

SALT & SUGAR

A COMEDY SCRIPT

WRITTEN BY

ALAADDIN HALIM

EMAIL: ALANABAZA@YAHOO.COM
WGA Registration #1801008

FADE IN:

A SHOT OF... a Boeing 727 shadowing the LOS ANGELES SKYLINE as it touches down a runway.

EXT. LAX - DAY

A TOURIST (40s) carries a duffle bag and a suitcase, walks through the sliding double glass doors and heads straight for the first YELLOW CAB he spots.

The cabbie's head, clad in a blue Yankees baseball cap, is propped up on the edge of the door. He's fast asleep. The Tourist nudges the driver's shoulder, startling him.

JAMES

What the-!!!

TOURIST

(heavy French accent)

Excuse me Monsieur. You are free, yes?

JAMES

Of course I'm free! Everybody's free here. It's America. I can even ride buses with the white folks, but I don't! And you shouldn't be free to wake a man from his nap.

A better look at our cabbie, JAMES JACKSON (40) handsome and black. Everything about him tells us he is from the ghetto.

TOURIST

(shocked)

Excuse me?

JAMES

Never mind. You're here now, you better get in.

James gets out, opens the passenger door, then quickly loads the man's luggage in the trunk.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

JAMES

So where you going?

TOURIST

The Century Hilton.

James frowns as he looks through his driver-side mirror and we... RACK FOCUS on a sign "the Century Hilton" a tall building less than two miles away.

JAMES
So you're French, ha!

TOURIST
(smiles and nods)
Yes Monsieur. You speak French?

JAMES
Me? French? Nah! I can only French kiss. And I like French Fries and that's about it. Uh, so the Century Hilton is about uh..., don't worry, I know a short cut.

TOURIST
Tres magnifique.

JAMES
Yeah, you said it.

ON A DIGITAL CLOCK on the dashboard - the time: 1:00 PM.

The Yellow Cab roars to life, speeds through airport traffic.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. YELLOW CAB - LATER

Loud RAP MUSIC plays. The clock reads: 2:15 PM as the car pulls into the Century Hilton entrance. The tourist is completely soaked in sweat. A DOORMAN opens the door for him.

JAMES
(without looking at the meter)
That will be uh, one hundred and seventy five dollars.

The tourist quickly hands James the money and gets out. He looks around in complete shock. The tourist sees an incredibly low PLANE ZOOMS by overhead.

TOURIST
Are we near zee Airport again?

JAMES
Uh, no. They're filming a movie here.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

They're shooting *Die Hard 7*, go see it when it comes out, I heard it's really good, here's my card. Let me know if you need a site seen around LA, and I promise to get that AC fixed.

EXT. CENTURY HILTON - CONTINUOUS

The Yellow Cab tears away quickly, leaving the Tourist alone, shaking his head as he watches the airplanes in the sky.

TOURIST

(sotto)
Die Hard 7?

EXT. CHICKEN PALACE - DUSK

James is picking up an order and he's on the phone.

JAMES

(into phone)
Yeah baby, I'm knockin' off early.
And I got a surprise for you.
(beat, looking at the
chicken)
Yeah, you're gonna love it. And
your Momma's gonna love it, too.

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

James raises his hand to knock on the door, but before he can the door flies open and he's yanked inside by a HUGE WOMAN, JANIKA, Trish's Momma. She's all smiles.

JANIKA

There you are. My favorite.

She hugs James, who pulls back. He's not used to such a warm reception from Janika.

JAMES

You on the crack pipe, Janika?

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

A quick look around tells us Trish and her mother live on a modest budget. No fancy appliances, televisions or computers.

JANIKA

Oh you! You're so funny. And look,
he brought dinner, too! Trish, your
nice young man brought dinner.

TRISH (late 20s) enters; she's beautiful with a smile that
could melt hearts. She kisses James. Both she and her mother
are "unbelievably" happy.

JAMES

(kissing her back)
Hey Sugar. What's with your Momma?
She on the juice?

TRISH

Dinner, too? That's real sweet.

She motions for her mother to skedaddle.

JANIKA

I'll let you two lovebirds be.

Janika exits to another room.

TRISH

Well. Where is it?

JAMES

Right here baby. Rotisserie and
barbecue. Got your Momma some onion
rings and we got some salads. Oh,
damn, they only gave me one pasta
salad. I told them --

TRISH

-- That's real funny baby. But you
know what I'm talking about.

JAMES

(clueless)
What are you talking about?

TRISH

The surprise. You know.

JAMES

(trying to figure it out)
Here it is!

He points to the food.

TRISH

This is it? This is the surprise?

JAMES

(confused)

Baby, you want me to go back and get that other salad?

TRISH

Damn it James! *This* is really it?

JAMES

What is it Baby? What'd I do wrong?

TRISH

What'd you do wrong? You know damn well what's wrong.

JAMES

I do?

TRISH

What did we talk about just the other day?

He thinks about this one.

JAMES

Oh yeah, we talked. We talked a lot. So what did we talk about?

TRISH

(mad)

See? See how you are? You never listen to me.

JAMES

Oh yes I do, baby, but uh...

TRISH

James, I can't do this anymore!! All I get from you is promises.

Before James can answer Janika comes running over, smothers him with a bear hug.

JANIKA

Congratulations! When's the big date?

TRISH

Don't be hugging' on him, Momma. He didn't propose.

JAMES

Propose?

Janika smacks him upside the head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ouch!

(getting it)

Oh, that "talk." The talk about the ring.

TRISH

Yes, I'm talking about the ring, us, marriage. What is wrong with you! How much longer do I have to wait? My best friend Anita, who is 3 years younger than me already has 2 kids!

JAMES

Who would knock up that ugly bitch? She looks very handsome just like Mr. Cruz, my high school gym teacher.

Janika smacks him in the head again.

TRISH

I'm sitting around listening to your promises. I thought you were bringing me a ring.

JAMES

Dinner! I brought dinner. I *thought* I was being nice.

JANIKA

Nice? You think being nice to my Baby Girl is some chicken wings.

JAMES

It's a rotisserie.

JANIKA

Fool. Get outta here. You don't come back until you have a ring for my daughter. Look at her. Look at how sad she is.

