

POTTERSVILLE

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EXT. ASCENA HEIGHTS, A SMALL TOWN IN NEW YORK STATE: A
DECEMBER EVENING

Deep purple dark; the street and sidewalk are dressed in a shawl of snow. Little traffic is evident, human or vehicular. The light from the working street lamps provide paltry comfort, their glow seeming to retreat back into the darkness rather than penetrate it.

From out of a bar steps RICKY: cute but drunk. He staggers towards a car and leans heavily against it. He searches in his pockets, finally recovering a set of keys and presses the fob, opens up and pulls back the driver's door. He climbs in and, without putting on his seat belt, drives off, swerving out into the road just missing an oncoming truck.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN: NIGHT

Ricky is driving home in blinding snow. The narrow road seems sharper with snow drifts each side and dark green menacing evergreens toss snow from their branches as if in spite. He turns a corner too sharply for the conditions. He begins to swerve and loses control. In front of him is a lanky man staggering over the road. Ricky whips the wheel around to miss him and collides with a small pudgy man. Ricky, instinctively, shuts his eyes bracing for the impact.

RICKY

Shoot!

The expected thud of a body careering over his bonnet is not heard and he opens his eyes to find the car sliding away down the embankment on the right hand side of the road, ploughing into a deep snowdrift.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW DRIFT

The front part of Ricky's car is buried within the drift. He is unconscious but alive slumped in the driver's seat.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. OUTSIDE A RESTAURANT: CHRISTMAS EVE EVENING, SOME YEARS EARLIER

The street is bedecked with Xmas lights and it's snowing lightly

RICKY
Not much of a dinner

DIANE
Hey, I saved a month so we could
eat there

RICKY
Over-hyped if you ask me

DIANE
You never left a crumb

RICKY
Next year will be different

DIANE
How?

RICKY
I got in at Straker's

DIANE
Oh, you didn't, did you? You packed
your job up without asking me?

RICKY
Listen, you know Dan. He cleared
50 grand last year

DIANE
We're doing okay

RICKY
I'm fed up with okay. I want
great, fantastic, unbelievable.
Straker's can give me that.

DIANE
That's him talking isn't it? I
knew the guy years ago. He isn't...

RICKY
I showed him my salary slip and he
just laughed at it. He could earn
that in ten minutes

DIANE
He probably could. I don't want to
be married to Straker. I don't
want 10 minute fixes, I want
lifelong commitment. I want good
old reliable Ricky.

RICKY
 Good for nothing Ricky. It isn't
 right a man being kept by his wife

DIANE
 Stop being so neanderthal, it
 doesn't suit you.

He grimaces

DIANE (CONT'D)
 Perhaps it does

RICKY
 Can't I try?

DIANE
 We'll talk later. Let's enjoy the
 cold, the snow and the walk home

CUT TO:

INT. RICKY'S LOUNGE

A sparsely decorated Christmas tree sits in the
 corner of the living room. Ricky is watching TV. Diane is in
 the kitchen area. 'It's a Wonderful Life' is being broadcast.
 The clip is from the Bailey household prior to the graduation
 dance. Harry Bailey has just been told by his father Peter
 not to touch 'even so much of a drop' of gin. Diane enters

DIANE
 If he can't have one, I will.

RICKY
 It's a tradition. I wrap up the
 presents and watch Jimmy Stewart

DIANE
 It's about the only one you have

RICKY
 They'll be others, when I find my
 Bedford Falls

DIANE
 What's so amazing about Bedford
 Falls?

RICKY
 You are kidding me? It's
 everything you could want.
 (MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)

The people, the community...the
snow even

DIANE

I'll go fetch some coal and a
carrot if it'll make you happy

RICKY

Too cold for that

DIANE

So you're gonna sit there and
drink. Is that another tradition
'cause it happens every year too?
Couldn't you try the shelf again?

RICKY

I put it up didn't I?

DIANE

The DIY equivalent of the Tacoma
Narrows bridge. Sixty seconds it
lasted. All I wanted was to have
my Mother's picture put up. The
last one I had took with her before
she died. That shelf wouldn't have
supported a passport photograph

RICKY

The case for the defense I
believe...oops

DIANE

That's low, even for you

RICKY

I didn't mean it honestly

DIANE

There seems to be little of that
quality in you lately. Watch your
film

RICKY

Sit down with me

DIANE

I'll wait for bedtime to dream.
George Bailey isn't going to cook
my Christmas dinner

CUT TO:

INT. AN OFFICE PARTY: CHRISTMAS EVE, A YEAR LATER

Ricky is standing with a colleague, DAN, solid like a purloined section of the Berlin Wall. Typical Xmas party scene: people draped across tables and chairs like an explosion in a human cloakroom and a glass orgy of bottles and tumblers strewn across every square inch of tile, wood and fabric.

RICKY

Didn't we do this last year?

DAN

This is last year; we're stuck in a time warp

RICKY

Could be - looks like Joe's about to make the same move on Carol he did...

They look across at Joe and Carol. Joe is as thin as a Praying Mantis on a diet and leans into Carol, small and attractive, like a Pekinese, who pops him in the face.

RICKY (CONT'D)

3:14 - a little earlier this year

DAN

He's a little drunker this year

RICKY

With good cause - Straker's looking to offload

DAN

Joe?

RICKY

He's had a bad year

DAN

He's not alone

RICKY

Maggie you mean? She's got Straker's ear

DAN

Not just his ear I'm told. I wasn't thinking about her

RICKY

Who?

DAN
Could be anyone. Maybe even you.

RICKY
I'm top this month

DAN
Come on Ricky - you got lucky with Parker

RICKY
Lucky? When's the last time you were top?

DAN
Consistency is a better strategy

RICKY
Ah - jealous

DAN
Of Diane maybe

RICKY
Hey - she just mentioned her brother wanted the business. I did all the work

DAN
He's your brother-in-law for God's sake

RICKY
What - you don't do business with family?

DAN
The difference is if I didn't, I wouldn't starve

RICKY
I suppose we'll be sizing out each others turkeys next

DAN
Ricky - you like to eat but you don't like cooking

RICKY
What the hell does that mean?

DAN
Jeez Ricky, I think you were raised on a checker board?

An attractive girl LAURA looks over at Ricky and gestures

RICKY

Time for the traditional giving and taking of presents Dan my boy

DAN

And Diane? After all she may have saved your job

RICKY

Come on, it's nothing. It's a party. Look I got Diane a special gift this year. She's earned it.

DAN

You make her sound like an employee

RICKY

Lighten up Dan. It's Christmas: the season of goodwill and Frank Capra

DAN

You still watch that old film?

RICKY

Every Christmas Eve - never miss. Me and Gloria Grahame, the sexiest woman ever to grace the silver screen. Can you imagine bumping into her in Bedford Falls?

DAN

Isn't it a bit lame for a pace setter like you?

RICKY

When I make my fortune Dan that's where I'm going

DAN

Do you have a fictional house in this fictional town that matches this fictional career path?

RICKY

There must be somewhere like it and I'm gonna live there

He moves after Laura. A few seconds later STRAKER, the company boss, joins Dan. He's lean and characterless like an insipid side of bacon.

DAN
Evening

STRAKER
Sober?

DAN
Unfortunately

STRAKER
Ricky?

DAN
He'll be back in five minutes

STRAKER
You sure?

DAN
Well, maybe four: important?

STRAKER
Awkward

DAN
You don't...

STRAKER
It's confidential. He should
really be the first to know. How
will he take it?

DAN
After the Parker business, probably
shock

STRAKER
He could hardly fail with that. He
hadn't written any business in six
weeks. We'd already agreed to let
him go

DAN
Now, at Christmas? Christ I
thought it was cold outside

STRAKER
First thing they teach you - cut
when necessary

DAN
Who's your surgeon Straker?

STRAKER

Huh?

DAN

Next time they operate on you tell them to give you a heart

STRAKER

Too much of a heart - that's my problem. I've given him chances. I should've got rid of him in the summer. Look at the leads the Parker deal has generated and what's he done - took the month off as his reward.

Ricky walks back in tidying himself up

DAN

I'm going home

RICKY

But it's early

DAN

Jane just rang. Her favorite Aunt's turned up

He grabs his coat and leaves

RICKY

Bull. He sure is well and truly tethered

STRAKER

And Diane?

RICKY

She's happy, why shouldn't she be?

STRAKER

What do you want Ricky?

RICKY

A bottle of wine, a good dinner and 'It's a Wonderful Life'

STRAKER

Is that really all it takes?

RICKY

Ah this year the wine will be more expensive and the dinner will have all the trimmings.

STRAKER
And Bedford Falls?

RICKY
That may take a little longer to
achieve

STRAKER
Yes, that's what I want to talk to
you about.

RICKY
Bonus?
(pause)

STRAKER
I'm not going to string this out
but we're letting you go

RICKY
It's a little early for April Fools
isn't it?

STRAKER
The Parker deal doesn't mean a
thing Ricky

RICKY
Okay I'll have your cut. Listen am
I missing something here?

STRAKER
If that was the basis of your
contract I'd be hiring Diane

RICKY
Okay, okay but I've got leads on
the back of that

STRAKER
Which you've done nothing with

RICKY
Give me a break - it's Christmas

STRAKER
You've been celebrating since
Thanksgiving. A real salesman
would've been on it a month ago.
Face it Ricky, this life isn't for
you. Get a regular job - you
couldn't sell a match to an
arsonist

RICKY

And Maggie?

STRAKER

She's young; she's still learning

RICKY

You are screwing her. How long
have I got?

STRAKER

End of January

RICKY

Maybe I do need to smell a
different brand of manure

STRAKER

Ricky, you can't rely on things
just landing in your lap. You need
to work at it and that isn't you,
if it was Diane wouldn't be holding
down two jobs

RICKY

Merry Christmas Santa

STRAKER

Give my love to Diane

RICKY

Tact really isn't your thing is it?

He exits. Straker is approached by a young pretty woman who
links his arm. He guilefully unhooks it but begins to
converse with her.

CUT TO:

INT. RICKY'S APARTMENT

The front door opens and Ricky steps in hitting the
lights as he enters. It is a tidy flat; the furnishings
adequate - the sort of place friends always comment as 'nice'
when they mean tedious. Ricky goes toward the small kitchen
situated to the right side of the living space. He sniffs as
if expecting something to be cooking but is disappointed. He
checks the refrigerator.

