinks it's his client who owns an ice cream parlor, but it's actually Conner's client who owns an ice cream *corporation* -- with an insider trading tip...

Smiles on the executives' faces as they take notes.

LATER

Sweating, worked-up, Quincy delivers his final words like Jimmy Swaggart at the pulpit.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

And then our hero drives off into the sunset with the super model -- in Conner's Porsche!

He pauses with a bright smile.

The executives talk amongst themselves in hushed tones.

Quincy remains, smiling, panting. He looks over to Dickie and talks through his teeth.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Do you think they liked it?

Dickie shrugs.

DICKIE

(whispering)

Supermodel? Porsche? What happened to sticking to the script?

QUINCY
 (through teeth)
 I was losing them. I had to punch
 it up a little.

DICKIE
 That's my job!

He glares at Quincy.

GLADSTONE (O.S.)
 Good job guys.

They turn back to the table.

DICKIE
 Thank you.

QUINCY
 Thanks.

GLADSTONE
 We'll let you know.

DICKIE
 Thank you, gentlemen.

The boys gather their stuff and prepare to leave.

GLADSTONE
 Hold on, we're not through yet.

The boys stop and resume their centered position.

DICKIE
 Yes, Mr. Gladstone?

The boys both gulp.

GLADSTONE
 You say the writer's not around?

DICKIE
 Yes sir.

QUINCY
 Uh-huh.

GLADSTONE (CONT'D)
 And she lives up in Marin or
 someplace?

DICKIE
 Uh-huh.

QUINCY
 Yes sir.

The executives turn to each other and talk amongst themselves again. Dickie and Quincy gulp again.

Mr. Levine looks up and studies the boys, then back to the huddle.

The executives nod and turn back to the boys.

SILVER
What's her name again?

QUINCY
Dal-

Dickie jumps in front of Quincy.

DICKIE
Dolly. Uh, her name is Dolly, Mr. Silver.

Mr. Gladstone flips to the first page of his copy.

GLADSTONE
It says here her name is Roberta Richards.

DICKIE
Right. Uh...

Quincy steps up.

QUINCY
Dolly's her nickname. She's very eccentric, you know.

The execs nod along, screw eyes at them, etc.

SILVER
My mother's name was Dolly.

QUINCY
Oh...

DICKIE
It's a lovely name, sir.

QUINCY
Yeah! Number one.

Quincy gives a thumbs up to the man. Dickie grimaces at him.

GLADSTONE
Never heard of her.

SILVER
Does she have representation?

No. DICKIE Yes. QUINCY

They look at each other. Dickie steps up.

DICKIE
She just fired her agent.

QUINCY
Yeah, too many dystopia gigs.

The execs all nod and grunt to each other.

SILVER
Is she produced?

Yes. DICKIE No. QUINCY

They look at each other again.

QUINCY
Nothing mainstream. Only art-house
stuff.

DICKIE
Yeah, she really is quite
eccentric.

The execs form another huddle and murmur in conference.

Levine peeks up at the boys then back to the huddle.

The execs break and turn back to the boys. The boys gulp.

GLADSTONE
Well, the material is brilliant.

DICKIE
Really?

QUINCY
No joke?

GLADSTONE
Haven't seen anything this good in
years.

SILVER

Yes. What else has she written?

The boys heave a big sigh of relief.

QUINCY

You mean, what hasn't she written!
She's got a sweeping war epic, a
sultry film noir, a gritty western,
a boy and his dog, a girl and her
horse...

Dickie's smile drops like a sack of concrete.

In the back of the room, Stan simmers.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie ushers Quincy into the office and slams the door.

QUINCY

Wow! We killed it in there! Let's
have a toast!

Quincy crosses to the tiki bar and pulls out a bottle.
Dickie follows and swipes it from him.

DICKIE

Are you crackers?

Quincy grabs the bottle back.

QUINCY

What? They want to see the western!

Dickie tugs the bottle away from Quincy.

DICKIE

Yeah, in three weeks, you dip! This
last one alone took me a month and
they passed on it!

He puts the bottle back in the cabinet and slams it shut.

QUINCY

Aw, don't snap your cap at me! We
got them eating out of our hands!

Dickie grabs him by the collar and leans in.

DICKIE

You know what happens when we
burrow into those old scripts! I'll

DICKIE
be talking like a ranch hand for
months!

Quincy grabs Dickie's collar and pulls him even closer,
their faces in kissing distance of each other.

QUINCY
Just phone it in then, Howdy Doody!

DICKIE
Howdy doo like a knuckle sandwich?

A knock on the door and Mr. Levine steps in.

MR. LEVINE
Aw boys, now is not the time to go
Brokeback on me. Did you just spit
into your hand, Quincy?

Dickie backs away and brushes himself off. Quincy adjusts
his collar.

QUINCY
No sir, we were just letting off a
little steam.

DICKIE
It was a tough room in there.

MR. LEVINE
Well the room liked your little
farce.

The boys share a look. Quincy looks to Levine.

QUINCY
Our farce?

MR. LEVINE
The movie you just pitched?

DICKIE
They did?

MR. LEVINE
Yeah, welcome to the fast track.
Just a few notes.

Quincy's eyes widen. Levine drops a stack of papers on
Dickie's desk.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)
 Good work, cowboys.

He exits and closes the door. Quincy pauses until Mr. Levine's out of earshot.

QUINCY
 Woohoo!

He grabs Dickie's head and plants a wet one on the kisser. Dickie sputters and wipes his mouth.

DICKIE
 Blech! If you have to kiss a fella
 does it have to be after you've
 eaten a corndog?!

INT./EXT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dickie sits at his desk, banging away at his keyboard. He wears a sweater vest over a pastel polo shirt and checkered slacks.

Penny enters the room, touching up her lipstick.

PENNY
 Will you give it a rest? They'll be
 here any minute.

Dickie doesn't look up.

DICKIE
 Aw, quit yer dern yammerin'! I
 ain't gonna fetch up now!

PENNY
 Watch it there, Colonel Custer.

A car horn toots outside. Penny crosses to the window.

OUTSIDE

Quincy pulls up in an aqua '55 Thunderbird and smiles up at Penny. He wears a navy sport coat with an ascot.

Next to him, Hazel sits in over-sized cat-eye shades and a silk scarf. Quincy waves a handkerchief.

QUINCY
 Hello, the house!

BACK INSIDE

PENNY

You say you've been in a steam room
with this guy?

MONTAGE -- WINE TASTING TRIP

INT./EXT. QUINCY'S THUNDERBIRD (MOVING) - DAY

Quincy Drives with Dickie riding shotgun. They check out each other's duds and nod approvingly.

In the back, Penny crouches in her modern outfit with her hair whipping about. She looks at the men, then at Hazel in her throw-back dress.

Hazel offers a smile then reaches into her purse and pulls out a spare scarf and pair of shades.

LATER

The group cruises along, chatting, smiling, laughing. Penny's look now matches her new friend -- with a scarf of her own and her lipstick touched up a bright red.

The car heads into Santa Ynez Valley.

