

FADE IN:

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BASEMENT -- NIGHT

A door CREAKS open, allowing light to cascade down a basement staircase and onto a twenty-something-year-old seemingly dead ROSE MCFADDEN.

Rose has that rare blend of exotica and naivete that instills in the observer hope for her early death so that her physical beauty doesn't give way to time or gravity.

Her hair is disheveled, as are her legs. Her dress rides higher up her thigh than is lady-like. Garters are exposed. Her eyes are shut.

At the top of the staircase, in ominous silhouette, is a broad-shouldered MAXWELL FICKLE, JR.

EXT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a neon marquis burns over the entrance to the club, a classy, intimidating structure. The sign reads: THE SPICY WHITEBOY; and below, in smaller letters: HOTTER THAN A THREE-PECKERED BILLY GOAT.

A black Pullmann four-door cruises before the club and turns down an adjacent alleyway. At that, we overhear THE GRAND POOBAH'S GRUFF VOICE:

THE GRAND POOBAH (V.O.)

I don't know how this happened...

The Pullmann turns into a parking garage after an electric garage door raises.

THE GRAND POOBAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...I have no explanation...

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/PARKING GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The Pullmann parks. Two men exit the car in silhouette: GYPSY JACK, a thug with obvious physical prowess; and RENO, Gypsy Jack's near dwarf-sized partner.

They approach the parking garage elevator, their faces obscured by darkness. The red "UP" arrow over the elevator glows. The doors open, and they step in.

THE GRAND POOBAH (V.O.)

...I understand...If you would,
allow me to ease your mind...

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/THE ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

The doors open, and Reno and Gypsy Jack exit into...

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/THE BAR -- CONTINUOUS

...a high-class club of sorts, past a stage, red leather booths, low lighting -- everything but people.

THE GRAND POOBAH (V.O.)

...Tonight, Reno and Gypsy Jack,
they're wearing the long, black
overcoats...

Gypsy Jack and Reno file down a corridor toward an office door, their long, black overcoats hanging near the floor.

THE GRAND POOBAH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...That's right -- long and black
shows no stains...

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

THE GRAND POOBAH, a behemoth of a man in his early fifties, sits at his desk, holding a phone to his ear. His face is a collection of concentric wrinkles, not unlike a topographical map.

Reno and Gypsy Jack enter; we finally see their faces. Gypsy Jack wears an eye patch and gnaws on a toothpick. He is Shemp from The Three Stooges if Shemp were a "made" man. Reno is equally as unattractive yet clearly lacking in size; however, there remains a visible confidence, which clarifies that he's not a dwarf to be trifled with.

THE GRAND POOBAH

...for the meantime, let's
continue all other operations.

The Grand Poobah's hand CRASHES the phone on the hook.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Well?

GYPSY JACK

Nothing.

Poobah straightens a nameplate on his desk. It reads: THE GRAND POOBAH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GRAND POOBAH

That phone call was our insurance policy. He is chafed to say the least. And we have nothing, so --

RENO

-- so we need to come up with something.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Precisely. And I've no regard for how this happened. I only want the situation rectified. Find me Max Fickle.

RENO

He's officially on the to-do list.

Gypsy Jack walks to a wall where a clipboard hangs. He begins writing, presumably the name MAXWELL FICKLE.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Start with the go-between.

INT. ARCHIE'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

ARCHIE WHITE, a sheriff in his early 40s, sits at his desk. Archie is more politician than cop; though this is in contrast to his body -- Archie can handle himself and other men. He's liberal with his bullet-proof smile, a quality that helps him tread the deep end of the pond.

His office is classic: a floor to ceiling bookcase spans one wall; a window, also floor to ceiling, faces the city's central park.

Behind Archie's desk is a montage of plaques, awards, and honors. Archie's desk is strewn with photos of himself shaking hands and sharing smiles with myriad high-powered officials. Each photo is faced toward the expanse of the office, except for one -- an unframed photo of a young Archie sliding his bride's ring on her finger.

Archie talks on the phone:

ARCHIE

So, can I have you for dinner?

He props his feet up on the desk.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You said that we're not as romantic as we used to be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Archie eyes the wedding photo.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Resisting an officer? I may have
to cuff you.

The bullet-proof smile surfaces.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm very certain you would.

The intercom on the desk BUZZES. Archie's secretary,
GLADYS, speaks through the loudspeaker.

GLADYS (O.S.)
Mr. White?

ARCHIE
(into the phone)
Hold on.
(speaking to Gladys)
Yes, Gladys.

GLADYS (O.S.)
Your wife is on the line.

ARCHIE
I'm on a conference call.

GLADYS
Certainly.

ARCHIE
(into phone again)
Alright, where were we?

Another BUZZ comes from the intercom -- Gladys again.

GLADYS (O.S.)
Mr. White?

ARCHIE
Yes, Gladys.

GLADYS (O.S.)
She wants to know if you'll be
home for dinner.

ARCHIE
No.

GLADYS (O.S.)
Mr. White, your dinner appointment
was cancelled. I--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ARCHIE

-- I'm not available. If you want to have dinner with my wife, feel free.

GLADYS (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

ARCHIE

(into the phone)

You there?...Yeah, well...

The intercom BUZZES once more.

GLADYS (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Mr. White, but --

ARCHIE

-- Christ, Gladys! I thought --

GLADYS (O.S.)

-- You have a delivery.

ARCHIE

Well, sign for it, and I'll grab it later.

A MAN'S VOICE is heard very faintly over the intercom.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I want to hand it to him personally.

GLADYS (O.S.)

He wants to hand it to you personally.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's important.

GLADYS (O.S.)

He says it's important.

ARCHIE

(into the phone)

Let me call you back.

Archie hangs up the phone and walks out of the room, then re-enters with a folded piece of paper in his hand.

He unfolds the note. We do not see what's written. After reading the note, Archie clumsily crumples the paper, and tosses it into the trash. He misses and we see random words on the message: FICKLE...SOLVED.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a two-lane highway stretches across an other-side-of-the-tracks landscape. GEORGIA WHITE's car is on the shoulder. Directly behind her car is a cop car.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia, a late 30s tobacco brunette, looks miserable as she often does, yet beneath her bitterness is beauty potential. Although it seems that Georgia's menopause has struck years early, it is obvious that her menopause is about to turn into meno-play.

A CHUBBY PATROLMAN approaches.

GEORGIA

Chop, chop, Speedy. Let's go.

The cop's belly fills Georgia's driver's side window.

CHUBBY PATROLMAN

You're kinda heavy on the accelerator there, ma'am.

GEORGIA

You're calling me heavy? That's rich.

CHUBBY PATROLMAN

Alright, enough o' the lip, lady. Out with your papers!

Georgia holds out her ID. The patrolman is perturbed.

CHUBBY PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

I had no idea, Mrs. White.

GEORGIA

Skip it. Anybody could look at your face and know right away that you haven't a clue.

CHUBBY PATROLMAN

Thank you, Mrs. White. Give your husband my best.

GEORGIA

That won't be too difficult.

Georgia speeds off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Shithead.

EXT. BOXING BARN -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a barn on the outskirts of town. A golden light glows from the door and windows. The Pullmann is parked amongst the shadows. Reno approaches the doorway.

INT. BOXING BARN -- CONTINUOUS

Reno stands at the door, looking in. In the center of the barn is a homemade boxing ring. On one wall is a large poster of a boxer: Gerald "The General" Sternwood.

Sitting on a stool in the ring, a gym bag at his feet, THE GENERAL tapes his hands. He is not as young as he is in the poster, but he is still in great shape.

RENO

Terrribly lonely out here, General.

He goes wide-eyed as he has been verbally sucker-punched by Reno who still stands in the entry way behind him.

RENO (CONT'D)

Terrribly lonely, indeed.

The General instinctively reaches into his gym bag.

THE GENERAL

I like being alone. It's good company.

Reno strolls in like he owns the place.

RENO

Awful dark, too. Quiet. Middle o' nowhere. A stage set for murder.

The General spins on the stool and gets the drop on Reno.

THE GENERAL

I'd agree.

The General's gun zeroes in on Reno's nose.

RENO

Impressive when he talks tough. Ain't he, Jack?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLICK! Gypsy Jack draws back the hammer of his own gun, which is angled on the General -- the third in a menage a trois of gunplay.

GYPSY JACK

Keep your wits, General.

Reno snatches the General's gun.

RENO

We'll kill you simply because we have the notion to do so. You go gettin' all puffed up like you do, it makes us wanna put a bullet in your throat just to see if you pop.

THE GENERAL

What do you want?

Reno and Gypsy Jack flank each side of the General.

GYPSY JACK

You still train with Max Fickle?

THE GENERAL

Stupid question.

A sucker-punch to the General's breadbasket from Reno.

THE GENERAL (CONT'D)

Ooomphh!

The General goes down to his knees.

THE GENERAL (CONT'D)

I don't know --

A bitch-slap from Gypsy Jack. The General wipes blood from his mouth.

RENO

A tragedy, General, has befallen our organization. We, too, have the taste of blood in our mouths.

The General holds his hands up in a position that is both submissive and defensive.

THE GENERAL

Alright! I don't train with Fickle. Not anymore.

Reno extends a hanky to the General.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GYPSY JACK

You have a fallin' out?

THE GENERAL

He's dead. Or didn't you hear? The hustlers and thieves and every other spook in town is whispering about how Fickle's dead and you boys dropped the axe.

RENO

Somebody's tickling your testicles then, 'cause we never met the sunuvabitch.

GYPSY JACK

We only know the go-between.

THE GENERAL

I don't care either way. All I'm saying is Fickle's not dumb. He wouldn't get between the sheets with the likes of The Grand Poobah just to leave him with blue balls. If you boys don't know where he's at, he's definitely dead. He's too smart to try to swindle Poobah -- and way too smart to think he'd get away with it.

GYPSY JACK

Like we said, we only know the go-between. And the go-between... well, there's nothing smart about you, is there, General?

THE GENERAL

Whoa, you boys are skipping over logic here.

GYPSY JACK

Do we look like the kind men who skip?

RENO

Where's Fickle's house?

THE GENERAL

Bell Circle Apartments. Downtown. Why?

Gypsy Jack makes for the exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RENO

You better hope Fickle's dead. If
he ain't, you're a liar.

Reno heads for the exit as well.

RENO (CONT'D)

And we're gonna come back here and
do what it is we do to liars.

THE GENERAL

Then I got nothing to worry about.

EXT. THE WHITE'S HOME -- NIGHT

Establishing -- an uppity home sits before a starry sky.
In an upstairs window stands Archie, phone to his ear.

ARCHIE

I need it delivered to my cabin
this weekend. Is that possible?

OPERATOR

(from the phone)
For an additional fee, yes.

INT. THE WHITES' HOME/ARCHIE'S STUDY -- CONTINUOUS

Archie still gazes out the window.

ARCHIE

Now, what exactly can I put in it?

OPERATOR

(from the phone)
Well, what do you --

Archie sees Georgia standing at the study door in the
window reflection. He covers the phone lickety-split.

GEORGIA

Archie? You coming to bed?

She cocks an eyebrow.

ARCHIE

It's business, Georgia.

Georgia sulks off; Archie pushes the door shut.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. My wife is impatient.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OPERATOR
 (from the phone)
 Not at all. Now, what exactly do
 you want to incinerate?

Archie ponders, his face a study in evil.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)
 (from the phone)
 Sir?

ARCHIE
 I want to get rid of some
 nonsense, just some nonsense
 around the house.

INT. THE WHITES' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Archie is atop Georgia: his face labored, her's bored. A
 dead flower sits in a vase on the night-stand.

GEORGIA
 Just...stop! This is pathetic.

They collapse side-by-side, a visible gap between them.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
 You know, despite what they say,
 it doesn't happen to all men.

Georgia scowls and wrinkles her nose as if she smells
 something. She sniffs her hands and then sniffs Archie.

GEORGIA
 You smell like raspberries.

ARCHIE
 Raspberries don't have a smell.

GEORGIA
 Yes, they do.

ARCHIE
 No, they do not.

GEORGIA
 Fine. Raspberries don't fucking
 smell...

Georgia lies back down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
 ...but what whatever it is, it
 smells like raspberries.

Archie rolls on his side, away from Georgia.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
 You bastard.

INT. THE WHITES' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM -- LATER

Georgia sleeps; Archie lies awake and stares at his wife.
 He slips out of the covers.

INT. THE WHITE'S HOME/MASTER BATHROOM -- LATER

On the mirror, in lipstick, Archie writes: GONE FOR A
 RIDE. The open bathroom door reveals Georgia mid-slumber.

INT. THE WHITES' HOME/MASTER BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Archie pulls on a pair of pants. Unbeknownst to Archie,
 Georgia's eyes have opened.

INT. THE WHITES' HOME/THE STAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

Archie descends the stairs. Atop the stairs, looking
 down, is Georgia. She glares at Archie as he exits.

EXT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a not-so-nice, five-story apartment
 building. A SILHOUETTED MAN approaches.

INT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Max stands in the doorway and looks into the simple
 apartment. Walls are dressed with posters of Tom Waits
 and Robert Johnson.

MAX
 Knock, knock!

Max flips on a light. His face appears young -- hints of
 salt and pepper hair and slit-like eyes not withstanding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max saunters into the apartment and looks around. His body moves with a cool, rhythmic swagger, despite the fact that he has not and would not ever dance.

MAX (CONT'D)

Dad?

INT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Max peeks in.

MAX

Hello?

EXT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Reno and Gypsy Jack's black Pullmann pulls to a stop.

INT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Max sits before a game of solitaire that's laid out on the coffee table. His hands alternate between a half-finished cigarette and the piping-hot contents of an OVER THE HILL AND OFF THE PILL coffee cup.

The phones RINGS on a stand across the room. Max crosses to the stand, grabs the phone, and whips it to his ear.

