

Hard-Boiled Christmas

by

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WGA Registered
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EXT. 1900'S NEW YORK

Horse drawn wagons splash in muddy puddles as sophisticated people go about thier business.

EZRA (V.O.)

As I've been told, I came into this life with shit-nothin'. A friggin' turd dropped by some two-bit whore. I ain't never seen nothin' to prove 'em wrong.

EXT. PUBLIC ORPHANAGE -

A run down plaque mounted to a brick entry way, leading to an old, Victorian style house.

EZRA (V.O.)

I learned from an early age that they are gonna screw ya;

INT. PUBLIC ORPHANGE BOY'S ROOM

A cold, sterile room, like army barracks. Boys of all ages sit on dirty cots lined up against the walls.

Against the far wall? Cribs.

EZRA (6) sits on on such cot, flipping cards with three other BOYS.

They all freeze when SCARY FRED enters the room.

Scary Fred (40's) is old, fat and bald. A scar runs down his right cheek and slobber drips from his lower lip as he smiles.

EZRA (V.O.)

it ain't a question of when, cause they're gonna, but a question of who...

Scary Fred grabs Ezra by the arm.

One of the older boys stands up as if to challenge Scary Fred, but one glare from Fred sits his ass back down.

EZRA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...how often and how much it was
gonna hurt afterward. And trust me,
it hurt plenty.

EXT. PUBLIC ORPHANAGE - AFTERNOON

Snow on the ground. Christmas decorations are up, as if that helps.

A business man, MR. SANDERS, sharply dressed with a brief case, opens the gate and proceeds up the path.

EZRA (V.O.)
One day, around December, this
government guy came to ask about
me. I thought maybe it was my own
personal Christmas angel, come to
answer my little prayers. Should
have known better.

Mr. Sanders rings the bell.

INT. ORPHANAGE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

MRS. BETTY, a slim, somber looking woman in a standard black dress, answers the door.

MRS. BETTY
Mr. Sanders, I presume?

Mr. Sanders enters and removes his hat and overcoat.

MR. SANDERS
Yes. Thank you.

Mrs. Betty takes his items and hangs them on the coat rack.

MRS. BETTY
Nice to get some early snow this
year. Perhaps well have a White
Christmas after all.

MR. SANDERS
I suppose. Me? Can't stand the damn
stuff.

(MORE)

MR. SANDERS (CONT'D)

My brother owns some property down in Florida, and I have good mind to join him. Is Mr. Darcy available?

MRS. BETTY

Yes. Please follow me.

Betty leads Mr. Sanders through the presentable part of the house.

It is neat, clean and filled with antiques and other elegant things.

Mr. Sanders stops to admire a crystal candleabra.

MR. SANDERS

Hard to believe you have boys here.

MRS. BETTY

Oh yes, our children are very well behaved. I assure you Mr. Sanders, the rod is not spared on the backs of these children. Harsh and constant discipline is the only thing that will keep this children on the narrow path.

MR. SANDERS

And what of love?

MRS. BETTY

(Laughs) Obviously, Mr. Sanders, you have never met our boys.

INT. MR. DARCY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

It's an oak lined study, the walls covered with items of the hunt: Deer. Elk. Moose.

MR. DARCY, ancient and gaunt with snow white hair, pins a live beetle to an insect display box on his desk.

EXT. MR. DARCY'S OFFICE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Sanders and Mrs. Betty stand and knock.

A sign reading ELDRIDGE DARCY, DIRECTOR is etched on a brass plate, screwed into the wooden door.

MRS. BETTY

Please remember to speak up, Mr. Sanders. Mr. Darcy's hearing has deteriorated greatly since his time in Africa...

Mr. Sanders nods as Mrs. Betty knocks louder.

MR. DARCY (O.S.)

Come in, please.

INT. MR. DARCY'S OFFICE

Mr. Sanders enters.

Mr. Darcy stands to shake his hand. He walks with a noticeable limp and an ornately carved wooden cane.

MR. DARCY

Jonathan Sanders?

MR. SANDERS

Yes. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Darcy. I've often read of your adventures, and I must say it is a pleasure to make your formal acquaintance.

Mr. Darcy smiles and points him to a leather bound chair. He pours liquor from a crystal decanter.

MR. DARCY

Yes, yes. The tales. The wonderful adventures, traipsing through the jungle in grand, pachydermal style; which tells nothing of the mosquitos and the dysentary. Still the majestic wildlife, some of which you see here, made such discomforts worth while. The lion, the rhinoceros, the gazelle. Such noble beasts. However, I'm afraid today that I am taming a rather different sort of animal...

He hands Mr. Sanders a glass.

MR. DARCY (CONT'D)
And to be perfectly honest, I'd
still much prefer working with the
former.

They both drink and Mr. Darcy sits down.

MR. DARCY (CONT'D)
You came with news about the
Merriman boy?

MR. SANDERS
Yes.

Mr. Sanders opens his briefcase and hands some papers over to
Mr. Darcy.

MR. DARCY
Trouble, that one is. Has been
since his first day here. You have
located an aunt, you say?

MR. SANDERS
Yes. Just outside of Chicago.

MR. DARCY
Chicago? Good. That could work out
well for him...get him in the
slaughterhouses. In fact, I know a
fellow. Here's his address.

Mr. Darcy scribbles on a separate sheet of paper and hands it
to Sanders.

MR. DARCY (CONT'D)
Tell him I sent you, but don't let
him talk you into playing
poker...Nearly lost my wooden leg
that thievin' little scoundrel.

Mr. Darcy signs his name on several sheets of paper.

He stops occasionally to read, but otherwise is all business,
like he's done this a thousand times before.

MR. SANDERS
I will keep that in mind.

MR. DARCY

Fine then. Tell Mrs. Betty to fetch the boy.

MR. SANDERS

I will. Thank you very much.

Mr. Darcy hands the signed papers back to Sanders, who prepares to leave.

MR. DARCY

Oh, and I suggest keeping a tight watch on your wallet, Mr. Sanders. And tell the same to this brave auntie. Poor woman. May God bless her for her charity...

MR. SANDERS

...and have mercy on her soul.

INT. 1900'S GRAND CENTRAL STATION - AFTERNOON

Mr. Sanders and Ezra enter the grand marble foyer.

Ezra stares wide eyed at the columns and the general business of the people moving around.

He carries a small duffel bag.

Sanders grabs him by the wrist and hurries him toward the trains.

With practiced ease, he breaks the grip and runs for it.

Like liquid mercury, he moves in and out of the crowd.

MR. SANDERS

Someone, stop him! He is a ward of the State!

Sanders gives chase, knocking people about as he tears after him.

Knocks over a stack of hat boxes.

Sanders pushes a baby buggy out of the way.

He kicks the hat of a BEGGAR, whose eyes are wrapped with gauze.

Coins scatter across the marble floor.

On the other side of the station, he spots Ezra.

He stands quietly by a newspaper stand.

Sanders pushes his way through and grabs him by the collar.

EZRA

Hey!

MR. SANDERS

What the hell was that?

EZRA

Nothin'. Jes' havin' a lil' fun.

MR. SANDERS

Listen, you filthy little snake.
I'm paid to get you to Chicago, and
I'm going to do that. Whether or
not you get there together or in
bits and peices is your choice. Do
we understand each other?

Ezra frowns and reluctantly walks back with Mr. Sanders.

EXT. TRAIN TO CHICAGO - MORNING

Chugging along the wintery landscape.

INT. TRAIN CABIN - AFTERNOON

Mr. Sanders is lost in a newspaper.

Ezra stares out the window.

He exhales on the glass and doodles a bit.

He draws a flower...then quickly wipes it away with his
sleeve.

The boy sits back in his seat. He reaches into his coat
pocket and opens a candy bar.

MR. SANDERS

Where did you get that?

EZRA

Get what?

MR. SANDERS

That chocolate bar. Where did you get it?

EZRA

This?

MR. SANDERS

Yes, that! Where did it come from?

EZRA

Hershey.

Mr. Sanders tosses down his paper and grabs Ezra's hand.

MR. SANDERS

You stole this, didn't you? Didn't you!

He squeezes Ezra's hand so tight he drops the candy.

EZRA

Stop it! That hurts!

Mr. Sanders lets go.

MR. SANDERS

Listen, you little bastard! In some countries they'll cut your friggin' hand off for stuff like this...And in this country, you rob the wrong person, and you're wearin' the Chicago overcoat. So I would suggest that you take advantage of this opportunity to get your act together before you wind up in some place much worse than the Municipal Orphanage, and believe me, there are places that are much, much worse than that.

Ezra stoops down and picks up the candy bar.

EZRA

That ain' gonna be me.

He finishes it as Mr. Sanders gets back to his newspaper.

MR. SANDERS

And why is that?

EZRA

I ain' gonna rob the wrong people.

MR. SANDERS

And how can you tell who is wrong
or who is right?

Ezra laughs.

EZRA

I can tell.

Mr. Sanders peers over the newspaper and hides a smile.

MR. SANDERS

I reckon you can.

EXT. AUNT ESTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Pleasant house on a suburban street in Cicero, Illinois.

Snow blankets the trees and side walks.

AUNT ESTHER, 40's and fat, stands on the front porch with Mr. Saunders and Ezra.

Saunders tips his hat and leaves, heading for a cab.

He checks for his wallet to pay the driver. Not there.

He glares towards Ezra.

Ezra smiles and shows him his wallet as he enters the house.

INT. AUNT ESTHER'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

It's vintage. There is a piano, a large couch and wooden furniture, such as roll top desk and bookcases filled with dusty old books.

AUNT ESTHER

So. Jeremiah's son. Handsome boy,
just like he was.

Ezra spots a plate of cookies on the coffee table.

Aunt Esther smiles.

AUNT ESTHER (CONT'D)

Of course you may have a cookie.
Just two though. Don't want you to
spoil your dinner.

EXT. CICERO STREET - AFTERNOON

Domino's is a traditional department store. Big glass windows filled with Christmas displays.