RICKY

She's not in. Good. Better have
another drink before I get the 'I
told you so' speech

He turns on the TV, walks back into the lounge and pours a drink before heading toward the single bedroom opposite. He flicks on the light and opens up an angry looking wardrobe to hang his jacket. He sits back on the sad double bed behind him and peels off his trousers, slinging them into a wash basket beside the wardrobe. He lies back on his side of the bed, looking pensive and exhales loudly. His arms stretch out to the side and his right arm catches something on the other pillow. It is a note. He reads it:

DIANE (V.O)

Ricky, you probably won't be surprised to read this but I have decided to call it a day. I won't lie to you, I haven't been happy for a good six months now. We don't talk and make love even less. I haven't met someone else but I can't pretend I'm not hoping to. I'd really like to say it's not you it's me; but it is you. Sorry. Diane.
Ps. Don't look for me - I've left town and I haven't gone to my mothers.

RICKY

She could've microwaved a pizza before she left

Behind him the TV is showing the opening credits of 'It's a Wonderful Life'

RICKY (CONT'D)

Oh God - that's all I need

He takes another drink, staring vacuously into the screen

DISSOLVE:

INT. RICKY'S CAR: NIGHT PRESENT

Ricky stirs. He shakes his head to clear it. A strange dissonant music is heard and at once it stops snowing. The starry sky disappears behind dark clouds and it becomes pitch black. Ricky looks out at the windshield in front of him. It is completely covered in snow. He licks away at his lip and then touches the spot with his finger. His lip is bleeding. He tries to move but is completely wedged in by his seat belt which is twisted and will not release. He hears the car groan. He can feel, without seeing, that the car is edging forward. Painfully he moves his arm and switches on the wipers.

They clear away some of the snow giving Ricky a restricted view of what's in front of him. He squints at the screen but outside visibility is still poor but he can hear water. Gradually he comprehends the fact that the car is lying 50 yards short of foaming, freezing river. He attempts to open his door but the central locking is jammed shut.

Again the car groans but this time it lurches forward. In desperation Ricky wrestles with his safety belt but cannot budge it. Suddenly he stops struggling and relaxes.

RICKY

What the hell anyway? No job, no wife, no Bedford Falls. Merry Christmas Ricky

The car begins to slide a little more

RICKY (CONT'D)

I don't mind the drowning just spare me the flashbacks

The car continues to edge toward the river

RICKY (CONT'D)

Here goes...on my way God. Hey I wonder if he really does look like Santa Claus? Or maybe he's a meanie like old man Potter. George Bailey had Clarence - I got no-one

The car is about 10 yards from the river's edge and then, inexplicably, stops.

RICKY (LOOKING UP) (CONT'D)

Well, well, I never you for a sense of humor big fella

The car remains still for a few moments and then it groans again under the pressure

RICKY (CONT'D)

Here goes!

VOICE

Hey, you in there!

RICKY

What...who's that?

Ricky looks out and sees a black featureless shape in the pitch black night

VOICE

Wait - I'll get you out

RICKY

No - go away

VOICE

Naw, I'm afraid I just can't do that

He feels the driver's door being pulled

RICKY

It won't open. Let it go - you'll get yourself killed too

The attempts stop and all is still outside

RICKY (CONT'D)

Relax Ricky it'll be like falling asleep

VOICE

Hey you inside, listen

RICKY

Will you leave me be? Can't a man drown in peace?

VOICE

Lean into the wheel, turn your head the other way and close your eyes

RICKY

Are you gonna serenade me to death?

VOICE

Just do it!

Ricky obeys. Seconds later the driver's window smashes and glass showers him. A rock hits him in the shoulder. A man leans in toward him out of the blackness outside

RICKY

Couldn't you let the water kill me you lunatic, it'd be kinder

The man tugs at the safety belt

RICKY (CONT'D)

I've tried that for Christ's sake. Don't you think I would've tried that?

VOICE

What the hell kinda fancy belt you got here?

RICKY

Can't we discuss that later?

VOICE

Sorry mister but I thought you was committing suicide.

RICKY

What am I an imaginative Lemming?

VOICE

But you told me to go away

RICKY

Okay, yeah, but I hadn't considered the benefits until now

VOICE

I'm confused mister

RICKY

So am I but don't worry only one of us will be in thirty seconds

VOICE

No, I can't let you - it's a sin

RICKY

Okay God, I get it; drowning isn't enough, you gotta lecture me too

The car moves again, inching its way on its final journey to the water.

VOICE

Move to the left. I can pull you up and through the window

RICKY

Don't I get a say in how I die?. If I change my mind I'll swim okay?

The man grabs him and begins to pull. Ricky can feel some purchase

VOICE

Push up with your legs now - come on - help me. It's difficult to hold my position with the car moving in the snow

Ricky moves in compliance. Between them, they manage to manoeuvre Ricky's head and shoulders through the broken window, however as the man pulls Ricky back, the car moves forward. Inside Ricky's right foot becomes entwined in the safety belt and he begins to become stretched.

RICKY

OOOW! Is this a rescue or a murder?

VOICE

Aw quit moaning

RICKY

Just my luck - I need Oscar
Schindler and I get the Marquis De
Sade

VOICE

Just stay there - for one moment?

RICKY

Really? Aw and I was going for
espresso

The man reaches in, his legs leaving the ground to attempt to unwrap Ricky's foot. His weight adds to the car's propulsion toward the foaming river.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Oh, have you decided to tag along?

With difficulty he unwinds the belt and gets back behind Ricky again to pull on his shoulders. Ricky's bottom is through but the front wheels of the car are over the edge and the vehicle is pointing down toward the river.

As the car finally releases its hold on the earth, the man hauls one last time and the rest of Ricky is tugged away from danger. The car hits the water and at once begins to sink and race down river. For a moment they are both standing on the snow breathing huge clouds of breath into the ether. Ricky is leaning back on his rescuer his eyes fixed on the vehicle. He shouts at it

RICKY (CONT'D)

Et tu Brute!

He turns to face the dark shape behind him

RICKY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna miss that car

He collapses

DISSOLVE:

EXT. SNOW BANK: NIGHT

The man and Ricky are lying face up in the snow; Ricky slightly atop. It is pitch black and they can barely see each other.

VOICE

Are you hurt anywhere?

RICKY

Easier to say where I don't

There is a pause as both men look upward at the stars

VOICE

It's been a weird night. What sorta car was that?

RICKY

It's a company car...it belonged to an asshole. Pity he wasn't sitting in it

VOICE

Looked like some kinda space ship compared to my old Dodge

RICKY

Why did you risk your neck - you could've been drowned?

VOICE

Not much chance of that tonight - too many folk trying to beat me to it

RICKY

What's stopping me getting my breath back and walking back down to the river?

VOICE

Why wait and get it back if you're that determined to give it up? You go on and stroll down there mister, I'm too plain tuckered out to try and stop ya.

Ricky exhales deeply

RICKY

And I'm too tired to try. Maybe tomorrow eh?

VOICE

Just let me know where you're gonna be and I'll be somewhere else

RICKY

That's a rotten attitude for a guardian angel

VOICE

Aw don't you start, I've had angels up to here tonight

RICKY

You know it's funny...maybe my ears are full of snow but your voice sounds...Do I know you?

VOICE

If it's any help I'm the town chump

RICKY

Not tonight - that's my privilege. Say was that you up there on the road?

VOICE

I just heard a screech and turned around. Next thing I see you heading down the bank

RICKY

Jesus, I remember now. Hey was there someone with you?

VOICE

Yeah, and hey fella go easy with the cuss words

RICKY

Cuss...

VOICE

He was kinda tagging along talking all kinda nonsense.

RICKY

Was he a small pudgy guy?

VOICE

Squashy? Yeah

RICKY
I think I may have hit him

VOICE
You hit him!

The stranger rises, an anonymous tall skinny Greek deity silhouetted against a backcloth of stars.

RICKY
I didn't mean to. I swerved to avoid hitting you

VOICE
So it was my fault. Seems most of the problems in this little town are down to me. Say just exactly what was on your mind tonight, suicide or murder?

RICKY
Do you think he's dead?

VOICE
Poor old Clarence. I know he was a little nuts but he didn't deserve to go that way

RICKY
But he might need help

He searches his pockets

RICKY (CONT'D)
Damn, my cell must be in the car

VOICE
Cell? The only cell you're likely to see belongs to Bert the sheriff

RICKY
What about you?

VOICE
Don't implicate me mister, I've been busy saving lives not taking them!

RICKY
Hey, it was an acci...wait a minute...did you say Clarence?

VOICE
That's what he called himself

RICKY
A short little fella

GEORGE
Yep

RICKY
I saw him just before...but I
thought I was seeing things

VOICE
I sure know how you feel, all sorts
of strange things have been
happening since I pulled him out
the river.

RICKY
You pulled him out the river!

VOICE
You having trouble hearing me
mister; you sound like
you got a trick ear? I used to
have one of them when I was a kid;
lost it jumping in to save the
little guy. 'Bout the only good
thing I ever got for helping
someone?

RICKY
No, no, this can't be real; this
just isn't possible: Clarence, Bert
the Sheriff and trick ears.

Ricky grabs him and pulls him up the snow bank toward the
street light

VOICE
Whoa, hey, just a cotton-picking
minute mister; who you man-handling
here?

Both men step under the street light. Ricky staggers back in
fear and amazement

RICKY
Oh my God - you are George Bailey!

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ROAD: NIGHT

George is pacing around; Ricky is sitting on a snow mound with his head in his hands

GEORGE

Now are ya sure you actually hit him, 'cause if you did you must've knocked him clear over the county line 'cause there ain't no corpse here that I can see.

RICKY

Sure? (scoops up a snowball) This feels like snow so I'm fairly sure it's Winter; the sky's dark so I'm pretty sure it's nighttime but you're George Bailey and you don't exist

GEORGE

Now don't you start with that! You suicidal types, you never heard of the phrase 'thank you'? If I don't exist who do you think pulled you outta the goddamn car?

RICKY

Who's cussing now?

GEORGE

Well, you got me all riled up

Ricky stands up, his feet slipping on the ice

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Maybe we should get a drink

RICKY

That's how I got here; maybe a double will send me back

GEORGE

Where you from? I don't recognize you from Bedford Falls

RICKY

Hey, that's it! I am dead. This is the answer to my prayer. I am in Heaven but for me Heaven is Bedford Falls, the place I've always wanted to live

GEORGE

Heaven - Bedford Falls? You're nuts. Bedford Falls ain't done me no favours, though I done it plenty. What you grinning about?