INT. TASTING ROOM - DAY

The group stands at a counter. A SERVER pours wine into their glasses. They swirl, huff, sip and swish... then, all at once, spit into the spit bucket.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

Quincy lies opposite Hazel on a blanket. She tosses grapes into his mouth.

Dickie lounges with Penny on a nearby blanket. He lobs a twig into Quincy's mouth.

Quincy gags and spits the twig out. His friends all laugh it up.

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

Dickie, Penny and Hazel stroll along with wine glasses, chatting, pointing at things, etc.

Quincy jumps out from a bush brandishing vines and leaves as a crude vine monster. The party jumps back, scream, spill their wine, laugh, etc.

INT. TASTING ROOM - DAY

The group stand at another counter. Their wine is poured. They swirl, huff, sip and, this time, swig.

LATER

They cheers and chug another round.

LATER

And then another.

LATER

And another.

LATER

The group laugh and chatter, falling over each other, etc.

At the door, A COUNTRY BOY in cowboy boots and hat mosies in. The girls crack up.

PENNY

Say, get a load of this mug!

HAZEL

Must think he's Gary Cooper!

The group bursts out laughing. The cowboy turns to them.

INT./EXT. QUINCY'S THUNDERBIRD (MOVING) - NIGHT

Quincy drives with Hazel riding next to him, holding an ice pack to his eye.

In the back, Penny does the same for Dickie.

END MONTAGE

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie hammers away at his keyboard. Quincy watches over his shoulder, checks his watch.

QUINCY

Boy, I don't know how you did it,
but it looks like we're gonna pull
this off!

DICKIE

Well it took a whole lot of coffee.
I was one latte away from sending
you over to Vine Street to score me
some meth.

A knock at the door. The boys look up. Stan enters.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Beat it, *Stooge!*

QUINCY

Yeah, *Stunod*, why don't you scam?

STAN

No, I think I'll stick around and
watch this train wreck.

DICKIE

Ah, go climb up your thumb.

QUINCY

And jump in a lake!

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Stan!

STAN

The board's in the conference room
now, tapping their fingers.

DICKIE

Son of a Siberian Sasquatch!

Stan snorts and exits.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Aw man, and I'm still not done
punching up the western...

Quincy ushers Dickie out of the chair and sits.

QUINCY

You go on in, they can't start
without me anyway. I have your
notes, I'll finish it.

DICKIE

But...

QUINCY

Go!

Dickie exits. Quincy compares the notes against the screen, then sets them down. He saves the file.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Meh. Good enough.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The executives sit around the table. This time, Dickie has a seat amongst them. Quincy stands in the pitching area.

QUINCY
In the corner booth with his entourage, we see Joey Ravioli, He's a real baller in his neck tattoos and gold chain-

GLADSTONE
Hold on...

Quincy bows and holds space. The executives confer in hushed tones. Quincy exchanges a look with Dickie.

GLADSTONE (CONT'D)
Well she executed the notes well.

SILVER
Yes, and it has the danger element now, but I'm not seeing this working as a comedy.

Dickie opens up his notepad.

GLADSTONE
I agree. And the stakes need to be higher.

Dickie scribbles in some notes.

SILVER
Absolutely. Why not make it an action thriller?

Dickie's jaw drops.

DICKIE
A thriller? Don't you want to hear the rest of it?

MR. LEVINE
Dickie...

The executives wave Dickie off.

SILVER
And make it high concept.

GLADSTONE
Yes, high-concept. How about the hapless accountant must keep his phone charged or the mob kills his family?

DICKIE
But he's single.

QUINCY
(through his teeth)
Just work it in, Dickie.

DICKIE
How does keeping his phone charged protect his family?

GLADSTONE
You figure that out! And change the title. It's too on-the-nose.

SILVER
Yes, too on-the-nose. How about simply: *Charge*.

He gestures an imaginary line.

	DICKIE		QUINCY
<i>Charge?</i>		<i>Charge?</i>	

The executives nod their heads.

GLADSTONE
Charge. That's a winner.

Stan snickers in the back. Dickie glowers at him.

DICKIE
Yeah, real winner.

GLADSTONE
Is our creative direction problematic, son?

DICKIE
No sir.

SILVER

Pass it on to your writer. That's her shtick.

DICKIE

Yes sir.

GLADSTONE

And bring her in, we want to meet her.

Dickie fidgets.

QUINCY

Oh I'm sorry but she does live up north and all.

SILVER

Well, fly her in for the holiday party.

GLADSTONE

Great idea. And put her up in the Standard.

QUINCY

Yes, Mr. Gladstone.

The executives gather their things.

DICKIE

But sir, what about the other script?

Gladstone turns to him.

GLADSTONE

The western? I'll see if my assistant got to it yet.

SILVER

In the meantime, send us another one. The one with the flying saucers.

They exit the room. Dickie's jaw hits the floor.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Quincy sits on the couch watching Dickie stomp about the room.

DICKIE
Fargin' friggin' dagnabbit...

QUINCY
You okay, chum?

DICKIE
No, chum, I'm not okay! Two weeks for a page one and another punch-up? I'll need a bag of meth the size of your head!

Dickie whips out his pocket square and dabs his brow with it.

QUINCY
Golly, Dickie, crank'll make your chompers fall out. And you still have credit with the tooth fairy for last month.

Dickie raises his fist to him.

DICKIE
Whadya say we max out your account!

QUINCY
Well, how do you like that? I grease the skids to advance our careers and this is the thanks I get?

DICKIE
Why don't you tell that to Roberta Richards? You'll find her listed with the tooth fairy!

QUINCY
Aw, she's out there somewhere. I'll post an ad on Craig's List.

DICKIE
What and have every starving starlet in this town lined up at our couch?

QUINCY

Or they could just send an email.

Dickie starts hyperventilating.

DICKIE

I can't take this! I'm falling
apart! I need my support! My rock!
My everything!

He crosses to his desk and picks up the phone.

QUINCY

Calling Penny?

DICKIE

No, my dentist!
(into phone)
Operator, get me Klondike five oh
two oh jeezus! What's happening to
me?!

A knock at the door. Dickie hangs up the phone.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Oh what now?

Mr. Levine enters.

MR. LEVINE

I don't know how you charlatans
pulled this off-

Dickie drops his shoulders and heaves a sigh.

DICKIE

Okay, fine Mr. Levine. Here's what
happened-

MR. LEVINE

No time for that -- you two
had better get hopping!

QUINCY

What for?

MR. LEVINE

A *Bonanza* remake went into
turn-around and we took over the
properties in a fire sale. We got
the financing too but our lead's
only available till January.

DICKIE

Okay, so...

MR. LEVINE

So we're green-lighting *The Ballad of Johnny Durango*.

QUINCY

The classic western!

MR. LEVINE

Don't get ahead of yourself. You start shooting next week.

DICKIE

You mean...

MR. LEVINE

That's right! You two lunkheads just became the youngest executive producers in Silvergreens' history!

He exits.

QUINCY

Well hot digitty!

He grabs Dickie's head and tries to kiss him. Dickie foils the move by shoving his handkerchief into Quincy's mouth.

EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

PEOPLE shuffle past a Hollywood magazine stand. A break in traffic reveals a cluster of trade magazines with a special cover:

Dickie and Quincy stand back-to-back, arms folded. Quincy has a beaming white smile. Dickie's eyes are half closed.

The headline reads: "The Boys who Saved Silvergreens?"

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Quincy, in a sharp tailored suit sits among Stan and various CAST and CREW.

All eyes are on the MALE LEAD (30, a pretty-boy version of Lorne Greene) as he reads the script.

MALE LEAD

Now look, you lousy pack of suck eggs, I said hit the trail or you'll each get a lead plum!

The FEMALE LEAD (20s) takes her cue.

FEMALE LEAD
Careful, Johnny, they'll be back on
account of them injuns out there.

The DIRECTOR (40s, urbane) halts the read.

DIRECTOR
Stop. That's the fifth "*On account
of*" I've seen. Who wrote this, the
Beaver?

The supporting cast laugh obsequiously. The male lead sulks
a beat at the attention directed at the director, but adds:

MALE LEAD
Yeah, with a little help from the
rabbit?

The cast laughs even louder. The male lead gloats.

The director and Quincy share a look And Quincy scribbles
onto his copy.

QUINCY
We'll fix it. People talked screwy
back when this was written I guess.

Stan raises an eyebrow at Quincy.

STAN
When was it written, Quincy?

Quincy stops scribbling, pauses then looks up.

QUINCY
Last year.

The director stares at Quincy. Quincy darts his eyes about
the table.

The director bursts out laughing. The leads and supporting
cast join in.

Quincy looks back to Stan who returns a suspicious gaze.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie slaves away at his desk, gulping down a giant mug of coffee. Quincy comes in and closes the door.

QUINCY

Oh boy, you look like a pile of old socks.

Dickie looks up.

DICKIE

Well I haven't changed mine in a week.

Quincy crosses to the bar and fixes himself a drink.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

How'd the meeting go? Any notes? Do I need to change anything? I'll pull it up now.

Dickie wields his mouse all over the mouse pad.

QUINCY

Whoa, there, buckaroo! Our flint's all fixed.

DICKIE

Stan's been on the prod since they shelved the *Smell Sorcerer*. Better stay skinned around him.

QUINCY

Eh, he got to keep Igor around. Don't get your dander up.

Quincy finishes his drink and heads for the door.

DICKIE

Where you going now?

QUINCY

Stage six. We're starting principal photography and craft services has tacos.

Quincy exits.

DICKIE

Yeah, don't work too hard.

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dickie works at his desk. Penny paces by him.

DICKIE
 Could you pull in your horns?
 You're distracting me.

Penny crosses to the window to observe the world outside.

PENNY
 Come on, Dickie, it's Saturday
 Night. Can't we go see a movie or
 something?

DICKIE
 Sweetie, can't you see I'm busy?

Penny huffs and disappears down the hall.

PENNY (O.S.)
 You've been chained to that desk
 every night for weeks. What're you
 working on anyway?

DICKIE
 I told you, I'm putting together a
 production budget.

PENNY (O.S.)
 I may work at a pet clinic but I
 know a screenplay when I see one.

Dickie's eyes widen.

DICKIE
 I'm, uh, just polishing it.

Penny returns with her purse and a light jacket, and pauses
 at the entrance to the room.

PENNY
 Oh Dickie!

DICKIE
 What?

PENNY
 (weak James Cagney sendup)
 You're a dirty rat, see!

DICKIE

Huh?

She mimics a bow-legged cowboy about to draw.

PENNY

(weak John Wayne sendup)

You're the rootin-tootin', high
falootin' sheriff in these parts!

DICKIE

Now sweetie-

PENNY

How could I be so dense!

Penny crosses to him and kisses his cheek.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You're writing again!

DICKIE

Well yeah...

Penny heads to the front door.

PENNY

Don't let me distract you. I'm
going over to Hazel's. Let me read
it when it's finished!

She puts on her coat and opens the door.

DICKIE

But...

PENNY

I'm so proud of you!

She blows a kiss at him. He "catches" it and plants it on
his cheek.

DICKIE

Thanks.

She exits. Dickie stares at the closed door.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Criminy.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A breakfast meeting. Mr. Levine heads the table with Stan, Dickie, Quincy and the rest of the staff. Quincy sits with a plate of donut holes in front of him.

Dickie is disheveled and fights nodding off.

QUINCY

So we'll have a rough cut in the can by Friday and ADR should be completed next week.

Quincy bites into a pastry and nudges Dickie awake.

MR. LEVINE

Great work, Quincy.

STAN

Yeah, great work on those donut holes.

QUINCY

(garbled)

You're a hole.

Stan glares at Quincy's full mouth.

STAN

Slob.

MR. LEVINE

Stan!

STAN

Yes, Uncle Ira.

MR. LEVINE

We're trying something new with our test markets. I need you to screen a copy of the rough cut at Shady Acres Friday afternoon.

STAN

The retirement home in Glendale? But we haven't done color grading or a music score.

MR. LEVINE

They can't eat their soup or wipe their asses without a nurse's help. They're not gonna kvetch.

STAN

But that's way across the five and
the holiday party's on Friday!

The table clears out.

MR. LEVINE

We'll save you a rugelach.

Quincy snickers and helps Dickie up. Stan glares at him.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Quincy helps Dickie into his office and closes the door.

Dickie passes out on the couch.

DICKIE

Alright, I'm just gonna close my
eyes for a-

He crashes and starts snoring. Quincy goes to the bar and
gets an old-fashioned soda syphon.

QUINCY

Come on! Wake up! Wake up!

He douses Dickie's face. Dickie snaps to it.

DICKIE

Is it Friday yet?

QUINCY

No but it will be in two days and
you still need to finish the space
movie. Better get a wiggle on.

Dickie jolts up, slaps his face, etc.

DICKIE

I still have the third act to do.
Shit. Two days? I don't think I can
do it.

QUINCY

Sure you can. Get through this and
we can let loose at the party. And
don't forget my nephew's birthday
Sunday.

Dickie rises.

DICKIE

Oh, we'll be there alright. Penny
dropped forty clams on the present.

QUINCY

Good. Now git along little doggie.

Quincy helps Dickie slog over to his desk.

DICKIE

Find our writer yet?

QUINCY

Everything's copacetic. There's
this lady in my building, see --
used to be a player.

He grabs an empty coffee pot off the desk.

DICKIE

Anyone we know?

Quincy crosses to the door.

QUINCY

Don't sweat it. I'll fix you some
more joe. And I think I saw a dime
bag of coke in the storeroom.

He exits. Dickie's asleep at his desk.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

Stan slouches in a chair with a notepad in a darkened room
full of SENIOR CITIZENS, most of whom are asleep. Caleb
scribbles notes next to him.

The *Johnny Durango* rough cut is projected in front of the
room:

EXT. LOG CABIN - DUSK

The female lead performs in frontier gingham on the porch.

FEMALE LEAD

Careful, Johnny, they'll be back.
That's Cherokee country out there.