MAX

Hello?

RENO (O.S.)

Fickle?

MAX

Who's this?

RENO (O.S.)

We'll be there in ten seconds.

The phone goes DIAL TONE. Max's eyes shift to a CLOCK on the wall. The second hand ticks away ten full seconds.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK!

Max's eyes shift to the front door.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK! The door vibrates.

Max stands with the phone dangling at his hip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Shit.

Max hangs up, creeps to the door, turns the knob, and opens the door to reveal a gun-brandishing Gypsy Jack.

GYPSY JACK

You're coming for a ride, Fickle?

MAX

Beg your pardon?

Gypsy Jack's cocks the hammer on his gun.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'll grab a coat.

GYPSY JACK

Be quick about your bad self.

Max coolly retreats into the apartment, turns a corner, and beelines for a half-open window.

EXT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT/FIRE ESCAPE -- CONTINUOUS

Max steps out and onto the fire escape. He does not see Reno who is waiting for just such an opportunity.

RENO

Got ants in your pants there,
Fickle?

Reno dangles a gun near his hip while his other arm holds a Zippo lighter, which he uses to blaze up the cigarette that hangs between his lips.

RENO (CONT'D)

You look a little nervous.

Max does not see Gypsy Jack who has entered the apartment and is marching toward the fire escape.

MAX

I have a phobia of little men --

CRACK! Gypsy Jack feeds Max a knuckle sandwich. Max goes down, and Gypsy Jack and Reno train their guns on him.

GYPSY JACK

Run from me -- you lost your mind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENO

Feel fortunate you didn't get the head butt. Jack's got a metal plate in his head -- fucking thing smarts.

GYPSY JACK

You better not bleed on our car.

EXT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY -- NIGHT

The neon marquis burns the night air.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia sits in a chair across from Poobah's desk.

THE GRAND POOBAH

You know what would happen if Archie knew you were here?

GEORGIA

You're not listening. Listen. Nothing makes a public official spend money faster than a picture of him-- trousers 'round the ankles-- walking on three legs.

THE GRAND POOBAH

I agree. But he and I have a long-standing relationship, a very lucrative relationship that I'm not willing to jeopardize.

GEORGIA

'Balls,' cried the queen!

She stands from her chair. She makes for the door.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

If I had 'em, I'd be the king.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Better men than you haven't walked out of this office after a crack like that.

GEORGIA

I'm not a man.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Sit down, Mrs. White.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

I'll stand.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Put your biscuits in the basket!

She sits back down.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Now, color in the lines,
sweetheart.

GEORGIA

I provide an address. You provide
a middleman to take some pictures.
We go at him before the election.
We get every cookie in the jar.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Not much to that plan but
potatoes. Where's the beef?

GEORGIA

That's why I came to you. You have
this business dialed in.

THE GRAND POOBAH

You're a smart girl, Georgia. A
girl who knows the kinda character
I am, and so on, and so on, and so
on, and --

GEORGIA

-- So?

THE GRAND POOBAH

So what keeps me from pulling this
off and keeping both the proof and
the pudding?

GEORGIA

Well, now that we've had this
little talk, I'm a lady who could
expose the truth. Say, to
Archie...

Georgia reaches across Poobah's desk and pulls a pen from
his inside coat pocket.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

...and that would bring a
devastating end to your long-
standing, lucrative relationship.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE GRAND POOBAH

Tread lightly, Georgia dear.

Georgia writes an address on a SPICY WHITEBOY cocktail napkin and drops it on Poobah's desk. The address reads: 1313 COCOON CIRCLE, LITTLE PINOCHE

GEORGIA (O.S.)

Do we have a deal?

INT. THE PULLMANN (MOVING) -- CONTINUOUS

Max stares through the windshield. Faintly visible in the high-beams is the old barn. Gypsy Jack cuts the lights and rolls to a stop.

MAX

Where are we?

RENO

We're at the next order of business.

GYPSY JACK

Sit tight, Fickle. This won't be but a minute.

Max watches Reno and Gypsy Jack exit and stride toward the barn door.

GYPSY JACK (CONT'D)

(to the barn)

General Sternwood! Come on outta there, General.

The General steps from the barn. Words are exchanged. The General pleads his case. Reno points toward the car. Gypsy Jack, Reno, and Sternwood all look in Max's direction.

The General looks as if someone opened an umbrella up his ass. Max offers up a befuddled, "Who? Me?" kinda face.

Reno and Gypsy Jack unload their guns into the General. Max GASPS.

Reno walks back to the car with Gypsy Jack in tow; the General's corpse is flung over Jack's shoulder.

The two hoods reassume their seats in the car, having stashed the General in the back seat next to Max.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/BACKSTAGE -- NIGHT

JERONIMO JONES, an ancient blues guitarist, sits on a stool near Poobah's office and walks the fret board. Georgia creeps out of the office, advances down the corridor, and runs smack into Rose McFadden who is indiscreetly dressed in a floor-length overcoat.

ROSE

Yes? Is there something you'd --

GEORGIA

-- I'm sorry. What's that perfume you're wearing?

ROSE

It's called Raspberry.

GEORGIA

It's nice

ROSE

You think so?

Georgia struts past Rose, continuing down the corridor. Rose continues in the other direction, toward Jeronimo.

JERONIMO JONES

Got something for you, sweet tits.

ROSE

What you got for mama?

JERONIMO JONES

A message. Poobah wants to see you in your dressing room. Says he'll be in on the hoo-ha.

ROSE

Thanks, Mo.

Rose smiles and then slips into the backstage darkness.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/DRESSING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Rose enters and drops her overcoat to the ground, revealing a sexy-as-all-hell, blood red dress.

Rose's eye is caught by a lipstick message on the corner of the mirror: CABIN TONIGHT. Rose smirks.

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CONTINUED:

She begins to pretty herself up, oblivious to a set of HANDS that approach from the corner of the room, fingers slightly bent and aiming for her throat.

The hands belong to Poobah. His intentions are romantic -- not lascivious.

ROSE

Hey, baby.

Rose stands, turns into Poobah's embrace, then pulls him back toward the vanity mirror. She kisses him, all the while rubbing the lipstick from the mirror.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I love the way you taste.

THE GRAND POOBAH

How do I taste?

ROSE

Like a rich man ought to.

Poobah pulls an envelope from his coat.

ROSE (CONT'D)

What's that?

THE GRAND POOBAH

It's the beginning. There's a lot more to be had in this life. But first, you gotta kill 'em. That's what I expect -- bloody murder.

Rose is shaken by this last statement.

ROSE

Of course.

Poobah grabs her by the throat and kisses her tenderly.

THE GRAND POOBAH

I knew you would.

Poobah leaves. Rose opens the envelope to see her likeness as the headlining act on a Spicy Whiteboy advertisement.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/PARKING GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The Pullmann rolls to a stop. The headlights go dark. Reno and Gypsy Jack step out of the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENO
Anytime, Fickle.

Max reluctantly exits. Gypsy Jack heaves the General's corpse over his shoulder.

The trio of men (plus one dead) move to the elevator. The red "DOWN" arrow glows, the doors open, and they pile in.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/STORE ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A metal folding chair and a director's chair sit opposite each other in the middle of the dull room. An antique bathtub resides across the room.

The elevator opens and the trio of men (plus one dead) file out onto the concrete ground, which is soaking wet.

MAX
Why is the floor wet?

RENO
Prevents bloodstains.

Gypsy Jack dumps the General into the bathtub.

RENO (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

Max attempts to sit in the director's chair.

RENO (CONT'D)
Not that one.

Max sits in the folding chair as Reno lights a cigarette.

MAX
Can I get one of those?

RENO
You know that day in kindergarten
when they teach you to share? I
missed that day.

The Grand Poobah enters and sits in the director's chair. He stares at Max; Max stares back.

THE GRAND POOBAH
(to Reno and Gypsy
Jack)
Who is this?

Reno and Gypsy Jack are puzzled by the question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENO

This is Fickle.

THE GRAND POOBAH

No, this isn't Fickle. At least it isn't our Fickle.

(to Max)

What's your name, son?

MAX

Maxwell Fickle... Jr.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Maxwell Fickle, Jr.? Sounds like the name of a faggot sailor.

Max smiles.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Does that amuse you?

MAX

Well, it amuses me that you're familiar with faggot sailors.

Bowser pulls a bell from his pocket and RINGS it. SMACK! -- Gypsy Jack serves a knuckle sandwich to Max's jaw.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Maxwell Fickle, Jr. Then your father must be Maxwell Fickle, Sr.? The boxing trainer?

MAX

(rubbing his jaw)

Yeah.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Where is your father?

MAX

Haven't seen him. I just got home from the WAR.

Max displays a tattoo of an octopus on his forearm, underscored by the letters: WAR -- an indication of time served amongst thugs.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Welcome home. Boys, we were fishing for a Fickle, Sr. and we reeled in a Fickle, Jr. Fickle this and Fickle that, eh? Well, it's neither here nor there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

One Fickle's as good as another.
 Forgive me for being the courier
 of bad news, Jr., but unless you
 can come up with dear old dad, you
 have just inherited your father's
 debt.

MAX

But --

Max eyes the bell in Poobah's hand, then eyes Gypsy Jack.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Reno, show Jr. how much he owes.

Reno pulls an index card from his jacket and hands it to
 Max who goes white-eyed at the amount on the card.

Poobah gestures to Reno with a nod.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Everybody pays, son. Everybody.
 So I'll put things in perspective.

Max watches Reno root through a file cabinet.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

My business has a hell of a lot to
 do with checks and balances.

MAX

I hate economics.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Well, the manner in which I
 balance the checks and check the
 balances is unique, you see,
 because the funds are not always
 there to establish equilibrium.
 Therefore, substitutions must be
 made. Do you follow?

MAX

Not exactly, no.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Years of trial and error have
 demonstrated that there is a price
 that is less than or equal to one
 human appendage. For you, that
 means both arms, both legs, and
 that appendage -- I'm making an
 assumption here -- that appendage
 that makes you a Mr. Fickle as
 opposed to a Mrs. Fickle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX

What about fingers?

The Grand Poobah RINGS the bell again. Gypsy Jack grabs Max's ears to administer the warned-of HEAD BUTT.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Superfluous! They're measured in pennies.

MAX

Shit! God damn!

THE GRAND POOBAH

You have 'til the end of the weekend.

Gypsy Jack stands Max up to leave.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Oh, one more thing --

Gypsy Jack steers Max's line of vision to the bathtub. Reno, now donned in a rubber apron and a surgical mask, leans over the bathtub with an electric meat carver. Reno grabs the General's hair as if it were a set of reins and yanks back to expose the neck.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

You being on parole and all, this probably won't be necessary, but all the same, don't get light feet.

BUZZZZZZ! Reno plunges the meat carver into the General's neck. Angle on Max -- sheer terror!

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/BAR -- CONTINUOUS

The bar maintains a DULL ROAR, HIGH-ROLLERS talking shop here and there. The elevator opens and The Grand Poobah steps out, flanked by Reno and Gypsy Jack.

Gypsy Jack and Reno drift off into the bowels of the bar. Poobah piles into a booth at the rear of the club.

After Poobah sits, a HAND serves him a tumbler full of flaming liquor.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Sobriety.

Poobah blows out the flame and sips.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The lights in the club darken. WHISTLES and HOWLS echo within the club. A small spotlight illuminates the stage where Rose stands at a mic. Jeronimo Jones, sitting next to her on a stool, finger picks a blues intro. Rose raises the mic to her lips.

ROSE

"It all comes around. It all comes around. She will breathe again and sic the fox upon the hound. When the sailor goes a' sailing he'll hear the siren's sound. I said it all comes around."

She walks the length of the stage and descends into the audience.

ROSE (CONT'D)

"It all comes around. The thief will steal the gold and get a penny on the pound."

Rose teases the patrons, running her hands along their collars and swinging her caboose into their faces.

ROSE (CONT'D)

"The cop will pull the strings and end up in the ground. 'Cause it all comes around. It all comes around."

Rose makes her way to the bar. A tumbler slides the length of the bar-top; she catches it with her free hand. A lighter comes out of nowhere and sets the drink ablaze.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(approaching climax)

"When the shadows come together the truth will be found. And it all comes around."

With that, Rose blows out the flame and shoots the drink. The patrons HOOT, HOLLAR, and WHISTLE.

Rose makes her way to Poobah's table.

THE GRAND POOBAH

You murdered, sweetheart. You're a killer.

INT. YI'S CHINESE -- NIGHT

Max enters a dark restaurant, passing WAITRESSES who look like geishas and move amongst the tables like ghosts.

He makes his way to a table where his middle-aged parole officer, DICK BISHOP, sits. Dick Bishop is the classic cowboy cop whose hair has looks like it's been overworked by a plastic comb.

Max stands, hovering over the table with a coffee in his hand while Dick Bishop slurps Moo Goo Gai Pan.

MAX

Dick Bishop?

DICK BISHOP

Fickle?

MAX

Max, actually.

DICK BISHOP

Fickle suits you. Now go on and take a seat. I took the liberty of ordering you some green tea.

MAX

Can we make this snappy? I have appointments to make. We can meet for tea some other time.

DICK BISHOP

I say how things are gonna be. Now drink up.

Bishop sips his tea.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

You find work?

MAX

Some good leads.

DICK BISHOP

What happened to the leads I gave you?

MAX

Yeah, those didn't wash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DICK BISHOP

That so? I spoke to Martinez; he doesn't recall speaking with you.

MAX

Something came up.

DICK BISHOP

Missing the appointment is not an option, Fickle. You have a civic responsibility to make the appointment. Is that understood?

MAX

Well, I set up my own job interview. I know some people.

DICK BISHOP

The idea, Fickle, is to get a job with character -- something dignified. Somehow, I don't believe your people offer those types of jobs.

MAX

You call sucking shit from Porta-Potties dignified?