James looks at Trish - she looks more angry than sad.

JAMES

Baby, I'm sorry.

Janika takes another shot at him, this time, James catches her hand.

TRISH
Momma, enough.

JAMES
Baby, I already told you, this is not the right time, I'm still trying to pay off that Taxi, the Jack La Lanne Juicer you wanted, the --

TRISH
(interrupts)
-- I've heard that before James, you keep playing it like an old record every time we talk about our future!!

JAMES
Well, what do you want me to do? It'd be easier if we lived together.

JANIKA
You know what'd be easier? Hittin' up your rich Uncle for some cash. That fool's worth millions!

JAMES
Trish, tell your Momma not to get into it with me and my Uncle Jack.

TRISH
Momma, just stop, please.

Momma keeps ranting.

JAMES
I told you all, my Uncle Jack is crazy. He plays everybody, nobody can predict what he is up too, you know that I tried before asking him for some cash but he played me like a fool in that stupid hospital, I get sick just thinking about him. He doesn't like me, I don't like him and you are forgetting the most important element that will inhibit this brilliant and "easy" idea of yours... Uncle Jack's in a mental institution.

James storms outside, Trish shoots her Momma a "Now-look-what you've-gone-and-done" look and bolts after James.

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

James presses on down the walkway.

TRISH

James.

He stops. Waits.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Baby, I'm sorry. I didn't mean for Momma to bring up "you-know-who."

JAMES

You know I love you Baby, but this is a bad time for me, business hasn't been good. I'm barely breaking even.

TRISH

I knew you weren't ready to buy that stupid cab.

JAMES

Hey, hey, hey! That stupid cab is gonna buy us a house someday.

TRISH

"Someday. Someday." That's all I ever hear from you. James, I can't do this anymore!

JAMES

What do you want me to do?

TRISH

Ask your Uncle Jack for help.

JAMES

Uncle Jack has been in a mental hospital for the past three years! He's the one who needs help! Last Christmas I went to visit him, he thought I was Michael Jackson and kept trying to set my hair on fire! The guy is a nut case. I can't do it. I can't go see him. And that place creeps the hell out of me. Besides, he's not gonna give me shit anyway. He's told me that before. Why should I try again?

TRISH

Because if we don't get married
soon babe, I may have to move on.

JAMES

Baby, I'm his only living relative.
All that money's gonna be ours
sooner or later.

TRISH

Just get it a little sooner.

Off James - shaking his head. Can I get couple pieces of
chicken from the dinner bag babe, she gets really irritated.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A seedy little, local watering hole.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Dimly lit. A few scattered patrons. In the b.g. two guys play
pool. At the bar sits James with his friend, MAX ROSENFELD
(late 30s) a Ben Stiller type, who wears a Rent-A-Cop
Security uniform. They are both very drunk.

MAX

I don't understand. Why don't you
guys just live together?

JAMES

Uh uh. Her Momma won't have any of
that. If I don't get Trish a ring
and soon, it's gonna be over.

MAX

Women suck.

JAMES

No. Not all of 'em. Trish is
different. And I don't want to lose
her, man. She's the best thing that
ever happened to me.

MAX

Then marry her.

JAMES

I just explained that. Her Momma
won't let her marry me until I buy
her a ring.

MAX

Oh, yeah. You did say that. I know a jeweler who can give you a great deal on cubic zircon.

JAMES

No. See, I want the best for Trish. Nothing fake. It's gotta be the real deal.

MAX

And you think going to Uncle Jack's a waste of time.

JAMES

Max, you and I, we go back a long time. You remember how crazy he was. The jokes he used to play.

FLASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK:

EXT. PICNIC - DAY

A younger JAMES (7) is surrounded by KLU KLUX KLAN members. He CRIES as they circle around him, menacingly.

Suddenly, the men reveal themselves. They're all black folks.

O.S. RAUCOUS LAUGHTER. Reveal - James' Crazy Uncle Jack (40s) as he collects money from the "actors."

UNCLE JACK

(to the actors)

Now pay up fellows, we got James to cry and pee in his pants in under a minute.

(to James)

Hah. Hah. You should have seen your face. Hah. You so pale, you almost white!

On YOUNG JAMES, confused, frightened and not comprehending.

JAMES (O.S.)

You know how long it was before I could trust black folks?

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO:

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

MAX

That's right about the time you and I became friends.

JAMES

And, remember the bungee jumping incident?

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK:

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

TEENAGE JAMES (15) suits up for a bungee jump. He stands at the top of the bridge. He looks terrified, but determined.

TEENAGE MAX, wearing a yarmulke reluctantly helps him into his gear.

TEENAGE MAX

This is crazy. Jews don't bungee. Black folks don't bungee either.

TEENAGE JAMES

They do when they want to impress the head cheerleader.

A pretty teenage GIRL waves to him. Max begins a traditional prayer, just as Uncle Jack approaches, bends down and unties one of the ropes.

TEENAGE JAMES (CONT'D)

No, Uncle Jack, don't touch that.

UNCLE JACK

You mean this rope?

He holds up the end of James' rope - now untied.

UNCLE JACK (CONT'D)

Bon Voyage.

He shoves James off the bridge. James SCREAMS the entire way down. Of course, it's not his rope that's been undone, but he has no way of knowing.

AT THE BOTTOM OF LAKE BED - James has wet himself. His Uncle collects money from a bet he placed with some guys around.

UNCLE JACK (CONT'D)
I told you all he'd pee his pants.
Now pay up.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO:

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

MAX
Yeah, he's a pretty sick bastard.

JAMES
Trish wants me to talk to him.

MAX
How'd he end up in a mental
institution, anyway?

JAMES
One of his little practical jokes
went wrong and he accidentally
killed my Grandma. Then he went all
psychos or something, I don't know.

MAX
That's awful. The only thing bad
that ever happened to my family was
the time we hired a drunken model
for my brother's circumcision.

JAMES
Which brother, Seth?

MAX
No, Pee Wee.

JAMES
Oh, yeah.

MAX
So go see him. He's locked up. It's
not like he can hurt you now.

JAMES
Yeah, I know, it's just that he's
not the only one in the family
who's been in a mental institution.
My Aunt Latifa was there...