OLDER EZRA (18) exits the store with some younger boys, STANLEY, PAULIE and TRIGGER, all thin and dressed in layers.

PAULIE

...an' I'm sayin is that I don'
believe it. I five finger'd from
Domino's an I ain' never, ever...

STANLEY

You gots some good technique there,
Ezzie, real good technique.

EZRA

Thanks Stinky...See, fellas? Like I
been tellin' ya...stick with me, an
ya might learn ya somthin'

TRIGGER

Ol' Flatfoot Charlie din' even
notice us...

FLATFOOT CHARLIE, (30's) a policeman, runs after the boys.

FLATFOOT

Get back here, ya dirty, thievin'
hooligans!

Flatfoot blows his whistle as he charges through the crowds.

The boys laugh as they run towards the L, Chicago's famous above ground transit system.

Trigger runs in a different direction and disappears.

An older man, THEO, 30's, steps out of the crowd and grabs Ezra.

Theo puts a gloved hand to his lips and whispers.

THEO
Shuddup and don't say a word. I got
a job for ya.

The other boys stop as they realize their friend is gone.

STINKY
Ey? Where's Ezzie?

PAULIE
I dunno! Keep movin!

Theo and Ezra disappear into the crowds.

EXT. MICHIGAN STREET

Theo and Ezra duck into an alley behind Theodore's Jewelry Emporium.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

Theo knocks on the door in a particular rythm.

The door opens into a speakeasy. PATRONS drink and have fun.

Ezra is impressed.

EZRA
'Spose I could get a drink?

THEO
You pull this off, kid, I guarantee
it.

INT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY

GLADYS SCHAEFFER, 20's, sits at a craps table. She calls out as Theo and Ezra make their way through the crowd.

GLADYS

Well, if ain' Lil' Ezzie! Figured
you'd turn up here sometime or
another...

EZRA

Uhm, Hello, Miss Schaeffer.

THEO

Know her?

EZRA

She used to be my teacher.

MICHAEL FROST, 30's, meets them halfway. He's accompanied by
a slightly older Mr. Sanders.

MICHAEL

This the kid, Sam?

MR. SANDERS

That's him. How are ya, Ezra.

Ezra turns slightly pale.

EZRA

M..Mr. Sanders?

Mr. Sanders turns and gives the kid a hug.

MR. SANDERS

Yeah...You remember me, huh? Jeez,
you lifted a few 10 spots off me,
when you were what...six?

EZRA

Six and half, sir.

Mr. Sanders laughs.

MR. SANDERS

Come on. I got someone I'd like you
to meet.

INT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY- BACK OFFICE

It's sparse. Several filing cabinets. A large safe built into the wall. A folding table surrounded by metal chairs.

PHILLIPE (PHILLY) GIORDANO, 60's, sits at his desk as he cleans a gun. He has slick black hair and wears a suit.

A small, iron safe sits in the middle of the desk.

Mr. Sanders, Ezra and Michael enter the room.

MICHAEL

This is that kid, Mr. Giordano.

Philly looks up from his glasses at Sanders.

Sanders nods.

Philly stands and offers his hand.

PHILLY

Philly Giordano.

Ezra steps forward, nervously holding his cap.

EZRA

Ezra Merriman.

He drops his cap as he reaches to shake hands with Philly.

PHILLY

Pleased to make your acquaintaince,
Mr. Merriman. Word on the street is
that you got a way with the
fingers. Is that true?

EZRA

I...I suppose, so , sir.

PHILLY

What's this "I suppose." Either you
or don't. Which is it.

EZRA

I do.

Micheal picks the safe off the desk and places it on the folding table.

PHILLY
Recognize that?

EZRA
Sure. It's the safe from Miss
Schaeffer's room.

PHILLY
Can ya open it?

Ezra nods.

MICHAEL
Go 'head.

Ezra rubs his fingers together. He puts his ear up to the
metal.

Slowly, he turns the dial.

The older men watch intently.

A turn to the right...a turn to the left.

Ezra steps back and opens the safe. It reveals comic books,
penny arcade cards, and a yo-yo.

EZRA
See? No problem.

Philly nods his head and points to the big wall safe.

PHILLY
Try that one?

Ezra nods.

He walks over and begins to feel the dial. He rolls it.

He bites his lip. Nothin.'

EZRA
I don't think so, sir.

The men laugh.

PHILLY
I should hope not! I had that
specially built by a guy down in
Jersey!

(MORE)

PHILLY (CONT'D)

Still, I am impressed, boy, very impressed. What'd ya think, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yeah. I think so.

PHILLY

Sanders?

MR. SANDERS

Without a doubt.

Philly sits back at his desk.

PHILLY

Good. Ezzie, you're with Michael. Show him the ropes.

MICHAEL

Sure thing, Mr. Giordano.

EZRA (V.O.)

So that was it. One quick sit down, an' I was in. It was a good day. Finally. After eighteen years of doom and gloom, things were finally beginning to look up.

INT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY- BACK OFFICE

Michael and Ezra, now in his twenties and as sophisticated as the other men, sit in front of Philly's desk.

Philly lights a massive cigar with a Santa Clause desk lighter.

PHILLY

Nice work on the First Coloniell job, boys. Nice work, indeed. How you feelin', E.Z.? Confident?

Ezra smiles.

EZRA

Just like when I was kid, pickin' up stuff at Dominio's.

Micheal walks over to the bar and pours three glasses of whiskey out of a crystal decanter.

MICHAEL

I wouldn't mind a piece of Dominio myself. Could be a good hit, bein' the season and all. Nothin' but cash, and lots of it, sittin' there waitin' for some yegg to come along an' take it... Might as well be us.

Michael hands each man a glass.

They slam back the booze.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You ready for that, kid? It's a big safe, bigger than what you seen so far at Hogan's or at Gietner's place. You sure you're up to it?

Ezra nods and takes an other drink.

PHILLY

Tomorrow night, then. Take Sanders and the kid... No one else.

Michael finishes his drink, pats Ezra on the shoulder and leaves.

EXT. DOMINO'S ALLEY/FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Sanders, Ezra and Michael slip into the dark back alley.

Michael gives Ezra a lift so he can grab the ladder to the fire escape.

Ezra climbs to the top, and dumps motor oil on the ladder connections.

It extends, not quietly, but less so than without the oil.

The three men sneak towards the roof of the building.

EXT. DOMINO'S ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

A flurry of pigeons take flight as the guys climb on the roof.

There's several skylights, with a locks on all of them.

Michael hands Ezra some tools.

MICHAEL

Here's you go, kid. Let's see what
you got.

Ezra deftly works the tools. He distracted by Sanders, who
loads bullets into a vintage revolver.

Sanders looks his way, and Ezra quickly gets back to work.

Moments later, the lock snaps open.

He wipes the lock with a clean cloth.

They drop a rope and the men climb down.

INT. DOMINO'S DEPARTMENT STORE - TOP FLOOR

The guys work their way past darkened Christmas displays.

Mannequins with Santa caps cast eerie shadows from the moon,
which shines through the skylights.

Sanders leads the group, pistol cocked and ready.

They follow him to a simple door, marked Office.

He turns the knob, and it simply opens.

Mr. Sanders smiles.

MR. SANDERS

After you, gentlemen.

INT. DOMINO'S OFFICE

It's large, spacious but somewhat messy.

The large, oak desk is covered with newspaper ads, with black
circles around the prices.

There are several large bookcases, opposite of the window.

Mr. Sanders looks at Michael.

Michael nods.

They tear the bookcase off the wall and reveal a large safe.

It's a similiar design to the one in Philly's office, only much larger, big enough for a man to stand in comfortably.

Micheal smiles as Ezra opens his pack.

Ezra gets out the stethoscope, some sandpaper and some other tools. He lays them out in order, like a surgeon.

MR. SANDERS

This is going to be a good one,
kid.

He patiently touches the dial, listens, twists the dial slightly, stops, listens and repeats the process.

MICHEAL

Always impressive.

MR. SANDERS

Kid's a natural.

Periodically, he calls out numbers, which Micheal writes down in a notebook.

EZRA

Thirty four...twenty four...thirty
six.

EXT. DOMINO'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Flatfoot approaches the front door.

He balances a thermos and what appears to be a sandwich in his left hand while he fumbles with his keys on his right.

INT. DOMINO'S DEPARTMENT STORE - OFFICE

Sanders sighs as he guards the door.

He walks over to the desk, on which there is a glass container of cigars.

He removes a cigar and lights it.

Ezra wipes his sweaty brow on his sleeve. He appears deeply focused as he goes back to the dial.

INT. DOMINO'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Flatfoot's desk is right next to the ladies changing room.

Flatfoot moves some papers on his desk, and places the paper bag on the surface.

He opens the bag to show a nice hoagie sandwich.

He stretches and fetches a flashlight, some Bazooka bubble gum and a gun from the top left drawer.

INT. DOMINO'S OFFICE

Michael fiddles with his gun as Ezra continues to work the safe.

EZRA

Fourty five...sixteen...thirty
eight...I got it!

Ezra pushes the handle downward.

Clanking, metallic sounds are heard from the safe door.

Like magic, the big steel door swings open.

MICHAEL

Alright, fellas...let's load up.

INT. DOMINO'S DEPARTMENT STORE

Flatfoot patrols the floors as he points his flashlight here and there.

He munches on his sub as he wanders around the displays.

He stops to admire one female mannikin, dressed in a racy red teddy.

He smiles and wipes his mouth, which leaves a trail of mayonnaise on his sleeve.

It appears that he hears a noise above him.

He takes off.

INT. DOMINO'S STAIRWELL

Flatfoot charges up the stairs best he can due to his wieght and portly stature.

INT. DOMINO'S THIRD FLOOR

Third floor. He sees the office door slightly open.

Carefully, he approaches the door, gun ready.

He takes a deep breath and counts to himself.

FLATFOOT

One...Two...

INT. DOMINO'S OFFICE

He kicks in the door.

FLATFOOT

Three!

The men are startled.