DICK BISHOP

Somebody's gotta suck shit from Porta-Potties. Besides, what's more dignified? Cleaning the shit from a Porta-Potty and getting paid good money to do it, or getting paid nothing to clean your own ass after it's been introduced to the morning glory of some animal in the C block? Either way, Fickle, you shall clean shit.

Drained of energy from his rant, Dick Bishop replenishes himself with his food. Max sips his coffee.

MAX

What about being a parole officer? You get me a lead into --

DICK BISHOP

Don't test me, Fickle.

MAX

Easy, Dick. I'm just trying to make conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DICK BISHOP

-- Let me make a few things abundantly clear -- you will find a job. Like it or fucking not, you will earn your keep in this society, or you will spend the rest of your days in The WAR. You are not to leave city lines. If you are caught so much as one foot, even one inch, outside of this town, I will see to it that you are on the next fun bus back to where you belong. You are mine for the next thirty months. That's right, asshole, you've got two and a half years of me, and it ain't gonna get any easier, so learn to fucking live with it. If you don't like what I have to say, fuck you. If you don't like what you have to do, fuck you. And if you don't like me...guess what?

MAX

Fuck me?

DICK BISHOP

Fuck you!

MAX

Do you mean fuck me, or fuck you?

DICK BISHOP

You know good and fucking well what I fucking mean.

Dick Bishop slams a ten on the table and stands to leave. Max grabs Dick Bishop's arm.

MAX

Wait. I need a favor.

With a look, Dick Bishop makes it clear that Max should remove his hand. Max complies and Dick begins to walk away again.

MAX (CONT'D)

My dad's missing.

Dick stops one more time.

MAX (CONT'D)

Since I got out, he's...he's gone. I was hoping you'd ask around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Without uttering a sound, Dick walks out. Max grabs the check -- it's a little over twelve dollars.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ah, shit.

Max pulls out a wrinkled five and slams it atop the ten. He grabs the fortune cookie and cracks it open. The fortune reads: DO NOT BE AFRAID OF SUDDEN TERROR, NOR OF TROUBLE FROM THE WICKED WHEN IT COMES.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a medium-sized cabin, classy and tasteful, but very much alone. No neighbors for miles.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Archie sits on the couch, sipping bourbon in the rustic yet stylistically responsible cabin.

The door SQUEAKS open. Rose leans seductively against the doorjamb, her red dress evident beneath her overcoat. In her hands is the stack of Spicy Whiteboy advertisements.

ARCHIE

Can I help you?.

ROSE

Perhaps.

ARCHIE

That's a good word. Perhaps.

ROSE

It rolls off the tongue nicely, doesn't it?

ARCHIE

I could think of better things to roll off your tongue. But, perhaps it'll do.

ROSE

You have a gift for --

ARCHIE

-- a gift for words, I know.

ROSE

I was going to say a gift for manipulation. But why split hairs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

Hmm?

ROSE

What does that mean?

ARCHIE

What?

ROSE

Hmm?

ARCHIE

A public official's last line of defense. When you can't think of anything clever to say, just look intense and say hmm.

ROSE

Clever.

ARCHIE

Whaddya got there?

Rose holds up the advertisement.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You're gonna knock em' dead, beautiful girl. Drink?

Archie goes to the mini-bar and refills his glass.

ROSE

Are we celebrating?

Rose advances on Archie, grabbing his belt loops with one hand, the drink with the other.

ARCHIE

I got something to show you.

Archie exits into a side room. Rose takes to scattering her individual head shots across the floor.

ROSE

So, what's the plan, Stan?

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Business as usual for me.

ROSE

With or without me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Without. I've got a whole mess of
nonsense I need to make sense of.

ROSE

Perhaps, afterward, I can surprise
you with some nonsense of my own?

Rose snatches a manila envelope from the coffee table. She slides a document out, sneers at it, and slides it underneath the couch. She replaces the document with one of her advertisements and drops it on the coffee table.

ROSE (CONT'D)

By the way, I saw the first lady
at The Spicy Whiteboy.

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Tonight? Really?

Rose turns to find Archie standing right behind her.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

That's...huh...that's
interesting...
(trailing off into)
Mmm...you smell like raspberries.

Archie's hands wrap around her throat. He lowers himself. Rose's eyes close in anticipation, but instead...

...SLAM! Then CLICK. Rose opens her eyes and drops her glass. It SHATTERS.

ROSE

Whoa, mama.

Rose gazes at an open briefcase on the floor. It's contents: money. Archie spins her into a quick tango step. A spin and a dip, then hold...

ROSE (CONT'D)

I'm going to...

ARCHIE

Yeah.

Rose exits to the bedroom.

ROSE (O.S.)

This weekend's gonna torture me.

Archie moves quickly. He closes up the briefcase, walks over to an ANTIQUE TRUNK, and takes a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ARCHIE

When I finish this monkey
business, you'll be first to know.

He pulls up a set of floorboards near the trunk, stashes
the case in the empty space, and replaces the boards.

ROSE (O.S.)

You're sure you don't need help.

ARCHIE

You'd die of boredom. I'll knock
this out in the next few days, and
we'll get back to having the most
fun we can have without smiling.

ROSE (O.S.)

Fiddlesticks. I smile every time.

Rose appears in a different dress, and she wears it in a
way that could give Jesus an erection.

They rush each other and end up on the floor flailing
about. Rose's hands search for a hand-hold; they find the
antique trunk, which SHAKES and RATTLES at her grasp.

Above the trunk is a slightly open window covered by
white drapes. A cool breeze makes the curtains dance.

EXT. BOWSER MACFADDEN'S PAWN SHOP -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a pawn shop situated amidst a string of
seedy shops. Max navigates through the ruffraff.

INT. PAWN SHOP -- NIGHT

A typical pawn shop -- lots of guns and guitars. A DORK
behind the cash register reads a comic book.

MAX

I'm here to see the albino.

The dork jerks his thumb at a curtain.

INT. PAWN SHOP/HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

A long hallway is poorly lit by flickering chandeliers.

Max makes his way to a steel door and KNOCKS. A slate
BURSTS open in the door to reveal a set of WRINKLY EYES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WRINKLY EYES

Password?

MAX

Fuck you.

The slate SLAMS shut. The door opens to reveal the BOUNCER who belongs to the wrinkly eyes; he is an elderly dwarf standing on a footstool with a sawed-off shotgun.

WRINKLY EYES

What's doin', Max?

Max hedges past the bouncer.

WRINKLY EYES (CONT'D)

Glad you got to see me.

INT. PAWN SHOP/BOWSER'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Bowser scribbles into a ledger while smoking a hookah. He is albino white, skin creamy and thick. His speech is croak-ish.

MAX (O.S.)

I'm here to see the albino.

Bowser looks up to see Max has entered his office.

BOWSER

Maxwell Fickle! Like a phoenix
outta the--

Bowser looks Max over, and, after considering, exclaims:

BOWSER (CONT'D)

-- cheese and crackers, Max. The
WAR musta been a bastard -- looks
like somebody tried to shove a
warm stick a butter up your ass
with a hot poker.

MAX

Yeah.

BOWSER

You in the catbird seat?

Max doesn't answer -- his expression does it for him.

EXT. A CEMETERY -- NIGHT

The Grand Poobah, Reno, and Gypsy Jack, stand in the Pullmann's headlights. Another set of headlights approach -- Archie's sedan. Archie parks and gets out of the car.

THE GRAND POOBAH
Sheriff.

ARCHIE
Any word on the missing score?

THE GRAND POOBAH
It's playing out.

ARCHIE
Don't get cute. Cut to it.

THE GRAND POOBAH
It's not the kind of business you really want to know about. Is this all you called for -- to bellyache about the Fickle situation?

ARCHIE
I got a bad case of nonsense. I need a guy to handle it.

THE GRAND POOBAH
What kind of nonsense?

ARCHIE
A nasty kind.

THE GRAND POOBAH
Be more specific?

ARCHIE
Nasty's as specific as I care to be right now?

THE GRAND POOBAH
How much is attached?

ARCHIE
I'll pay the piper. But the situation is volatile. If it goes south, and it very well could, I'd need this guy to be expendable.

THE GRAND POOBAH
You need a Patsy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

You got one?

THE GRAND POOBAH

Sure, but he's already into me. If the situation does go south, will you make good?

ARCHIE

How much good?

THE GRAND POOBAH

High society.

ARCHIE

I can cover high society. What's the Pasty's name?

THE GRAND POOBAH

Fickle.

ARCHIE

Beg your pardon?

THE GRAND POOBAH

Maxwell Fickle, Jr.

INT. PAWN SHOP/BOWSER'S OFFICE -- AS BEFORE

Max sits across from Bowser who gnaws on the hookah pipe.

MAX

I have to eat an elephant and I only got the weekend to do it.

BOWSER

What kinda mess you in?

Max flashes the index card to Bowser.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

Shit. You've been tearing up the pea patch pretty good, haven't ya?

MAX

Got anything cooking in the books?

BOWSER

I got a lead over here and a fix over there, and more sure things coming out my ass by the minute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Anything you can help me out with?

BOWSER

Why should I?

MAX

Because you're a fine and decent man, and you haven't forgotten that I used to be a fine and decent man.

BOWSER

Alright, Fickle. Alright. There's an undercard that's getting a whole lotta play. A Swede that goes by the name --

The phone RINGS.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

-- Beg your pardon.
(answering the phone)
Bowser McFadden... yes...yes...

Bowser's eyes go big and he peers at Max.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

...well...yeah...I understand....

He hangs up the phone.

MAX

Everything okay?

BOWSER

The Grand Poobah says to go home and wait.

MAX

Are you --

BOWSER

-- There's nothing I can do, Max.

MAX

Look, I've gotta --

BOWSER

-- There's nothing I can do!

Max leaves. Just before he reaches the door...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOWSER (CONT'D)

I ain't said a prayer in twenty years. Tonight, I'll pray for you, Max.

MAX

Like you said, nothing you can do.

Max yanks the door shut behind him.

SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK...

INT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT/CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Max opens the apartment door and stares out into the corridor, presumably at a person. After a once over:

MAX

Who are you?

ARCHIE

I'm a guy with money.

INT. MAX'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Archie circles around the apartment. Max eyes the potential Godsend.

ARCHIE

This is normally where I'd tell you that you have a nice place. But this is a real shit-hole.

MAX

I ain't the kinda man who has time for bullshit.

ARCHIE

Glad to hear it. That's the kinda man I'm looking for. Why don't you pour a couple of drinks?

Max hesitates, then nods his head.

MAX

I'm a Cape Cod man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

Whatever's clever.

Max takes to mixing a pair of Cape Cods.

MAX

So, what are you selling?

Max hands the drink to Archie. Archie sips just before conjuring a stack of cash and putting it on the counter.

ARCHIE

I'm selling you your life. You have debt. Well, I have money, the kinda money that solves problems -- the kinda problems that begin and end with The Grand Poobah. All you gotta do is a simple job. Whether you do it or don't do it, it's getting done. So you should do it.

Max picks up one of the bills and stares at it.

MAX

What's the business? And how much do I get? And talk fast because --

ARCHIE

-- Because the weekend is your hourglass, I know.

Archie pulls out a book and sets it on the counter. It's entitled: "How to Get Rid of a Body."

MAX

You want...what? You want me to kill somebody? You came here to hire...I've never murdered anybody. What makes you think --

ARCHIE

-- Don't think murder. Think accident. It's a simple accident, and you're simply a liaison.

MAX

If I were a liaison, it wouldn't be an accident.

ARCHIE

Whatever you have to tell yourself. Look, I don't care how you do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX

I didn't say I was gonna to do it.

ARCHIE

You haven't said you're not gonna do it.

Max sets the bill back on the stack, then pulls a cigarette from a pack and puts it between his lips.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You own a gun?

Max searches for a lighter; Archie tosses him a matchbook. The matchbook reads: LITTLE PINOCHE REST STOP SALOON AND MOTEL -- WARM BEER AND COLD WOMEN.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Do you own a gun?

Max pockets the matches and ignores the question.

MAX

Who is it you want killed?

Archie hands Max an envelope. Max slips the picture out. It's the advertisement of Rose, which was switched out, apparently unbeknownst to Archie. Max slips it back in and sets it on the counter.

MAX (CONT'D)

Your wife?

Archie nods his head.

MAX (CONT'D)

Why don't you do it?

ARCHIE

Because I have money, enough money to get someone else to do it.

MAX

Why you want her dead?

ARCHIE

Why? Why not? She sings outta tune. She's more trouble than she's worth. What do you care?

Archie un-holsters a revolver and sets it by the cash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

It's simple. One second. A quick squeeze. Or the jerk of a rope. Your bare hands. Gentleman's choice. And afterward, you just slip her into the incinerator.

Archie puts the money in Max's hands.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

A little today. A lot more when you finish.

MAX

I just don't think --

ARCHIE

-- You don't have to think. I've made it simple. She'll be alone in a cabin in the middle of nowhere.

Archie pulls out a blue key and sets it next to the gun.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

She'll be dead this weekend whether or not you're the man for the job. One weekend. Two days of work as simple or as difficult as you make them. She'll be the only one around for miles.

Archie taps his fingers on the counter.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You want the money?

INT. FICKLE, SR.'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Max sits in front of a half-played game of solitaire. Next to the deck of cards is the stack of money.

The phone RINGS. Max stares at it.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

A drab city hospital. People enter and exit like ghosts.

INT. HOSPITAL/LOBBY -- NIGHT

Max strolls to a MAGAZINE VENDOR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Pack o' Marlboros. Box, please.

VENDOR

I don't sell those here.

MAX

Then gimme Camels.

VENDOR

Sir, this is a hospital. We don't sell cigarettes.

Max surveys the lobby but sees nothing of interest.

MAX

Okay. Just gimme a paper.

The vendor tosses a newspaper on the counter.