BACK TO SCENE

On the other side of Stan, an old man, MR. WELLER (100),
sits barely alive in a wheelchair. His oxygen tank gives off
a loud puff.

Stan rolls his eyes, turns to Caleb and hands him a twenty dollar bill.

STAN

Go get me some Fireball.

Caleb takes the cash and walks off. Stan looks back up to the movie:

EXT. PRAIRIE - DUSK

The male lead stands in cowboy wardrobe in front of an expansive backdrop with storm clouds gathering.

MALE LEAD

I ain't a talkin' man. A cowboy
saves his breath for breathin'...

BACK TO SCENE

The oxygen tank puffs again. Stan sighs.

MALE LEAD (O.S.)

I only cuss around horses, cows,
and other cowboys...

Stan notices Mr. Weller speaking along with the dialogue and turns to him.

STAN

Sir, do you mind?

Mr. Weller doesn't respond.

Stan looks away then back as Mr. Weller recites the next line verbatim with the lead.

MALE LEAD (O.S.)

I live by a different code.
The cowboy code. And if a
man don't respect that,
then heaven help him.
Cause a six-shooter don't
discriminate.

MR. WELLER

I live by a different code.
The cowboy code. And if a
man don't respect that,
then heaven help him.
Cause a six-shooter don't
discriminate.

Stan's eyes widen. A NURSE (50s) approaches and leans into Mr. Weller's ear.

NURSE

Come on now Mr. Weller, you know
it's not polite to talk during the
movie.

She turns to Stan.

NURSE

I'm so sorry. He was in the industry, you know.

She wheels him away. Stan's face morphs into a maniacal leer.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The Christmas party in full swing. The room is tastefully decorated and set up so one would never suspect it was just a conference room. EMPLOYEES socialize.

Dickie, Penny and Hazel, in evening attire, watch Mr. Levine hobnob with the other executives and their WIVES.

MR. LEVINE

So I told him, let's just have the party here and there's our marketing budget!

The group bursts out laughing.

Penny turns to Hazel.

PENNY

He doesn't seem so wound up.

HAZEL

Believe me, there are enough knots inside that man to make a boyscout jealous.

Dickie cranes his neck around the party.

DICKIE

Come on, where are they?

Quincy enters the room and approaches them escorting a buxom older lady, CANDY (60s), sashaying in, wearing a fox stole, fancy hat and wielding a cigarette holder.

QUINCY

Hiya dollface, sorry we're late.
(to Dickie)
Got held up in wardrobe.

He leans in to kiss Hazel. She presents her cheek while sneering at the lady and her pelt.

HAZEL

Eew. You can't smoke in here.

Candy takes the shaming with class and replies in a hammy mid-Atlantic accent and rolling her 'r's.

CANDY

Oh *daaahling*, that's just for show.
And relax, this isn't real.

She holds the pelt out for Hazel and Penny to pet it.

PENNY

Feels just like a dead fox...

Dickie sneaks a word with Quincy.

DICKIE

What the?

QUINCY

It's all good. She's a trained
actress.

DICKIE

This is a Christmas party, not
Night at the Opera!

QUINCY

Hey she takes her craft seriously.

Mr. Levine walks up with Gladstone and his wife, MRS.
GLADSTONE (50s). Elegant, tan and Botoxed. She eyes Candy up
and down.

GLADSTONE

I suspect this is the mysterious
Roberta Richards I heard so much
about?

QUINCY

Roberta, this is Gene Gladstone,
Executive Vice President of
Production.

Candy extends her hand.

CANDY

How do you do?

GLADSTONE

Your work precedes you, Ms.
Richards. Or should I call you
Dolly?

She shoots a nervous look to Quincy. Quincy quickly bobs his head. She turns back to Gladstone.

CANDY

You can call me anything you like,
my dear.

She locks eyes with him. Mrs. Gladstone glares at him. He adjusts his tie. Quincy pops in and ushers Candy to Mr. Levine.

QUINCY

And and this is our boss, Ira
Levine.

Candy holds out her hand.

MR. LEVINE

Thrilled to have you with us,
Dolly.

CANDY

I'm thrilled to be here.

MR. LEVINE

You have an uncanny talent.

CANDY

I have many talents, thank you.

GLADSTONE

Yes, I can't explain it. You write
in such a classic style we haven't
seen in ages.

CANDY

Oh, well I've been around the block
a few times.

MR. LEVINE

But with a modern voice.

CANDY

And I stay current with the times.

Dickie turns to Quincy.

DICKIE

Hey, she isn't bad!

QUINCY

Uh-huh!

GLADSTONE

Tell me, how do you have such a command of so many different genres?

CANDY

Lots and lots of practice and always..

(leans in)

...trying new things.

Mrs. Gladstone huffs and turns her nose.

GLADSTONE

Oh my. Well...

(clears throat)

That's just the type of chutzpah we need around here. Let's have a toast.

Quincy and Dickie share a smile. Mr. Gladstone calls over to Mr. Silver and his wife, MRS. SILVER (50s), classy, tan and equally collagened as Mrs. Gladstone.

GLADSTONE (CONT'D)

Mort, come over here.

Mr. Silver turns, then freezes. Candy freezes as well.

SILVER

Candy?

CANDY

Rocco?

GLADSTONE

You two know each other?

CANDY

Oh, we did some work together...

Mrs. Silver glares at her husband.

SILVER

Yes, once or twice back in the disco era.

CANDY

It was a groovy time, wasn't it Rocco?

Silver turns to Gladstone with gritted teeth.

SILVER

And what is she doing here?

Quincy and Dickie look at each other.

GLADSTONE

Why this is Roberta Richards, the writer.

SILVER

Oh, and Ron Jeremy's directing the next Star Wars?

Gladstone scratches his head and studies Candy.

GLADSTONE

Wait a minute, you're Candy
Conners! Loved your work in *The
Wench Connection!*

(to Silver)

Mort, you devil!

SILVER

It was the seventies. I just got
into town.

MRS. SILVER

You grew up in Bel Air, Mort.

The executives glare at the boys. Quincy stammers and turns to Candy.

QUINCY

Candy- Dolly- Roberta! I'm
appalled! How could you?

Dickie scowls at him. Candy stands firm. Her real voice is a nasally Bronx accent.

CANDY

What? Other adult performers made
the transition to mainstream. Why
shouldn't I?

GLADSTONE

So you're saying you did write
those scripts?

Penny and Hazel glower at their dates.

MRS. SILVER

This old tramp couldn't write a
grocery list.

SILVER
Sylvia, please...

CANDY
Sylvia Silver? Hah! Well if that's
not an industry name, I don't know
what is!

Mrs. Silver fumes and charges at Candy.

MRS. SILVER
You don't talk to me like that! I'm
the wife of an executive!

Mrs. Silver swings her purse at her. Candy fights back with
her fox stole.

CANDY
This trophy's looking a bit
tarnished! Let me buff that out for
you!

She mashes the stole in Mrs. Silver's face. Mrs. Gladstone
sneaks a cheap purse shot in.