RICKY

I was just thinking if this is Heaven that makes Pottersville hell.

GEORGE

Pottersville?

Ricky's eyes widen as something has just occurred to him

RICKY

Whoa! Your trick ear...

He points at George's ear

GEORGE

Not any more

RICKY

But that means...

GEORGE

We were on our way to Martini's...

RICKY

Clarence has granted you your wish

GEORGE

What wish? All I want is a drink

RICKY

That you've never been born

GEORGE

That was just a load of old baloney

RICKY

What about your trick ear? You can hear out of that for the first time since you saved Harry

GEORGE

Sure, but I just told you that...hey how did you know about Harry?

RICKY

You lips stopped bleeding too

GEORGE

Hold on now mister, I had this same conversation with the little guy half an hour ago. Are you another shapeshifter?

RICKY

George, I've watched that scene between you and Clarence oh, two dozen times

GEORGE

Mister, you're either cussing or making no sense at all. I need a good stiff drink. I'll be in jail tomorrow.

RICKY

George - Clarence has fixed things - everything's different now

GEORGE

Sure is for Clarence. Claimed to be an angel and you sure made him one

George turns to go but Ricky grabs his arm

RICKY

You don't belong here George

GEORGE

Now don't you start! I know where I come from - sure ain't anywhere you'd know with your fancy threads

RICKY

This isn't Bedford Falls

GEORGE

Well it don't look like New York City to me, not that I'll ever get to see the place. I'm gonna get that drink

George looks long and hard at Ricky and then runs off. Ricky sits back down against the snow drift and closes his eyes

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD. HALF AN HOUR LATER

Ricky wakes up stiff like a figurine in a Juneau garden. He struggles to open his eyes and tries to rub some warmth into them.

RICKY

God, that was some dream. How many
did I have?

He stands up and looks down the embankment. He can see the tyre tracks leading down to the river

RICKY (CONT'D)

Ah shoot! I did lose the car - must've been thrown clear. Where is this? Don't look like any part of Ascena Heights I know.

A MAN in a black coat walks out of the gloom heading toward a large brightly lit house

RICKY (CONT'D)

Can you help me?

The figure stops reluctantly

MAN

What do you want?

RICKY

What part of Ascena Heights is
this?

MAN

Have you been drinking?

RICKY

Forget the sermon eh? - I lost
Straker's...my car. That's worse
than jail time

MAN

This town is bad enough without
crazy nuts like you driving around
drunk. I hope you live fifty miles
away mister and have to walk every
foot back

RICKY

Easy now - I ain't (pause) killed
anyone. Just point me toward Plum
Street

MAN

You're either still drunk or very
lost; ain't no such place in
Pottersville. Get outta here
before I call the cops

Man hurries toward house

RICKY

Oh my God it's not a dream,
but...it...can't be

CUT TO:

EXT. NICK'S BAR 10 MINUTES LATER

Ricky is standing in front of the bar

RICKY

I gotta be imagining this. Maybe
I've overdosed - I've seen that
goddamn film too many times; I've
become a Capra junkie and this is
my cold turkey. Maybe I'm really
George Bailey

A shadow moves behind him

VOICE

Oh no - you're not George; you're
still Ricky

Ricky doesn't turn but answers

RICKY

And you must be the Wicked Witch of
the West

The figure chuckles

VOICE

Oh, no, no, my name is Clarence

Ricky turns to see a small pudgy guy with a thick overcoat,
wearing a trilby and spotted bow tie. Ricky walks up to him
and pokes him in the chest

RICKY

So I didn't kill you and you are
real?

CLARENCE
Oh, tish, tish, you can't kill an
angel

RICKY
Even a second class angel

CLARENCE
How did? (looks up) Joseph have you
been telling?

RICKY
Listen cut the crap will ya? You
can't exist

CLARENCE
And yet here I am. Why don't we
have a drink?

RICKY
Won't Joseph disapprove?

CLARENCE
Probably

They go in

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S BAR. NIGHT

The bar looks the same to Ricky as in the Capra film:
crowded, noisy and with a PIANO PLAYER and two HEAVIES at the
end of the bar. They sit down. NICK walks over to serve them

NICK
What'll it be?

RICKY
Bourbon Nick

NICK
You know me?

RICKY
Well this is Nick's isn't it?

CLARENCE
Not where I come from

Clarence points to the floor

RICKY
It's okay Nick - I found him
outside. I think he's bumped his
head or something

NICK
You'll need a stiff drink then old
timer; you want a little brandy?

CLARENCE
I was just thinking...of a flaming
rum punch...no, no, it's not nearly
cold enough...

RICKY
Give him a brandy

Nick gives them both a queer look. Ricky whispers to
Clarence

RICKY (CONT'D)
Don't talk like that

CLARENCE
Like what?

RICKY
You were going to say mulled wine
and cinnamon cloves

CLARENCE
Yes I was Do you like it too?

RICKY
They don't serve...for God's sake
Clarence - you're an angel you
should know how this ends

There is an abrupt silence across the bar as Ricky is
overheard

RICKY (CONT'D)
It's a pet name...angel

NICK
You give guys a pet name you only
just met?

RICKY
He's a sorta neighbour of mine

NICK
Not this neighbourhood

RICKY
He's a little eccentric

NICK
You related then?

The bar customers start to laugh and resume what they were doing

CLARENCE
Back in my day people were a little more civil my man

NICK
Oh I do beg pardon...would you gentlemen like a napkin with your drinks?

CLARENCE
That's...

RICKY
It's fine Nick really

Nick slams their drinks onto the counter and moves off to serve someone else.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Look you wanted to come in here so drink your Brandy and help me try to figure this all out; isn't that what you're all about?

CLARENCE
You can't

RICKY
I have to - I can't stay here, even if there seems to be no logical reason for me being here at all

CLARENCE
We have to help George

RICKY
How? He could be anywhere by now

CLARENCE
Yes, pity, I thought it was going quite well up to that point.

RICKY

Hey you wanna start pointing
fingers Clarence direct them
upwards. I didn't plan to land in
Pottersville.

CLARENCE

But I'm not here for you Ricky, I'm
here for George

RICKY

But what if you're too late this
time? What if he has gone and
killed himself.

CLARENCE

He can't. He doesn't exist

RICKY

Well if he doesn't exist how can we
help him? How does anybody even
talk to him or touch him? Are you
saying he's the product of another
immaculate conception?

CLARENCE

You musn't say that

RICKY

Yeah, I know - Peter and Joseph but
it still doesn't explain

CLARENCE

Ricky - there's a difference
between the body and the soul.
It's the soul of George Bailey that
doesn't exist anymore

RICKY

Sounds like a cop out to me

CLARENCE

Der mentsh trakht un got lakht

RICKY

Sounds like another in Hebrew. So
he could jump in the river again,
after all no soul, no sin

CLARENCE

I'm not jumping in again

RICKY

Then you don't get your wings

Nick records a sale on the till

CLARENCE

Someone just has. Everytime you
hear a bell...

Ricky looks at Nick. He is following every word

RICKY

It's okay Nick he watches too much
television

NICK

You gotta television? You making
fun of me? Only one man in town got
that kinda money and that's old man
Potter

CLARENCE

He can't take it with him

NICK

Potter will. He'll bribe St Peter
at the Pearly Gates

CLARENCE

Not if I know St Peter

NICK (WHISPERING)

Is he listening?

CLARENCE

Of course. He's the one that sent
me here

NICK

I don't know what you two pixies
have been drinking before you came
into my bar but it's time for you
to leave, out through the door or
through the window

The two heavies grab them

RICKY

It's just a joke Nick

NICK

And that's another thing. Where do
you come off calling me Nick? I
don't know you from Adam...

Suddenly the bar opens and MR GOWER staggers in.

RICKY

Oh God I can't watch this

NICK

Hey you! Rummy! Come here! Come here!

He grabs the soda syphon

NICK (CONT'D)

Didn't I tell you never to come panhandling around here?

RICKY

Don't do it Nick

NICK

Stay outta this. Be thankful you ain't picking glass outta your teeth

RICKY

You don't know him - he really is a decent man

NICK

Decent? He poisoned a kid

RICKY

Only in Pottersville...oh sh...

NICK

Is that a fact? Maybe we should bus him all over the state then, even things out

RICKY

No, no, I mean it was an accident

GOWER (SLURRING)

Thash right; I wash drunk

NICK

You were drunk on the tit

GOWER

Bad newsh - my shon - dead

NICK

Murdering your own now

RICKY

You've got it all wrong

NICK
 This is my bar and in my bar I'm
 right. I don't know what's worse:
 an old pathetic drunk who murders
 kiddies or a crazy nutcase trying
 to defend him. Hey Rummy - come
 over here and sit down. You can
 have your drink.

Ricky smiles

NICK (CONT'D)
 And you can have one too

He sprays the syphon all over Ricky and Clarence

NICK (CONT'D)
 Get rid of 'em

CUT TO:

EXT. NICK'S. EVENING

Ricky and Clarence are ejected into the snowy roadside

RICKY
 This has to be the single most
 depressing moment of my life

CLARENCE
 What about Diane?

RICKY
 How did you?

CLARENCE
 Your eyes betray you

RICKY
 Save the philosophy for George

CLARENCE
 You were beginning to sound like
 him back there
 (pause)

RICKY
 What's happening Clarence?

CLARENCE
 I'm not sure.

RICKY

Can't you get some advice, I mean you gotta have a hotline straight to the big guy

CLARENCE

I wasn't sent here for you. I won't get my wings if I don't save George

RICKY

So you gonna desert me then? How do I get home then?

CLARENCE

Oh it is a mess. Pity you don't have your own guardian angel

RICKY

What happens if I help you get George back?

CLARENCE

Well it was my idea in the first place so I guess I'd have every right to expect them to give me...

RICKY

No, not you. I mean me. If I help George go home...couldn't I go with him?

CLARENCE

Without Diane?

RICKY

There's no Diane anymore and don't tell me you don't know what she wrote

CLARENCE

I don't think that's quite the done thing.