VENDOR

Fifty-four.

MAX

Fifty-four cents? Since when does a paper cost fifty-four cents?

VENDOR

Tax, sir.

MAX

Twenty-nine cents tax?

VENDOR

No, four cents tax. Fifty cents for the paper, four cents for the tax. That equals fifty-four cents.

Max sees a newspaper dispenser on the far side of the lobby.

MAX

Tell ya what, how 'bout you break this dollar into four quarters.

The vendor grabs the dollar and slaps down four quarters.

MAX (CONT'D)

Mighty kind of you.

Max grabs the quarters, walks to the dispenser, deposits the change, and takes a paper. A front page headline jumps out: UNIDENTIFIED BODY FOUND IN ALBERHILL CREEK

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DICK BISHOP (O.S.)

Fickle.

Max lowers the paper to see Dick Bishop.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

Follow me.

Dick Bishop leads Max toward a SECURITY GUARD who sits at a desk. Dick Bishop flashes his badge.

SECURITY GUARD

Officer Bishop, what can I help you gentlemen with tonight?

DICK BISHOP

We came to visit the ice box.

SECURITY GUARD

Certainly. Let me just...

The guard picks up the phone just as MIKEY, dressed in scrubs, comes out of the corridor.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)

Ahh, Mikey. You mind taking these gentlemen back to the ice box?

MIKEY

Follow me.

The three walk through the doors and into...

INT. HOSPITAL/MORGUE -- CONTINUOUS

...a metallic filing cabinet for the dead.

MAX

A morgue? This is the ice box?

DICK BISHOP

What did you expect?

Dick Bishop hands Mikey a card. Mikey reads it and begins searching the cabinets.

MAX

What am I doing here?

Mikey slides open a drawer, revealing an old, decrepit corpse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DICK BISHOP

I need you to identify a body.

MAX

Who is it?

DICK BISHOP

I was hoping you could tell me.

Max pussyfoots to the body.

MAX

I've never seen this guy before.

DICK BISHOP

Are you sure about that?

MAX

He's just some old man.

DICK BISHOP

Is he your old man?

Realization on Max's face as he looks closer.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Max. You asked me to
find out what I could.
Unfortunately, this was it.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- MOMENTS LATER

Max and Dick Bishop stroll out of the automatic doors.
Max lights a cigarette with a match.

DICK BISHOP

Bum one?

Max gives him a smoke and the matchbook. Dick Bishop
lights up, and then looks at the matchbook.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

Little Pinoche? Any good?

Max shrugs. Dick Bishop gives the matches back.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

I'll have to check it out. You
should steer clear though. It's
awfully close to your boundaries.

MAX

Thanks for the pointer.

EXT. BOWSER MACFADDEN'S PAWN SHOP -- NIGHT

Rose sashays along the sidewalk.

INT. BOWSER MACFADDEN'S PAWN SHOP -- NIGHT

Bowser McFadden cleans a gun behind the counter. Someone enters the shop, triggering a BELL. Bowser looks up. Rose emerges in attire that suggests she is going to or coming from The Spicy Whiteboy.

BOWSER
My goodness, look at you.

ROSE
Look at me.

BOWSER
You goin' some place?

ROSE
Aren't we always goin' someplace?

BOWSER
What brings you here?

ROSE
You buy things, don't you?

BOWSER
If ya got something I want.

ROSE
If I had to put my money on it,
I'd say I do.

BOWSER
Ya wouldn't be here if ya had any
money.

ROSE
You see right through me.

Rose reaches into her hand bag.

BOWSER
The same story every time. You're
gonna pull out that old watch and
try to convince me it has some
value to someone other than you.

Rose produces a PEARL-HANDLED KNIFE from her handbag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOWSER (CONT'D)

Where'd you get that?

ROSE

I got it. That's all that matters.

Rose hands it over. Bowser inspects the knife.

BOWSER

If I buy this from ya, how ya gonna protect yourself? Pricks in this iceberg will be following ya home, bustin' down ya door.

Bowser holds out the knife to give it back to Rose.

ROSE

Why would anyone want to do that?

Bowser looks Rose up and down.

BOWSER

I can think of two reasons.

Rose softly grabs Bowser's hand and curls it up so he grips the knife with a closed fist. Holding his hand, she forces it down to his side as she moves closer.

ROSE

Is that so?

BOWSER

How much do ya need?

ROSE

How much you got?

BOWSER

Now don't start that. If I let ya, you'd take me for everything. I'll give you fifty for it.

ROSE

I need at least two hundred.

BOWSER

I better get a lot more than just that knife if I'm gonna give you two hundred dollars.

ROSE

Haven't I given you enough already?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOWSER

You could at least give me a kiss.
I am you father for Christ's sake.

Rose tentatively kisses him on the cheek. As she pulls away, Bowser grabs the back of her head. He leans, and their lips slowly press together. Before it becomes a full-fledged kiss, Rose pulls away in protest.

ROSE

You gonna give me two hundred
dollars or not?

BOWSER

When do I see you again?

ROSE

Maybe never.

BOWSER

That right? Your sugar daddy gonna
take care of you? He gonna make
you famous?

She starts to leave.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

You're forgetting your money.

Bowser holds out two one-hundred dollar bills.
Reluctantly, she leaves.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

A PIECE OF SHIT -- Max's piece of shit -- rambles along.

INT. PIECE OF SHIT (MOVING) -- CONTINUOUS

The headlights of the piece of shit light up a sign on the highway: LITTLE PINOCHE REST STOP SALOON AND MOTEL -- WARM BEER AND COLD WOMEN. Max fishes out the matchbook from his pocket -- the same.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE REST STOP SALOON AND MOTEL -- NIGHT

Establishing -- a seedy joint that embodies the bitter flavors of small-town America sits off the highway. There is a gas station, a saloon, and a motel. The whole of the setting longs for a past that never really existed.

Max's piece of shit exits the highway to the parking lot.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- CONTINUOUS

ODD CHARACTERS cuddle up to three fingers of scotch and buckets of beer. COCKTAIL WAITRESSES tiptoe about the patrons.

Max enters and bellies up to the bar. The BARTENDER, a man with barbed-wire whiskers, greets Max.

BARTENDER
Time for your medicine, killer?

Max shifts uneasily.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
What'll it be? You look like a
Bloody Mary man.

MAX
Cape Cod.

BARTENDER
Close enough.

The bartender mixes and serves. Max takes a healthy swig.

Another DRINKER's stare lingers on Max. He is SHAMUS RIGBY, a man approaching his twilight years who is more than likely the uncle to a family that no longer allows him at holiday gatherings. Although he is aged and small in stature, a rolling boil can still be sensed beneath his skin. He has a habit of flicking his tongue over his lips to keep them moist.

SHAMUS
(to Max)
How long you been home from the
WAR?

MAX
Do we know each other?

SHAMUS
Brothers by experience you might
say.

Shamus rolls up his sleeve to reveal an octopus tattoo on his forearm.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)
I, too, have untangled myself from
the tentacles of the octopussy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max draws his sleeve down so that it covers his tattoo.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

Neither an axe nor a gun is the right tool for whittling one's future.

MAX

Sage advice. Does it also apply to the past?

SHAMUS

Is there any difference between the two?

MAX

Sometimes I wonder.

SHAMUS

Wondering's good. Good to keep an open mind. Take your time though. I've seen a man get so impatient with opening his mind that, when it happened, his head exploded. Don't let that happen to you.

A flick of the tongue from Shamus.

MAX

Another piece of sage advice. You have any advice for a recent veteran of the WAR. I mean, what did you do when you got out?

SHAMUS

Same thing I'm doing now: odd jobs.

MAX

Odd jobs? What's odd about them?

SHAMUS

You mean, other than the fact I'm doing em'?

MAX

Yeah.

SHAMUS

Odd jobs end you up in places like this, places where people are comin' or goin' without knowing where they've come from or where they're goin' to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX
Sounds like hell.

Max knocks back his drink and stands from his stool.

SHAMUS
Indeed it is. Do you know where it
is you're goin' to?

MAX
Yes, sir. Goin' crazy

Max drops some cash on the bar and makes for the exit.

SHAMUS
Well, then...I'm sure we'll be
seeing more of each other.

EXT. A GAS STATION -- NIGHT

Archie stands at the payphone, phone in hand.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
Hello?

ARCHIE
It's me. I'm up at the cabin.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
Is that so?

ARCHIE
We need to talk. I want you to
come up here.

GEORGIA
I'm not going to --

ARCHIE
-- I know you were at The Spicy
Whiteboy.

A long SILENCE between them.

GEORGIA
Who have you been talking to?

ARCHIE
Get up here. We need to discuss
this marriage.

He hangs up, an impending look of doom across his face.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Max's piece of shit flows down a coal-dark highway.

INT. PIECE OF SHIT (MOVING) -- CONTINUOUS

Max turns down an obscure road that has a NO OUTLET sign. Over it is a smaller sign that reads: COCOON CIRCLE -- PRIVATE ROAD -- NO TRESPASSING.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

Max plays solitaire on the hood of the piece of shit, which is parked on the side of the small road, well-camouflaged by the thick of the forest. The Whites' Cabin is visible from his point of view.

The ACCELERATION of a taxi kicks up dust as it propels toward the cabin. Rose exits the taxi.

INT. PIECE OF SHIT -- CONTINUOUS

Max lets himself in, then opens the console. He grabs the envelope given to him by Archie and studies the picture.

Max looks at himself in the rearview -- his eyes big, scared. Then, an attempt at focus -- a lowering of the brow, a curl of the lip.

MAX

Everything we see is just a shadow
cast by that which we do not.

The ACCELERATION of the taxi is heard again. Max watches the taxi tear up dust on its way back to the highway.

He pulls out the revolver from the glove compartment and opens the chamber. Bullet by bullet, he loads the gun.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

Max trudges toward the cabin.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN/PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

Max tries to slip the blue key into the lock, but his hand shakes. He uses his other hand to steady the key.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He scowls -- time to get dirty. He turns the key. He turns the knob. And, finally, he pushes the door open.

There, swaying before him, is Rose, a large goblet of wine in her hand. She's socially lubricated.

ROSE

You're not Archie. Who are you?

Max's scowl disintegrates.

MAX

Excuse me?

ROSE

No excuses here. You must be looking for something else. You always find what you're looking for.

She slurps from her wine.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I believe our shadows dance when we're not looking.

She cocks an eyebrow.

MAX

I'm a friend of Archie's.

ROSE

You lie like a rug.

MAX

He gave me a key. Said I could come up for the weekend.

ROSE

Maybe we should call him up. Straighten it out.

Max nods.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Or maybe not. I came up here to surprise Archie. But, instead, I got a little surprise of my own. Would you like a glass of wine?

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max steps into the cabin and pulls out his cigarettes.
Rose shuts the door.

ROSE
You can't smoke in here...unless
you're willing to share.

Max offers; she accepts. He lights up while Rose fills
her glass with what's left of a bottle on the table.

ROSE (CONT'D)
I'll have to open another bottle.
You like red?

MAX
Uh-huh.

Her back turned to Max, she pulls a bottle from a wine
rack and starts the corking process.

Max, cigarette dangling from his lips, quietly pulls his
gun from his back pant waist.

ROSE
This wine has the best color.
It's deep and rich...like
raspberries or roses or maybe even
like...like blood.

Max has the gun aimed at Rose's back. He trembles.

ROSE (CONT'D)
(glancing over her
shoulder)
I suppose blood isn't the best
word to use for describing wine,
is it?

Max lowers his gun to his side. Rose cannot see it as a
piece of furniture skews her view.

MAX
I wouldn't know.

Rose returns to corking the wine.

ROSE
I could imagine worse words.
Once, I heard a man compare a
white zinfandel to cat piss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max raises his gun again.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I don't mind that so much. White zin is for assholes who are too afraid to fly by the seat of their pants because they might forget to come home and feed the pooch.

POP goes the cork. The cigarette falls from between Max's lips and tumbles down his shirt front.

ROSE (CONT'D)

There it is.

Max swats at his shirt with his gun-brandishing hand. He stomps the cigarette out and then lowers the gun as Rose turns around with the bottle and an empty glass. He pockets the gun on the sly.

Rose pours the other glass at the table.

MAX

Something smells like raspberries.

ROSE

It's me. Let's toast.

MAX

I always toast to sobriety.

ROSE

We may as well toast to irony. To finding what you're looking for.

CLINK goes the toast. They gulp.

ROSE (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

MAX

The easy way out.

ROSE

You wanna know what I'm looking for? Life! I just wanna be alive -- really, really alive. That's what I want -- to be really alive. And I want a little love too. And a little magic. Life, love, and magic -- doesn't that sound delicious?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX

It sounds like...like we should
have toasted to irony.

Rose smacks Max with a kiss, hard and sloppy. They stop.

ROSE

We're gonna need more wine.

She goes to the table to refill.

MAX

I think I know where you can find
what you're looking for.

ROSE

You know where to find life, love,
and magic?

MAX

Mexico.

ROSE

Mexico? What makes you say Mexico?

MAX

This.

Max holds up the Spicy Whiteby advertisement.

ROSE

I don't speak Spanish, and I'd be
damned if I was going to sing the
blues in Spanish.

She snatches the picture from Max to admire herself.

MAX

Archie gave me that.

ROSE

Yeah? Daddy's proud of his baby.

She carelessly places the advertisement face-down on a
random piece of furniture.

MAX

Daddy wants you dead.

She LAUGHS. Max stares her into submission, and she
realizes he might be serious. He affirms by tossing the
"How to Get Rid of a Body" book at her feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She reads the cover; then her glass slips from her hand, and SHATTERS on the hardwood, SPLASHING wine everywhere.

MAX (CONT'D)

Archie lent it to me when he hired me to kill you. He also gave me the keys to the cabin, your picture, a little bit of cash, and the promise of a whole lot more money if I --

ROSE

-- I don't believe you --

MAX

-- He said you sang outta tune and that you were more trouble than you were worth.