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)
 she ended up killing herself with
 tooth picks, crazy ass family.

FLASH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK:

INT. OPERA - NIGHT

An Opera in progress, a big, beautiful black SINGER takes the stage, begins an aria. It's perfect... every note...

MAX (O.S.)
 What was her problem?

Until... she stops mid-song, looking into what might be a rear view mirror if it were there.

OPERA SINGER
 (shouting to no one)
*Chandra, you spit out that gum. I
 don't want it all over my seats.
 Jimmy, I'm telling your Momma on
 you if you keep beatin' on Duane.
 Hey, hey, there ain't no pets
 allowed - you get rid of that frog.
 Come on now. I don't have all day.*

JAMES (O.S.)
 She thought she was a school bus
 driver.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO:

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

MAX
 I thought those were neo-dadist
 operas.

JAMES
 So mental illness runs in my
 family. What if I'm next?

MAX
 James, you're a crazy son of a
 bitch but you're not crazy.

James notices Max's "Detective Training Manual."

JAMES

Here I am, going on about me. How you doing with your studying?

MAX

I don't know. I don't think I'm ever gonna pass this exam. It's hard stuff. But I'm tired of being a security guard.

JAMES

You'll ace it Max. You're smart. Sort of. Besides, five times a charm, even if you become a cop you will get fired on your day off mother fucker, just messing with you.

They toast each other.

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL CAB STATION - NIGHT

James parks his Yellow Cab and gets out. He looks around, then slowly heads out the door.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Well. Well. Well. Look who's here!

James fakes a big smile. CHARLIE (50s) the owner of the cab station ambles over.

JAMES

Charlie! I was just gonna --

CHARLIE

(interrupts)

-- Bullshit! You were just gonna sneak out like you've been doing for the past few nights.

JAMES

Look, Charlie, I've been going through some shit lately. But you know me, I'm always on time with the rent. Just bear with me this month.

CHARLIE

James, you're already a couple weeks late. I let you buy the cab from me and told you I'd carry the loan. Now, I gotta my own bills to pay. So where's the ten grand?

JAMES

I'll have it soon. I promise.

CHARLIE

You got a week. Then I'm gonna have to call it in. Don't make me call it in man, you know I will.

Off James, mulling this over.

EXT. PRIVATE MANSION - DAY

James' cab approaches a heavy wrought iron gate flanked with high-tech security cameras. James punches a button, waits for an answer. It seems to take forever before someone responds.

VOICE (O.S.)

May I help you?

JAMES

This is James Jackson. I'd like to see my uncle Jack Jackson please.

There's an inordinately long delay, then finally, the gate opens. James drives in, pull back to reveal a sign at the entrance: *California Institute for the Mentally Challenged*.

The grounds are deceptive, it looks like a retreat, but on the lawn, closer to the main house, mental patients in gowns are being led through a group exercise program. One INSANE MAN tries to flee, is chased by ORDERLIES and wrestled to the ground. James shudders, drives on ahead.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL - DAY

James makes his way down towards the reception area, through a mixture of people. Some in white hospital gowns, some in plain clothes.

JAMES

(to nurse)

Uncle Jack please. I mean Mister Jack Jackson.

NURSE

You'll have to wait a few minutes. He was just called to the Administrator's office.

James takes a seat in a small waiting area. Next to him sits an elegant looking MAN in a dark suit and tie. He nods as James takes a seat.

MAN IN SUIT

Hello.

JAMES

Hi... what's up?

MAN IN SUIT

My name is Moore. Steve Moore.

JAMES

Your name sounds familiar, wait a second, are you the President and CEO of GET RICH.COM?

MAN IN SUIT

You've heard of us.

JAMES

Heard of you? Shit. You're worth over a hundred million dollars. You are all over the news, you guys who help everyday folk with struggling businesses. Right?

MAN IN SUIT

Yes, that's right.

JAMES

Well this must be my lucky day.

MAN IN SUIT

Here's my business card.

He reaches from his pocket and hands him a torn slip of paper. James takes it, looks at it - the name STEVE MOORE is scribbled in CRAYON.

MAN IN SUIT (CONT'D)

If you hurry you can attend our staff meeting.

James rolls his eyes. He should have known.

JAMES

Yeah. Sure. Thanks.

MAN IN SUIT

Today we're going to discuss the civil war in England and how it will be affecting our assets.

A NURSE approaches, humors the Man in the Suit.

NURSE

Oh "Mr. Moore", we've been looking for you. Everyone's in the board room, and it's time for your meds.

She smiles at James, who's clearly got the heebie-jeebies.

MAN IN SUIT

See you there, Son. Don't be late.

JAMES

Uh... Yeah... England... Sure.

(sotto)

What the hell am I doing here?

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

A spry black man (late 70s) leans backwards on a comfortable chair. This is UNCLE JACK, he's every bit the imp.

Across from him, behind a large desk, is a sexy hospital administrator HELEN THOMPSON (40s) with a tight, firm body.

Her back is to us as she flips through some files in a large file cabinet. Uncle Jack can't keep his eyes off her.

HELEN

So, Jack, there have been constant complaints received from patients and employees alike, regarding those games and bets you've been running.

UNCLE JACK

Folks only upset cause they keep losing, Ms. Thompson.

HELEN

Yes, well, that and the fact that they always lose to you.

JACK

I don't force them to play.

HELEN

Jack, let's not forget where we are. This is a hospital not Monte Carlo casino and even though you placed yourself here, volunteered on your own volition...

JACK

Let's not forget, it's my money that's paying your salary. My money that keeps this facility running.

HELEN

Who could forget? You remind us daily of your patronage. However, you can't take advantage of the patients.

JACK

I don't. I just *know* people. All my life, I had a knack for predicting what they'd do. My bets are honest and fair.

HELEN

(impatient)

Honest and fair? You can't be winning all the time if your bets are honest and fair.

JACK

You bet I can. In fact, I'll bet you if you want and I can prove it.

HELEN

You want to bet me?

Helen secretly enjoys this.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Fine. I'll prove to you that you can't. Let's bet on something, what do you want to bet about... can't possibly know.

JACK

(thinking it over)

Hmmm. Okay. I am gonna bet on something about you nobody know about it but you --

HELEN

OK I am gonna play along.