The men all join in to break them up.

GLADSTONE
Ladies! Please!

SILVER
Darling! Your dignity!

Dickie turns to Quincy.

DICKIE
Well this is a fine mess you've
gotten us into, buster!

QUINCY
Say, what gives, Dickie?

DICKIE
Oh, you know what gives. Gammin'
around in your glad rags while I
did all the heavy lifting. Was that
your angle?

A crowd gathers around them. The ladies cool it.

QUINCY
Aw, you're all wet! There's no
angle! I'm on the level, I tell ya!

DICKIE
Why I outta level you...

MR. LEVINE
Boys...

QUINCY
Oh yeah?! You and what army?

MR. LEVINE
Boys...

Dickie scores an imaginary line with his foot.

DICKIE
Cross this line, I dare ya! I
double dare ya!

QUINCY
Alright! You asked for it!!

Quincy launches at Dickie and they topple on top of each other.

MR. LEVINE
Boys, cut it out!

QUINCY
I'll show you!

He swings and misses Dickie's head completely.

HAZEL
Quincy!

DICKIE
Come on! Show me!

He swings and misses, loses his balance and they tumble into a table of appetizers.

PENNY
Dickie!

MR. LEVINE
Come on boys, knock it off!

GLADSTONE
What's the meaning of this?

STAN (O.S.)
Yeah fellas...

The boys stop wrestling and look to the door. The rest of the crowd does as well.

Stan leans against the doorway, dangling a screenplay. Caleb holds the box of old scripts and the janitor stands next to him with a ring of office keys.

STAN

What's the big idea?

Candy turns to Gladstone.

CANDY

I can still have that room at the Standard tonight, right?

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Penny wheels out her luggage into the living room. Dickie rushes through the front door.

DICKIE

Oh here you are! Why didn't you wait for me?

Penny sets a wrapped present on a side table.

PENNY

Here. For Quincy's nephew.

DICKIE

Aw, I can't go to that party now.

PENNY

Well you have to go, cause I'm not.

Dickie sees her suitcase.

DICKIE

Wait, what are you doing?

PENNY

I'm going back to Laguna to be with my parents. I'll get the rest of my stuff on Sunday.

She advances toward the door. Dickie steps in her way.

DICKIE

But you can't leave!

PENNY

Why not?

DICKIE

We just signed another year on the lease!

PENNY

That's the only reason you want to keep me around and string me along?

DICKIE

Oh, so that's what this is about. Because I haven't slapped a handcuff on you yet?

PENNY

No Dickie. You made a fool out of me thinking you were writing again.

DICKIE

But I was!

Penny furrows her brow at him.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Look, I paid the price for it, but now I'm all yours. Let's go to Catalina for the weekend!

PENNY

It's too late for that.

She skirts him to the door.

DICKIE

Oh swell. So you're gonna just toss me aside like yesterday's mashed potatoes?

PENNY

We didn't have mashed potatoes yesterday, Dickie. We never did.

She sobs and walks out the door.

EXT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - NIGHT

The sounds of the party waft from above. Quincy storms out of the front door with a banker's box.

Hazel follows him out.

HAZEL

Quincy!

Quincy stops.

QUINCY

What?

HAZEL

Where you going?

QUINCY

To look for a job.

HAZEL

But what about us?

QUINCY

What about us? I'm no good for you anymore. I'm no good for anyone anymore.

HAZEL

Don't say that. Come on, take me for a ride. It's a beautiful night. Look at the moon!

She waves her hand across the sky. It's a full moon.

QUINCY

Oh that thing we never landed on? I have enough problems without your nutty beliefs.

HAZEL

Hey, I don't push my nutty beliefs on you. And so what? Both of my parents are gone. If I want to believe that I can stand anywhere on this earth knowing Heaven is always up and they're smiling down on me, then what's it to you?

Quincy takes a beat to let that sink in.

QUINCY

Nothing. See ya, dollface.

He continues on. Hazel drops her shoulders and pouts.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dickie packs things from his desk into a banker's box.

He exits the door as Caleb enters with his own box. Stan gloats in the hallway.

Dickie glowers at Stan.

DICKIE

Better set a mouse trap. There's a rat in this office.

Caleb grimaces.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

A cube farm with office din of typing, phones ringing, etc.

Dickie skulks past an open area with his box. Murmurs come from the INTERNS and ASSISTANTS at their desks.

DICKIE

Well what're you all looking at?
I'll lick any one a ya!

A sharply dressed EFFEMINATE INTERN (Male, 20s) titters with a GIRL INTERN (20s) next to him.

EFFEMINATE INTERN

Oooh!

Dickie continues down the hallway.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Levine steps out into his doorway.

MR. LEVINE

Dickie.

DICKIE

Aw I'm on my way out. No need to make a federal case out of it.

MR. LEVINE

Wait a minute.

Dickie turns.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)

Look kid, you had a good run. But you know, copyright laws. It's a real mess here.

DICKIE

Uh-huh.

MR. LEVINE

Don't give up on yourself. You know
I was once an actor, now look at
me. *I'm* a real mess.

He jostles his gut, prompting a slight grin from Dickie.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Mr. Levine, Sam Ludwig returning.

MR. LEVINE

Take care of yourself, Dickie.

Levine disappears into his office. Hazel offers him a sad smile. Dickie nods and continues on.

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Sam, you ol' son of a bitch, how
the hell are ya...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - NIGHT

Dickie wanders with his banker's box among the throngs of TOURISTS, PARTIERS, HOMELESS PEOPLE, etc.

NEWS STAND

Dickie slogs past the news stand, not bothering to look at a stack of trade papers with a special front page:

A black and white photo of Dickie and Quincy wrestling at the Christmas party.

The headline reads: "Script Stealers Sully Silvergreens"

INT./EXT. PENNY'S CAR (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Penny wipes tears from her eyes. An old Big Band era standard drones on. She huffs and switches the radio to a Top 40 station.

A beat then she sighs and changes the radio back.

EXT. EL POLLO LOCO - DAY

Quincy takes a breath in interview attire, toting a resume folder. He walks toward a building.

REVEAL:

Quincy walks into an El Pollo Loco.

INT. HAZEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Hazel cradles a carton of ice cream, sobbing in front of her laptop. The screen casts a glow on her.

NARRATOR (O.S.)
 (squeaky-voiced teen)
 And in nineteen-eighty-eight, an
 eyewitness saw Elvis eating a
 grilled cheese sandwich at a malt
 shop in Tucson...

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A make-shift stage set up in the backyard of a Hollywood Hills home. Behind the mic, urbane JESSE (20s) tunes an acoustic guitar plugged into an amp.

Brooding in a black leather jacket and dark aviators. To him, he's playing the Hollywood Bowl. He strums a chord.

JESSE
 How you all doin' tonight? I'm
 Jesse Cassidy and I'm here to make
 you smile.

REVEAL:

Jesse's performing before a group of restless CHILDREN (4-9).

Quincy watches from the rear, wearing an El Pollo Loco uniform. Dickie sidles up next to him with the gift.

DICKIE
 Hey.