ROSE

What are you going to do?

MAX

Well, right now, the plan is to fill you full o' lead and stick whatever doesn't drip on the floor into the incinerator.

ROSE

But you don't even have a gun.

Max whips it out. Rose fumbles back and bumps the table. The bottle topples, spilling wine onto the table and floor. DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...

MAX

This is why I brought up Mexico.

Rose watches the gun in his hand as if it were a rattlesnake about to strike. DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...

MAX (CONT'D)

I came here to kill you, but I don't think I'm gonna be able to pull this trigger.

He points the gun at her.

MAX (CONT'D)

It's just not in me to point this at you and --

Max realizes the effect of the gun on Rose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MAX (CONT'D)
 -- It's okay. I'm not --

She can't peel her eyes off of the gun. Max pops the chamber and empties the bullets into his hand.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Here. Here we go.

He tosses them on the table, and they ROLL chaotically; some even DROP to the ground with a CLINK.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Here.

He offers her the gun. She slaps it to the ground, startling herself. She stumbles backward, steps on a stray bullet, and tumbles against a door. The door gives way and she crashes through it.

...THUMPETY-THUMP THUD CRASH BANG BOOM -- the lumbering sounds of flesh plunging down the steps of a staircase.

CREAK -- the door swings shut. Max approaches the door.

MAX (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Rose?
 (louder)
 Rose?

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS (*NOTE -- THIS SCENE BEGINS WITH THE SAME SHOT OF THE FIRST SCENE)

Light cuts through the blackness. Max draws the door open, revealing Rose face down at the foot of the stairs: her hair disheveled, her body lifeless.

Max rushes down the stairs to Rose and rolls her over. A trickle of blood slides out of her mouth. Her lids are shut, her mouth open. Max fingers her lids open, lets go, and they fall shut.

MAX
 (whispering)
 Rosebud.

Fear inundates Max's face. His fear becomes LAUGHTER, LOUD CACKLING LAUGHTER, which crescendos into hysterics. He stops. Reality. Laughter becomes grief. He reluctantly puts the snarl back on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Using Rose's underarms as handlebars, Max drags her up the stairs -- BUMPING and THUMPING her various parts.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max bursts into the cabin through the basement door, sweating like Liberace eating a corndog.

THUNK -- he drops Rose's body to the ground. He lights another cigarette as he heads for the back door.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max steps out of the back-door to find the incinerator.

He takes hold of a handle that is attached to the contraption and swings open a small trapdoor. He measures the opening with an improvised meter stick: his hand.

Max SLAMS the door shut. He flicks a switch; the contraption HUMS.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max straddles Rose's body and applies his improvised meter stick -- not even close.

Max pulls his hands down his face, stretching his skin taught and distorting his eyes. DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...

Max's looks to the drip-drop of the wine. Beyond the wine bottle, next to the fireplace, is a wooden stump; and in the stump, an axe.

Max wrenches the axe from the stump. The blade is shiny: a virgin. Max looks at his reflection in the blade.

Returning to Rose's body, Max lines up on her wrist. A few slow practice swings before he whips his hands over his head. His eyes go wicked. He inhales --

BUMP -- a sound near the front door keeps the body whole.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max peeks through the curtains of the front door. Nothing. He steps out onto the porch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX
(softly to himself)
No more nonsense.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max returns to Rose's body. He raises the axe and...

...the phone RINGS! He looks up. The phone RINGS again.
He is frozen. He lowers the axe and walks to the phone.

He places his hand on the phone, but it goes to the
ANSWERING MACHINE:

ANSWERING MACHINE
(computerized)
Please leave a message.

BEEP!

GEORGIA (O.S.)
(from the answering
machine)
Hello. Are you there? Goddamnit,
quit playing games and pick up the
phone. Fine. I'll be there in 10.

DIAL TONE.

MAX
Fuck me.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max is visible through a window -- again, with the axe
raised over his head. He swings -- THUNK!

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max releases the handle of the axe, which is stuck firmly
in the stump.

Max scans the dishevelled cabin: spilled wine, broken
glass, stray bullets, tipped chairs, a dead blues singer.
He sets out to restore order:

He picks up the glass, big shards and little shards.

He wipes up the wine with paper towels.

He pockets the "How to Get Rid of a Body" book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He rearranges the table and chairs.

He picks up the stray bullets and the gun.

Then, the body. Max scans the cabin until he comes upon the antique trunk.

ROSE (V.O.)
You always find what you're
looking for.

Max goes to the trunk. There is an old and rusty skeleton key in the keyhole. He turns the key, which is stubborn and takes some elbow grease. The lid POPS open -- empty.

Max lifts Rose into the trunk. It's a tight fit and he stuffs her limbs into the space as if she were clothes in a suitcase. He SLAMS the trunk closed and notices, on the wall, a gun rack that displays an antique shotgun. Next to the rack is a picture of Chekhov.

MAX
Have we met? I think I know you.

Max makes for the back door.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max BURSTS out the back door, turns off the incinerator, and darts out into the woods.

EXT. THE WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

Max cuts and weaves through trees; he high steps through ivy; he hurdles small bushes. Glancing over his shoulder, he -- SPLASH -- falls face first into a small pond.

INT. THE POND -- CONTINUOUS

Max delicately moves underwater like a fetus in the womb.

EXT. POND - CONTINUOUS

The surface of the pond captures the reflection of the moon. Max's head crowns through the surface.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

The piece of shit, as before. Max enters.

INT. PIECE OF SHIT -- CONTINUOUS

Max rams the keys into the ignition and cranks the key -- nothing. Again -- nothing. He cranks the key like a masturbating college freshman -- still nothing.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

Max walks swiftly while fumbling with his now-soggy pack of cigarettes; they crumble in his grasp.

In a fit of rage, he stomps on the cigarettes, loses his balance, and falls on his ass.

While Max is on his ass, a car ROARS around the bend and BRAKES just short of vehicular man slaughter.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia strangles the steering wheel. Max erects in the headlights, blocking his face to cut the glare.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia steps out of her car.

GEORGIA

Jesus, are you alright? What the hell were you --

(second thought)

-- are you the guy?

MAX

Excuse me?

GEORGIA

Were you hired to do an odd job out here? Because if you were, we're probably not going to need you. Not now.

Max stares blankly; Georgia gets back in the car and ROARS toward the cabin.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/ROOM SEVEN -- NIGHT

A purple haze saturates the drab room. Foil covers the windows, just one of several bizarre features that is characteristic of this homemade dark room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A MALE FIGURE, in silhouette, drops a piece of paper into a tub and then stirs the paper gently with tongs. An image begins to forge on the paper.

A clothesline hangs above the tubs of development fluid. Several pictures dangle and drip from the line: the first is of Max arriving to the cabin; this is followed by Max and Rose on the porch and so on (each subsequent photo a storyboard of Max's tryst with Rose).

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE -- NIGHT

Max trudges toward the saloon, leaving a trail of wet footprints in his wake.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- CONTINUOUS

The USUAL SUSPECTS drink their drinks and wallow in whatever it is they wallow in. Max enters and grabs a stool. The bartender takes notice.

BARTENDER

Back again, huh, killer?

Max Flinches.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

We just cracked a bottle of cab,
and you look like a red wine kinda
man to me. Am I right? Red wine?

MAX

You gotta phone?

BARTENDER

Payphone. In the back.

Max peels a bill from his wad and SLOSHES it on the bar.

MAX

Change?

BARTENDER

Yes siree Bob, Bill.

The bartender snatches the bill.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Why's it wet?

MAX

Prevents bloodstains.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARTENDER

Beg your pardon?

MAX

I fell in a puddle.

The bartender POPS open the register.

BARTENDER

Must have been a big damn puddle.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON PHONE BOOTH -- CONTINUOUS

Max holds the receiver to his ear in the antique-style phone booth, which is strikingly similar to a coffin.

INT. THE WHITE HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The master bathroom. Archie stands before the mirror and removes his contacts.

RING! Archie's hand snatches the phone.

ARCHIE

Hello?

Max, at the phone booth, pushes in on Archie so that the screen is split. This gives the illusion that Max speaks face-to-face with Archie's reflection.

MAX

The thing is done.

Archie inhales deeply.

MAX (CONT'D)

Hello? You there?

Archie turns on the water and splashes his face.

MAX (CONT'D)

I said the thing is done.

Archie turns off the water.

ARCHIE

I heard you.

MAX

It wasn't exactly a tea party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

I wouldn't think it would be.

MAX

Yeah, and your wife's girlfriend didn't make it any easier.

ARCHIE

My wife's girlfriend?

MAX

Some woman with a rusty set o' pipes left a message on the machine while I was...while I was doing the --

ARCHIE

-- Sure.

MAX

And she said she was on her way over. So let's just say you're a lucky sunuvabitch that I'm good under the gun.

ARCHIE

I'd say we're both lucky.

MAX

Yeah, well, I suppose I'll be seeing you at the rendezvous.

ARCHIE

I suppose so.

Max hangs up and his phone booth pushes out so that we're left with Archie and his reflection.

DIAL TONE.

With a burst of frantic excitement, he dials the phone.

RING! Georgia's hand reaches into frame.

RING! -- Again, we're in split screen with Archie's reflection and Georgia at the cabin.

GEORGIA

Hello?

A CRUNCH is audible O.S. and the source of the sound is implied by the cracking image of Archie in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Hello? Helloooo?

Georgia notices the advertisement that was left behind.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Is that you? Archie? Is that --

Archie SLAMS the phone down. The split screen pushes out and we're left with Archie in the cracked mirror.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- MOMENTS LATER

A small puddle of water has accumulated beneath Max's stool. Max tosses em' back, unsure if they're celebratory or simply necessary to busy his idle hands.

SHAMUS (O.S.)

The man who was goin' crazy.

Max looks up to find Shamus Rigby.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

Already went crazy and back, huh?

MAX

Mr. Odd Jobs. Yeah, I'm back. When you're goin' crazy and finally get where you're goin', it's difficult to find a place where you can take a shit comfortably.

SHAMUS

You strike me as the kinda man who never really gets comfortable.

MAX

I have shallow roots. It's no secret. Shallow roots make crooked trees, and crooked trees never grow straight.

SHAMUS

Not without an axe.

MAX

I thought you said...didn't you say neither a gun nor...shit...

SHAMUS

Beg your pardon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX
(on second thought)
I have to shit.

SHAMUS
Well, before you --

Shamus attempts to gesture the word *shit*.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)
-- my mother never swore. She argued that it lacked style and grace. In all her years, I only heard her say one foul word: she said *shit*. And when that word came out of her mouth -- shit -- I could practically smell it.

Max stands from his stool.

MAX
Well, I'm off to lighten my load.

He stumbles toward the bowels of the bar.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Max pushes a stall open, yanks his pants to his ankles, and PLOPS down on the seat.

He reads the bathroom graffiti. One line catches his eye - - one that has been revised. Initially, the graffiti read: LIFE IS AN ISSUE OF HARMONY; but after an addition: LIFE IS AN ISSUE OF HAR-MONEY.

The door to the bathroom opens. FOOTSTEPS echo off the tile as they approach Max's stall -- SILENCE.

MAX
(hesitant)
Yeah?

An envelope DROPS on the floor. A BOOT slides the envelope under the stall door. The FOOTSTEPS echo on their way out of the bathroom

Max picks up the envelope. He pulls out a piece of paper: WE KNOW ABOUT THE BLONDE, ROOM SEVEN -- 10 MINUTES, OR OTHER PEOPLE WILL KNOW TOO.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE/ROOM SEVEN -- NIGHT

Max edges to the door of room seven and eases the door open. A FAMILIAR VOICE greets him:

FAMILIAR VOICE
Close the door behind you.

Reluctantly, Max slips into the homemade photo lab.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/ROOM SEVEN -- CONTINUOUS

As Max steps into the room, Shamus gets the drop from behind, frisking Max until he finds the gun in his pants. Shamus checks the chamber -- empty.

SHAMUS
I want to tell you more about my odd jobs. I take pictures of people. That's what I do. It isn't all that odd, actually. Well, sometime it is. Today was definitely odd.

Shamus gestures to the clothesline before taking a seat with his and Max's gun in hand.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)
She was so pretty, they'll say. She was so pretty. She sang the blues like she knew it was coming.

Max sees a pack of smokes and a bottle of booze.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)
Be my guest.

Max lights up and pours three fingers into a glass.

MAX
I didn't do it.

SHAMUS
Maybe not; but you analyze that photograph -- the line, the composition, the foreshadow -- you take all those elements and you set them right next to the girl's dead body, and suddenly it seems that, yes, maybe you did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max's hand curls into a fist -- shaking, white knuckles. Shamus points his gun at Max.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

Play pretty now.

Max blows smoke at Shamus just before splashing him with booze and flicking the cigarette onto his lap. A small flame ignites. Shamus SCREAMS and slaps at the flame.

Shamus drops both guns. Max secures his gun and kicks Shamus's under the bed while Shamus extinguishes the flame.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

(breathless)

No bullets in that gun. You didn't bother with bullets.

Max pulls back the hammer. The gun is just as frightening to Max as it should be to Shamus.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

Amateur. You really didn't do it, did you?

Shamus HOWLS. Max pulls a bullet from his pocket and loads it into the chamber. A SPIN and a CLICK, and the revolver is live in Max's hand.

MAX

I want the negatives. All of them.

SHAMUS

I would hope so. I wouldn't --

Max slugs Shamus in the nose; Shamus falls to his knees.

MAX

I've got one bullet.

SHAMUS

(nodding)

Just one.

MAX

That means I can't just injure you. I'm going to have to kill you if I don't get all the negatives.

A flick of the tongue from Shamus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SHAMUS

I'd bet if my darlin' Clementine
walked down this street right now -
- in this moment -- she'd assume
you had the power.