Sanders turns and shoots towards the door.

Miss. A hole is blown out of the door jam.

Flatfoot returns fire and hits Sanders in the wrist.

SANDERS

Ahhh!

Sanders gun flies out of his hand.

Flatfoot takes aim at Ezra.

Blamm!

It's a miss, but shatters the glass container of cigars.

Ezra dives for Sander's gun.

Flatfoot fires at him as he ducks behind the desk.

Ezra grabs the gun and stands up to fire...

Blam!

FADE TO BLACK

INT. PHILLY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

FADE IN. EZRA'S P.O.V.

Blurry faces. Philly. His teacher, Gladys and Michael hover around him.

MICHAEL

He's coming too

Gladys wipes away a tear.

GLADYS

Oh, thank heavens.

NORMAL P.O.V.

Ezra's on a folding table in Philly's office. His chest is covered in blood, his shirt torn into strips.

He winces, like suddenly aware of a searing pain.

Appearing frail, he tries to touch his chest.

Can't do it.

DOC EVERETT, 60's with a face that tells more tales than a dime store novel ever could, arrives with some fresh gauze.

DOC

He's awake? Good. That's good.
Don't try to move, sonny. You lost
a lot of blood and ain't exactly
out of the woods yet.

EZRA

Wh-What happened?

DOC

What happened? You got shot, boy!
Right there! Missed yer ticker by
this much.

Doc holds his fingers together as he demonstrates an inch or so.

DOC (CONT'D)

Looks like you got a Christmas miracle granted on your behalf. Suspect you own a big one to the man upstairs.

Ezra smiles as he looks around the room.

The smile melts into a bitter frown.

EZRA

And...Where's...Sand-Sanders?

MICHAEL

Should we tell 'em, Doc?

Doc cleans bloody surgical instruments with whisky and wipes them dry with a bar cloth.

DOC

He did choose this line of work. That's a hazard of this here occupation...

Philly enters the office.

PHILLY

He didn't make it. Got it just before you did. Michael here carried ya out on his shoulders...

EZRA

...the cop?

PHILLY

You got him down while Michael finished the job. Otherwise, both you fellas would be takin' the dirt nap.

EZRA

He-he's dead, then?

PHILLY

Yeah. You boys need to head to the safe house for a while. Few weeks anyways. They know there was more than one guy involved, and have no leads at this point.

(MORE)

PHILLY (CONT'D)

We wanna keep it that way. How soon
can we move 'em Doc?

DOC

A few days would be good, but I
reckon' that ain't gonna happen.

Philly smiles and pats the Doc on the back.

PHILLY

Tommorrow?

DOC

Absolutely not.

PHILLY

Would it kill 'em?

DOC

Probably.

PHILLY

Odds?

DOC

Sixty fourty, maybe seventy thirty.

Philly grunts.

PHILLY

OK, Doc. Ya got two more days.
Doll, you got room for this mug at
your place?

GLADYS

Sure.

PHILLY

Two blocks alright with you, doc? I
can't risk the operation by havin'
him here. Regardless of the odds.

DOC

Fine. I'm stayin' with him though,
at least till he's a bit more
stable.

PHILLY

As long as you don't drink all my
whisky...That arrangement alright
with you, doll?

Gladys smiles.

GLADYS

Sure. Nice to have some decent
fellas in the house for a change.

Gladys touches Ezra's cheek.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

You have to be on your best
behavior or I'm giving you more
homework...

Ezra smiles, though he is clearly in pain.

EXT. GLADYS' HOUSE - NIGHT

It's a small, clapboard house on a residential street.

It's also Christmased to the max. Lights. Reindeers.

A Joseph and Mary cut out of plywood, the baby Jesus in a
manger made from wooden pallets.

Christmas hard core.

Gladys pulls into the driveway. She opens the door and
carries a few small bags of groceries.

INT. GLADYS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Inside, it's just as festive. A log burns in the fire place.

Ezra lies on the couch shirtless, his wound still bandaged.

Classical music plays on the Victorola.

Gladys enters.

GLADYS

Brrr! It is too way cold out there.
Colder than a witch's you know
what!

Ezra reaches for a his shirt, but does not put it on.

EZRA

Got a nice fire going inside,
though.

GLADYS

Are you feeling any better?

Ezra shrugs.

EZRA

A bit.

GLADYS

Ran into your aunt today at the
market. Told her I heard you had
gotten a job down in Louisiana on
short notice, and that you'd notify
her when you got a chance...

EZRA

...She believed you?

GLADYS

Seemed to...

Gladys takes off her overcoat.

She wears a grey sweater that fits tightly over a starched
white shirt, her small waist highlighted by a long cotton
dress.

Ezra is caught staring.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

What're you looking at? Longing for
your school boy days?

EZRA

I ain't got no more use for school.

GLADYS

Maybe not in your current line of
work...perhaps in the future
though, you will choose something
slightly more...legal?

EZRA

I doubt it. I ain't smart enough to do much else.

Gladys sits next to him on the couch.

GLADYS

Nonsense! Absolute nonsense! You can do anything you set your mind to doing...I truly believe that...How's your...

Gladys reaches over and touches his bandaged spot.

EZRA

Getting better. It only hurts when a pretty lady isn't looking at it.

Gladys smiles.

GLADYS

Heard your old friend Stanley got arrested.

EZRA

Really? What for?

GLADYS

Petty theft. Seems you are not the only one persuing an alternative career.

Ezra sits back, slightly stunned.

EZRA

Does he need bail? Maybe I can help him out.

GLADYS

That's thoughtful, but no. Phillip wants you to keep your distance from him. He's been spotted with some guys from the South side that have had differences with our organization in the past. No matter. Enough business. Time for a little pleasure.

Gladys gets up and returns with a bottle of wine and two glasses.

EZRA

Nice. What's the occasion?

GLADYS

It's Christmas. I got a huge chunk of change in the bank, good wine a roaring fire and a perfectly daring, handsome young man to enjoy it with. It simply could not be any better than this

Ezra smiles as the light from the fire dances in Gladys's deep brown eyes.

EZRA

It could be slightly better...

Gladys unbuttons the top buttons to her blouse.

GLADYS

Is this better?

She unbuttons a bit more. Her lacy bra shows as her blouse drapes around her shoulders.

She breaths heavily and licks her lips.

The young woman leans in to a searing kiss.

They are lost in the embrace.

INT. GLADYS' BEDROOM

They lay together in each others arms.

The sound of breaking glass wakes them up.

Gladys hastily finds a robe.

EZRA

What's that?

Ezra grabs her by the arm, even though the movement makes him wince.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Wait. Let me go.

Gladys pulls a pistol out of her dresser. She loads it quickly.

GLADYS

You rest up. I can handle myself,
believe you me! I'll be right b...

Before she can finish the sentence, a spray of bullets pepper the bedroom door and pop into Gladys's body.

Ezra rolls out of bed and falls on to the floor. H

e grimaces as blood starts to seep through the bandages.

He crawls over to the body and grabs the gun.

Heavy footsteps head towards the bedroom.

Ezra slides under the bed.

Two men, LOCKJAW (30's) and BUNNY (20's), nicely dressed, enter the room, smoke rising from the nozzles of their tommy guns.

Bunny kicks the dead woman in the side.

BUNNY

That her?

LOCKJAW

Mus' be. Hot little dame. Too bad.

Bunny spots cotton balls, gauze and tape sitting on the dresser.

BUNNY

Look.

Lockjaw examines the bottle, then perks up as sirens can be heard in the distance.

LOCKJAW

He's in here somewheres.

Lockjaw exits while Bunny looks towards the closet.

Bunny lets the bullets fly into the closet.

He opens the door to find nothing but a ruined wardrobe.

He turns his attention to the bed.

He fires an "S" pattern into the mattress, but half way through, the gun jams.

LOCKJAW (CONT'D)
Goddamn peice o' junk.

Lockjaw casually bends down to look under the bed.

Face to face with Ezra's pistol.

Blam.

Lockjaw falls, the back of his head blown away completely.

Ezra moves the large body out of the way and scrambles to his feet.

Cautiously he exits the bedroom.

INT. GLADYS' HOUSE - STAIRCASE

He makes his way down the staircase.

He stops and appears to listen to noise in the dining room.

INT. GLADYS' HOUSE - HALLWAY

Ezra see's Bunny rummaging through papers on a desk, his back to the door.

Ezra picks up a vase and throws it in his direction.

It crashes on the floor, which causes Bunny to spin around and fire randomly in that direction.

Ezra turns and hits Bunny in the wrist.

Bunny drops his gun, and, as he holds his bleeding arm, charges towards Ezra.

Two more shots, one to the shoulder, one to the gut and the big man falls to the floor.

EZRA

I got one more bullet in here and
unless ya wan' it in your head
you'll be tellin' me what this is
about.

Bunny coughs up blood, which flows down his beard and onto
the floor.

BUNNY

C-Capone...

Bunny dies.

Ezra sits up straight and begins to shudder.

The sound of sirens come closer.

Ezra scrambles to find some cloths and Gladys' purse.

EXT. GLADYS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ezra throws a bag into the car, climbs into the drivers seat
and takes off.

Seconds later, police cars arrive on the scene.

DETECTIVE LEO MADIERA, early 20's, climbs out of the car.

He lights a cigarette as OFFICER FRED, 30's, approaches.

OFFICER FRED

Yeah, that's the car. Tags match.

LEO

Good. Leave me your report when
your finsihed, will you?

OFFICER FRED

Sure thing.

Officer Fred nods as DETECTIVE EARL BRANDON, 30's and stocky,
exits the house.

EARL

Two dead males, one dead
female...multiple bullet wounds.
Not a pretty sight in there, Leo.

LEO
Never is. Said only two dead males?

EARL
You were expecting more?

LEO
No, no. It's just that this woman
had a reputation...figured she'd
have a john or two hiding in the
closet or something. Regardless,
let's get this mess cleaned up.
Don't want Santy Claus stoppin' in
this house.