RICKY

Clarence, I come out of a bar and crash my car. When I wake up not only am I in a town that doesn't really exist, the town that does exist with the town that doesn't exist only exists in a old black and white film. Are you gonna quote heavenly protocol at me?

CLARENCE

I'm not your Guardian Angel Ricky

RICKY

Well send for one - like at the start of the movie.

CLARENCE

I can't - I haven't got my wings

RICKY

I used to think that line was funny, now I know how George feels

CLARENCE

But you just can't order up a guardian angel. Have you ever tried praying?

RICKY

The last time I spoke to 'Him' George turned up instead

CLARENCE

Really? I see...oh but yes, yes, that must be it.

RICKY

What are you babbling on about?

CLARENCE

It's George. George is your guardian angel.

RICKY

But he isn't even dead and you told me he can't try suicide again

CLARENCE

God works in mysterious ways his wonders...

RICKY

He's certainly surpassed himself tonight. We passed mysterious an hour ago, we need to get real

CLARENCE

Boy oh boy this isn't going to be easy

RICKY

Whoa time out little angel - you're not going to suggest I've never been born are you?

CLARENCE

Well it would've worked...

RICKY

We're in Pottersville now, where the goddamn will we end up next?

CLARENCE

Tut, tut; Matthew 5:37 - plain language is enough - no need to cuss

RICKY

Clarence if you don't want the air around you and every Angel first, second or economy class, as blue as a Montana sky, you'd better stop quoting scripture and come up with a plan.

CLARENCE

First step I suppose is to find George

RICKY

Don't you know where he is?

CLARENCE

No, why should I?

RICKY

Don't they issue Guardian Angels with some kinda tracking device or something?

CLARENCE

Until I get...(Ricky scowls)
...until I'm fully developed, then, I have to rely on Joseph

RICKY

What? He picks you up and puts you down? What is this - Star Trek for the Bible Belt?

CLARENCE

I lost George when you ran me over

RICKY

Are you telling me I did kill you?

CLARENCE

No, no - he just took me back

RICKY

The Trekkies would love this sequel
Star Trek meets Touched By an Angel

CLARENCE

Ssh, they might be listening

RICKY

Good. (He looks up and shouts)
Where's George?

CLARENCE

That won't work. We'll have to do
it together. I failed.

RICKY

Why? I ran you over. They should've
seen that one coming - they're the
ones with wings

CLARENCE

Shall we go. I expect George will
probably need us now. He has
nowhere to go in Pottersville.
He'll be scared

RICKY

But that's good isn't it - that's
what convinces George his old life
was worth fighting for

CLARENCE

With a little bit of persuasion on
my part, yes, but I'm not there now
am I?

RICKY

So all bets are off?

CLARENCE

He'll be in Pottersville and he
won't be hard to find. We'd better
take it from there

RICKY

Okay Clarence I got nothing to look forward to so I may as well go back, back with George, and you my dear Clarence, St Pete and St Joe and anyone else who ever grew wings, are gonna make it happen, because if I can somehow be in Pottersville, then I can be in Bedford Falls.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. POTTERSVILLE. NIGHT

Ricky and Clarence are standing next to the town sign

RICKY

This is creepy

A snowball is fired from somewhere behind them, hits the sign and smashes through the 'O'

RICKY (CONT'D)

What the...

He bends down and picks up the snowball. There is a stone inside it. They look behind them and see a group of kids laughing. A small child in the middle is preparing to launch another snowball

RICKY (CONT'D)

Throw that at me you little bastard and you'll have stones coming out of your ass

Clarence covers his ears. The children run off. Ricky looks at Clarence

RICKY (CONT'D)

Take your hands down for God's sake

CLARENCE

It's for his sake I'm covering them

RICKY

How old did you say you were?

CLARENCE

I didn't

RICKY

Of course, we never got around to that bit

CLARENCE

293 next May

RICKY

Well grow up

They walk on

CLARENCE

The children seem to be a little lively in Pottersville

RICKY

Where I'm from some of them are psychotic

CLARENCE

Is is that bad?

RICKY

This is just Howdy Doody where I'm from

CLARENCE

Don't they play any nice games?

RICKY

Yeah, sure - Grand Theft Auto, Resident Evil - shoot 'em up and shoot 'em down. Anything that disassociates them from the real world, except in some cases it becomes the real world and then they bring it into ours

CLARENCE

That's all gobbledeygook to me

RICKY

Maybe it's not such a leap from stony snowballs.

CLARENCE

What is?

RICKY

Murder

CLARENCE

Heavens No

RICKY

Say just what exactly do they let you see up there?

CLARENCE

I suppose when I get my wings I'll see it all but I'm not quite sure I want then now

RICKY

Never mind the sensibilities - besides which if we get George back to Bedford Falls I won't have to worry about lunatic kids growing into crazed fanatics will I? Pottersville is nothing more than a dry run for modern America; your idea was hardly original.

CUT TO:

EXT. POTTERSVILLE, MAIN STREET. NIGHT

They walk up the main street. They come to a halt outside the 'Dreamland Dime a Dance' There's a kerfuffle outside and a girl has been arrested.

RICKY

I think I know where George is? In the film that girl should be Violet Bick and it isn't

CLARENCE

Film?

RICKY

Of course, all this is real to you

CLARENCE

This is real because George doesn't exist, just as Bedford Falls is real because he does

RICKY

You're giving me a headache - can we just go in

CLARENCE

Oh no, not me! A bar is one thing but I don't think Joseph will approve of me attending a brothel

RICKY

It's not but even if it was you'd
still be going in - move

Clarence has the look of a lost puppy. Ricky gathers in the
leash and drags him in

CUT TO:

INT. DREAMLAND DIME A DANCE. NIGHT

The decor is dark and garish and the dance floor
occupies the central space with a glitterball hovering above.
Underneath couples claw at each other. It gives the
impression of an ante chamber that one must visit prior to
incarceration into Hades. There is a bar at the far end with
two sofas positioned at either end. They are occupied. There
is a bar stool vacant and Ricky heads for it and tells
Clarence to stand at the right hand side.

RICKY

Clarence, look out for George but
don't, don't say a word to anybody

At the bar two couples sit either side. In the
middle an attractive, long-legged and dark haired girl RITA,
is draped over the counter like a discarded shawl. Ricky
approaches her. She turns.

RITA

Hello Gorgeous. Wanna dance?

RICKY

I'm looking for someone

RITA

I could be someone honey, it's your
dime

RICKY

No, I want somebody specific

RITA

I do specific too. You like Ava
Gardner? - I can do her

RICKY

Violet Bick

RITA

She does herself well enough.
Besides she's busy. She's always
busy. I'll be your lover

RICKY
Who's she with?

RITA
A big tall gangly guy - he's kinda
cute but...

RICKY
She call him George by any chance

RITA
Didn't catch it. He seemed a
little crazy when he came in here,
yelling that everything was
different - that it shouldn't
exist. The doorman was gonna throw
him out but Vi stopped him. It was
kinda strange, almost as if she
knew him but I'd never seen him
before, not round here. She
straightened it out, said she'd
look after him.

RICKY
That's what you do isn't it?

RITA
Hey mister, you make it sound
dirty. With me it's a dance,
that's all, some guys are lonely.
You want extra, there are places
for that too

RICKY
Listen I'm in a hurry - I don't
mean...what do you mean she knew
him - she can't he doesn't exist

Ricky bites his lip

RITA
Looked real enough to me

RICKY
Where'd they go?

RITA
The guy was mumbling something
about Lake Bedford but he'd have to
drag Vi up there

RICKY

What is he doing. He should be
scared witless not running off with
Vi and leaving Mary

RITA

Married eh? Only makes them more
attractive to Vi. Mary who?

RICKY

Mary Hatch

RITA

You must've had a skinful
suggesting that, but you don't look
drunk. Mary Hatch is an old maid.
I was at school with her. She used
to be pretty but after she came
home from college she changed. She
didn't like the way the town was
going

RICKY

Potter

RITA

Correct - our beloved benefactor
and the true name of providence

RICKY

This is...good?

RITA

Better than it was honey - what
sorta fun can you get outta crummy
movie house and a bar for old men

RICKY

Community

RITA

That costs more than a dime.
Listen honey - don't go. If you
want...you know...there's a room we
can use...

Across the room Clarence is standing awkwardly above a GIRL
and a MAN necking but cannot resist looking at them in
fascination

GIRL

Hey mister, what are you leering
at?

The man spins around

MAN

Hey buddy, if you're looking for a girl - she's taken. Take your dime somewhere else

CLARENCE

They don't give out money where I come from

GIRL

Aw sweetie that's a shame, but the management don't like freebies. Say aren't you a little old for this?

CLARENCE

Oh no, I don't want you, I want George

MAN

In that case you're in the wrong joint mister and I ain't George.

He rises and is around 5'8" tall and nearly as wide making Clarence feel like he is being confronted by a huge black square

MAN (CONT'D)

You queer?

CLARENCE

Too be truthful, my good man, I been feeling that way all evening

MAN

Well someone outta put you straight

He raises his fist to hit Clarence but it's caught as it descends. He looks at the owner. It's Ricky

RICKY

Leave the little fella alone

MAN

Who are you - the boyfriend?

RICKY

He's just old-fashioned - he's not gay

MAN

Okay so he's miserable - don't mean
he parade his perverted ways round
here even if that's what makes him
happy

CLARENCE

Well I would be if I could find
George

MAN

Fags!

Ricky groans. The disturbance has stopped the music
and everyone is looking at them. Suddenly the man has the
backing of another half dozen. Several ask what the problem
is.

MAN (CONT'D)

They're faggots

Some of the women gasp and the expressions on the faces of
the group of men harden. Ricky turns to Clarence

RICKY

No wonder you haven't got your...

The Man hits him in the stomach and he doubles up,
dropping onto his knees. Everything stops. Ricky catches
his breath and looks up at his attacker.

MAN

Get up

RICKY

No - join me will ya?

He swings his arm behind the man's legs and sends him
flying to the ground. The gang fly at Ricky arms and fists
pumping. One of them grabs Clarence and hurls him across the
dance floor. He glides along on his bottom straight through
the legs of one of the girls.

GIRL

That cure ya honey?

Suddenly the police come through the door led by BERT the
cop.

BERT

What the Sam Hill is going on here?

MAN
Couple of queers looking for
trouble

BERT
I only see one

The men are dragging Ricky to his feet

BERT (CONT'D)

WHERE'S THE OTHER?