QUINCY
 Yo.

DICKIE
 So what do they have you doing,
 frying up churros?

QUINCY
 No. I spin the sign down the
 corner.

DICKIE
 Gotta start somewhere, I guess.

Quincy quaffs his drink. They watch the performance.

JESSE
 (wistful oversinging)
A B C D... E F G, she said...

Dickie cringes.

Quincy's brother-in-law, SIMON (40s) comes over, sipping a stiff cocktail. The three stand there, wincing.

SIMON
 Yeah, your sister discovered him.
 Open mic in Pasadena.

QUINCY
 That's my sister for you.

JESSE
... H I J K L M N Oooo Peeeeee...

The kids all laugh at the last note.

DICKIE
 This is criminal.

SIMON
 Nah. It's in the public domain.
 Copyrights expire seventy years
 after the death of a writer anyway.
 This song's way older than that.

Dickie frowns at Quincy. Quincy remains facing ahead.

QUINCY
 I didn't know that, I swear.

Dickie swigs his beer.

SIMON
 Still, if he wanted to be taken
 seriously in this town, he'd write
 his own material.

Dickie gives Simon a long look.

JESSE
... W X Yyyyyyyyy a-a-and Zeeeeee.

DICKIE
 Yeah. You got that right.

He turns back to the performance. The men attempt to clap their hands while holding their drinks.

JESSE
 Thank you. Thank you.
 (singing)
*Row, row, row your boat, she
 said...*

DICKIE
 Okay, I'm done.

Dickie downs his beer and tosses the bottle in a trash can.
 He sets the gift on the table and marches off.

Quincy turns to watch him off. Dickie doesn't look back.
 Quincy looks back to the performance.

JESSE
Merrily, merrily, merrily...

A kid starts crying.

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dickie, in shorts and sandals, sits at his desk typing away
 at his laptop.

He huffs a bag of potato chips and sets it aside -- next to
 his open shoebox of old scripts.

He looks at the door. Penny stands there with a box.

PENNY
 Good to see you writing again.

She exits. Dickie sighs and resumes working.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Hazel types on her computer and hears a heated discussion
 from inside Levine's office. She leans an ear to the wall.

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)
 What do you mean we lost the rights
 to the Sense Master? We optioned it
 just last summer!

STAN (O.S.)
 It expired! We only had it for six
 months!

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)
 Well god damn dagnabit son of a-
 You mean you didn't acquire any
 other material?

STAN (O.S.)

Not since you put me on that shitty
old western that's gonna bankrupt
us!

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Well now what the hell are we
supposed to do with no
screenplays?!

Hazel snatches her cellphone and dials a number.

HAZEL

Penny, how are you holding up?

(beat)

Aw, sweetie, me too. But listen, I
need to talk to you about something
else. Something big.

(beat)

Yeah, you might call it a
conspiracy.

INT. DICKIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dickie's position hasn't changed. Same clothes, but with a
beard. A pile of potato chip bags cover the shoebox.

His phone rings and he picks it up. On the other line is
Hazel in disguise as a buttoned-up showbiz type.

DICKIE

(into phone)

Hello?

HAZEL (O.S.)

(disguised voice)

Hello Mr. Cohn, this is Debra
Walters from Global Diversified
Talent Agency. I heard what
happened with you at Silvergreens.

DICKIE

Oh. Word sure gets around.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Yeah. But we heard of your material
and wanted to know if you're
seeking representation.

DICKIE

Well, yeah, I sure am!

HAZEL (O.S.)

Great! Do you have anything new you could send over?

DICKIE

As a matter of fact I'm finishing up a spec right now.

HAZEL (O.S.)

Wonderful. And it's your own material?

DICKIE

Wow. Word sure does get around.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

A pair of YOUNG MEN (20s) face each other in a dark alley, lit up by a spotlight. ACTOR #1, looks athletic in a tracksuit. ACTOR #2 is more rugged in dark leather.

ACTOR #1

Cut the crap, Murdock. What do you want?

ACTOR #2

I have a little proposition for you-

A phone rings.

QUINCY (O.S.)

Cut!

The actors drop out of character and the LIGHTING GUY (20s) lowers his spotlight to reveal:

Quincy twiddles with his phone aimed at the boys.

QUINCY

Take five you guys.
(into phone)
Hello?

On the other line, Penny in disguise as a valley girl.

PENNY (V.O.)

(disguised voice)

Hello, Mr. Pratt? My name is Alyssa. I'm an assistant at Wrong Hole Productions and we're looking for a producer for a script we just optioned. Are you available?

Quincy watches his cast practice Karate on each other. ACTOR #1 does a spinning back kick and knocks Actor #2 to the ground. He and the lighting guy rush to him.

QUINCY

Yes. I'm definitely available.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Another heated discussion wafting from Levine's office.

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Look, we're getting this sorted.

GLADSTONE (O.S.)

Well you'd better. I haven't been with this studio for forty years to see you flush it down the toilet!

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Yes sir.

SILVER (O.S.)

We'll be back Wednesday afternoon. That nogoodnik nephew of yours had better deliver or you'll both be sacked!

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)

Yes sir.

Hazel hums along while holding the phone to her ear and working on her computer.

INSERT -- A SCREENPLAY TITLE PAGE: "OH DAMNIT!"

The cursor backspaces over "Dickie Cohn" in the 'written by' line.

BACK TO SCENE

HAZEL

Hey Dickie.

(beat)

How've you been?

(beat)

Oh that's great news! Listen, we need you to come in and get the tiki bar.

(beat)

No, I'm not talking to him.

(beat)

Can you come by Thursday at, say, five o'clock?

(beat)
Great. See you then.

Hazel hangs up the phone and resumes typing.

INSERT -- SCREENPLAY TITLE PAGE "OH DAMNIT!"

The text "Alan Smithee" spells out in the 'written by' line.

The sound of the door opening

MR. LEVINE (O.S.)
Hazel, book an all-hands for
Thursday at four.

HAZEL (O.S.)
I'm already on it.

EXT. EL POLLO LOCO - DAY

Quincy, in a chicken costume, spins a sign outside the building.

His phone rings. He drops the sign, fumbles under the suit and pulls it out.

QUINCY
Hey Penny.
(beat)
I'm great, I actually just got a
lead for a new comedy. The script
is fantastic!
(beat)
Uh-huh.
(beat)
Uh-huh.
(beat)
Yeah well, I don't want to talk to
her either.
(beat)
Sure, I can go in Thursday.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - HALLWAY - DAY

Dickie saunters down the hall, disheveled in his shorts and flipflops, looking like The Dude, but without the White Russian.

DICKIE
Hey, hey, heya Hazel!

HAZEL

Shhh!

Hazel springs up from her desk, checks around her, and ushers him toward his old office.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

You're not really supposed to be here.

She pushes him through the door.

DICKIE

But-

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - DICKIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dickie enters with his head turned behind him to Hazel.

DICKIE

Didn't you tell me to come-

He turns around to see Quincy and Penny standing there. Quincy's in his El Pollo Loco uniform and Penny's in her nurse scrubs.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Wait, what're they doing here?