EXT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY

Glady's car stops in the back alley. Ezra hops out.

He knocks on the door. No answer.

EZRA
Come'on Charlie, it's me! Open up,
damn it!

Ezra turns the knob.

It opens.

Cautiously, Ezra steps inside.

INT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY

Obviously, the bad guys had been here first.

Bullet holes are every where, as are several dead patrons.

He runs towards the back office.

INT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY - BACK OFFICE

Ezra kicks at the door, but it is blocked by the body of
Michael.

He pushes with more focused strength, and the door slowly
gives way as Micheal's body is nudged out of the way.

The office is ransacked.

He opens a drawer and finds a hammer and a gun.

He takes the hammer and moves towards the file cabinet.

Ezra moves the file cabinet away, only to find the floorboard underneath already removed.

EZRA

Damn it!

Ezra turns towards the large safe that had vexed him earlier.

He takes a deep breath and begins to work it.

Sweat beads on his forehead as he deftly works the tumblers.

He can't get it. He pounds the metal.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Come on, ya chippy...give it up,
will ya!

He again takes a breath and furrows his brow as he spins the dial.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Fourty five, twenty three, nineteen
and six...

The safe opens.

Philly, cramped into that small space, falls out, quite dead.

Otherwise, the safe is empty.

Ezra looks into Philly's pockets and pulls out some bills.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Thanks, boss.

Ezra finds an overcoat and turns to exit, but stops.

He spots a half full bottle of bourbon at the edge of Philly's desk.

He walks over, opens the bottle and raises it to the heavens.

EZRA (CONT'D)
To the faithful departed...

He slugs it down and leaves.

EXT. THEO'S SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

It's snowing heavily, and he leaves bloody footprints as he returns to the car.

He uses his arm to remove snow from the windshield and then climbs in.

He flips on the lights and starts the motor.

He rolls out...

Another car, parked several yards away from him, also starts up and follows him.

INT. EZRA'S CAR

Ezra lights a smoke.

He glances at the rear view mirror.

EXT. CICERO STREET

Ezra takes a turn on to the main street.

The other car follows him. Keeps an even pace.

Another turn by Ezra, another turn by the mystery car.

EXT. SUBURBS/FARMLAND

The city lights spread further and further apart as Ezra heads down the country road, followed by the other car.

INT. EZRA'S CAR

The speedometer increases...and increases some more.

The gas gauge pushes empty.

Ezra gets his gun out of the glovebox.

He tries to load and drive at the same time.

Doesn't go well. Bullets fall and roll under the seats.

EZRA

Of all the stupid...Come'ere ya
bugger.

He gets one bullet with his foot and picks it up.

He's going about eighty and it is very bumpy.

EXT. SUBURBS/FARMLAND

The snow picks up as the two cars race down the narrow road.

INT. EZRA'S CAR

Visibility out of the front window is minimal.

He peeks out the window. Other car is right on his tail.

The engine begins to sputter.

EZRA

Oh no... No!

Ezra bangs on the dashboard, like that helps.

EZRA (CONT'D)

NO, NO, NO!

EXT. SUBURBS/FARMLAND

The car slows to a crawl, then stops.

INT. EZRA'S CAR

He scrambles looking for bullets...to late.

The nozzle of a Gatlin Gun is aimed straight at his head.

He tosses the smaller pistol aside.

EXT. SUBURBS/FARMLAND

The man outside opens the car door for him.

Hands clearly in front of him, Ezra exits.

EZRA
...Stinky?

STINKY
Yeah, well, it's Stanley now. Get
in my car. We need to talk.

EZRA
You are the man with the gun.

STINKY
That I am.

Casually, Stanley fires a barrage of bullets into Ezra's car.

It catches on fire, but doesn't explode.

EZRA
Too bad. I liked that car.

STINKY
The 18' was a better year.

EZRA
Can't argue that.

The men climb into Stanley's car.

INT. STANLEY'S CAR

The back seat holds a plain steamer trunk.

Stanley starts the car and pulls off.

EZRA
So...Stanley...Can you tell me what
the gig is here?

STANLEY
Sure. Word around town is that you
crossed Capone.

(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Nobody crosses Capone and lives to tell about it. Nobody.

EZRA

So why didn't you kill me?

STINKY

Wha? And knock off one of the finest box men in the game? Nahhh. I got other ideas. Besides, my mom really likes you...

EZRA

Nice to be liked.

Stanley smiles.

STANLEY

So here's the deal. Your aunt thinks your working on shrimp boat outside of New Orleans, cause one of my cousins down there set you up. To Capone, you died back there in that fire-and it's bes' to keep it that way for now...lay low.

EZRA

Lay low 'til what?

Stanley laughs and lights a big, fat cigar.

STINKY

Til you an' me, we hit the biggest box in the City of Chicago...

EZRA

Wha? The First National?

STINKY

Small potatoes.

EZRA

The Federal Reserve on Madison?

STINKY

Tiny...Like yer wiener...

Stanley smiles through a thick fog of cigar smoke.

STANLEY

We're gonna hit Capone.

Ezra laughs.

EZRA

How long has it been, Stin-Stanley?
Two, three years and you are still
certifiable. Certifiably insane.

STANLEY

No, you got to trust me. I've got
your stuff and a train ticket to my
uncle in New Orleans. You sit tight
until I call...Then we'll come back
to Chicago and pull off the biggest
heist in history.

EZRA

And if I don't?

STANLEY

Simple. I tell the Feds everything
I know about you and your
involvement with Philly's
organization, including the hit on
the cop, who happened to be a
personal friend of Capone himself.
So if I were you, I'd suggest
becoming adept at sayin' ya'll and
gettin' a likin' for crawfish and
gumbo...

EZRA

Couldn't I just as easy tell Capone
that you faked my death and are
plotting a scheme against him?

Stanley frowns, then laughs.

STANLEY

Yeah, I suppose you could.

EZRA

Why wouldn't I?

STINKY

What's the fun in that?

Ezra smiles and lights a cigar for himself.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS CIRCA 1920 -

Street Cars. Sidewalk cafe's. Riverboats on the Mississippi.
Trees are in springtime bloom.

EXT. THE BONAVENTURE - DAY

A Shrimp boat, the Bonaventure, arrives to port, accompanied by a chorus of optimistic seagulls.

Ezra, LITTLE JIMMY (20's) a husky African American man, and PADDY IRISH (30's), a burly guy with a smashed in nose, hustle on the boat.

They do things that need to be done in order to off load the catch.

Ezra operates a winch, which pulls up a full net.

PADDY

Move it over! This way, this way!
Atta boy, Eazey! Nice! Real nice!

The net, full of wriggling shrimp, swings over to the dock

LITTLE JIMMY

Swing it on, Brother! Swing it!

EXT. BOAT DOCK - AFTERNOON

The boys collect their pay from Paddy, who receives the pay envelope from LARRY SANDOSKY, mid forty's.

Larry is handsome, tallish with short grey hair and a tight goatee. He wears a tailored suit and cowboy hat.

PADDY

Thank you, Mr. Sandosky.

LARRY

How's that Ezra fellow working out for you? Not giving you any trouble, is he?

PADDY

No, sir. He's a valuable member of our crew. Fine chap.

LARRY

Good. Mr. Merriman, see to it that it stays that way. Let me know if there are any problems. I'm not running a charity here and have no problem with dropping you overboard if things don't work out.

EZRA

I understand, Mr. Sandosky.

LARRY

Good. You gentlemen have a grand afternoon.

Mr. Sandosky smiles, tips his hat and exits.

PADDY

See you fellas next week. An' don' blow it all on booze n' dames.

Jimmy laughs.

LITTLE JIMMY

Ah, I wish I could! Claudette already spen' all this an' then some...Whatchu gonna do, Eazey?

EZRA

Send mos' back to my aunt in Chicago. Maybe play some cards...

Paddy frowns.

PADDY

Wha? Ya dinna learn your lesson last time ya got paid?

EZRA

I'm a slow learner.

PADDY

I'd keep a lot of extra miles between you an' those clip joints.
(MORE)

PADDY (CONT'D)

You an' them don' do so well
together.

EZRA

Aye Aye, Capn' Bligh.

EXT. SIMON'S SHOE SHOP - NIGHT

In downtown New Orleans, the store front is lit, though the sign on the door reads 'Closed.'

Through the windows, LUCY TREBUCHET, late teens, rearranges the shoes.

She's stylish and lovely, with long legs and shoulder length hair, contrary to the flapper look of the day.

Ezra strolls past when he happens to see her in the window.

He stops as if to admire a pair of satin pumps.

Lucy's blouse opens to reveal some cleavage as she adjusts the shoes.

She spots Ezra and promptly points to the "Closed" sign.

Ezra folds his hands, as if in prayer.

Lucy rolls her eyes and walks to the door.

She props open the door, slightly.

LUCY

I'm sorry, sir, but the store is
closed early today. You'll have to
come back tomorrow.

EZRA

Sir? Please, call me Eazee. My dad
is sir, and I am not my dad. At
least, not yet.

LUCY

Does your father understand the
notion that a proprietor has the
right to establish his own rules of
business?

SIMON TREBUCHET, 50's and slim, emerges from the store.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Wha?

SIMON

Lucy! What are you doing? Open the door for this young man! Sir, I do apologize. She is still...

INT. SIMON'S SHOE SHOP

Walls of shoes with a few benches.

EZRA

Thank you for letting me in. I just got paid, and I promised my dear mother that the first thing I would do was to procure a new pair of shoes.

SIMON

Wonderful! Lucy, show this man the Garrison line. Have you heard of Garrison?

Ezra shakes his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)

They are made by hand in Lynn, Massachusetts, the world's leading manufacturer in quality footwear. In fact, I just got a shipment in this morning, which practically guarantee's a size that will provide you with the most comfortable fit.

Lucy arrives with a few armfuls of shoe boxes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Lucy is well qualified to help you. Please give me yell if you need any further assistance. Have to keep the books straight, you know.

Simon exits. Lucy looks at Ezra's old shoes with disgust.