GIRL
Over here behind me

They look over but Clarence is gone.

RICKY
No wings my butt

He passes out

CUT TO:

EXT. DREAMLAND DIME A DANCE. NIGHT

As Ricky is being hauled outside he regains consciousness. He begins to struggle but he's been handcuffed. He looks across the road and sees George Bailey and VIOLET BICK walking arm in arm toward Potter's Bank.

RICKY
Bert you gotta let me go

BERT
Officer to you boy. You make it
sound like we're friends

RICKY
But George is over there with
Violet

BERT
Your boyfriend. Well never mind. If
he's decided he likes girls it's
probably best in the long run. One
less body sitting in my jailhouse

RICKY

Bert, you don't understand.
There's something wrong with
George. He doesn't belong...he's
sick.

BERT

Well I wouldn't worry none, Vi's
got plenty a' cures

He pushes Ricky into the squad car and drives off

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT

Sparse and uninviting with two cells, a desk and a
couple of chairs. Bert sits Ricky down next to a radiator and
cuffs him again. In the adjacent cell is a drunk, JOEY,
sleeping it off. Bert leans on his desk and looks at Ricky

BERT

I gotta ask you some questions son

RICKY

No Bert, listen to me. You can't
keep me here

BERT

You Houdini? No, thought not, you
ain't going nowhere. Empty your
pockets

Ricky fishes inside his pockets but can find nothing

RICKY

My stuff: my wallet and keys,
they've all gone

BERT

A might convenient if you ask me

RICKY

Wait...I crashed my car - I must've
lost them

BERT

Crash? Nobody's reported nothing to
me. You hurt anyone? Where's the
car?

RICKY

No, I just ran off the road. Car's
in the river

BERT

I should book you for pollution,
natural and otherwise

RICKY

Bert I'm not that way I am...was
married for five years.

BERT

Most of your kind are. They tell
me the wife's usually last to know

RICKY

Dammit, it's like being lectured by
Robert Mugabe.

BERT

Why don't you stick to harmless
distractions like old Joey in
there? His missus hates him and
vice versa

RICKY

He here every night?

BERT

Weekends mostly. Bars are all he's
got; still took a man's way of
dealing with his problems.

RICKY

Sleeping alone in a jailhouse? You
his wife?

BERT

I ain't a mean guy mister but I
ain't averse to setting you
straight.

RICKY

I'm as straight as anyone could be
in Pottersville. I'm Ricky and the
little guy is Clarence. We're
looking for a friend of ours,
George. We think he could be in
trouble, that's all. Everything
else is a misunderstanding

BERT

Where's the little guy now?

RICKY
Kinda hard to say?

BERT
Must admit from his description you
sure seem like an odd couple but
yours is an odd business

RICKY
It's odd alright, but not the way
you think. There's nothing gay
about me and Clarence

BERT
Well if it don't make you happy
why'd you do it?

RICKY
What about George?

BERT
He a big lean fella?

RICKY
Yeah I saw him for a moment outside
the dime a dance with Vi Bick; but
you dragged me away

BERT
Hey I saved you from a beating son.

RICKY
I know, I know

BERT
Well if your friend ain't in
trouble now he will be soon. I'm
normally dragging Vi outta the
dance hall. Is he married?

RICKY
In a way

BERT
Bad news - that's irons to a magnet
in Vi's case.

RICKY
She can't be all bad

BERT
Worse. She weren't a bad kid - bit
wild that's all - just needed a
father figure. Never had one.
(MORE)

BERT (CONT'D)

He ran out on her and her mom when she was 4.

RICKY

She work for Potter?

BERT

We all do - one way or another. Old man's gotta freehand in the town. Clue's in the name

Bert looks over at a plaque hanging on the wall and then looks away

BERT (CONT'D)

My jail and I seem to be answering all the questions

RICKY

Bert all I can tell you is that I don't belong here, and neither does George. We're trying to get home to Bedford Falls

BERT

Bedford Falls, New York state?

RICKY

Yeah

BERT

You being funny with me mister? This is Bedford Falls or at least it was 'till Potter bought everything up

RICKY

How's that possible? Of course - what did Rita say about Lake Bedford?

BERT

It works the way Potter wants even if there's still some things he can't buy

A creak is heard from behind and the jailhouse door swings open slowly. POTTER appears in his wheelchair being pushed by his VALET.

POTTER

That's only because that piece of real estate has no interests for me...yet

BERT

Mr Potter...don't often visit my
part of the world

POTTER

I had you installed here - don't
mean we have to break bread. (Turns
to Ricky) Do I know you son?

RICKY

I know you

POTTER

You do? I think if our paths had
converged I might have remembered
and had the good grace to cross to
the other side of the street

RICKY

Have you got spies everywhere?

POTTER

Let's just say I have
interests...everywhere

RICKY

That's a lot of minds to control

POTTER

I'm a little more economical than
Mephistopheles. The citizens of
Pottersville need guidance - not
damnation.

RICKY

Isn't misery another form?

POTTER

Would they be any happier without
my jobs? What did Bedford Falls
give them that Pottersville can't?

RICKY

Hope?

POTTER

Never saw a starving family raised
on hope. Money, food - sure but
hope, that tends to give one
constipation.

RICKY

Your money - your food

POTTER

More than their beloved benefactor, Peter Bailey, could do for them when his charity ran dry. And how did they repay him when they lowered him into the mud? A miserable half dozen showed up. He gave the lazy good for nothings all he had and what did they give him? - a heart attack

RICKY

He did good for the sake of good - he never asked for a thing

POTTER

How come you claim to know so much about him? Are you the black sheep maybe? Is that why you're here - back for your inheritance because the family sent you away to save them from scandal?

RICKY

Why didn't you get it all?

POTTER

Left all the parasites to me and their debts.

RICKY

Faust again. How much do you want Potter? You have a Loan Company, a Bank, Stores, Bars - when does it stop? When do you own enough?

POTTER

When they stop wanting

RICKY

And as parasites...

POTTER

It's their raison d'etre. You call it tyranny. I call it economics.

RICKY

So what's charity?

POTTER

A free lunch. You wanna eat - get a job or buy an allotment. Julius Caesar didn't say I came, I saw, I helped out.

RICKY
That's hardly the point

POTTER
Then don't judge me. Bert are you
going to lock this pervert up or
what? I have a job for you

BERT
Sure Mr Potter.

He puts George into the other cell

POTTER
Now Bert, as my role as 'Arch
Demon' or as I like to put it, the
only man that gets things done in
this town I have acquired another
'soul' or employee, to use the
customary terminology, recommended
to me by Violet Bick.

RICKY
George!

POTTER
Friend of yours? George Brady

RICKY
Brady? Are you sure?

POTTER
According to Vi Bick

RICKY
Why would George...he's all mixed
up

POTTER
He didn't seem too mixed up about
the 20,000 dollars a year

BERT
Jeez that's more than I get for 5
years policing

POTTER
Policing? Throwing Joey here in
Jail every Friday night is hardly
gold shield detective work besides
if you were that good at your job I
could trim my payroll

RICKY

George'll change his mind - let me talk to him

POTTER

You're going nowhere but you could be right. Funny - after he shook my hand he started mumbling something about always hating me. Seemed kinda familiar. Still that's fine by me. Never hired anyone to like me; can't build an empire on love.

RICKY (WHISPERS)

George did

POTTER

What's that? Never mind. Bert I have appointed this George as our new bailiff and have given him a task to perform tonight to which you will lend support

BERT

What's the job?

POTTER

That garlic eater, Martini, he owes two months rent. He's being evicted tonight

RICKY

But it's Christmas Eve - how can you be so heartless?

POTTER

Two months rent? Too soft with scum like him - that's my problem. I should have slung him out on the street in November. Promised me he'd find a job. Not my fault the guy can't keep his word

BERT

There ain't no work here Mr Potter

POTTER

Pottersville isn't the only town around here. There's work if you want it

BERT

Martini hasn't got a car - how could he?...

POTTER

I'll let you into a little secret history of mine Bert. Might be worth you thinking on it next time you challenge my authority. My father worked from nothing. Came in from Ireland on a boat like a lot of these good for nothings - only difference is he got a job, no, tell a lie he got several jobs. Took a single room tenement next to the Second Avenue Line. Got used to the noise; got used to the smell; got used to the work - hard work. He didn't complain about the wages or the hours. Knew that one day he'd be the man setting the wages and the hours. Saved enough to buy his first store. Took on the competition, despite threats and made a success. Bought another shop and another. He didn't eat another man's food - he learned how to cook. By the time he sent me to the Collegiate, one of the finest schools in New York, he owned six stores all over Manhattan. One day I came home and I asked him why I didn't get any pocket money like the other kids. You know what he did? That night he told my mother to send me to school without my lunch but to give me a note. On that note was an address of a Deli in Upper Westside about 10 minutes from the school. Like a fool I thought he had an account, thought I was turning up for a pastrami on rye - turned out he'd got me a job delivering groceries. I had a three hour shift after school five days a week and six hours on Saturday. I got home and asked him why. He said you want to eat - that's fine, I'll feed you. You want to eat and have pocket money too - you work.

RICKY

I can see how you inherited his philanthropic nature

POTTER

I spent seven years in that school and I can honestly say that Keynes, Malthus, and all those other so called monetarists never inspired me more than that simple lesson. Best education a boy could buy.

RICKY

So you built Pottersville without his help?

POTTER

Sure I did. He was long dead

RICKY

But what about his stores?

POTTER

I sold them all and started buying land out here.

Potter breaks into huge guffaws. Ricky sits back in the cell

POTTER (CONT'D)

Why concern yourself son? If I were you I'd spend the night trying to think up some rational excuse for your lewd behavior. Why do I have to support people who deliberately dig themselves a financial hole by having too many kids under the foolish notion of safety in numbers? - Have enough kids and chances are one of them will make good - a sports star or a doctor - and support us in our old age is that it? And when this over-breeding strategy backfires they ask me to sponsor their irrational irresponsibility.

RICKY

How selfish of them

POTTER

You see - I'm practically a martyr. You got any money

RICKY

I'm broke

POTTER

Bert - let's say we need the space
in here - how much of a fine would
we give this lecher? Ten dollars?

BERT

Maybes

Potter pulls out his wallet and takes out a bill and thrusts
it toward Ricky.