Max shoves the barrel into Shamus's nose.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

What you should realize, sir --

Shamus stands.

SHAMUS (CONT'D)

-- is that there has been no shift
of power here.

MAX

A loaded gun is pretty steep in
favor.

SHAMUS

Burn me down with that bullet and
my other half will see to it that
the negatives go straight into the
hands of your parole officer.

MAX

You have a partner?

SHAMUS

You don't really believe I just
stumbled upon that cabin?

MAX

Even with those pictures, it'd
take a helluva lawyer to prove
guilt. There isn't one drop of
blood in that cabin. Not one drop.

SHAMUS

You don't strike me as one who
would receive mercy if he threw
himself on the floor of the court.

Max lowers the gun.

MAX

What do you want?

Shamus looks at the gun. Max hands it over.

SHAMUS

I want harmony.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX

How much does harmony go for these days?

Shamus hands Max a business card from his coat pocket.

MAX (CONT'D)

I don't know who you think I am, but --

SHAMUS

-- I know exactly who you are.

Max pulls out his wet wad of cash.

MAX

Look, this is all I have. This is it. I'll give you this for --

-- Shamus snags the money and pockets it.

SHAMUS

It's a sizable down payment. I respect your integrity.

MAX

How in the hell am I supposed to --

SHAMUS

-- You're not asking the right question. The question you should be asking is: How long do you have? And the answer is: until tomorrow night.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Georgia opens a closet door, exposing a mirror, where she examines herself. She's plain; she slouches; her hair is tied back sloppily; she attempts a smile -- it's phony and she knows it. She pins the advertisement of Rose next to the mirror.

She switches tactics -- tries to seduce her own reflection, but can't even sell herself on herself.

She SLAMS the closet door. It hits the doorjamb and flies back open -- the mirror CRACKS. Georgia glares at her cracked reflection.

She rushes into the closet and tears into the wardrobe. She holds a black dress up to her frame. In the cracked mirror, Georgia's reflection offers a glimmer of hope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA (O.S.)
Mama's gonna get ya.

EXT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY -- NIGHT

Archie walks into The Spicy Whiteboy in a long overcoat, a fedora, and sunglasses.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Bowser examines the pieces on a chessboard. Reno enters.

RENO
The sheriff is here.

THE GRAND POOBAH
White?

RENO
He's pissed off.

THE GRAND POOBAH
Send him in.

Reno exits; after a beat, Archie thrusts into the office.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)
Sheriff, I would think you too beholden to your public image to be seen lurking in the bowels of The Spicy Whiteboy.

ARCHIE
What was my wife was doing here?

THE GRAND POOBAH
How's that?

ARCHIE
My wife was here. I want you to explain to me why she was here.

THE GRAND POOBAH
Why she was here is not the question you should be asking, White. The question you should be asking is why you don't know why your wife was here.

Poobah slides the queen across the board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Do you even know where your wife
is right now?

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- NIGHT

Max RATTLES ice in his glass, oblivious to the SEXY MAMA that enters the saloon and surveys the prospects.

The sexy mama bellies up to the bar along side Max.

SEXY MAMA

Somebody must have licked all the
red off your lollipop.

Here we realize that the sexy mama is a madeover Georgia.

GEORGIA

I'm Georgia.

MAX

Georgia, huh? Do you have a
cigarette, Georgia?

She fetches a single cigarette and holds it out to Max. He grabs for it, but she pulls it out of his reach.

GEORGIA

I don't give up the goods to men
without names.

MAX

I'm Max.

She surrenders the cigarette. Max lights up.

GEORGIA

Well, Max, could I talk you into
buying me a drink?

Georgia flags down the bartender with a wave of the hand.

MAX

No, you can't. Not tonight anyhow.

GEORGIA

What makes tonight different from
any other night? Or yesterday for
that matter?

MAX

Yesterday I could have bought you
a drink --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max sucks an ice cube into his mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)

-- but today, right now...I'm not sure how I'm going to pay for the drink that used to be in this glass.

The bartender approaches.

BARTENDER

Time for your medicine?

GEORGIA

I'll have a TNT. Pair o' olives. Pair o' onions. Another one of the same for Max, here.

She extends a fifty dollar bill.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Make sure all his drinks -- past, present, and future -- go on my tab.

BARTENDER

You're the doctor.

The bartender retreats to mix the medicine.

GEORGIA

I think I might like to have you in my back pocket.

Max gives Georgia a good once-over.

MAX

That dress doesn't look like it has any pockets.

GEORGIA

You'll have to keep me company to find out.

MAX

Why would you want my company?

GEORGIA

Because you look like you've been up all night doing something very bad, or, perhaps, planning on doing something very bad. And I find that terribly interesting.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

As before with Archie and Poobah.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Sheriff, your wife is a firecracker. She had this idea -- a good idea -- that involved you, another woman, and blackmail. In so many words, I told her that it was the kinda idea that could end her up in the morgue, and then I sent her on her way. I did, however, follow up on the idea to show you that you've been looking at yourself in the fun house mirror. Your perception is off. You're vision is distorted because your head is too far up some girl's ass. Hey, I sympathize. Up a girl's ass is a nice place to be; it's just not exactly lucrative.

Reno enters with a sealed manila envelope in his hand.

BOWSER

Is that it?

Reno nods.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Give it to him.

Reno extends the envelope to Archie.

ARCHIE

What's this?

THE GRAND POOBAH

That's the follow-up.

Poobah lends Archie a brass letter opener. Archie opens the envelope, slips a picture out, and examines it.

Poobah can tell by the look on Archie's face that the follow-up caused the desired effect. Poobah nods to Reno and who peeks out the office door where Gypsy Jack waits.

RENO

Pay the photographer.

Gypsy Jack sets off.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

The picture is one of Max speaking with Rose on the porch of the cabin. Archie, quick to realize the potentially detrimental gravity of the situation should Poobah see the picture, attempts to make haste:

ARCHIE

You were right to do this. I've been careless, and you were right to do this.

Archie slips the picture in the envelope and hands it to Reno.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I'll take care of it.

THE GRAND POOBAH

I think that is a wise move.

ARCHIE

We'll be in touch.

Archie makes for the door.

THE GRAND POOBAH

Oh, how is the Patsy working out?

ARCHIE

Couldn't say. He's still at it.

Archie exits.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/PARKING GARAGE -- CONTINUOUS

The elevator opens, and Gypsy Jack charges out. He walks to a parked CADILLAC with jet-black tinted windows.

INT. CADILLAC -- CONTINUOUS

The window lowers. Gypsy Jack extends a stack of money. The HAND of the PHOTOGRAPHER reaches out to accept.

GYPSY JACK

The Grand Poobah appreciates your work and your discretion. You're our man if we need more pictures.

EXT. CADILLAC -- CONTINUOUS

From Gypsy Jack's point of view, the photographer is visible: a smooth, clean-cut young man -- the very antithesis of Shamus Rigby.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Cheers.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Poobah sits at his desk. Reno holds the manila envelope.

RENO

Do you want these in the vault, or should we get rid of them?

THE GRAND POOBAH

Keep'm in the vault. It's the best insurance policy we've ever bought.

Reno moves to the door.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Let's have a look at em' though. I'm curious to see if the sheriff's taste has improved any on his wife.

Reno hands Poobah the pictures. Poobah examines.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Well, jump up my ass and eat a big bag o' hell.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- NIGHT

Max and Georgia have moved to a booth. They have fresh cocktails, and Georgia has inched herself close to Max.

GEORGIA

So?

MAX

So what?

GEORGIA

(whispering)

So are you going to divulge your secret?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Why is it that I'll believe almost anything when it's whispered?

GEORGIA

What do you mean?

MAX

You just whispered a question. You said, 'Are you going to divulge your secret?' And you've convinced me that I have a secret.

GEORGIA

Well, you do have a secret. You know, the secret of your very bad behavior.

Georgia sucks an olive off of its pick.

MAX

Ohhhhhh.

GEORGIA

Ohhhhhh. Come on. Out with it.

MAX

I'm not telling any secrets until you do.

GEORGIA

You think I have a secret?

MAX

I'm sure you have many secrets.

GEORGIA

Bullshit.

MAX

I can't think of anybody that could walk through the doors of the Little Pinoche Rest Stop and Saloon with a clear conscience.

GEORGIA

Well, I'll give you that one.

Georgia reaches down and strokes the inside of Max's leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX

Added to that, you're so damn near close to sitting on my lap that someone could mistake you for a cherry on a sundae.

GEORGIA

And that's secretive?

MAX

Well, it wouldn't be if you weren't wearing a wedding ring.

GEORGIA

It's beautiful, isn't it?

Georgia holds her hand out for Max to examine the ring. The SOUND OF A COWBELL jump-starts Max and Georgia.

BARTENDER

The witch's hour and all's well!

GEORGIA

The moment of truth.

MAX

(suddenly)

It's been a pleasure. Thanks for the drinks. Thanks for the smokes. Thanks for the company.

Max moves out of the booth; Georgia stops him.

GEORGIA

I want you to take me home.

She asks him again with her eyes.

MAX

That's very tempting, but I have to --

GEORGIA

-- I'll pay you.

MAX

Thanks, but I'm already in your back pocket for my drinking habit.

Max turns to leave.

GEORGIA

I'm ready to tell you a secret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She beckons him with her finger. He leans toward her.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
 (whispering)
 This dress doesn't have pockets.

MAX
 What about your other secret?

Georgia cocks an eyebrow.

MAX (CONT'D)
 Your wedding ring?

GEORGIA
 That's why I'm going to offer to
 pay you. My husband's cheating on
 me, and I want to return the
 favor.

Max reluctantly sits back down.

MAX
 How much?

EXT. PAWN SHOP -- NIGHT

Reno and Gypsy Jack march into the shop.

INT. PAWN SHOP/HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Reno and Gypsy Jack knock on the steel door. Reno KNOCKS.
 The slate BURSTS open -- WRINKLY EYES right on cue.

WRINKLY EYES
 Password?

GYPSY JACK
 We're with the Grand Poobah.

The slate SLAMS shut. The door opens with gusto. Wrinkly
 eyes stands on his stool in awe.

RENO
 Bowser?

Wrinkly eyes shoots his thumb over his shoulder. Reno and
 Gypsy Jack proceed.

INT. PAWN SHOP/BOWSER'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Bowser, gnawing on his hookah, looks up to see Reno and Gypsy Jack file into his office.

BOWSER

You're the Poobah's boys, right?

Gypsy Jack reaches into his coat pocket.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

Wait! Wait! Wait!

Gypsy Jack's hand freezes inside of his coat.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

Look, I didn't mean to shit in your oatmeal. The guy comes here, he asks for help, I get Poobah's call, and so I send him packin'. That's all that --

GYPSY JACK

-- Simmer down, McFadden. Nobody's here to bust ya up.

Gypsy Jack pulls out an envelope and hands it to Reno.

BOWSER

That an invitation to a tea party?

RENO

You still got Shamus Rigby on a leash?

BOWSER

Occasionally, I do.

RENO

Is *now* one of those occasions?

BOWSER

Maybe.

GYPSY JACK

We don't understand maybe, McFadden. We prefer certitude. Do you understand certitude?

BOWSER

Yeah, I understand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GYPSY JACK

So?

BOWSER

Yeah, Shamus Rigby's on the clock.

RENO

What do you have Rigby doing?

BOWSER

Odd jobs.

Gypsy Jack and Reno exchange a look of impatience.

RENO

Look here, Bowser. Our tempers are as short as the hair on our balls. Start spilling your guts, or we're gonna start spilling 'em for you.

BOWSER

Alright...alright.

Gypsy Jack slaps Bowser on the neck.

GYPSY JACK

Atta boy.

BOWSER

Shamus is doing sleuth work, taking snapshots.

RENO

Where at?

BOWSER

Out there near Little Pinoche.

GYPSY JACK

He still out there?

BOWSER

I suppose. I haven't heard from him. Why the curiosity about Shamus Rigby? He's a twenty-five cent shit bird.

RENO

What do you know about Archie White?

BOWSER

Shit! Is that what this is about? Archie White?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOWSER (CONT'D)

I know he's a sheriff, and I know he can't keep his wife happy. Archie White is the reason Shamus Rigby is out at Little Pinoche. The old battle-axe wants pictures of him giving the business to some jezebel.

RENO

That's it?

Reno draws the left side of his coat back to reveal his shoulder holster, the gun glistening therein.

RENO (CONT'D)

Think real hard before you answer. That's all you know?

Bowser's mouth falls open. He stops himself, starts again, then stops himself once more until finally:

BOWSER

That's it. That's all I know.

Reno lets his jacket fall back over the holster.

GYPSY JACK

So the sheriff's got himself somethin' on the side?

BOWSER

Yeah, and I hear this hussy is a saucebox if you know what I mean -- a real saucebox.

GYPSY JACK

You hear that, Reno? A saucebox. How do you like that?

RENO

I like it fine. It's accurate.

Reno hands a picture from the envelope to Bowser.

GYPSY JACK

So long, McFadden.

Reno and Gypsy Jack show themselves out.

Bowser examines the photo. His eyes bulge the size of billiard balls; his nostrils flap like a pair of condors.

BOWSER

Rose?

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Georgia drives and Max sits shotgun with the window down. The ROAR of highway wind is ominous.

GEORGIA
I've never done anything like this before.

MAX
I didn't think you had.

A pair of headlights whiz by in the opposite direction.

GEORGIA
What if --

MAX
-- What?

GEORGIA
Never mind. It's completely mad.

MAX
We're past madness, sweetheart.

GEORGIA
What if tonight wasn't tonight?
What if it was some other moment --
and you were you, and I was just a
girl in a pretty dress with no
pockets and no money? What then?