LUCY

How long have you had those? They look like they barely fit.

EZRA

A while.

LUCY

You do have money, don't you? I'm not in the mood for any con games, and, in case you have any other ideas, I am not nearly as gullible as my father is. So you are walking out of here with a flashy new pair of tanned leather Garrison's or I'm going to have you drawn and quartered. Do we understand each other?

Ezra smiles.

EZRA

You sell a mean shoe.

LUCY

Thank you. I try.

EXT. CAFE DU MONDE - NIGHT

Ezra sits at the iron table with two boxes of shoes.

Lucy sits opposite as they share benguits and cafe au lait.

LUCY

I can't believe I'm doing this.

EZRA

What? The sugar is good for you. Honest.

LUCY

No...I mean this! You barge into our store, you buy our outrageously overpriced but very high quality men's shoes and now you are forcing bengiets, of which I have formally made a declaration of war upon for being so delicious, into my mouth.

EZRA

I do that. I'm a barger. Subtlety
has never been my strong point.

LUCY

Obviously.

MONTAGE - THINGS GO WELL FOR EZRA - (1920's New Orleans Jazz
Number Playing)

- Ezra shakes hands with Simon.
- Ezra is very successful at selling shoes.
- Lucy and Ezra visit the zoo together.
- Ezra visits Catholic Mass with Lucy.
- Paddy and Little Jimmy purchase shoes from Ezra.
- Ezra and Lucy cut the rug at a fancy night club.
- Lucy and Ezra kiss on steamboat at sunset.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

A nice house on a pleasant street in the Garden District.

A streetcar rolls through, slows and stops.

Lucy exits carrying bags of groceries.

The Trolley driver, MISTER ROYAL, 60's, hollars out of the
window.

MISTER ROYAL

Have a nice Thanksgiving, Miss
Trebuchet!

LUCY

You too, Mr. Royal. Give my regards
to Wilma!

MISTER ROYAL

I sure will, Miss Trebuchet! You
take care!

The door closes and the street car grinds back in motion.

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Nicely appointed, but crammed to the gills with family and friends.

CHILDREN, ages 4 to 10, run around with wooden airplanes as MRS. TREBUCHET (40's), COUSIN DEBORAH (20's) and AUNT SARAH (70's) fret about in the kitchen.

SERVANTS attend to dishes and other matters.

AUNT SARAH

Make sure that turkey is at the right temperature...you don't want it too dry.

COUSIN DEBORAH

Don't want to undercook it either. How big was that bird?

MRS. TREBUCHET

Thirty eight pounder from Shweggman's...

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Ezra talks with Paddy Irish as they move through the house.

PADDY

Nice of you to invite me over, Eazee...It hasn't been easy since...

Ezra pats the older man on the shoulder.

EZRA

Glad to have ya, boss.

Paddy watches Lucy as she works with the other women.

PADDY

So...You like her, eh? Gonna make it permanent or do I still stand chance?

Ezra laughs.

EZRA

I don't think you'd stand a chance either way, boss. She doesn't like the smell of shrimp.

PADDY

A Southern Gal? How is that even possible?

COUSIN DEBORAH

She got spoiled up in Boston. Ugh. I'd rathah have a lobstah boiling in my pot anyday...

Simon enters with a bowl full of green beans.

SIMON

...I'd agree with that. No offense to the nobility of your profession, Patrick.

Paddy smiles.

PADDY

None taken...And thank you and your family for having me in this holiday...It means a lot.

SIMON

Think nothing of it...and fetch those biscuits. I believe the women-folk have those up next.

Aunt Sarah approaches with the biscuits.

AUNT ESTHER

Way ahead of you, Mr. Trebuchet...

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

She places the biscuits on the table.

It is a glorious, Norman Rockwell worthy thanksgiving, with a distinctly New Orleans feel.

LUCY

Ok, ya'll! Come on in and take your seats, please!

Aunt Sarah sits next to Ezra, near the head of the table.

AUNT SARAH

Such a wonderful boy. So much nicer
than the regular boys from the
Quarter.

Ezra frowns, then smiles as Lucy and the other family members
sit down. Lucy sits next to Ezra and smiles.

Esther whispers into Ezra's shoulder.

AUNT SARAH (CONT'D)

She's so pretty. (Sighs) It would
be ever so lovely to come up to New
Orleans for a June wedding.

Lucy blushes, then breaks into applause with the family as
Simon enters with the turkey.

It's a truly magnificent turkey.

Simon places the platter in the center of the table, and pops
open a bottle of champagne.

A pretty black servant, LYDIA, 18, pours the champagne.

LYDIA

Here you go, sir.

SIMON

Thank you, Lydia. Now, we are not
asking where Mister Ezra Merriman
was able to obtain this quality
libation, but let us use this
opportunity give thanks with a
toast...To friends, both old and
recently acquired, to family, both
from here and afar and good health
to all.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ezra and Lucy walk arm and arm around the neighborhood.

LUCY

That was a lovely dinner. One of
the finest I can ever remember.

EZRA

I think your Aunt Sarah liked me.

LUCY

We all LIKE you Ezra. That's not even a question.

EZRA

No, I mean she liked me...I swear she was squeezing my knee underneath the table.

LUCY

That was me, you nitwit.

Lucy playfully punches him in the side.

EZRA

It was? Phew. I was wondering how I was going to explain it to your Uncle Phil.

Lucy chuckles and sighs.

An egret walks in front of them on the sidewalk.

LUCY

Can I ask you something?

EZRA

Sure. Ask away.

LUCY

What were you doing last thanksgiving? Did you have any idea that you'd be here today, walking along with me, on Veteran's Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana, with that egret bumping and bobbin' up ahead?

EZRA

No...I can honestly say that the egret had never even crossed my mind. However, at the moment, I can not think of a more beautiful bird...or a more beautiful girl.

LUCY

Why Mister Merriman. Flattery will
get you every where.

A light rain begins to fall.

EZRA

I'd better get you inside...

LUCY

Why? I won't melt.

EZRA

I'm afraid it may be to late for
me...

They kiss.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE PORCH

Ezra and Lucy walk onto the porch.

Cousin Deborah meets him at the door with a note scribbled on
a piece of paper.

COUSIN DEBORAH

Excuse me, Ezra. A gentleman by the
name of Sandowsky just called for
you on the telephone. He asked for
you to call him back at this
number.

LUCY

Business?

EZRA

Yeah...an old friend. Sort of.
Thanks, Deborah.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

Rough neighborhood. A DRUNK is tossed out of a bar into a
puddle on the street.

He is splashed by a nice car driving by.

The car turns into an alley.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The car dodges trash cans and hobos as it rolls down the narrow lane.

A garage door opens directly in front of it.

A sign by the door reads "SANDOSKY SHRIMP & FISHERIES, INC."

The car pulls into the warehouse.

INT. SANDOSKY WAREHOUSE

Inside, dozens of WORKERS stand by large wooden tables.

They sort through mounds and mounds of shrimp, crabs, crawfish and catfish.

Ezra climbs out of the car as Larry Sandowsky walks over to greet him.

LARRY

Nice to see you again, m'boy! Happy Thanksgiving to you. I trust you had plenty of turkey over at the Trebuchet's?

EZRA

It was real nice.

LARRY

Good, good. Yeah, I met Simon a few years back when he was with the Baucus krewe. He's a surprisingly good dancer and can play a mean trombone...the drunker the better.

EZRA

So where is that dirty, no-good double crossin' nephew of...

Stanley enters.

He wears a suit that looks like it was cut from a fashion magazine, with the gloves and spats to match.

STANLEY

... Clara Bow? Pretty sure she is waiting for you and me at the Regal...God, you are not wearing that are you? Where is Fredrico? Fredrico!

Frederico, a slim guy in his mid-fourties, pops his head out of a side office.

FREDERICO

Si, senor?

STANLEY

Freddie, get my friend here a decent set of threads, will you? I can't inflict these clothes on the City of New Orleans with good conscience...

EZRA

There is nothin wrong with these...

Frederico rolls his eyes.

LARRY

It's Ok. Just let him do his thing. Trust me.

Like a rapid wolverine, Frederico attacks Ezra with a measuring tape.

EZRA

This isn't...

FREDERICO

Si, senor...muy, muy necessita.

Frederico and Larry disappear into a side office.

INT. SANDOSKY WAREHOUSE - OFFICE

Ezra removes a loaded pistol from his belt.

STANLEY

Nice to see the bean shooter. They ain't civilized you completely...yet.

EZRA

I guess not...they are close,
though.

STANLEY

Good, cause you and me have some
unfinished business to discuss.

Ezra grabs Stanley by the arm.

EZRA

Look, I'm not interested in any
gigs at this point, Stanley. I got
a job, a girl and a real future
down here in New Orleans, and I
don't want to ruin my chances at a
normal life by getting shot again
doing some job in Chicago.

Stanley laughs.

STANLEY

See? You IS civilized. I can't
believe that EaZee Merriman, the
best damn safe cracker in Chicago,
has gone dizzy for some dame.

EZRA

She's not some dame, Stan...She's
different.

STANLEY

Married?

EZRA

No...Not yet.

STANLEY

Well, then. You'll be able to buy
her the biggest chunk of rock candy
on the whole planet...But, come on!
Enough business. Enjoy this night
on the town on your old pal Stinky,
huh? Just like old times, right?

Ezra steps behind a closet door.

He takes off his old clothes and puts on the new suit.

EZRA

Sure. Just like old times. Except without the freezing nights...

STANLEY

And running away from Flatfoot and his boys at Dominic's. Except for Paulie Madison. He still grabs from them from time to time.

EZRA

Paulie? I thought he was in the can.

STANLEY

He was. Got out a few months ago, lookin' for in to our outfit...

EZRA

Did ya let 'im in?

STANLEY

Naw...I ain't got the time nor the patience for the small time potatoes...An' that's Paulie Madison...Small potatoes.

EZRA

That's funny.

STANLEY

What?

EZRA

Philly Giordano said the same thing about you...