POTTER

Take this. You can either give it
to Bert and go free or I can give a
dollar to the first ten bums I see
hanging round town so they can get
liquored up.

RICKY

I need to get out - you know that

POTTER

Then your need is greater

RICKY

How far would you really go Potter?
How many lies would you be prepared
to tell in order to...

Ricky stops mid-sentence. Potter takes the ten dollar bill
away

POTTER

Looks like a stone just hit the
glasshouse. Get me out of here.
I've dealt with enough losers for
one day. Just you be there Bert,
as insurance, in case this guy gets
cold feet

Potter's valet wheels him around

RICKY

George won't do it

POTTER

Only a fool would turn his back on
20,000 dollars for someone he
doesn't know

RICKY

You can't turn Martini out - he's a
part of Bedford Falls

POTTER
This isn't Bedford Falls anymore

He exits followed by Bert

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT. AN HOUR LATER

Ricky is flitting between sleep and wakefulness.
Behind him Joey is snoring. Ricky jerks awake like a tired
driver coming out of a cat nap at the wheel of a car.
Clarence is facing him on the other side of the cell bars.

CLARENCE
Are you hurt?

RICKY
You didn't hang about long enough
to find out did you?

CLARENCE
It wasn't my fault; Joseph took me

RICKY
And left me behind

CLARENCE
He can't interfere with you,
besides they're not happy with you
up...you know

RICKY
I'll apologize next time I go to
confession. Have you found George?

CLARENCE
Yes, but you're not going to be
happy

RICKY
Don't worry about dampening my mood
I left happy several hours ago

CLARENCE
He won't talk to me

RICKY
He must've sobered up

CLARENCE

He's convinced I'm a figment of his imagination. He told me I don't exist

RICKY

That's three of us then. By morning we may have killed off half of Pottersville

CLARENCE

It's worse I'm afraid

RICKY

You can top non-existence and without your wings?

CLARENCE

He says he's in love with Violet Bick and wants to marry her

Ricky grabs Clarence by the collar

RICKY

He can't. He's married to Mary

CLARENCE

Yes but only in Bedford Falls

RICKY

Silly me, I forgot. How can you commit bigamy when you don't exist. I hope they have kids. I really want to see what they turn out like.

CLARENCE

What can I do? This wasn't part of the plan

He lets him go

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

All I can do is influence - George has to choose to go back to Bedford Falls

RICKY

And that's another thing. This town used to be Bedford Falls - how the hell does that scenario play out?

CLARENCE

Why shouldn't it have been?

RICKY

It's not logical

CLARENCE

It's perfectly logical. 'We are near waking when we dream we are dreaming' Novalis

RICKY

If I punched you really quickly would they see it coming?

CLARENCE

We both come from different eras but it seems to me that for most human beings the pursuit of wealth is the path most sought out

RICKY

Not for George?

CLARENCE

George is no different to you or I. He wants all those things that we want - to be rich; to have no cares in life. Unfortunately for him, like for most of us - fate or circumstance has thwarted his desires, or at least that's what he thinks.

RICKY

No that can't be right. Potter offered him a job in Bedford Falls and he turned it down

CLARENCE

Why? If Straker had offered you the same what would you have done? Large fixed salary - not having to rely on commissions - the Holy Grail?

RICKY

I...forget me...answer the question

CLARENCE

It was the handshake that did it remember? George had fallen hook line and sinker for Potter's offer right up until he shook his hand

RICKY
But what does that mean?

CLARENCE
Hard to say - what we do know is
that Pottersville has altered the
equation somewhat

RICKY
You gotta get me out Clarence

CLARENCE
I can't interfere physically, you
know I can't

RICKY
Damn your heavenly procedure - we
can't just sit back and let George
fall under Potter's spell. Get me
out

He grabs the bars and shakes them in frustration- the cell
door opens

RICKY (CONT'D)
That didn't hurt did it?

CLARENCE (SMIRKING)
That wasn't me - perhaps Bert
forgot to lock it

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND JAILHOUSE. NIGHT

They are walking toward the main street. Ricky is
still remonstrating with Clarence. A taxi drives by. It's
ERNIE with Violet and George visible in the back

RICKY
Clarence - look. That's Ernie's
taxi and George and Vi are in it

CLARENCE
Oh dear they must be on their way
to Martini's house in Potter's
Field

RICKY
Damn now we'll have to wait until
they come back

CLARENCE

I think it might be better to stop them. I don't know how George will react if he actually goes through with it

RICKY

Get Saint Joe to beam you over

CLARENCE

That won't work - I told you George won't talk to me

RICKY

Send us both

CLARENCE

I can't - he won't do it

RICKY

Then you'll have to steal us a car

CLARENCE

Oh no - rules are rules. I can't commit a crime trying to win my wings - why I'd be disqualified.

RICKY

Not very modern are they? Couldn't they just give you points on your...wing licence or something?

CLARENCE

Wait - look

Clarence spots Bert moving toward his squad car.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

We can go with Bert

RICKY

Are you nuts? He thinks I'm in his jailhouse.

(pause)

Hey that gives me an idea

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET POTTERSVILLE. NIGHT

Clarence walks toward Bert who is sitting in his squad car about to move. The engine is running.

He stands by the driver's window staring in at Bert. Bert sees him and winds down the window

BERT
You want something?

CLARENCE
I believe you are looking for me

BERT
Why?

CLARENCE
You have my friend locked up

BERT
You Clarence? Listen I gotta job to do - you come back in an hour I need to see you

CLARENCE
My, my, policing has changed since my day. Do you normally let fugitives roam around endangering the public.

BERT
You don't look dangerous to me. You do your worst until I come back - My boss'll give me more trouble in one night than you could give me in a lifetime.

CLARENCE
Oh dear - I was hoping it wouldn't come to this. Joseph don't look

Clarence shuts his eyes and jabs Bert in the nose. Bert flies out of the car and grabs Clarence forcing his arm behind his back. He begins to frogmarch Clarence to the jail. Behind him the squad car engines rev. He turns around to see Ricky driving off. Automatically he releases Clarence to chase the car but realizing it's a useless task turns back to Clarence but he has vanished.

BERT
What the Sam Hill?...

CUT TO:

INT. BERT'S POLICE CAR. NIGHT

Ricky is driving looking for the Taxi

RICKY

Aw shoot...I just realised I don't know how to find Martini's

CLARENCE

Take the next left my man

Ricky jumps out of his seat. Clarence is in the rear of the car

RICKY

Are you trying to make me an angel too? Couldn't you have stood by the side of the road and hailed me down?

CLARENCE

We don't have time to stop

RICKY

This is hell

Clarence frowns

RICKY (CONT'D)

Why so sensitive. You live next door don't you?

CLARENCE

We don't like to mention the 'H' word - it causes unhappiness

RICKY

I would have thought having your ass one end of a toasting stick would be unpleasant not flying, or in your case, strolling around plucking on harps.

CLARENCE

We are happy but some of us have loved ones that were no so...lucky

RICKY

I thought Hell was for the wicked, not the unlucky

CLARENCE

Doesn't mean they're not missed...or loved

RICKY

Who do you know in Hell? An abusive father maybe?.

(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)
 Might explain your timidity.
 Probably getting wasted with my old
 man.

CLARENCE
 My wife

RICKY
 She's in Hell. I would have
 canonized her. What's she do?

CLARENCE
 Poisoned me

RICKY
 I'm warming to her already - no pun
 intended

CLARENCE
 I miss her regardless

RICKY
 Don't you get weekend passes? Take
 her to dinner? Food would be warm
 at least.

CLARENCE
 Oh no you can't cross the periphery

Ricky lowers his eyes

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
 What's wrong?

RICKY
 I guess Diane must've been tempted
 with me at times

CLARENCE
 Miss her?

RICKY
 How can I? She probably doesn't
 even exist now
 (pause)
 Yeah...I do.

CLARENCE
 She won't be in Bedford Falls

RICKY
 And she's not in Ascena Heights
 either, is she? If I could go to
 Bedford Falls - I know I'd be happy

CLARENCE

A dream world? How would you live and work?

RICKY

I'd get by - you're bound to in a place like Bedford Falls. It's a community - someone would give me a good job.

CLARENCE

What happens if that 'good' job is working for Potter, he'll still be there?

RICKY

I could help George in the Building and Loan

CLARENCE

I doubt if he could afford you and your ambition

RICKY

This is my ambition

CLARENCE

'God gives every bird its food, but He does not throw it into its nest'

RICKY (POINTING UPWARDS)

Bet you got that first hand. Listen Clarence I just need you to help find George. I'm not likely to be lured by Potter here or in Bedford Falls

CLARENCE

Unfortunately Potter has a wallet where he should have a heart

RICKY

You mean soul?

CLARENCE

No. Souls are funny things. A man can harden his heart to all kinds of sufferings but his soul retains its goodness

RICKY

Isn't this a bit...revolutionary?

CLARENCE

Take Saul. Was there ever a harder heart in man? Was God's voice appealing to him from without or within?

RICKY

So some sort of Damascene conversion is required for Potter in order to save George?

CLARENCE

Everyone will get their chance of salvation - but it's not Henry Potter's time yet. We've got to appeal to George's soul, his heart isn't listening anymore

Ricky slaps himself in the face

CLARENCE (CONT'D)

What did you do that for?

RICKY

For a moment I thought I'd reached that point in a dream when the level of unreality is so great you simply have to wake up

CLARENCE

This isn't a dream

RICKY

Or maybe we haven't got to that point yet...whoa, just wait a minute. Maybe Pottersville and Bedford Falls aren't that dissimilar after all

CLARENCE

You have a plan?

RICKY

A theory at least

CLARENCE

Will it work

RICKY

Ask Saint Joe

CUT TO:

EXT. POTTERSVILLE SUBURBS. NIGHT

Ricky catches up with Ernie's Taxi on the outskirts of town. He puts on the siren and lights. Joe stops. Ricky and Clarence get out. Ricky runs toward the vehicle. Joe stays in the cab but winds his window down. He stretches out as Ricky approaches looking at the police car

ERNIE

Where's Bert? That's his car ain't it?

RICKY (IGNORING HIM)

George - get out

Ernie runs off toward town

VIOLET

Who you pushing round mister?

George says nothing. He looks drunk and stares out of the cab

RICKY

You can't...oh my God you're Gloria Grahame

VIOLET

I can be Gloria honey, if that's what you want

George reacts

GEORGE

Hey, what sort of game are you playing - I thought you were sweet on me?