JACK

Well I bet you a hundred bucks to one that you're wearing a hot, pink G-string that reads "touch but don't feel."

Helen glares at Uncle Jack, but you can see she likes him. She pulls a dollar from her purse, puts it on the table.

HELEN

I will ignore the fact that you're a dirty, perverted old man and I will play along. And just to let you know Mister, you have just lost your first bet. My underwear is not hot pink and there is no writing on it.

JACK

It's not?

HELEN

(thin smile)

No.

JACK

Show me.

HELEN

Let's see your money first.

He takes out a hundred dollar bill and places it on the table. She reaches under her skirt, pulls down her underwear, flashes it in his face. It's black.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(victorious, taking the money)

You've just lost Mr. Jackson, I should have called in my office long time ago, I hope after this lose you will stop these nonsense bets.

She grabs the hundred dollars.

JACK

Not really. You see, I just made me a thousand dollars.

Off Helen, shocked.

JACK (CONT'D)

You see, I had a bet with eleven other folks in here. A hundred bucks each, that I could get you to show me your underwear.

At the upper window of her office looking down, we see ELEVEN SHOCKED FACES.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - SAME TIME

James and the Receptionist wait.

HELEN (O.S.)

Jack Jackson, you no good you son
of a bitch!

JAMES

Guess my Uncle's ready to see me.

INT. JACK'S ROOM - LATER

James opens the door, tentatively enters. Jack is seated on a small white bed, and stares out at the green courtyard.

JAMES

(fakes a smile)
Uncle Jack!

Jack looks up at the ceiling, then to the side as if to determine where the voice is coming from.

JACK

Where you at?

JAMES

(waves)
Right here. Behind you.

JACK

That's not possible.
(laughing, and getting up)
Because when I came here, I left
nothing behind.

JAMES

(confused)
Huh?

JACK

How you doing kiddo?
(but before James answers)
You think I'm crazy don't you?

JAMES

Well, you are in a nut house so it
kinda stands to reason.

JACK

Maybe it's you who's crazy? Did you
ever think of that?

JAMES

Uncle Jack, I didn't come here to debate my medical history I came here for --

JACK

-- You came here to ask me for money. That's all I'm good for, my money.

(beat)

Is that your cab out there?

James nods.

JACK (CONT'D)

So you're a cab driver now. How do you like it?

JAMES

It's fine. A lotta driving and shit.

JACK

It's fine. It's fine. Does being a cabbie make you happy? Cause that's what it's all about James, finding something you love to do and doing it well.

JAMES

So you saying you love being a nutter?

JACK

James, I know I've done some bad things in my life. My jokes always seem to go a little too far.

JAMES

A little! One of your jokes killed Grandma.

JACK

She had a stroke, James. It was her time.

JAMES

Look it, I didn't come here to rehash the past. I'm outta here. I knew coming here was a mistake. Why I ever thought you'd understand what I've going through.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

You've been tormenting me since I was a little kid, even growing up, you never helped me. I'm just trying to make ends meet. I got a nice girl now, and we wanna get married. I got a cab to pay off and a few bills I'm behind on and you got all this money and I'm your only livin' relative. Ah the hell with this. The hell with you.

James storms out.

JACK

I know it's a rat race out there. From the moment you wake up until the moment you come home, and even then, you're thinking of the next day.

JAMES

(stopping at the door)
Uncle Jack, you live in a loony bin? I don't know what's so good about being here except for the fact that you enjoy being crazy and I bet you you drive everybody crazy too, I don't really hate you, I just hate what you do, mmmmm you know what --

JACK interrupts JAMES.

JACK

You still not listening to anyone? And I also don't hate you, I really love you jack, but there's --

JAMES cuts him off.

JAMES

-- I'm sure as hell not listening to you.

James leaves. Jack looks out over the courtyard, watches as James gets into his cab and drives off.

Uncle Jack takes a pen and paper from his desk, begins writing several notes. He starts LAUGHING to himself.

INT. JAMES APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: "Three Weeks Later"

James is in a deep asleep. O.S. a loud RING. James thinks it's his alarm. He hits it but the ring doesn't stop. He finally realizes it's actually his doorbell that's RINGING.

JAMES

Hey this better be important or I'll be kicking your ass, whoever the hell you are. Better not be another bill collector.

He stumbles out of bed tripping on the sheet and falls flat on his face. The annoying bell keeps ringing.

AT THE FRONT DOOR - the MAILMAN. He hands James an envelope.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Certified? From who?

MAILMAN

How the hell should I know?
(reading the letter)
Michael Bowden Law Offices.

JAMES

(not surprised)
Great! I'm being sued too.

He signs for the letter and takes it. The MAILMAN leaves. James frowns as he opens the letter and reads it loud.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(reading)
Dear Mister James Jackson, we're sorry to inform you...
(his voice trails off)
What? HOLY SHIT!

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - DAY

James pounds on the door. Trish's Momma answers, sees James slams the door in his face. James opens it, barges in, finds Trish in the kitchen making coffee.

TRISH

What are you doing here? I thought I told you we were through.

James, excited as hell, he grabs a big salt shaker that looks like a sugar shaker and pours some of it on Trish's coffee.

JAMES

Trish baby listen please --

She sips her coffee and yells at him.

TRISH

-- Not only your making my life miserable you now put salt in my coffee ?

JAMES

Just let me talk babe. Uncle Jack passed away.

TRISH

What?

JAMES

Look.

He hands her the letter.

TRISH

(grabs the letter, reads)
...to discuss your inheritance.
Your inheritance? Oh Baby! You're gonna be rich? We're gonna be rich!

James hugs her. They jump up and down.

JANIKA

Good. Now you can trot on outta here and get her that ring you been talking about and make my baby girl happy.

JAMES

(sotto)
 I'd like to trot your big ass down to the fat farm.
 (to Trish)
 Baby! Don't you worry. I'm gonna get you the biggest ring ever and we are gonna get married and make lots of babies. I hope none of them would look like your mama.

Janika grabs a duster to hit him but he storms out.

INT. MICHAEL BOWDEN ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

James and Trish are practically giddy. ATTY. MICHAEL BOWDEN (mid-50s) an elegant, tall, black man enters. He has a big smile as he shakes their hands.