STANLEY

Well, Philly Giordano ain't sayin' nothin' like that no more, is he.

Ezra doesn't respond, but steps out in his new suit. He looks slick. He smooths the fabric along his arm.

EZRA

This is really nice.

STANLEY

So what's Philly Giordano sayin'
right now, Ezra, huh?

Stanley's face contorts with anger.

EZRA

Nothin.' You know he's dead.

STANLEY

Yeah, I know he's dead, but seems
like you forgot all about it! Here
ya are, sellin' shoes to the same
trash we used to laugh at- We ain't
them, Eazee...Never were...The
Philly I heard about was about
loyalty...Capone spatters his head
juice all over the wall an' all you
can think about is some dime-store
dame? Come on, Eazee! This is your
chance to fight back-kick that
dirty son of bitch square in the
biscuits, if not for yourself, then
at least for Philly, Theo and the
rest of your crew.

EZRA

I ain't doin' the job, Stanley.

Stanley pulls his arm back and slugs Ezra right in the jaw.

Ezra falls back into a filing cabinet.

He stands up and throws a punch, which connects right on
Stanley's chin.

Stanley falls back into the wall. Ezra has the upper hand.

He lifts Stanley up by the shirt, ready to punch him again.

STANLEY

Course, I may no longer be able to
provide protection for your
precious little shoe store, of
which Angelo Cappriotti has shown a
great deal of interest in...

Ezra lets him down.

EZRA
You know about that?

Stanley laughs and dabs blood from his lip.

STANLEY
Course I know about that! Why do you think he just walked away? It wasn't because he liked your shoes...My uncle had a sit down with him and he agreed to let it ride, provided he gets a cut of the Chicago gig...

Ezra stands quiet for a long moment.

EZRA
Alright. I'm in, but only for this one job. After that, I'm gonna settle down with Lucy and start living the good life.

STANLEY
Fair enough.

Ezra reaches for his gun that sits on the desk.

Stanley stops his hand.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
You ain't gonna need that. This is a classy joint.

Ezra grabs it anyway.

EZRA
I'd prefer not to take my chances.

STANLEY
Suit yourself, Pally...Let's go.

INT. SIMON'S SHOE SHOP - DAY

An UPTIGHT MOTHER with a SMALL CHILD watches Ezra as he fits the child for a pair of shoes.

SMALL CHILD
What's your name, Mister?

EZRA

My name is Mister Merriman. What's yours?

The child giggles as Ezra puts a shoe on his foot.

SMALL CHILD

Puddin' Tame. Ask me again an' I'll tell you tha same!

EZRA

Clever. Ma'am, I suggest we go up one half size.

The mother nods, though she does not break a smile.

SMALL CHILD

Hey Mister! Ya know what Santa's bringin' me this year?

EZRA

A lump of coal?

SMALL CHILD

No! A tommy gun, just like Al Capone and his gangsters use! Rat-a-ta-tatt!

The child jumps up and pretends to shoot a machine gun all over the shop.

The child runs into Simon, who acts like he got shot.

Ezra appears disturbed by this scene.

EZRA

That's enough, young man.

UPTIGHT MOTHER

Why, Mr. Merriman! I am shocked! How dare you scold my child!

SMALL CHILD

Yeah! You aint got no right, Mister! No right at all!

He sticks his tongue out at Ezra.

UPTIGHT MOTHER

Come on, Fontelroy. We shall
henceforth take our business
elsewhere. Good day to you, sir!

The uptight mother and snotty kid leave.

EZRA

Looks like we lost that sale.

SIMON

We'll make it up. Christmas season
is starting. People finally seem to
have some money to spend, and
everyone needs quality shoes...

Lucy enters with several boxes of Christmas decorations. She
places them on the counter.

LUCY

How's the morning going so far?

SIMON

Good, if we can get Ezra here to
stop harassing the customers...

Just then, the bell on the door chimes.

ANGELO CAPRIOTTI, 50's, a large man in a suit, enters with
EARL (20's) and BUD (30's) also in suits.

LUCY

What do they want?

SIMON

I'll take care of this.

Simon walks over to the men, who browse casually at the
shoes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Good morning, Gentlemen! How can I
help you today.

ANGELO

I understand you have a fella named
Merriman workin' here.

SIMON

Yes, of course, of course. He is one of the finest salesman I've ever had. He'll be happy to...

ANGELO

Good. Send him over.

Lucy unloads the Christmas decorations.

LUCY

Be careful, Ezra! That's Angelo Capriotti!

EZRA

I guess he needs shoes.

Ezra walks over and offers a hand. The men ignore him and light cigarettes.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Might I interest you gentlemen in a pair of William Denhams? They are extremely comfortable, long lasting and are making quite a stir in New York fashion.

ANGELO

I will take a nine and half- the ones the man was tellin' about.

SIMON

Right away, sir!

Simon leaves as Ezra removes Angelo's shoes.

Angelo has a gun stuck in his sock.

ANGELO

I understand you and Sandowsky had a talk last night. I'm looking forward to seeing fruits of that discussion.

EZRA

Yes, sir. We have an agreement.

ANGELO

Good. That makes me happy.

Ezra smiles and stands up.

EZRA

Always appreciate a happy customer.

Simon returns with three boxes of shoes.

SIMON

Sir, I'd estimate this gentleman to be a nine wide, and this gentlemen to be a twelve.

BUD

I'm impressed.

SIMON

Thank you. Please accept these on the house in return for the promise of future business.

ANGELO

Thank you for your kindness. It will not be forgotten.

The men take the boxes and head towards the exit.

Simon sighs heavily.

SIMON

Well then. That takes care of that. A pair of shoes every once and a while and they go about their business.

Ezra frowns.

LUCY

What was he talking about, Ezra? Has been threatening Larry Sandowsky as well?

EZRA

To tell you the truth, I have no idea what he was talking about. However, he struck me as the kind of fella you don't want to disagree with.

Lucy smiles and steals a kiss while Simon stares out the window.

Ezra walks over to Simon.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Penny for those thoughts...

Simon laughs.

SIMON
Sometimes you work your whole life, working, saving and doing things the right way, like our parents did. They came over here by the thousands, scraping together what they could to get by. Then some two bit thugs just want to come along and take it all away from you.

EZRA
Maybe we can figure out a way change that. Score one for the little guy.

SIMON
That would be nice, but Even the cops are on the payroll. I used to complain about Capriotti's schemes, but they never do nothing about it.

Lucy interrupts with a suction cupped wreath to put on the window.

LUCY
Excuse me, gentlemen. Christmas is coming! Honey, can you get the tape from behind the counter?

Ezra walks over to fetch the tape.

A he reaches the counter, the shop is slammed with a hail of bullets.

Ezra dives behind the counter as merchandize explodes around him.

Broken and shattered glass is everywhere.

Moments later, the gunfire stops.

He climbs over damaged stock to find Simon, almost torn in half from bullets draped over a store display.

Under that display, he finds Lucy, covered in blood and with a gunshot wound to her torso and shoulder.

He moves Simon and the display aside.

Sirens can be heard coming closer and closer.

LUCY (CONT'D)

We have...to decorate the store for
Christmas...

Ezra cradles Lucy in his arms.

EZRA

We did, sweetheart. And it looks so
beautiful...

LUCY

Like the sunset...on the
riverboat...

EZRA

Yes, darling. Just like that
sunset...

Lucy's eyes close...She passes out, but still breathes.

Ezra holds her tightly as POLICE and EMERGENCY PERSONNEL
arrive on the scene.

EXT. PUBLIC HOSPITAL - DAY

Well manicured lawns with neatly trimmed hedges accent the
stately brick building.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM

An open window allows a gentle breeze to billow the curtains
and let some diffused sunlight into the room.

Ezra sits in a chair, next to Cousin Deborah. A NURSE with a
clipboard approaches.

NURSE

She lost a lot of blood, but the doctor feels her chances are good.

COUSIN DEBORAH

Thank God...

NURSE

She's still not out of the woods, however. Are you related to the victim, ma'am?

COUSIN DEBORAH

Yes. We are cousins.

NURSE

I'd like to ask you a few questions privately, if I could.

COUSIN DEBORAH

Of course.

NURSE

Come this way, please.

The Nurse and Cousin Deborah walk towards a small office.

Ezra sits alone.

Bud, one of the gangsters, enters carrying a bouquet of flowers.

Ezra stands.

BUD

We would like to extend our condolences on behalf of Mister Capriotti.

Ezra rips the flowers from his hand and grabs him by the collar.

He jams him into the wall.

BUD (CONT'D)

I can understand your concern. However, Mr. Capriotti wanted to let you know that we are in no way responsible for this most heinous action...

Ezra pushes him slightly higher. Bud struggles to breath.

EZRA

Who is?

BUD

Word is some guys from Chicago were lookin' for ya...They found out where you was and did the hit.

EZRA

Chicago?

BUD

Yeah...

Ezra lets the man down.

Bud gasps for air and loosens his collar as he falls to the ground.

Ezra helps him to his feet.

EZRA

Apologize for any discomfort.

BUD

Unnerstandable...given the circumstances.

EZRA

Thanks for the flowers.

Bud smiles slightly and exits.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The window in the waiting room has gone dark.

Ezra naps in an awkward position.

The nurse enters.

NURSE

Mr. Merriman.

Ezra nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Miss Trebuchet is awake and asked
to see you.

EZRA
Thank you. How is she?

The nurse smiles as she escorts Ezra to her room.

NURSE
You'll have to ask her...But I will
tell you that she asked for you
shortly after she was admitted.
Your name barely left her lips.

Ezra enters the room.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Ain't love grand...

INT. LUCY'S ROOM

Lucy is bandaged like a mummy, attached to the best
technology available in the day.

Dried blood stains her many bandages, including one that
wraps around her face.

Ezra enters and kisses her forehead.

LUCY
Oh, thank goodness you are Okay...I
was so scared...

EZRA
I'm fine...I...I just want you to
get better...