Max looks at her as she turns onto a dark road. In passing, Max sees the sign for Cocoon Circle.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia's car parks in front of the cabin.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR (PARKED) -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia cuts the ignition. Max is half-paralyzed, and Georgia takes notice.

GEORGIA
Jesus-God, you're pale as
porcelain.

MAX
Your husband's name is Archie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA
(hesitantly)
What did you say?

MAX
Your husband paid me to kill you.
Archie paid me to kill you.

Georgia considers it thoughtfully, coolly.

GEORGIA
Well, what are you gonna do?

CUT TO:

BLACK

GEORGIA (V.O.)
No! No! Don't...Oh, God...
No...Don't...Please...Please...

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Max's face is sour, snarling and sweaty.

GEORGIA (O.S.)
...No...No!...Don't!...Don't stop!

Max and Georgia violently make love as if it were the first and last time.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Georgia and Max lie in bed, side-by-side.

MAX
Wow. That was...God, that was --

Georgia lights a cigarette.

GEORGIA
-- a near death experience.

Max sits on the edge of the bed and pulls his pants on.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)
I don't think Archie had this in
mind when he hired you to kill me.

Georgia slips her ring off and puts it on the night stand. Max picks up the ring.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

I don't think anyone had this in mind.

Georgia smiles knowingly, then slips into a robe.

MAX (CONT'D)

You should hock this ring -- it'd fetch a pretty penny.

GEORGIA

Knock yourself out. It's nothing to me anymore.

Max looks at Georgia, then pockets the ring.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Ya know, there's a full moon tonight?

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

The from doorknob twists, and the door inches open.

GEORGIA (O.S.)

Brings out the weirdos.

Bowser tiptoes into the cabin. There is blood spattered on his hands, face, and shirt.

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

Brings out things that go bump in the night.

He notices high heels, a dress, and a bra strewn about in a path toward the bedroom.

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

Things like you and me.

Bowser sees the antique shotgun. He cracks open the barrel to check for shells -- check. But then something catches his attention. He sniffs the air suspiciously. Bowser rushes the bedroom door.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Georgia and Max fling themselves back against the headboard.

MAX

Bowser?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bowser shoves the shotgun into Max's mouth, turning Max's would-be pleas into a series of MMPHHS and UMPHHS.

GEORGIA

For the love of --

BOWSER

-- Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Shut up, I said! Shut up!

Bowser COCKS the shotgun.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

Was it the Poobah? He put you up to it? He let you out of the catbird seat if you --

Max closes his eyes.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

-- open your eyes. God damn you, open your eyes!

Max opens his eyes.

BOWSER (CONT'D)

I want you to know that I prayed for you. I got on my knees and prayed for you, God damn it! I begged God almighty to spare your soul, you filthy bastard.

Max, shotgun barrel still in mouth, responds:

MAX

UMMPHHS NNOFPH VHA MMPHHEEN --

BOWSER

You go to hell.

Bowser pulls the trigger.

CLICK -- nothing. Again, CLICK -- nothing.

Bowser yanks the barrel from Max's mouth and swings for Max's head. Max ducks and wrestles Bowser to the floor.

Georgia spectates, practically catatonic, watching Bowser and Max trade sloppy punches, fighting for the shotgun.

They make a mess of the room, tearing into the closet just before thrusting into the hall. The closet door swings open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Georgia sees the advertisement of Rose and her face goes sour. GRUNTS and BUMPS from Archie and Max are heard O.S.

GEORGIA

Ahhhhhhhh!

Georgia charges out of the bedroom -- down the hall to the living room -- and leaps wildly onto Bowser's back, causing Max to fall on his ass and relent the shotgun to Bowser.

Georgia chokes Bowser and gouges his eyes. Bowser sees flashes of Max scurrying about the hardwood. He swings the shotgun at Max by the barrel as if it were a bat.

He misses once -- strike one.

Again -- strike two.

Again -- clipping Max's shoulder: a foul ball.

Georgia's feet flail about like a tetherball. A thunderous pivot and Georgia falls to the ground -- THUD! Bowser swings again, this time as if chopping wood. He connects -- not with Max -- but with the hardwood.

KA-BOOM! The shotgun finally discharges into Bowser's belly, launching him across the room, near the trunk.

Max surveys the situation, then rushes to Bowser's dead body. He notices a blood-soaked picture -- partly blown away -- peeking out of Bowser's jacket. Max slip the picture out -- it's one of Shamus Rigby's.

Georgia picks herself up.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

What happened?

Max discreetly slips the picture back into the jacket.

MAX

Nothing happened, except for everything.

GEORGIA

Is he dead?

MAX

Does Howdy Doody got wooden balls?

The blood of Bowser's body flows across the hardwood into an amoeba-like shape, reaching the spot in the hardwood where Archie had pulled up the floorboards. The blood drains and seeps through the cracks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Max and Georgia pull up the floorboards and hit pay-dirt.

MAX (CONT'D)

We just cut a fat hog in the ass.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Georgia drives down a dark road with Max in the passenger's seat. Their demeanor is decidedly different. Whereas Georgia sports a cool grin, Max is laggard. She breaks the SILENCE, bursting into LAUGHTER.

MAX

Something funny?

She pauses to look at Max, but falls back into HYSTERICS.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm glad you see humor in this.

GEORGIA

Lighten up. It's not so bad.

MAX

I just cleaned up a gallon of blood with T-shirts and socks. Fucking socks!

GEORGIA

The paper towels were gone.

MAX

-- Not to mention that this was a man that I didn't care to see die and then buried in Godforsaken Little Pinoche.

GEORGIA

What would you have us do? Leave his body rotting in the house. He was gonna kill you, Max. Would you rather have cleaned his blood, or had him clean yours? Because that's what it came down to.

MAX

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

Bullshit. You know damn well. A couple hours ago you couldn't afford the whiskey running down your throat and hadn't seen any action since shower time in the WAR. Now look at you. You went and got yourself loved up. And by the sound of it, pretty good, too. And if you've already forgotten, there's a suitcase full of dreams back there with our names written all over it. Enjoy it. This is as good as it gets for you.

MAX

Don't talk to me. I don't want to hear you right now.

Georgia LAUGHS.

MAX (CONT'D)

Quit your cackling!

With the look of 'fine, fuck you' written all over her face, Georgia focuses on the road. She throws on the blinker. Her destination: The Little Pinoche

MAX (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

GEORGIA

That didn't last long.

MAX

Why are you stopping?

GEORGIA

I'm not sitting in silence forever. I'm dropping you off. I'm sure there's some drunk sap here who'd love to join me.

MAX

The hell you are. Keep moving.

GEORGIA

Max, take off your sissy-britches and calm down. We need gas.

Max glances at the fuel-meter. It's on E.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE/GAS PUMPS -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia pulls into the bay and shuts off the car. She throws the keys to Max.

GEORGIA

Fill it up! I'm going to powder my nose.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- MOMENTS LATER

Reno and Gypsy Jack waiting for the bartender.

BARTENDER

Get you boys something?

GYPSY JACK

Some answers, we hope.

BARTENDER

I got the answer to any question you can ask sitting right up there on the shelf. What's your prescription?

RENO

Maybe you misunderstood.

BARTENDER

I understand fine. But if it's answers you're looking for, you've come to the wrong place. I've seen a lot of men come through here, all of them with questions, but I have yet to see a man walk out of here with the answer he was looking for. I offer them an interim solution -- and that's what I'm offering you.

GYPSY JACK

We're not here to drink --

Gypsy Jack leans on the bar, letting his jacket fall open to reveal a holstered gun. The bartender goes rigid.

GYPSY JACK (CONT'D)

-- We're gonna ask you a question. You're gonna answer politely. We'll continue on in this fashion until I get the information I want. How does that sound to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARTENDER

Fine. Sounds fine.

A MAN, only partially visible from behind, looks in the direction of the two thugs.

RENO

Something we can help you with?

The man turns away.

Georgia enters the bar and passes by this scene on the way to the bathroom.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE/GAS PUMPS -- MOMENTS LATER

Max pumps the gas.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Nice car. What year is it?

Max doesn't acknowledge the voice. The voice gets closer.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's a '76, ain't it? Funny thing is, I have one just like it. Now what are the chances of that?

MAX

Yeah, sounds like a real --

Max turns and sees that the man is Archie.

ARCHIE

Goin' somewhere, Fickle?

MAX

Uhh, well, just getting ready to, you could say.

ARCHIE

You weren't going to wait for me?

MAX

Of course I was. You ever know a man to walk away from that kind of money?

ARCHIE

I've seen men do many a strange thing. Especially in desperate situations.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

The only thing I'm desperate for
is that money.

ARCHIE

Do you want it now?

MAX

Yeah, sure. That would be good.

ARCHIE

Okay, well maybe we shouldn't do
it out in the open, you know.
Might look suspicious.

Archie gets in the car.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

C'mon.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- MOMENTS LATER

At the bar, as before.

GYPSY JACK

I'm looking for a man named
Shamus. You know him?

BARTENDER

Can't say that I do.

RENO

He's a weasly cuss -- kinda guy
that would steal the clothes off
his dead father's back.

BARTENDER

With all due respect gentlemen,
look around.

GYPSY JACK

Well, maybe you'll recognize this.

Gypsy Jack reaches into his jacket. The bartender jumps
back, knocking a beer bottle to the ground.

The SHATTER captures everyone's attention, including
Georgia who walks directly behind Reno and Gypsy Jack.

Georgia recognizes the thugs and retreats to a table to
avoid confrontation. Neither Reno nor Gypsy Jack see her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GYPSY JACK (CONT'D)

Keep your cool, slick. I'm not gonna hurt ya.

RENO

Not yet anyway.

Gypsy Jack sets a photo of Shamus Rigby on the bar.

GYPSY JACK

Let me introduce you to Shamus Rigby. Now what's your story?

The bartender scrutinizes the picture.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Archie and Max sit in park at the pumps.

ARCHIE

Do you think I'm fucking stupid Fickle?

MAX

No, not at all. I think you're very bright.

ARCHIE

Shut up, asshole. I don't think you're a genius, but I know you're not as dumb as you're playing.

MAX

Okay, I'll --

ARCHIE

-- Shut up. Why are you driving this car? This is my wife's car.

MAX

She's dead. I didn't think she'd mind if I took it for a spin.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- CONTINUOUS

At the bar, as before.

BARTENDER

Yeah, I've seen this guy.

GYPSY JACK

Bingo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENO

Where do we find him?

BARTENDER

I can't be certain, of course, but
I can tell you that the first
place I'd look is room seven.

The man to the right of Gypsy Jack steals a glance at the photo. Gypsy Jack spots him peeking.

GYPSY JACK

Got something to say, buddy boy?

The man turns away again.

GYPSY JACK (CONT'D)

Mind your fucking Ps & Qs.

Gypsy Jack pockets the picture.

GYPSY JACK (CONT'D)

Room seven?

BARTENDER

Yes, sir.

Reno pulls out a wad of cash and places a five on the bar.

RENO

For the beer.

Georgia coyly exits the bathroom just as Reno and Gypsy Jack are leaving. She continues on, keeping her distance.

INT. GEORGIA'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Max and Archie sit parked at the pumps-- as before.

ARCHIE

If my wife's dead, Fickle, like
you say she is, then how'd she
manage to answer the phone when I
called?

Max anxiously peeks toward the saloon. At this moment, the gas pump POPS and startles Max.

MAX

Let me take care of that.

Max opens the door and jumps out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARCHIE

Whoa, asshole!

Archie hops out in a rush, thinking Max is trying to run.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE/GAS PUMPS -- CONTINUOUS

Max grabs the pump as Archie rounds the back of the car.

MAX

It's done pumping. That's all.

Max holsters the gas pump.

MAX (CONT'D)

Okay, done. We can go.

ARCHIE

Where is it you want to go? You're going to sit right there and explain to me what exactly went down at the cabin.

MAX

I'll show it to you.

ARCHIE

Show me what?

MAX

The body.

ARCHIE

There's not supposed to be a body, Fickle. The body was supposed --

MAX

-- It didn't work. I mean, it did, but I couldn't use it. Let's go back to the cabin. I'll show you.

Max opens the driver's side door. Archie hesitates before getting in on the passenger side.

As Max ducks into the car, Georgia exits the saloon and watches as Max and Archie drive off.

EXT. LITTLE PINOCHE/ROOM SEVEN -- NIGHT

Gypsy Jack KNOCKS. The door -- having been not pulled shut -- swings open slightly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENO

Shamus Rigby?

Gypsy Jack nudges the door completely open. A pair of legs on the floor stick out from behind the bed. There is blood smeared on the wall above the legs.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/ROOM SEVEN -- CONTINUOUS

Reno and Gypsy Jack pull the door shut behind them. The pair of legs belong to Shamus Rigby who has a knife stuck in his back -- a pearl-handled knife. Gypsy Jack studies the pictures on the clothesline. He pulls one off that depicts Max, the axe, and Rose's body.

GYPSY JACK

Damn.

He hands the picture to Reno.

RENO

We better get to that cabin and see what we can see. You wanna grab those pictures?

Gypsy Jack pulls the pictures off the clothesline. Reno scans the room. Something catches his attention.

RENO (CONT'D)

He's still alive.

Shamus's left-hand fingers stroke the carpet, his eyes twitch, his lips tremble.

RENO (CONT'D)

Helluva thing -- to just fizzle out like that.

Reno makes for the door. Gypsy Jack does not follow.

RENO (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GYPSY JACK

We can't just leave him like this?

RENO

A guy with a knife sticking out his back must have had it coming.

Reno leaves. Gypsy Jack raises his gun -- BLAMMO!

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- MOMENTS LATER

Georgia has a seat at the bar. The bartender cleans up the mess from the spilled beer. The man previously sitting next to Gypsy Jack is still at the bar.

BARTENDER

T&T?

GEORGIA

Extra olives.

Georgia turns to the man sitting next to her.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

So, what about you?