ATTORNEY
You must be James.

JAMES
How you doing, this is Trish, my
fiancée.

The Attorney takes a seat behind his desk.

ATTORNEY
So you must be wondering what this
is all about?

JAMES
I think we know. Just give us the
check and we'll be on our way.

ATTORNEY
It's not that simple. Your Uncle
had very specific provisions in his
will and we're legally required to
follow them to the letter. No
funeral. He wanted to go quietly as
possible.

JAMES
Right. Right. It's so sad. I really
miss him. So where's my
inheritance?

Trish smacks him in the head.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Baby, you're startin' to remind me
of your Momma.

TRISH
How did he die?

ATTORNEY
A heart attack from laughing. He
laughed so hard on a bet he placed
with one of the nurses in the
hospital he couldn't stop.

JAMES
Tell me something I don't know.

ATTORNEY
(flips open a file)
As you know, your uncle was a very
rich and generous man when he was
alive, and he continues to be so
even after his death.

He takes out a paper from the file and flashes it in James face. James' eyes light up. He reaches for the paper.

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Mr. Jackson asked for all of his assets to be liquidated, including his house in Brentwood, California; the ranch in Alabama and his coconut farm in Florida, which in our estimate amounts to a little over twenty-six million dollars which will be deposited...

JAMES

(jumping up)

Twenty six million. Oh Baby! We're gonna buy Madonna's house in Hollywood hills. This is it. I take back every mean thing I said about you Uncle Jack. May your soul rest in peace.

The Attorney keeps reading.

ATTORNEY

...into the account of the California Institute for the Mentally Challenged and the care foundation in Alabama.

James falls over...

JAMES

What?! Cafalornia what ---- Ala facking bama what? Damn it! Uncle Jack you bastard.

ATTORNEY

...and for my nephew James, I leave this key...

The Attorney pulls out a key.

JAMES

What the hell am I supposed to do with that? Open up his grave and cuss at him every time I am mad or my ass is broke, there must be something wrong! Are you sure this is the right will? Not bill gate will or some shitt coz that guy is a nut case too, he is leaving them kids with no money after he dies.

TRISH

This is crazy. We don't get any of his money? Not any?

The Attorney shakes his head. Trish sobs.

JAMES

I told you he was a crazy son of a bitch, shiiiiiiiit.

ATTORNEY

There's more here. The key belongs to a --

JAMES

(hopeful)

It better be to a safe deposit box or a house. Is that it? A house?

ATTORNEY

No, it belongs to a storage facility located downtown. You never know, I could be better than a house.

JAMES

What's in it?

ATTORNEY

I'm not at liberty to say.

EXT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - DAY

James and Trish head downtown.

JAMES (O.S.)

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Baby, don't you see? This is one of Uncle Jack's crazy jokes.

INT. YELLOW CAB - DAY

TRISH

I can't believe your Uncle would be so cruel. Let's try to be positive.

JAMES

You want positive? I'm positive Uncle Jack was an asshole!

EXT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - DAY

ESTABLISHING - run down facility.

JAMES

Okay Baby, I'm thinking positive,
for you. You ready? We're gonna get
in there and that storage unit will
be full of money, jewels, you name
it. You wait an see.

INT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

James and Trish wait at a cashier window. The CASHIER
processes some paper work, slides him a bill.

JAMES

Two-hundred dollars!

CASHIER

If you want to get in, yeah.
Otherwise, have a nice day.

James reluctantly hands her the money. The cashier quickly
stamps a paper then unlocks the elevator for them.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

Third floor, unit C-307.

James and Trish get into the elevator, the doors close.

INT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - HALLWAY/3RD FLOOR

James and Trish step out of the elevator, the doors close,
leaving them in dimly lit industrial hallway.

ON JAMES and TRISH - moving through the aisles.

INT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - UNIT C-307

JAMES

Here it is.

James takes out the key.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(almost believing it now)
This is it, Baby. Our future.
Everything we been dreaming of...
it's all in here.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Uncle Jack just wanted me to drive to downtown, he wants me to work for it, that's all, he likes to make me suffer a bit before I get to the sugar you know.

TRISH

(being impatient)

Sugar your sweet ass down and open the door.

James kneels over and opens the door.

JAMES & TRISH'S POV: Six elegant ARMCHAIRS, arranged neatly in a circle, surround a large round wood table.

The backs of the chairs are oval, the legs turned and tapered. The front and back are upholstered in fine pistachio colored material.

JAMES

What the fuck is this?

TRISH

It's a table and chairs.

JAMES

No shit, really? I can see that.

TRISH

Don't get snippy with me.

JAMES

Where the hell's our money, Miss Positive?

Trish walks in, picks up a small card attached to the top of the table, reads it:

TRISH

My beloved Marie Antoinette set to my beloved nephew James.

JAMES

Who the fuck is she and why do I have her chairs?

TRISH

She was the queen of England or France, way back when, until she...

Trish makes a grim slicing motion to her neck.

TRISH (CONT'D)

...and I don't know why do you have her chairs.

JAMES

If all that bitch had were these ugly chairs, no wonder she got her head chopped off.

TRISH

(realizing)

James, these might be worth a lot of money.

JAMES

You think?

(shakes his head)

I can't believe this shit is happening. Twenty six million dollars and all we get are these stupid fucking old looking chairs.

TRISH

That's why he was in a mental hospital, he wasn't thinking straight.

JAMES

(squeezing his teeth)

Don't. Mention. That. Hospital. Ever. Again!

TRISH

(hugs him)

Sorry, Baby. Let's try to look on the bright side. We can make love on that table.

JAMES

(looking really confused)

What bright side?

TRISH

Anita's an appraiser. She can tell us how much these chairs are worth.

JAMES

No baby, Anita does not know what she is doing. Remember she appraised my father's Silver Star for 5 dollars, I almost killed her if it was not for you?

Trish smacks James in the head.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(re: the smack)

You really gettin' like your Momma.

(sotto)

Next thing you know you be getting
all fat and shit.

TRISH

What'd you say?

JAMES

Nothing.