Quincy turns to Penny.

QUINCY

Now will you tell me what's going on? The tiki bar's not even in here.

They all look to the space where the tiki bar was: a gamer's paradise with beanbag chairs, gaming consoles and controllers, and a large flat-screen monitor.

DICKIE

Hazel? What gives?

HAZEL

Look, we're in a pickle here, Dickie. We need your help. Both of you!

DICKIE

Well you're outta luck. Global Diversified has me in their hip pocket and I'm about to sign.

Quincy turns to Penny.

QUINCY
And I've been tapped to produce *Oh
Damn!*.

Dickie perks an ear and turns to Quincy.

DICKIE
Say, you stealing material again?

QUINCY
What are you talking about?

DICKIE
Oh Damn! is my damned script,
damn!

QUINCY
Alan Smithee wrote *Oh Damn!*,
damn!

DICKIE
You blockhead! Alan Smithee is not
a real person!

QUINCY
Who you calling a blockhead?!

Quincy steps up to Dickie and Dickie extends his chin. They
put up their dukes.

Penny steps between them.

PENNY
Guys! Stop it!

The boys back off.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Quincy, was the script sent by
someone named Alyssa from Wrong
Hole Productions by any chance?

QUINCY
As a matter of fact it was! And it
was the best script I've ever read!
How'd you know that?

Dickie lets his guard down and turns to Hazel.

DICKIE
So lemme guess, that must make you-

HAZEL
 (disguised voice)
 Debra Walters.

Dickie sniggers and shakes his head.

QUINCY
 So Alan Smithee didn't write *Oh
 Damn!*?

DICKIE
 Now you're on the trolley. Looks
 like these dames have taken us for
 a ride.

Quincy nods. Dickie laughs to himself a moment and Penny
 kicks him in the shin.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
 Oww!

HAZEL
 Look Dickie, we haven't much time!

Dickie leans down and massages his shin.

DICKIE
 What do you want me to do? I
 already got the axe.

HAZEL
 Levine's in the conference room now
 and the axe is about to fall on him
 any minute. If he goes, I go.

DICKIE
 So why is she in on this?

He casts a side glance at Penny. Penny looks to Quincy.

PENNY
 Hazel's my friend.

QUINCY
 Well, it was still pretty sneaky of
 you broads pulling a switch like
 that-

Hazel growls and kicks Quincy in the shin.

QUINCY
 Oww!!

Hazel turns to Dickie.

HAZEL

Penny told me she saw you writing again and, well, I just had to do something.

The boys dawdle, bent down rubbing their shins and gazing at their shoes. Dickie looks over to Quincy.

DICKIE

Did you really think the script was the best you ever read?

Quincy nods.

QUINCY

I had a feeling it was yours all the time.

Dickie scans Quincy up and down, looks about himself, then turns to Hazel.

DICKIE

Do we have time to drop by wardrobe?

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Executives populate the table. Stan stands in the open area with Caleb in front of an easel with concept art reading "You Again?".

STAN

And that's when she discovers that he was the she she dated before she went from being a he to a she!

GLADSTONE

So she was a he before being a she and he was a she before being a he?

STAN

Uh, yeah.

SILVER

But they dated each other when she was a he and he was a she?

STAN

Uh, exactly!

GLADSTONE

I don't know. This is all so confusing.

SILVER

Who's the target market for this again? Hes, shes, he-shes or she-hes?

Caleb clears his throat.

CALEB

I was thinking she could turn out to be a Cyborg and it was all a dream she implanted in her mind.

The executives look at him speechless. Mr. Levine buries his head. The door creaks open.

Mr Levine turns to see Hazel poking her head in.

MR. LEVINE

What is it Hazel? Can't you see we're busy?

HAZEL

A couple of gentlemen wish to see you.

(out the door)

Come on in fellas.

Dickie and Quincy walk in, all cleaned up but in old-timy suits with tailcoats, carnations, etc.

MR. LEVINE

Aw Hazel.

SILVER

What are these gentlemen doing here?

GLADSTONE

I thought we said they'd never work in this town again!

QUINCY

Well technically we were working out of North Hollywood.

DICKIE

Please, just give us a minute-

SILVER

After what you put us through? I had to send my wife to Cabo to cool off -- with the pool boy!

GLADSTONE
Levine, get them out of here.

Mr. Levine rises and walks to the boys.

DICKIE
Mr. Levine, please.

MR. LEVINE
Come on boys. Don't make this any
harder than it has to be.

Quincy calls over Levine's shoulder.

QUINCY
Wait! What if I told you the
lawsuit was dropped?

Silver and Gladstone look at each other.

SILVER
What do you mean?

Gladstone raises a hand to call off Levine.

GLADSTONE
Explain.

Quincy approaches the table.

QUINCY
I met with Buddy Weller's family
and explained the whole thing.

DICKIE
You did?

MR. LEVINE
You did?

QUINCY (CONT'D)
They're just happy to see one last
film of his get made. As long as we
give him his due writing credit
they're not going to sue!

Silver and Gladstone turn to each other again, then back to Quincy.

SILVER
And his other film? The thriller?

QUINCY
Charge? Well, that one's hacked
beyond all recognition. But sure,
why the hell not?

(to Dickie)
Right?

DICKIE
Yeah, I don't need any credit for
that one.

The executives confer a beat in hushed tones.

GLADSTONE
Well. It looks like you boys
redeemed yourselves.

Dickie and Quincy smile to each other and to the table.

SILVER
You may go now.

Their smiles fade.

DICKIE
But...

MR. LEVINE
Come on, Dickie, don't push your
luck.

STAN
Yeah, sayonara chumps.

Dickie turns to go but takes a look at Stan's pitch set-up.

DICKIE
You Again?, huh? Where'd you get
that script?

SILVER
You're not the only writer in this
room, son. Now be on your way.

Mr. Levine takes him by the elbow.

MR. LEVINE
Don't make me call security,
Dickie.

DICKIE
Horseradish! I wrote *You Again?*!

QUINCY
You did?

MR. LEVINE
You did?

A din rises in the room, oohs and aahs, etc.

GLADSTONE

Stan?

STAN

Erm, uhhh...

Dickie winks at Quincy.

DICKIE

(sotto)

I planted it when I packed up my things.

Stan whips his head at Dickie.

STAN

Yeah, well they think it sucks anyway.

DICKIE

It was a first draft. First drafts always suck.

Silver and Gladstone confer with other in hushed tones then turn back to the room.

GLADSTONE

So is that all you have then, Stan?

STAN

Well no, uhh...

Stan elbows Caleb.

STAN (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Come on, tell 'em one of yours.

CALEB

Oh okay. It's a future where humanity is ruled by robot deejays...

Stan nods and looks to the table.

STAN

Yeah! See?

The executives fold their arms and frown at them.

CALEB

And society is divided into syndicates, by musical genre.

The room falls silent. Dickie approaches the table.

DICKIE
Sirs, do you really want to listen
to this?

Gladstone turns to Silver.

GLADSTONE
Well, the post-apocalyptic premise
is a bit played out.