VIOLET

Oh don't mind me sugar - that's just Vi's little roulette routine. Don't go cashing in your chips yet Georgie Porgie.

Ricky forces himself away from his distraction with Gloria Grahame

RICKY

George - Martini's your friend, remember? You helped him buy his house in Bailey Park

VIOLET

You drunk? No such place. You must have the wrong guy - we're going to Potter's Field

GEORGE

We gave them bread and salt

RICKY

That's right and wine too. You and Mary, when they moved in

VIOLET

Mary who?

RICKY

Mary Hatch, his wife

VIOLET

She's an old maid

GEORGE

Hey where's the little fella?

RICKY

Clarence is here

He looks back but Clarence has gone again

RICKY (CONT'D)

Why is that guy so obsessed with wings? He don't need 'em

VIOLET

Listen out, even if George here is married I'm the one that's looking out for him. I even got him a job

RICKY

Kicking a family out on Christmas Eve - that's a job?

George and Violet get out

GEORGE

She's right. When did anyone in this hick town ever do anything for me? Besides which I ain't married - not here. I can do what I like in Pottersville. I can be as greedy as Sam Wainwright and as promiscuous as dear old Violet here, or even as grasping as Potter.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

There's no guilt, no Heaven, no Hell

VIOLET

Am I really promiscuous Georgie?

RICKY

It isn't a compliment. What can Potter offer you?

GEORGE

Big bucks, big house and the prettiest girl

RICKY

Kinda similar to what you told Mary when you were going on vacation

GEORGE (WHISPERS)

Mary...

(pause)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

...and if I remember I never made it. I spent the day saving that worthless Building and Loan for what? I stood there all day handing out my money and all they left me was two lousy dollars. Well it don't exist here so one less thing to concern myself with. All my life I worried 'bout losing my job, losing my house, my family but in Pottersville I literally have nothing to lose. There's no guilt, no caring, no conscience...

RICKY

No George Bailey

VIOLET

Bailey? He said his name is Brady

GEORGE

George Bailey doesn't exist anymore - that's what that blasted angel wanted - well that's okay by me - I don't wanna exist

VIOLET

You a Bailey, like Peter Bailey? I thought you seemed familiar

GEORGE

Another sucker - is that what you mean?

VIOLET

No lover. If you say Brady I'm happy

GEORGE

Good now we can move along just fine. We gotta job to do.

VIOLET

Yeah but we ain't got a driver

GEORGE

I'll drive. Sooner the job's done - sooner I get paid

RICKY

You sound like an insurance salesman I used to know

VIOLET

What do you know about it mister?

GEORGE

Maybe Martini should've took some out - might still have his house

RICKY

Maybe you are George Brady now or even George Potter

GEORGE

Well if I am don't see what concern it is of yours. By rights you shouldn't even be here

RICKY

But George Bailey saved me. Lucky he got to me before he changed his name

George pushes past Ricky toward the driver's door and looks in

GEORGE

He's took the keys. How far is it to walk?

VIOLET

Walk? It's about another quarter mile straight ahead.

GEORGE

Let's go

VIOLET

I ain't walking - not in these shoes.

GEORGE

Okay - suit yourself

VIOLET

I thought you were different. I thought you was a gentleman

GEORGE

And I thought you were the convent type. I am different but I ain't no gentleman

He begins to walk. Ricky follows

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You working for Potter too?

RICKY

Can't I keep you company?

GEORGE

Just don't get in my way

VIOLET

You're gonna leave me here alone George?

GEORGE

You won't be alone long

They walk off. Vi looks upset. She gets back in the cab and slams the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. 320 SYCAMORE STREET POTTERSVILLE. NIGHT

The wind has become bitter and both George and Ricky have their collars over their faces against the gale. Their progress is slow. Ricky looks to his left and sees the Old Granville House. He picks up a stone out of the snowy ground and throws it at the windows. A smash is heard

GEORGE

What was that?

RICKY
Just smashing windows and making
wishes

GEORGE
What?

He looks around and sees the house. He stops facing it

GEORGE (CONT'D)
It seems like a lifetime ago

RICKY
You and Mary

GEORGE
Yeah...how'd you know that? I get
it now. You are a shape-shifter.
You're the angel. What's this
another plan?

RICKY
I'm no angel and I've never had a
plan

GEORGE
Well dragging me past here ain't
gonna help none

RICKY
This had nothing to do with me

George walks toward the house with Ricky in tow

GEORGE
Look at it - draughty, run-down -
what the hell I ever saw in...over
there - Bert and Ernie serenaded us
on our wedding night

RICKY
Remember the posters to make up for
the honeymoon you lost?

GEORGE
Another Bedford Falls trick

RICKY
It's gonna be a problem for you
George isn't it

GEORGE
I told you this is my brand new
start.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)

There aren't any problems here
unless it's what plane I'm gonna
catch on my next business trip

RICKY

George Bailey and Bedford Falls may
not exist here but you can't
eradicate your memories of them

GEORGE

20,000 dollars is a mighty big
sedative

RICKY

You can't stay numb forever George.

GEORGE

Who are you?

RICKY

I honestly have no idea anymore

GEORGE

Why are you so concerned about me?

RICKY

All my life I wanted to live
somewhere like Bedford Falls

GEORGE

Why? I've been in Pottersville
five minutes and I have more than I
slaved for all my life in Bedford
Falls

RICKY

What? No Mary, Tommy, Pete - no
Jane nor Zuzu?

GEORGE

Not long ago I was about to throw
myself in a river and if I recall
you were too. Now you want to
lecture me on living? What makes
you the expert?

RICKY

Pottersville's not the way out

GEORGE

Neither was Bedford Falls

Ricky is about to speak then pauses as if divine inspiration
has shot through his brain like electricity

RICKY

But that's it. That's the answer.

GEORGE

What was the question?

RICKY

You belong in Pottersville

GEORGE

You trying some kinda double bluff?

RICKY

And you belong in Bedford Falls

GEORGE

You belong in a nuthouse

RICKY

All your life you wanted to see the world and build things but for one reason or another it never worked out

GEORGE

You talking 'bout fate? Call it by its real name - The Building and Loan

RICKY

It wasn't fate or the Building and Loan

GEORGE

You forget it's my life, my memories.

RICKY

You stopped you

GEORGE

Me? Must be the old Bailey guilt inherited from my father

RICKY

You think you hate Bedford Falls but its not the town you hate its you. You could've left at anytime. You chose not to. When your father died the Building and Loan should have died with him. What difference did it make to you what happened to Bedford Falls? You were leaving it behind.

(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)

When Harry got married you chose not to make him keep his promise because he had a job with his father in law. Do you really think that job wouldn't have been waiting for him regardless?

GEORGE

What's the bottom line here?

RICKY

Pottersville is the incarnation of all that repression you've been storing for thirty-five years.

GEORGE

Come on Mister are you trying to tell me Pottersville is the bad me and Bedford Falls the good?

RICKY

No. That's too simple. I think Clarence conjured up Pottersville as the extreme consequence of your ambition, unfettered, without restraint, but Bedford Falls is the real deal, tempered, targeted, philanthropic if you like, you just can't see it

GEORGE

Cloud Cuckoo Land more like it

RICKY

It's not bad to be ambitious, to want to make a living, to create and not to struggle

GEORGE

I agree

RICKY

Do you? Why didn't you leave then?

GEORGE

Hold on mister if I had where would half the town be? No Building and Loan, no Bailey Park. Where would Ernie and Martini be...

RICKY

Potter's Field? You built Bailey Park but what's there is more than bricks and mortar.

(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)

It's the hopes and ambitions of others. It's the house George. You, Mary and the house - they're all connected

GEORGE

All of a sudden I miss her

RICKY

Funny how all the little things you lose leave the biggest holes.

GEORGE

You married

RICKY

Ha...I think so but she needs a better man

GEORGE

I gonna find Mary. Stuff Potter

A car engine is heard behind them

RICKY

It's Bert and Ernie

They get out of a borrowed car and run toward Ricky and George. Bert sees Ricky and pulls his gun out of its holster

BERT

You? Who let you?...

RICKY

You were careless Bert

BERT

Don't try telling me my job. Potter let you out? He's the only one who's got a spare set. You working for him too now?

RICKY

No and neither is George

BERT

That right? You got cold feet?

ERNIE

Potter's gonna be sore

RICKY

Maybe he should feel a little pain now and then

ERNIE

You don't understand. If Potter gets crossed we all hurt. If he knows about this he'll raise my rental

RICKY

What he owns the cab company?

ERNIE

Sure

BERT

And the town's gonna need a new sheriff

GEORGE

I'm sorry boys - seems like I let you down again

BERT

No you don't. There's something strange going on here and I'm as sure as Hell gonna find out what happened in my jailhouse but you're gonna make good on your promise to Potter. If you wanna tell him to where to go you do it tomorrow morning after we conclude the business tonight.

GEORGE

I can't do it Bert

ERNIE

You gotta friend - Potter will make us all suffer. Stores, bars - he'll cut our wages and raise prices.

BERT

Ernie's right. The only way outta this mess is to evict Martini. Listen son it ain't the nicest of jobs kicking a family out on any night least of all Christmas Eve but its either them or all of us

GEORGE

Then you do it

BERT

I ain't empowered to evict nobody - it's gotta be the bailiff

RICKY

I thought Potter took care of everything

BERT

If there's one thing Potter can't buy is State Law. It's gotta be legal

GEORGE

There's only one family I want to see and it's called Bailey

ERNIE

Bailey - I thought you said his name was Brady, Bert?

BERT

You some relation to old Peter Bailey?

GEORGE

I was his son

ERNIE

Can't be right - he lost his only boy when he was just a kid

RICKY

No - George saved Harry, didn't you George?

BERT

Don't tell me my business son. I was the one who had to drag the kid out. I don't know what stunt you're both trying to pull but if George here is shunning his official duty I'm gonna lock both of you nutcases up

GEORGE

Is it really that simple?

RICKY

What?

GEORGE

One life...take one life out of a world full of a billion souls and it ends up like this?

RICKY
Find Mary George - she'll be at the
Library

BERT
How'd you know that?