He looks at the chairs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You know, if I can get fifteen
grand for these, I can pay off the
Taxi *and* have enough to get you a
nice ring.

TRISH

What? No, we gonna wait till Anita
checks them out. Until then,
they're staying right here.

JAMES

If she's gonna appraise them, you'd
better be careful, she always looks
high on Saturdays and Father's Day.

Trish spots something on one of the chairs, a small NOTEBOOK.

TRISH

Hey, look.

She grabs the book, opens the first few pages.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Oh my God, James. This is your
uncle's journal. He left it for
you.

JAMES

Yeah, well, he was psycho and I
ain't reading no psycho's diary.

James tosses it back onto the table, begins closing the
doors.

TRISH

Wait, my purse.

She runs back inside, picks up her purse. Notices the journal, thinks a moment, then stuffs it into her purse.

JAMES

Hurry up.

Trish exits the room, and James closes it up.

ON THE LOCK - as it clicks back into place.

CUT TO:

INT. YELLOW CAB - LATER

James is driving, Trish is next to him. He seems to be lost in a deep thought.

TRISH

Baby, please take it easy... It wasn't meant to be. Hey, at least something good came out of this whole thing.

JAMES

What would that be?

TRISH

(mad)

You haven't noticed?

JAMES

Hmmm... What?

TRISH

We're back together, you and I. What's wrong with you, Baby? You forgot we haven't been talking for a whole week?

JAMES

You mean we're back talking, like "talking and all?"

TRISH

(smiles)

Well, we're talking, yes. The other kind of talking, we'll see.

The yellow cab pulls over by Trish's building. She gives him a big kiss then gets out.

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTH CENTRAL CAB STATION - NEXT DAY

James pulls in, parks the cab and gets out. He counts out some money as Charlie approaches with two burly guys.

BIG MIKE is tall, heavy and looks like a real thug. The other, GUY is big, but looks like the progeny of Arkansas siblings.

CHARLIE
(re: the money)
What's that?

JAMES
A few hundred towards what I owe you. I'll have the rest in two days, I am working on something to get you the rest.
(checking out the men)
They remaking *Deliverance*?

CHARLIE
Meet the new owners of your cab.

JAMES
What? What the fuck you talking about? You said two weeks!

CHARLIE
Circumstances changed. I told you I have my own shit to pay, and unlike you, I pay them.

JAMES
Yeah, with other people's stuff!

Big Mike holds James, while Steve grabs the keys.

BIG MIKE
You got ten G's, you can have it back. Yeah, that's right. Until then, it belongs to me, I just bought half of this company.

JAMES
Oh yeah? Well, you can kiss my ass on a Sunday after lunch, no you can not, Sundays I am usually busy, that's my cab there.

BIG MIKE
You watch your fucking mouth.

JAMES

(to big Mike)

You watch your fucking teeth, I
will bust your ass right here.

(to Charlie, pleading)

Charlie, don't do this.

CHARLIE

It's outta my hands. He is my
partner now.

Charlie walks away.

JAMES

How am I supposed to get home?

BIG MIKE

Call a cab.

Big Mike and other guy LAUGH.

EXT. LOS ANGELES FREEWAY - DAY

A slow white van plods down the freeway.

INT. MAX'S CAR - DAY

James rides shotgun while Max drives way too cautiously and
slow for freeway traffic.

JAMES

We need to sell these chairs ASAP,
and pay off that fucker before I
lose my taxi.

MAX

"We" need? I don't know, James.

JAMES

Could you go a little faster?
You're killing me here. You drive
like a blind man for god sake.

MAX

We're just at the speed limit. I
can't afford to get another ticket.

ON THE FREEWAY - *everyone* is passing them.

MAX (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you wait for Trish and
her friend? She said --

JAMES

Fuck that. I ain't got time.
Besides, if I don't my cab now, how
am I supposed to make a living?

INT. SELF STORAGE FACILITY - LATER

James and Max load up the furniture.

JAMES (V.O.)

Look at this mess I'm in. I hope
Uncle Jack rots in hell.

MONTAGE:

James and Max loading up the furniture. While they're moving
the table, Max accidentally drops his end, nicking a large
piece of the top - practically ruining it.

JAMES

Max! Watch out!

AT THE CAR - James takes the car keys from Max.

ON THE FREEWAY - James hauls ass, Max prays for dear life.

MAX

Where are we going?

JAMES

Uncle Jack used to take me to a
antique store when I was little.
We'll go there.

MAX

Well, slow the fuck down man. We
cannot sell this shit and get the
money if we are dead.

EXT. BEVERLY BOULEVARD - DAY

Restaurants, coffee shops and a lot of Antique Stores on both
sides of this busy street. One store in particular: "BEVERLY
ANTIQUES." The van SQUEALS into a space in front.

Max exhales, can't believe he's still alive. James jumps out.

JAMES

We're gonna get rid of this shit
and I'm gonna get me some money.

INT. BEVERLY ANTIQUES - DAY

An ANTIQUE DESK CLOCK sits on a book shelf, a small pendulum swings back and forth behind its glass housing.

James waits impatiently for the STORE OWNER (50s) a bald man with a pot-belly to make up his mind. Behind them are the SIX CHAIRS AND THE TABLE.

Max picks up a Menorah, checks it out, holds it up.

MAX

For your Uncle Soul.

JAMES

Put that down.

Max reluctantly does what he's told.

OWNER

This set is NOT part of the Marie Antoinette collection. They're good replicas though. I'll give you six thousand dollars for all six plus the table.

JAMES

That's it?

OWNER

Yeah, that's it.

JAMES

(shakes his head)

I'm sure they're worth more. I'll just go somewhere else.

OWNER

Alright, alright. What do you think they're worth?

JAMES

I don't know. But they gotta be worth more than six grand.

OWNER

How about seven thousand?

JAMES

How 'bout ten thousand

OWNER

How 'bout nine thousand, and that's my final offer?

MAX

Can you throw in the Menorah?

The Owner looks at Max and shakes his head "No."

JAMES

So much for Trish's ring.

(to the Owner)

Alright, just give me the damn money.

EXT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

James is drunk. He stumbles up to the door, KNOCKS. Trish opens the door, jumps on him, kissing and hugging on him.