STAN
Yeah but it's original!
(to Dickie)
Do you have anything better?

QUINCY
Only the funniest comedy I ever had
the pleasure to read.

STAN
Pfff! I bet.

SILVER
Alright, let's hear the logline.

QUINCY
Okay, it's about a guy, he-

Dickie gently takes Quincy's arm.

DICKIE
Let me get this.

Quincy backs away. Dickie steps up.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
A corrupt CEO dies in a plane crash
and when he's sent to Hell, he
learns it's not as bad as they say,
but actually a lot of fun. So he
plots a journey to Heaven to
convince his best friend to join
him... back in Hell.

Gladstone and Silver stare at them a bit then confer again.
Mr. Levine's brow sweats. The boys wait.

STAN
That's the stupidest idea I've ever
heard.

Dickie and Quincy ignore him.

QUINCY
No supernatural shit, huh?

Dickie shrugs.

DICKIE
I'm evolving.

Gladstone looks back up.

GLADSTONE
This is your material?

DICKIE
Yes sir.

SILVER
No funny business?

DICKIE
No sir.

The executives fix their eyes on him.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
Look, what I did was wrong, I know that.

The executives nod.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
I thought I could gain Hollywood status by updating those old scripts.

GLADSTONE
Well derivative content is safe.

DICKIE
Yes sir, considering the risk in this industry.

QUINCY
It's practically killed our boss.

Mr. Levine pops an antacid.

DICKIE
Sure, there's a lot of magic in those classic scripts, but screenwriting has also evolved over the past sixty years.

SILVER
Of course. It's become a science.

DICKIE
Sure. And I've become a better
writer by working in the best of
both worlds.

Stan launches into sarcastic clapping.

STAN
Well good for you. I'm sure you'll
do real well in direct-to-video.
We're a big six studio. We don't
have time for this schmaltz.
(to Mr. Levine)
Right Uncle Ira?

The room murmurs. Gladstone looks to Silver. Silver looks to
Mr. Levine.

SILVER
Levine, would you kindly dismiss
the plagiarist?

Mr. Levine rises and walks to Stan and Dickie, then
stammers. Quincy leans toward the executives.

QUINCY
Did you say plagiarist or
plagiarists?

STAN
Pfft! Who do you think?

Gladstone and Silver nod at Stan.

STAN (CONT'D)
What?! Oh, come on!

MR. LEVINE
Come on, Stan.

He takes Stan by the elbow and walks him to the door.

STAN
But what am I supposed to do now?

MR. LEVINE
You can go back to work with your
dad.

STAN
But he works in public television!

MR. LEVINE
Consider it community service.

Mr. Levine shuts the door on him.

STAN (O.S.)
(through door)
I'll show you! I'll show the whole
lot of you!

Levine returns to his seat.

LEVINE
That's nepotism for you.

Dickie and Quincy share a chuckle and the rest of the room
chortles, murmurs, etc.

GLADSTONE
Alright, alright, quiet down
everyone.

Dickie and Quincy snap to attention.

GLADSTONE (CONT'D)
Please, continue.

DICKIE
So, gentlemen, I'm willing to do
whatever it takes-

SILVER
With the pitch.

The boys let out a sigh. Dickie smiles.

DICKIE
Right! So the CEO's a real piece of
work. He brings a smelly reuben
sandwich into first class...

Penny and Hazel enter the room and distribute copies of the
script around the room. Penny found a wardrobe upgrade
herself: a modest old-fashioned work dress.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
... pinches a flight attendant's
backside, and doesn't turn off his
cell phone.

Dickie sends a nod to Quincy.

QUINCY

But his best friend, the CFO, is a real mensch. He warns him about the toy company they're about to do business with as it has ties to North Korea...

Dickie watches Penny make her way about the table and smiles to her.

INT. SILVERGREEN STUDIOS - COMMON AREA - NIGHT

The staff file out of the conference room. The janitor mops the floor down the hall.

Mr. Gladstone shakes Dickie and Quincy's hand. Mr. Silver shakes Quincy's. Mr. Levine observes proudly.

SILVER

Well, that picture's quite a gas, fellas.

GLADSTONE

I love the part where he lands in the scalding hot tub and the maintenance demon apologizes!

DICKIE

Thank you. I had a lot of fun writing it.

GLADSTONE

We'll have our girls send our notes to the hacienda.

SILVER

Good luck, Levine.

The executives walk off.

DICKIE

The hacienda?

QUINCY

Good luck? What just happened?

MR. LEVINE

Well, you two schmendricks did fine work, but I'm afraid you're not getting your old jobs back.

Dickie and Quincy drop their shoulders.

DICKIE

We're not?

MR. LEVINE

No. But we can put you up in the old backlot. Silvergreen's gets first look, of course.

Dickie and Quincy look stunned then share a laugh. Mr. Levine turns to Caleb.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)

Caleb, do me a favor and go in my closet. I stashed away a nice bottle for an occasion like this.

CALEB

Okay.

Caleb walks away.

DICKIE

Mr. Levine, I don't know what to say.

QUINCY

Yeah, how could we ever thank you?

MR. LEVINE

It's not for you, you schmucks! We're celebrating my resignation!

Everyone's mouths drop in shock.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)

But you can thank me with a bit part in *Oh Damn!*. I'm going back in front of the camera!

Everyone cheers. Quincy pats him on the back.

QUINCY

We'll see if we can pull some strings!

The staff gather around and shake hands with Mr. Levine, and lib best wishes, etc.

Quincy sidles over to Hazel. She feigns disinterest.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Well, I still think you're a little nutty.

She huffs and turns her nose. He takes her hand.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

But I don't care! I'm nuts about you, baby!

He pulls her in and kisses her.

Penny comes up and fidgets next to Dickie.

PENNY

All this excitement is making me hungry. I think I need a hot dog or something.

Dickie puts an arm around her.

DICKIE

Better make it a Hebrew National.

PENNY

Why?

DICKIE

Because I wanna go kosher, sweetie!

PENNY

Oh Dickie!

They embrace and kiss as well. The two couples kiss among a throng of onlookers.

Then release and Quincy walks over to Dickie.

QUINCY

Say, so you're not still sore at me?

Dickie stares him down for a beat.

DICKIE

Nah, skip it.

QUINCY

Well, put 'er there pal!

They give each other a hearty handshake.

The boys return to their gals. Caleb returns with a bankers box and hands a bottle of scotch to Mr. Levine.

CALEB

I found it. And I also found this.

He opens the box and presents it to the men. Quincy pulls out a script and reads the title.

QUINCY

Black Justice?

Dickie reaches in as well.

DICKIE

Race Car Brother?

Levine takes a peek.

MR. LEVINE

Hah! The old blacksploitation scripts! I was wondering what happened to these!

Dickie and Quincy's mouths drop. Mr. Levine looks up to them and grins widely.

MR. LEVINE (CONT'D)

They were never produced, you know!

Dickie and Quincy turn to each other, mouths agape. The janitor stops his mopping and breaks the fourth wall.

JANITOR

Say what?!

FADE OUT

THE END