Tears flow from Lucy's red and puffy eyes.

LUCY
D...Daddy didn't make it...

EZRA
I know, sweetheart I know...

Ezra grasps her hand and kisses it.

LUCY
Why...is it this way? Why can't we
just...live in peace?

EZRA
We will, darling, we will. I
promise you that.

LUCY
Y-You do? How?

EZRA
Trust me...If I have to storm the
very gates of Hell, we WILL have
peace.

Lucy smiles and laughs softly.

LUCY
Oww...it hurts when I laugh...

The nurse enters the room with Lucy's chart.

NURSE
It's closing time, sir.

EZRA
Could I have a few more minutes,
please?

Nurse nods.

NURSE
Yes, but only a few.

The nurse closes the door.

EZRA
Listen, honey. I won't be coming by
for a little while.

Lucy becomes visibly upset.

LUCY
W-why? Because of...this?

Weakly, she points to the bandages on her face.

EZRA

No, no! Nothing could be further than the truth. I need to see my aunt back in Illinois...some family business, but I promise, this will be the last time I travel anywhere without you...

LUCY

Y-you do?

Ezra's own eyes begin to tear up.

EZRA

Absolutely, dearest, absolutely. Besides, Deborah won't let you out of her sight, so I know you are in good hands.

LUCY

T-this is true...Do..you...love me?

EZRA

I-I love you with all my heart.

He bends over and kisses her on the lips.

The nurse enters, sees them kiss, smiles and closes the door.

EXT. SANDOSKY WAREHOUSE - DAY

Ezra's car pulls in to the open garage.

INT. SANDOSKY WAREHOUSE

Larry and Stanley greet him.

LARRY

I am so sorry to hear what happened to Simon and Lucy.

STANLEY

Heard they were some of Capone's boys.

EZRA

I heard the same. Now let's get this son of bitch.

LARRY
Let's talk.

INT. SANDOSKY WAREHOUSE OFFICE

The men sit at a folding card table.

LARRY
My cousin works at the Livingston
Hotel downtown. Said some boys came
in from Chicago a couple of nights
ago.

STANLEY
Big spenders. Lousy with cash...

EZRA
Do we know the room?

Larry smiles.

STANLEY
Yup.

EZRA
Okay. Let's go hit 'em where it
hurts.

INT. LIVINGSTON HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Ezra is dressed as a waiter and pushes a room service cart.

Stanley crouches underneath it, hidden by a linen cloth.

He walks up to room 1440 and knocks on the door.

EZRA
Room service!

No answer. He knocks a little harder.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Hello? Room service.

He uses a maid key and enters the room.

INT. ROOM 1440

The beds have been made, but there is ample evidence of two guys still staying there: Shaving kits, suits in the closet and scattered maps.

By the room phone, Ezra notices a scribbled note detailing the location of Simon's Shoe Shop.

His face flushes red as Stanley climbs out of the cart.

STANLEY

Wha's that?

Ezra hands him the note.

EZRA

Looks like we are in the right place...

Stanley frowns as he adjusts his pistol.

STANLEY

Hate to make a mess o' the Livingston...But in this case, I'll make an exception.

Ezra finds the room safe.

He spins the dial. Piece of cake.

The safe opens to reveal several stacks of cash, as well as ammo, two guns and a brown leather notebook.

EZRA

Jackpot.

The two men load up. Ezra closes the safe.

STANLEY

Do you want to wait for them?

Ezra pauses and studies his own gun.

EZRA

No. We got their souls right here.

Voices are heard coming towards the room door.

STANLEY
Might not have to...

Ezra and Stanley take up strategic positions; Ezra is behind a slightly open bathroom door.

Stanley is behind the bed on the far side of the room.

The room door opens to reveal BENNY (20's), GORDON (30's), HILDA (20's) and GRETA (20's).

All wear disheveled evening wear like they were up all night drinking and carousing. They are still drunk.

GRETA
Oh...lookit...The hotel sen' us
room service...

GORDON
I din' ask for no room service, you
Benny?

BENNY
No...maybe it's a...

Stanley rises from the side of the bed and fires.

Benny is hit in the forehead and slams backward.

The momentum from his body dumps the cart, which puts Gordon off balance.

Greta screams.

Gordon goes for his gun, but Ezra pops him in the shoulder before he gets a chance.

EZRA
Get out of here, girls! An' you
don' know nothin!

HILDA
Right, Mistah! We ain' seein'
anythin!

Gordon takes a shot, barely missing Greta as she ducks out of the room.

With screams and tears, the girls run out of the room.

Ezra and Stanley stand over Gordon..

EZRA

Did you shoot up the shoe store?
Did you?

GORDON

Go to hell.

Ezra pistol whips him, which sends teeth flying in the opposite direction.

EZRA

I said did you shoot up the shoe store?

GORDON

Alright...don' hit me again...I did it...

EZRA

On who's orders?

Gordon looks around the room. He's about to speak when Blam!
Stanley blows him away.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Wha'd you do that for?

STANLEY

Cause we gotta get the hell out of here and we don' need no canary tellin' stories!

INT. LIVINGSTON HOTEL CORRIDOR

Ezra and Stanley run towards the stairs and disappear in the stairwell.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A brand new car drives up the highway.

INT. NEW CAR

Ezra sits in the backseat.

He pours over the leather notebook that was stolen from the hotel safe.

Stanley drives and Larry rides shotgun.

Paddy Irish naps next to the window, beside Ezra.

EZRA

This is incredible. I mean, what are the odds?

STANLEY

What's that?

EZRA

Appears Capone has given orders to allow holiday time to his soldiers...

STANLEY

I had heard that. That's why I wanted to hit during the holiday's, when He's runnin' thin.

EZRA

This also gives an address...four seventeen Maple drive...Does that ring any bells?

LARRY

That's his safe house, about twenty minutes from downtown. But that's not where the money is.

EZRA

Where is it, then?

Stanley laughs.

STANLEY

How long have you been gone? That's one of the worst kept secrets in history...Everyone knows he has a vault in the basement of the Ambassador...It's state of the art.

EZRA

Look forward to seeing it...

STANLEY

It's supposed to be a wine locker,
made for some of the finest
vintages ever created...

EZRA

Maybe we'll have some of it...Could
stand for a nice glass of
bourdeaux...

Paddy stirs from his nap.

PADDY

Did somebody say Bourdeaux?

EXT. JOE'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The car pulls into a friendly looking restaurant.
Santa and reindeer are painted on the windows.

INT. JOE'S RESTUARANT - MOMENTS LATER

The men sit at table, drinking coffee. DELORES, 30, wears
excessive Christmas flare.

Ezra still reads the notebook.

STANLEY

You find anything else in that
book?

EZRA

Yeah. The guy who attacked our
store may have been the same guy
who hit Philly...That address was
listed earlier in the journal, with
a big check mark on it...I also
found my aunt's address in there.

PADDY

But she's alright, ain' she?

EZRA

Yeah, but made a note of N.O.

LARRY

So your own aunt tipped them off,
eh?

Ezra nods.

STANLEY

It was only a matter of time...You
should have used an alias...A
little more careful next time.

EZRA

I'm hopin' there won't be a next
time...I'm gonna marry Lucy and
settle down as far away as Illinois
as possible...

STANLEY

What's your alias gonna be? You
thought about it?

EZRA

Yeah. Something simple, that blends
in with everyone else. Maybe Harry.
Or George. George and Helen Smith.
That'll be us...happy and
completely invisible.

The waitress returns with the check.

DELORES

There ya go, fellas. Merry
Christmas!

PADDY

Same to you...Let's go, boys.

EXT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL - DAY

Snow drapes decorated Christmas trees in front of the elegant
Ambassador Hotel.

A BELLMAN opens the door for Ezra, dressed in a sharp suit.

Ezra places a five dollar bill in the bellman's gloved hand.

EZRA

Thank you.

BELLMAN

And A Merry Christmas Eve to you
too, sir.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL LOBBY

Marble and brass everywhere. Handsome men and beautiful women
mix, mingle and go about their business.

Ezra walks up to the front desk.

JILL FRENCH, late 30's with an air of sophistication and
lovely in her hotel uniform, greets him at the desk.

JILL

Welcome to the Ambassador.

EZRA

I'm George Smith. I believe you
have a reservation and deposit
under my name?

JILL

Of course, Mr. Smith. Would like
Albert to help with your
belongings?

EZRA

That won't be necessary. I have my
own servants...and that will be for
housekeeping as well.

JILL

Certainly. Here is your key. I trust
you will have a pleasant stay.

EZRA

Thank you.

JILL

And Mister Smith, remember that we
will be having a special Christmas
Eve celebration in the Cabana room
this evening. I hope to see you
there.

Ezra smiles.

EZRA

I'll consider your invitation, Miss French.

INT. AMBASSADOR EZRA'S ROOM - DAY

The men arrive with suitcases and crates.

Paddy and Larry, dressed as servants, carry a trunk that appears quite heavy.

They drop it on the carpet.

PADDY

I'm getting to old for this...

LARRY

Stop yer whinin' young man!

Ezra wasted no time getting his bearings in the room.

He and Stanley quickly move the bed away from the back wall.

STANLEY

Capone is directly above us...the staircase has to be beyond this wall.

Paddy and Larry open the trunk to reveal iron construction tools. Hammers, chisels and crowbars.

Ezra grabs a large drill and begins to make a sizeable hole in the wall, about halfway up.

It grinds through the bricks as red powder flows from the hole like blood.

It appears to have broken through.

Ezra grabs a dentists mirror and sticks it through the whole.

LARRY

Any cavities, Doc?

EZRA

Yeah, a big one right here. Let's go, and remember to keep it as quiet as possible.

First, using knives and crowbars, they remove a four by four section of drywall, just above the floor.

Then, methodically using hammers and chisels, they begin to remove mortar, brick by brick.

Each brick is stacked neatly in a pile.

INT. AMBASSADOR EZRA'S ROOM

The pile is large, and there is now a man-size hole, leading from the room to a very narrow back stair case.