The man turns toward Georgia; it is Dick Bishop.

DICK BISHOP

No story.

GEORGIA

A man drinking by himself in a bar in the middle of nowhere doesn't have a story? I wasn't born yesterday, you know.

Dick Bishop looks Georgia up and down.

DICK BISHOP

You're not fooling anyone.

The bartender sets Georgia's drink on the counter. Without pause, she gulps the entire thing, pulls out a ten from her purse, and sets it down on the bar.

GEORGIA

Keep the change.

Georgia gets up to leave.

DICK BISHOP

I shouldn't have said that.

Please, sit.

(to the bartender)

Can we get another one of these over here? On me.

Dick Bishop motions for Georgia to sit.

DICK BISHOP (CONT'D)

Please.

INT. THE INCINERATOR -- NIGHT

The small hatch opens and Archie peeks in.

MAX (O.S.)

Now you understand why this wasn't
much of an option?

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Near the incinerator. Archie eyeballs Max.

ARCHIE

There's an axe in the cabin. Have
you no initiative?

MAX

You want me to show you where I
buried her?

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Near a woodpile. Archie and Max stand at the foot of the
freshly-dug grave. Max conjures Georgia's wedding ring
from his pocket and gives it to Archie.

MAX

You want me to dig her up? Let you
see the body?

ARCHIE

No. Let's get you your money.

INT. LITTLE PINOCHE/SALOON -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia and Dick Bishop at the bar, as before.

GEORGIA

Not the best conversationalist,
are you?

DICK BISHOP

Just not always in the mood.

GEORGIA

Then why did I sit back down?

DICK BISHOP

So, I could buy you a drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

That's original. A man that wants to buy drinks but doesn't want to talk? What's next? You gonna ask me if I need a ride home?

DICK BISHOP

My mom taught me better than that.

GEORGIA

You're a man. It's in your blood. Nothing momma says changes that.

DICK BISHOP

What do you know about a man's blood?

GEORGIA

I've known many men.

DICK BISHOP

I suppose you have.

GEORGIA

What's that supposed to mean?

DICK BISHOP

Not many women would come to a place like this all by themselves, in the wee hours of the night. What makes you special?

GEORGIA

What makes anyone special? Everything and nothing, I suppose.

The bartender drops the check on the bar.

BARTENDER

Closing up shop soon.

DICK BISHOP

I never got your name.

GEORGIA

You probably never will.

Dick Bishop stands, reaches into his pocket for some cash, and leaves it on the bar.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

So soon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DICK BISHOP

You heard the man.

GEORGIA

And your name?

DICK BISHOP

Dick Bishop.

GEORGIA

Dick. Short for Richard?

DICK BISHOP

Believe me, there's nothing short about it. You enjoy the rest of your night.

GEORGIA

You gonna offer me that ride?

DICK BISHOP

You think you can trust me?

GEORGIA

I don't trust anyone. Especially you.

Georgia knocks back her drink and SLAMS it on the bar.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Archie removes the floorboards, pulls out the briefcase, and pops the lock.

ARCHIE

I would like you to tell me one more thing before I give you the money. I want you to tell me...

Archie raises the lid of the case to hide the fact that he is reaching for a gun that is tucked in his waistband.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

...about Rose. What was she --

-- Archie stares into the case: sheer befuddlement.

MAX

Who's Rose?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Archie peers over the lid at Max.

ARCHIE

Where is it?

MAX

Where's what?

Archie aims his gun at Max, then shifts his aim to the side of Max's head. BLAMMO! -- the door window SHATTERS.

ARCHIE

That was your first and last warning --

UNSEEN ENTITY (O.S.)

Ahhhhhh!!!

An UNSEEN ENTITY beyond the door THUMPS on the porch. A gentle breeze blows the curtain that covers the door window. WHISPERS are heard beyond the door.

ARCHIE

Open it. Open it!

Max opens the CREAKING door. Nobody is there, but blood trails around the corner and into the darkness.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN/PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

Archie follows the blood. He peeks around the corner and raises his gun at the Unseen Entity.

A MYSTERIOUS GUNMAN raises his steel at Archie' back from the other side. The gunman circles round Archie, swiping Archie's gun, revealing himself to be Gypsy Jack.

GYPSY JACK

It's easy to see how you made the headlines, Sheriff. Why don't we go talk about it?

Gypsy Jack escorts Archie into the woods. Reno appears from around the corner, one hand on a gun, the other pressed against a bloodied ear.

RENO

Inside, Fickle!

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max walks in, followed by Reno who rips the curtain off the door and applies it to his ear.

MAX

Does that hurt?

BLAMMO! A SHOT echoes; a flash of light sparks in a window. Max flinches. A SCREAM is heard, followed by two more SHOTS, each accompanied by a flash in the window.

RENO

You scare easily for a guy so handy with an axe.

FOOTSTEPS approach. Reno turns toward the front door.

RENO (CONT'D)

You got those pictures, Jack?

Archie emerges in Gypsy Jack's coat and eye patch. BLAMMO! -- Archie FIRES and hits Reno in his other ear.

RENO (CONT'D)

AHHHHHHH!!!!

BLAMMO! -- Archie fires again and hits Reno in the chest. Reno drops dead. Archie turns the gun on Max.

MAX

The money's in the car.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Archie follows Max to Georgia's car. Max opens the trunk, fishes out a floral print suitcase, and SLAMS the trunk.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Max kneels and opens the suitcase, exposing the stacks of money laid across Georgia's bras and undies.

ARCHIE

Put the money in the briefcase.

Max obeys.

EXT. COCOON CIRCLE -- CONTINUOUS

Dick Bishop's car rolls to a stop at a healthy distance.

INT. DICK BISHOP'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

The open cabin door is visible from their POV.

DICK BISHOP
You make a habit of leaving the
door open when you leave?

GEORGIA
No.

She exits the car, closes the door, and moves forward.
Dick Bishop reaches into the glove compartment.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

MAX
I was going to bring the money
back to you. I knew it was yours.

ARCHIE
Of course it's mine. This is my
cabin. Who's else could it be?

MAX
Just don't --

ARCHIE
-- You're in no position to tell
me what to do.

Max puts the last stack of cash in the suitcase.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Stand up.

Max stands.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
They say a man feels death
approach moments before it
strikes. Is it true, Max?

Archie pulls back the hammer on his gun.

MAX
Dick?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Archie turns his head to see Dick Bishop behind him -- standing on the porch -- a gun aimed at his back.

DICK BISHOP
You know the drill. Drop the gun.

ARCHIE
I'm an officer of the law.
Identify yourself.

DICK BISHOP
Officer Dick Bishop.

ARCHIE
Dick, I'm gonna turn around. Don't
fucking shoot me, alright?

Archie turns slowly. He keeps his aim pointed at Max as long as possible before he turns his aim on Dick Bishop.

DICK BISHOP
Sheriff White? What's going on
here?

Georgia moves to Dick Bishop's side. Archie casts an evil eye in Max's direction.

ARCHIE
I should ask you the same thing.
What are you doing with my wife?

DICK BISHOP
Wife?

GEORGIA
Hello Boys. Don't look so
surprised honey.

ARCHIE
Dick, put down the gun.

DICK BISHOP
I can't do that, sir. Tell me
what's going on.

ARCHIE
This man behind me --

DICK BISHOP
-- Fickle.

ARCHIE
He a friend of yours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DICK BISHOP

I'm his P.O.

GEORGIA

You're a parole officer?

ARCHIE

Looks like you need to keep a better leash on your guys, Dick. Max has been up to some naughty stuff tonight.

GEORGIA

That's right. He fucked me.

MAX

No, I didn't! No, I didn't!

Archie casts a second evil eye Max's way.

MAX (CONT'D)

She's lying. I swear.

ARCHIE

Max is a murderer, Dick. He killed a friend of mine. I was just about to cuff him and take him in.

GEORGIA

He's a liar. He's lying. You bastard liar!

ARCHIE

Georgia, you've had too much to drink.

(to Dick)

C'mon, Dick, put down the gun.

GEORGIA

He tried to have me killed.

ARCHIE

Georgia, please!

GEORGIA

Tell him Max. Tell him you were gonna kill me.

MAX

I don't know what she's talking about. I didn't kill anyone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ARCHIE

Don't listen to her, Dick. She's drunk. Let's do the right thing.

Dick Bishop surveys the situation, taking in each side.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Here, let me prove it to you. There's a grave out back. There's a young lady buried in there.

DICK BISHOP

Max? What did you do?

MAX

Nothing. So help me, God. There's nobody in the grave! There is no grave!

ARCHIE

You see? He's a crook. You see this all the time, dontcha, Dick? Let's put our guns down together.

Archie lowers his gun. Dick Bishop follows his lead. Soon both men have their guns by their sides.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Wow. That was hairy. Good man, Dick. You got cuffs?

Dick Bishop holsters his gun and reaches for his cuffs. Archie raises his gun and squeezes the trigger; a bullet RIPS into Dick Bishop's head. Dick falls dead into Georgia who stumbles backward onto the porch. Archie aims his gun at Max.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Now, where were we?

Just as he is about to fire, he pauses to sniff the air. Georgia bursts up with Dick Bishop's gun.

GEORGIA

Raspberries!

Georgia squeezes the trigger and TAGS Archie in the shooting arm. His gun falls to the ground.

Another squeeze -- a bullet TEARS into Archie's chest.

Georgia rushes him from the porch, squeezes again, and BLASTS him directly in the forehead. He falls to the hardwood. Georgia UNLOADS all of the bullets into Archie.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN/PORCH -- CONTINUOUS

Max watches Georgia in disbelief until a faint RATTLING catches his attention. Georgia hears it, too. She lowers the gun and walks...

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

...to Max who investigates. They inch toward the antique trunk -- the source of the RATTLING.

The RATTLING turns to BUMPS as the lid wobbles up and down. Red fingernails curl from the opening. The lid raises; Rose sits up, disheveled and half-dead.

MAX
(whispering)
She's alive.

Rose slowly stands.

MAX (CONT'D)
She's alive.

Georgia's rage builds with Max's laughter. She aims the gun from her hip and pulls the trigger: CLICK -- nothing.

MAX (CONT'D)
(laughing)
She's alive. Dear, God -- she's really alive!

Georgia plucks the axe from the stump and charges Rose. Max's laughter fades as he watches Georgia raise the axe.

Max throws his forearm in front of the axe handle and blocks the would-be decapitation -- by a fraction of an inch. Georgia stares daggers at Max.

MAX (CONT'D)
No. She already died once today. I don't think I can watch her die again. Or anyone else for that matter. It's just not me. Besides we're all out of clean socks.

Max eases the axe from Georgia's vice grip.

MAX (CONT'D)
Good girl.

Georgia spits at Max, then SLAPS the shit out of Rose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGIA

Kiss your suitcase full of dreams
goodbye, you bastard.

Georgia grabs the floral-print suitcase and blows.

EXT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Georgia piles into her car, FIRES UP the engine, and
TEARS down the road toward the highway.

INT. THE WHITES' CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

Rose rubs her face, still dazed by Rose's slap.

MAX

You okay?

Max fishes a pack of smokes from Reno's pockets.

APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS echo from the porch. Max grabs
Archie's gun and tucks himself behind the door. He
motions to Rose to keep quiet.

Gypsy Jack, sans an eye patch and overcoat, enters.

GYPSY JACK

Rose?

ROSE

What happened to your head?

GYPSY JACK

I got shot.

ROSE

Does it hurt?

GYPSY JACK

Yes.

ROSE

But you're alive?

GYPSY JACK

Never mind. What about --

Max shoves his gun into the side of Gypsy Jack's head.

MAX

Easy, Jack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GYPSY JACK

Fickle? If you intend on killin' me, I'd aim that thing some place else. Otherwise you're just gonna aggravate me.

Max reassumes his aim at Gypsy Jack's back.

MAX

I could kill you, Gypsy Jack. Put a bullet right in your kidney.

Max picks up the briefcase. He holds the gun at his side.

MAX (CONT'D)

Just take me to the Poobah.

INT. THE PULLMANN (MOVING) -- NIGHT

Gypsy Jack drives, the bullet hole in his head ever present; Rose, looking half-dead, sits shotgun; Max sits behind Rose, a look of relief on his face as he stares at the corpse of Reno who sits beside him.

EXT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY -- NIGHT

The marquis on the club burns bright.

INT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY/POOBAH'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Poobah sits at his desk; Max sits across from him; a briefcase-sized stack of money sits between them. Gypsy Jack stands behind Poobah, his head wrapped in gauze.

Poobah inserts a stack of bills into an electric money counter. The bills SHUFFLE through the machine.

MAX

So, we're square?

THE GRAND POOBAH

Not quite.

Poobah gestures to Gypsy Jack. Jack hands him a newspaper.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

You know what this is?

Poobah puts the paper on his desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Yeah, it's fifty-four cents.

THE GRAND POOBAH

You haven't read the paper today?

Max shakes his head.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

Well, I did read the paper. And I
was sorry to hear about your
father.

Poobah lays the newspaper on the desk. A circled headline reads: ALBERHILL CREEK BODY IDENTIFIED AS BOXING TRAINER: AUTHORITIES SUSPECT FOUL PLAY.

THE GRAND POOBAH (CONT'D)

His cut was one-third. You're his
next-of-kin, so it seems to me
that a-third of this is yours.
Does that sound right to you?

Poobah tosses a white paper bag on the desk in front of Max. Max opens it and glances inside. He closes the bag and gives Poobah a nod of acceptance.

EXT. THE SPICY WHITEBOY -- SUNRISE

Max exits the club, a doggie-bag in hand. The doggie-bag has The Spicy Whiteboy insignia on it, complete with the slogan: HOTTER THAN A THREE-PECKERED BILLY GOAT.

Max struts down the sidewalk as the sun crowns on the horizon.

FADE OUT.