JAMES

(unhappily)

Trish, wait. Take it easy. I have -
I have to tell you something.

TRISH

Whatever it is, it can wait.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She pulls James inside. JAMES' POV: The place has had a major changes. There's beautiful furniture, a brand new Samsung LCD TV.

JAMES

What's this all about?

TRISH

Oh Baby! That's what I got to talk to you about. You like my new TV?

JAMES

(re: all the stuff)

Your Momma start going to the track again?

TRISH

No. I just put it on my credit card.

JAMES

Credit card! You know how long this will take to pay off, you'll be in finance charge hell, I'll be --

TRISH
Here, listen to this...

Trish picks up the NOTEBOOK, James sees it, goes ballistic.

JAMES
What's that doing here? Oh, don't
tell me you went and read his book.

TRISH
Yes, and so what?

JAMES
See, look at all this stuff. You
read his book and now you're crazy
too. His soul is fucking with your
head babe.

TRISH
(pleading)
James. James, listen, this is
written on the last page of the
journal.

She reads from the book.

TRISH (CONT'D)
Dear James, you just left my
hospital room, and if you're
reading this letter, it means I'm
finally dead. I know you didn't
think much of me while I was alive.
I know I played too many jokes and
gambled too much with people's
lives. God rest your Grandma's
soul, But I did work hard for my
money and you know it.

(beat)
By now, you most certainly know
about my will and the fact that I
gave most of my money to the
hospital and to the foundation. And
even though you probably hate me
for it, I believe it was the right
thing to do. This place gave me
peace of mind, and I wanted to give
something back in return. But don't
think I forgot about you, you're
still my blood, I saved the best
for last.

JAMES
Oh my God, hun, did he leave me
something?

James grabs the letter keeps reading...

JAMES (CONT'D)

So indulge me in my last prank. I'm leaving you a gift that will change your life forever.

(to Trish)

Oh my God!

James is motionless and breathless, his eyes bulging as he moves closer to Trish.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(voice shivering)

There is five million dollars worth of junk bonds hidden inside one of the dining chairs, I hope you invest it and spend it wisely.

James freezes. Eyes wide open, unable to breathe.

TRISH

That's what I'm trying to tell you Baby! We're rich, can't get Madonna's house but at least will get a house.

James looks like a deer caught in headlights. Trish doesn't notice, she hugs him and kisses him.

JAMES

(excited)

We're rich!

(then, realizing)

Holy shit!

James is suddenly back to life as he storms out of the door, leaving Trish in total shock and confusion.

TRISH

Baby, where you going?

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

James jumps into the car. Trish comes bounding out.

TRISH

James what the hell is wrong with you? Wait up! Where you going?

JAMES

(to Trish)

Babe, mmm, I gotta go pick up my sister and her kids from the Lakers game.

TRISH

Stop lying to me, you don't have a sister.

JAMES

(to Trish)

I don't, shit, you're right Baby, I can't talk to you now. I gotta go.

TRISH

What do you mean you can't talk to me! We gotta go get the chairs.

JAMES

We will, we will, it's kinda late already, will do that first thing in the morning

TRISH

Have you lost your mind?

James drives off fast.

Trish watches as James reaches a stop sign at the end of the street but did not stop.

INT. BEVERLY ANTIQUES STORE - LATER

They're just about to close up. James storms inside, he spots the table and one of the chairs at a corner. He flips the chair over to its side, starts ripping the upholstery. Two STORE EMPLOYEES tackle him, push him away from the chair. The store OWNER comes running over.

OWNER

Hey! What's going on?

JAMES

I need my chairs back right now! I'm sorry, but they mean a lot to me. I wasn't supposed to sell them.

OWNER

Sure. Only problem is there's only one left.

JAMES

(angrily)
Only one left? Where the hell are
the rest?

OWNER

Pal! What the hell do you think I'm
in business for? I buy and sell
furniture. I sold the rest.

JAMES

You what!!! How'd you sell 'em so
damn fast?

OWNER

I'm a good businessman.

JAMES

Who bought 'em?

OWNER

They're called "customers." They
saw them, loved them. End of story.

JAMES

You sold my chairs, you son of a
bitch!

But James goes crazy. He takes a leap for the one chair
that's left, but the employees tackle him again.

OWNER

I'm calling the cops.

James regains composure.

JAMES

No, it's okay. I'm okay. I just
wanna buy the last one.

OWNER

Fine. It's three thousand dollars.
Will you be paying by cash or
check?

JAMES

(mad as hell)
Three thousand dollars? For one
chair? You paid nine G's for the
entire set, plus the table.

OWNER

That's right! It's called making a
profit.

James stares him down for a moment, then storms out.

JAMES

I'll be back for your sorry ass and
my chairs! Motherfucker!

EXT. WAL-MART - BACK OF STORE - NIGHT

Max, in his Rent-A-Cop uniform, is propped up on a folding chair, studying. Not a thing going on in the back of Walmart. James pulls up.

MAX

James, what the hell?

JAMES

Get in!

MAX

I just started my shift.

JAMES

Ain't nobody gonna steal from
Walmart. Everybody stealing goes
right on out the front door.

Max reluctantly gets in the car.

INT. THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

As it speeds through traffic.

JAMES

God damnit. I'm not gonna let that
motherfucker rip me off twice.

MAX

James, slow down. You're not making
any sense.

JAMES

Look it. We fucked up big time
selling the set to that
motherfucker.

MAX

"We"? man, I told you Trish would
be mad.

JAMES

Forget her, you don't understand, I gotta, ummm, I'm getting the set back and you're gonna help me.

MAX

What the fuck did you do, shit man, what are you planning to do?

(realizing)

Oh no, you mean for us to steal it! Man I don't feel good about this, what if we get caught?

JAMES

What do you mean, "get caught." You're wearing a cop uniform . That chair is mine and I'm gonna get it back.

MAX

James, I flunked out of the police academy, five times and shit... now I'm gonna lose the only steady job I've ever had. This is ridiculous. Why are we here?

They pull up in front of the Antiques Store - now CLOSED.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Trish paces the living room with a phone in hand, on the table is the key for the storage room.

TRISH

(into phone)

Anita, can you meet me tomorrow? James has been acting real strange. I think he might have done something stupid.