RICKY
An angel told me

ERNIE
If there's an asylum round here
it's missing two residents

BERT (TO GEORGE)
Now why don't you be a good kid and
we'll take you to the doctor.
Everything's gonna be all right

RICKY
I recognize that - that's what you
say - hey we might just pull this
off

GEORGE (WINKS AT RICKY)
Don't listen to him Bert - he's an
angel too

Bert lifts his gun to hit George with

BERT
I hate to do this fella but...

Ricky grabs Bert's arms

RICKY
Run George

George sprints as fast as he can. After a minute
Bert gets the better of Ricky and pins his arm against his
back, but George is long gone.

RICKY (CONT'D)
What you gonna do Bert lock me up?
You know there ain't a prison in
Pottersville that can hold me

ERNIE
Hold on Bert I want a fare outta
the guy before you haul him away

BERT
How much?

ERNIE

Way I see it - inconvenience and
all - three dollars outta do it

BERT

Pay the man

RICKY

Who am I - Houdini? Besides which
you searched me - I got nothing -
money, ID, driver's licence

ERNIE

That's just great - getting stiffed
on Christmas Eve while that loafer
Martini gets another rent free
night.

Ernie looks down at Ricky's pants

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Hey what's the bulge there?

BERT

You holding out on me son?

Bert lets Ricky go and he puts his hands into his pockets and
finds his wallet.

RICKY

How the...Clarence was that you?

BERT

I don't know if you're Houdini, or
the Angel Gabriel himself and I
care less. You're going back to my
cell and you ain't getting out if I
have to sit on you all night. Now
pay Ernie what you owe him.

RICKY

Three dollars you say?

Ricky hands Ernie a ten

ERNIE

I can't split th...hey this don't
feel...this ain't American...look
Bert

Bert takes the bill

BERT
Counterfeit money - since when did
Hamilton's head get so big?

RICKY (WHISPERS)
Damn. I forgot.
(pause)
It's okay they're a new print.
Haven't you seen these yet?

BERT
Potter's bank gets all the new
bills first.

RICKY
That's where I got them - this
morning

ERNIE
He's lying Bert.

RICKY
Can I have another look?

Ernie tries to give him the note back but Ricky drops it.

BERT
Pick that up Ernie - it's evidence

As Ernie bends down to pick it up Ricky pushes Bert over his
arched back and takes off

RICKY
Jeez didn't they ever see Hope and
Crosby?

As Bert and Ernie untangle themselves Bert is already
drawing his gun. He aims at Ricky's rapidly disappearing
back and then fires into the air

ERNIE
Why didn't you nail him? I've seen
you make harder shots than that

BERT
I dunno

ERNIE
He could be wanted in any state
pushing dirty money.

BERT

No - that wasn't dirty money. It was too obvious, besides which he ain't my state. He's just a guy trying to get back to wherever he belongs

ERNIE

You let him go because you were sorry for him

BERT

No - cause I envy him

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW BANK: NIGHT 30 MINUTES LATER

Ricky is slowly walking back to the place he first met George

RICKY

Is this really still the same night?

He sits down on the snow bank

RICKY (CONT'D)

And still no sign of the Clarence the hapless harpless angel

Out of the gloom comes George

RICKY (CONT'D)

You see her?

George sits down next to him and nods

GEORGE

Why is she an old maid in Pottersville? Mary was the prettiest girl I ever saw - makes no sense

RICKY

That part always bothered me

GEORGE

You met Mary?

RICKY

From the film I...look I've been thinking about that.

(MORE)

RICKY (CONT'D)

Mary went away to college but
unlike you all she wanted was to
come home to Bedford Falls. She
was married to the town long before
she married you. Potter destroyed
her town, her world, her
dreams...maybe that's the answer

GEORGE

But she could have left

RICKY

Like you could have left?

GEORGE

I need Mary. I've always needed
her. If I have a guardian angel
it's her

Ricky looks up at the street light.

RICKY

You seemed to be blessed with them.
I only want one

GEORGE

Ain't you an angel? Can't you send
me back?

RICKY

Clarence will send you back but you
need to go to the bridge - where it
all began

GEORGE

Let's go then

RICKY

No George - I'm not coming

GEORGE

But you...

RICKY

I spent my whole life wishing I
could find a place to live like
Bedford Falls but now that it's so
near it doesn't feel right

GEORGE

I could get you a job

RICKY

Bedford Falls is your town, not mine. It didn't just happen or appear like it seems to do in the movies. It took a lot of hard work

GEORGE

What's your town like?

RICKY

Like most places. Good and bad, I suppose, can be defined, identified even understood but indifference, insouciance - they're the real evils.

GEORGE

So what you gonna do open your own Building and Loan?

RICKY

Naw, I thought I'd start small and see what happens

GEORGE

Well I guess I'd better go. Hey I don't have to throw myself in this time do I?

RICKY

Good God no - I'd hate to think where we'd end up

GEORGE

We'll this is goodbye then

RICKY

Maybe, maybe not

GEORGE

You'll come see us in Bedford Falls?

RICKY

I promise - every Christmas Eve

George runs off toward the bridge. Ricky watches him disappear into the gloom. After a minute or so he is out of sight. Ricky feels something cold hit his cheek. It's snowing

RICKY (CONT'D)

He's home

CLARENCE

And you've got your wish

Ricky swings around and Clarence is there

RICKY

Couldn't they, just for once, drop
you back in front of me? What
wish?

CLARENCE

You're in Bedford Falls

RICKY

So I am but that's hardly down to
you is it?

CLARENCE

That's not strictly true

RICKY

Whoa there Trigger. You're not
actually gonna take credit for this
are you?

CLARENCE

Well it was my idea

RICKY

Very intuitive Einstein but don't
you recall I got beaten up,
arrested, incarcerated and shot at,
and where were you half the time?
Stealing all the plaudits just to
get those wings of yours?

CLARENCE

But I haven't got my wings quite
yet

RICKY

But George has gone back hasn't he?

CLARENCE

Oh that's all back on schedule.
He'll be finding ZuZu's petals very
soon now but it was you that made
the difference with George

RICKY

Are you telling me I've got your
wings

Ricky lifts his arms as if checking

CLARENCE

In a way - not that way though -
you're still very much alive

RICKY

I don't understand

CLARENCE (WHISPERS)

Can I let you into a little secret?

RICKY

Won't Pete and Joe hear anyway?

CLARENCE

You really must stop calling them
by those names - they're really
sensitive you know.

(pause)

I didn't lead a bad life but I took
too much for granted. I had ideas,
plans, dreams if you like, but it
all seemed too hard, too much
trouble. You don't always have to
wait until you're dead...

RICKY

What's the catch? Was George
always the key?

CLARENCE

We are all keys

RICKY

Many mansions then?

Clarence smiles

RICKY (CONT'D)

So you get another mission do you?

CLARENCE

Oh no, I'm done now. A nice fluffy
cloud to lay my weary head on will
do nicely.

RICKY

Without your wings?

CLARENCE

They'll be here soon - once I send
you back

RICKY

Are you really trying to tell me
all this was planned? I thought
George was my guardian angel.

CLARENCE

He was in a way. Ricky...you
thought you could inherit Bedford
Falls like someone receiving a
precious heirloom passed on after a
favourite aunt has died but you
never appreciated the hard work
behind the achievements before now
and that's why you turned your back
on Bedford Falls. Even better than
the Bailey idea I think

RICKY

You don't really expect me to
believe that...

CLARENCE

No need - look out!

Ricky wheels around to see Bert's police car heading straight
for him. Ricky is knocked over and down along the snow bank.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW BANK, ASCENA HEIGHTS. EARLY MORNING

Ricky wakes up slowly. He winces in pain. He has cuts and
bruises but is otherwise in one piece. He's alone. Behind
him his car is ploughed into a huge snow drift half way down
the hill and practically invisible with the night's snowfall
cover. He doesn't notice but instead drags himself to his
feet and struggles back to the road

RICKY

Clarence! Clarence!

A house light comes on across the street. A window
opens and the RESIDENT sticks his large red face out into the
cold morning air

RESIDENT

Quit shouting asshole - it's five
o'clock Christmas Morning. Go home
and sleep it off

RICKY

Asshole? Asshole?

Ricky runs down the road about 100 yards. There's a road sign.

RICKY (CONT'D)
This is it. Ascena Heights. It's gone. I let Bedford Falls go

CUT TO:

INT. RICKY'S APARTMENT. CHRISTMAS MORNING

Ricky is on the phone. He has a screwdriver in his free hand

RICKY
I'm not asking you to pick it up today - I know what day it is - but when can you? Okay, okay, I'm sorry. Thursday is fine

He hangs up. Someone knocks on the door.

RICKY (CONT'D)
Hold on I'm coming

He puts the screwdriver in his pocket and goes to answer the door. Diane is standing there

DIANE
Don't get the wrong idea Ricky, I just forgot a few things.

She sees the bruises on his face

DIANE (CONT'D)
That looks sore and, before you say it, if you got drunk because I walked out on you it makes no difference

RICKY
Straker fired me

DIANE
He did? He didn't beat you up first did he?

RICKY
No - I got drunk because you left me

DIANE
It's too late for sympathy - too
much of our relationship was based
on that

RICKY
I agree

DIANE
And sucking up to me won't work
either

RICKY(SMILING)
I agree

DIANE
Where's Mom's picture? I forgot it
in the rush yesterday

Ricky says nothing. She walks past him toward a cupboard
underneath the stairs.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Have you thrown it out?

RICKY
No...actually I...

DIANE
Don't lie to me

Something on the wall catches her eye. It's her
mother's picture sitting on a small shelf. She goes toward
it and tentatively prods it. It stays put

DIANE (CONT'D)
Who'd you get to do it - Rob next
door?

Ricky pulls out the screwdriver from his pocket

DIANE (CONT'D)
Why, now?

RICKY
Why not?

Behind them the TV bursts into life with the opening titles
of 'It's A Wonderful Life'

RICKY (CONT'D)
Sorry I'll turn it off

DIANE
No leave it - sit down - watch -
it's a tradition isn't it?

RICKY
I don't need to

Diane goes into the kitchen and returns with two drinks

DIANE
Maybe I do

RICKY
A kind of last date maybe?

DIANE
Maybe a first

They sit down to watch. After a moment Diane moves into
Ricky's shoulder.

CUT TO:

INT. SHELF

Behind the picture of Diane's mother the spine of a book is
visible 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer' Somewhere a bell rings

END