EZRA

Ok, men. Let's pack up.

As the guys pack up, CHESTER, 7, peers through the hole from the staircase side. He holds a gun aimed at Ezra.

CHESTER

Hold it right there! What'd ya think yer doin'?

Stanley, whips out his gun and draws an immediate bead on Chester.

STANLEY

Holy cow! It's a kid!

CHESTER

I'm not a kid! I'm a soldier workin' for Mr. Capone, and Mr. Capone says ain' no one allowed in this staircase 'cept for him!

LARRY

Well, Mr. Capone - Alphonse, asked us to help you keep an eye on things.

Larry grabs a hundred dollar bill from his pocket.

LARRY (CONT'D)

You let us do that an' I'll give you this nice, crisp C-note. How does that sound?

CHESTER

That'd be swell.

EZRA

What's your name, kid?

CHESTER

Chester...Chester Barnes.

Ezra offers his hand to shake.

EZRA

Nice to meet you, Chester. I'm George, that fella over there is Sam and his nephew, Paul.

PADDY

An' I'm Kevin. Nice to meet you. Let me hold that pea shooter for ya.

Chester does so.

EZRA

Now Mr. Capone asked us to make sure everything was Ok in his vault. Can you show us where that is?

Chester laughs.

CHESTER

Why, sure!

EZRA

And we need these tools to open the safe. Can you help carry some of these down...help out those old men?

CHESTER

It's gonna cost ya...

PADDY

I'll give ya a fin...

CHESTER

Done.

Chester picks some of the equipment and heads towards the hole.

Ezra smiles and carries the drill, stethoscope and notepad.

One by one, the men and the stuff vanish into the hole.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL BASEMENT

The stairway leads to a tunnel, lined with barrels and barrels of alcohol.

Chester turns on a light switch and points to an area of barrels.

There is a blanket spread on the floor, some comic books, baseball cards and candy wrappers scattered about.

There is also large deposit of empty liquor bottles nearby.

EZRA

This...is your room?

CHESTER

Yep! No one bothers me at all.
Ain't got no chores or nothin, cept
for keepin' an eye on things down
here with Mr. Hunter...

STANLEY

And where is Mr. Hunter today?

CHESTER

Awww, he went to Christmas or
somethin' like that. Said I had to
stay here, but he'd back in a while
with some bread and candy.

Paddy and Larry search for the vault. They spot an area behind some barrels that is a slightly different color.

STANLEY

Is he your pa?

Chester laughs.

CHESTER

Naw, he ain't my pa! I ain' got no
pa an' my momma died cause she got
sick...

EZRA

My momma got sick and died, too, at
least that's what they told me.

PADDY
Is this where it is, kid?

Chester nods.

The men lift the barrels down. They appear to be empty, as the men move them with ease...

There it is. The Al Capone's infamous vault.

The dial is massive...

Ezra sighs.

LARRY
Wow. That's a big one. How do you
want to handle it?

Ezra shooshes Larry as he puts the stethoscope up to the metal. He turns the dial a few times, then rips off the instrument and tosses it on to the floor.

EZRA
I figured that. We're gonna have to
drill for the first couple of
tumblers, then I might be able to
get some clicks for the rest.

CHESTER
Can I help, Mister George?

EZRA
Absolutely. You keep Mr. Kevin from
fallin' asleep.

PADDY
We'll stand watch by the
hole...Come on, kid.

Paddy and Chester walk back towards the stairs.

Larry, Stanley and Ezra get started on the safe.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL BASEMENT

There are several holes drilled into the metal. Ezra feverishly calls out numbers to Stanley, who jots them down as quickly as possible.

EZRA
Fourty Six! Nineteen!
Sixty...Seven! Twenny three! Thirty
two and...five!

A loud clank is heard. Ezra smiles.

STANLEY
I'll go fetch Paddy...He's gonna
wanna see this.

Stanley exits.

INT. SECRET STAIRCASE

He climbs up the staircase to the hole. He readies his
weapon.

STANLEY
Paddy? Kid?

He hears a toilet flush.

Stanley breaths a sigh of relief and crawls into the bedroom.

INT. AMBASSADOR EZRA'S ROOM

Stanley stands to see Paddy stretched out on the bed. His
neck appears to be broken.

Stanley fires into the bathroom door.

The door swings open, revealing FAT MOBSTER, (40's) and butt
ugly with massive pock marks in his cheeks.

Fat Mobster fires again, hitting Stanley in the shoulder and
the chest.

Stanley makes a break for it into the staircase, with Fat
Mobster in pursuit.

He peppers the wall with bullets.

INT. SECRET STAIRCASE

Fat Mobster has a hard time getting into the hole, giving
Stanley ample time to shoot him dead.

Stanley runs back down the stairs, clutching his chest.

INT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL BASEMENT

Stanley stumbles down the stairs and into the empty barrels.

EZRA

Damn! What happened? Where's Paddy?

STANLEY

Bastard got him, Ezz..But I got him
back...the safe...can I see?

Larry helps his battered nephew to the vault.

Ezra opens the door to reveal several bags of cash, a pile of gold bars and dozens of paper boxes, all stacked to the ceiling.

Ezra walks in and takes out a gold bar. He hands it to Stanley, who gives the gold a big kiss.

EZRA

Nice, eh?

Stanley hands it back to Ezra.

EZRA (CONT'D)

I ain' gonna be needin that where
I'm goin...but do one thing...use
that gold to make the ring for your
sweetheart, Ok...

Stanley coughs up large amounts of blood...

STANLEY

You guys bett...load up...

Stanley expires. Larry sets him gently on the dirt floor.

EZRA

Let's go...

INT. CAPONE'S VAULT

The men load up as much as they can carry. Ezra wears a vest with many pockets, all of them filled with gold.

LARRY

Wonder what happened to that kid?

Ezra shakes his head.

INT. SECRET STAIRCASE

Ezra and Larry climb up towards the hole, still blocked by Fat Gangster.

MR. HUNTER (O.S.)

...You ain' gonna sit down for a month, you filthy little vermin!

CHESTER (O.S.)

Please, Mr. Hunter! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I promise...

The sound of a hard slap and breaking glass echo through the staircase.

MR. HUNTER (O.S.)

Teach you a lesson you ain' never gonna forget...

Ezra dumps his jacket filled with gold onto the stairway.

LARRY

What are you doin? We just gotta wait them out!

EZRA

I'm not. I'd get back if I were you.

Ezra takes out a heavy shot gun and blasts the wall at point blank range.

This gives him room to jump over the Fat Gangster.

Taken by surprise, Mr. Hunter scrambles for his tommy gun.

However, Chester finds it first and aims it at Mr. Hunter.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Don't do it, kid. Put the gun down and let me take care of this.

Chester fires, but the kick back is so strong it knocks him to the floor.

The bullets arc upward, with one hitting Mr. Hunter in the shoulder.

The glass door to the balcony is also blown out.

Mr. Hunter grabs Chester and climbs out.

EXT. AMBASSADOR EZRA'S BALCONY - EVENING

Mr. Hunter dangles Chester over the edge by his collar. He's strong enough to hold him steady with one hand.

MR. HUNTER
Drop everythin'!

Ezra does.

EZRA
Fine. Let the kid go. He ain' done nothin' to you!

CHESTER
Yeah...p...please, Mister Hunter...please!

MR. HUNTER
Shut up, ya little punk!

Ezra slowly walks towards the balcony.

EZRA
Look...I got gold...You'll get a cut...You can bolt out of this hell hole with the rest of us...set up some where else, outside of Chicago...Outside of Capone...What'ya say...

MR. HUNTER
Show me!

EZRA
Let the boy over and I will...

MR. HUNTER
Why should I believe you?

EZRA
I'm Ezra Merriman...

MR. HUNTER
I see...Two gold bars...

EZRA
Done.

He lets the boy over.

Chester runs over to hug Ezra as Mr. Hunter reaches into his shirt.

EZRA (CONT'D)
Hey! Larry...Toss through my vest...

Mr. Hunter takes aim at Ezra when...

Blam! A bullet flies through the wall into Mr. Hunter's arm.

Mr. Hunter turns to fire back, when Blam!

Another shot hits him right in the heart.

Mr. Hunter looks down in disbelief before he collapses on the bed, lying over Paddy's corpse.

Chester hugs Ezra as Larry climbs out of the wall.

CHESTER
Were you gonna do it, Mister? You'd really give him two gold bars...for me?

EZRA
Yeah...I'd have given him more if he'd asked...It's just gold, an' I got plenty of that...

Chester smiles as Larry hands Ezra his vest.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY

Ezra pulls into the driveway. Chester, neat and clean, runs out to greet him.

CHESTER

Hey! Did you get it? Did you, Huh?

EZRA

Hold on, boy. Ya'll will see it soon enough.

Lucy, still on crutches, greets them at the front door.

LUCY

Well, Hello...Mister Smith. I'd like to tell you- that boy has learned A through E and can now count all the way up to fifty.

EZRA

Nice work, sweetheart. You should be a teacher...

LUCY

Yes...I imagine they have teaching schools in Boston.

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Lucy and Ezra hug.

EZRA

So, You are still planning to join me up there, Miss Trebuchet?

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE PORCH

Chester peers into the window as he watches Lucy and Ezra kiss. Cousin Deborah joins him, as does Larry.

INT. SIMON'S HOUSE HALLWAY

Ezra removes his hat and tosses it nonchalantly on a parlor chair.

LUCY

Why of course. You will not be able to shake me off that easily.

EZRA

I have no intention of doing that.
However, I also have no intention
of moving with Miss Trebuchet,
either...

LUCY

Oh?

Ezra gets down on the one knee and produces a ring box from
his suit coat...

EZRA

But I have every intention on
moving with Mrs. Smith...

Lucy smiles with tears in her eyes.

EXT. SIMON'S HOUSE PORCH

Chester, Larry and Deborah break into applause. Larry and
Deborah hug. Chester sighs.

CHESTER

Ain't love grand?

FADE TO BLACK