EXT. BEVERLY ANTIQUES STORE - NIGHT

The guys get out, trying not to look suspicious.

MAX

Okay. Let's get my Uncle Sol. He's an attorney. I'm sure he'll be able to help you --

JAMES

You don't understand. I need to find those chairs now.

MAX

Is there something you're not telling me? I know that look. It's the same look you gave me when you failed the written driver license test.

JAMES

Yeah, and if I recall, we both failed that test the first time.
(beat)
Okay, it's like this...

He whispers in Max's ear.

MAX

(yelling)
Five million dollars!

James covers his mouth.

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh my god that's awesome, then says wait a second, What if this is one of your Uncle's crazy jokes?

JAMES

I thought about that, but what if it's not?

MAX

And what if it is? This place may have an alarm. Dogs? Worse?

JAMES

Listen Max, you're my best friend. If you help me, I'm gonna take care of you. I'll give you five hundred thousand dollars.

MAX

Five hundred thousand?

Max stops, looks at James and extends his hand for him.

MAX (CONT'D)

(they shake hands)
You got yourself a deal, man fuck it, let's do it, I'll open my own police station.

INT. BEVERLY ANTIQUES STORE - NIGHT

The moonlight casts silver beams through the large front windows of the store. A shadowy figure falls through a vent in the roof. It's Max. He lands with a thud, hitting his nuts on the edge of a desk.

MAX

Ow!

JAMES (O.S.)

Keep it quiet!

James jumps down, lands on top of Max, just as Max is recovering.

MAX

(muffled, yelp)

Ouch! Umphf!

JAMES

What's the matter?

MAX

(whimpering)

I'm fine. Let's find the chairs before someone catches us.

JAMES

Don't be so nervous. Someone comes in you just pretend you're arresting me.

James looks around, finds the chair.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(whispers)

This is it!!

James' hands shake. He kneels by the chair, flips it to the side, starts feeling the front and back. Max illuminates the chair with a flashlight; James pulls out a small knife.

MAX

Here, use this.

Max reaches in his back pocket, pulls out a bigger one. James looks at the switchblade, then to Max.

MAX (CONT'D)

It's for protection. You know.

James takes the large knife and starts ripping the upholstery.

MAX (CONT'D)
Anything?

JAMES
Hold on, I'm still looking.

James' hands nervously work the ripped cloth as he frantically searches every inch of the chair. Then he busts the legs off one by one.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Motherfucker. It's not in this chair.

MAX
So grab the others.
(looking around)
Where are the others?

JAMES
Gone. Someone bought them.

MAX
We broke in for one chair? I assume you know who bought the other five?

JAMES
Nope.

MAX
I tell you what, you screwed this one up big time, fuck head.

Max spots a large desk in a corner with a computer on it.

JAMES
What are you doing?

MAX
(as he turns on the computer)
You wanna know who bought the chairs don't you?

JAMES
(whispers)
Oh shit man, you're genius. I don't know why you didn't pass your police tests?

MAX
When I get nervous I forget things.

A small window screen pops up, asking for a login name and password.

MAX (CONT'D)

We need a password.

JAMES

Shit, what'd you think? How we gonna get that?

MAX

(reading from his police manual)

Look around. It says here, *law abiding citizens typically keep their passwords near their computers.*

James opens a small ledger book, starts flipping the pages.

JAMES

There's nothing here, Man. Only a bunch of receipts.

MAX

Bunch of what? Let me see.

Max snatches the note book, *ONE RECEIPT, slips out, falls to the floor, during the exchange, neither Max nor James notice.*

Max flips through the book.

MAX (CONT'D)

This is it!

He flips the stack of receipts quickly. Max fingers one page and goes down a list of receipts. He stops at one name.

MAX (CONT'D)

Here, here, Marie Antoinette.

JAMES

Yeah, that's the bitch!!

MAX

Here I found some more. Three more.

JAMES

There should be five, more!

MAX

Wait, here's someone bought two chairs.

JAMES

That only makes four. We're still missing a receipt.

MAX

That's all that's here.

JAMES

Are you sure?

MAX

Positive.

Stuffs the receipts in his socks.

JAMES

Oh, don't use that word. Okay, well at least it's a start. Let's go.

MAX

If we leave like this, the owner definitely will come after you. We gotta make this look like a normal break-in.

JAMES

How do we do that?

Max consults his detective study book.

MAX

(reading)

Okay. *Break a bunch of other stuff and...*

James finds a nice chachki on the counter, pockets it.

MAX (CONT'D)

Just go break some pieces of furniture.

Max sees the Menorah, thinks for a moment, then grabs it. James looks around, spots an expensive looking couch, checks out the price tag.

JAMES

Seven grand!! That son of bitch must have paid pennies for this piece of shit.

He pulls his pants down and starts peeing on it.

MAX
(referring to his police
Manual)
It doesn't say anything about
urination. What are you doing?

JAMES
Pissing on a seven thousand dollar
couch. What does it look like I'm
doing?

MAX
Dude, DNA evidence. Not cool. I
said break some shit, not pee on
the furniture.

ON THE FRONT DOOR - as the Owner and a COP enter, turning on
the lights, they see James peeing on the sofa and Max holding
the Menorah. Max drops the Menorah.

OWNER
Ah hah! Look who we have here,
(looks at Max)
I had a bad feeling about you.

The Cop points his gun, approaches. Max puts his hands up,
James does the same.

JAMES
Ah shit.

MAX
I knew it was gonna be a shitty
evening.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The Cop, his uniform wet from the urine, drags the guys, now
cuffed, through the station. Some of the OFFICERS recognize
Max and taunt him accordingly:

VARIOUS COPS
"What happened Max? You couldn't
become a cop, so you decided to try
a life of crime?" "He even failed
at that!"

MAX
I hope you're happy now.

JAMES
 (whispering)
 Just keep to the story.
 (yelling)
 I want my phone call.

COP
 Nice. Now we got you on grand
 larceny and breaking and entering.

MAX
 I told you, I was attempting to
 apprehend the suspect, beside that
 guy did not steal anything.

COP
 Dude, you work at Walmart. It's ten
 miles from the scene of the crime.

JAMES
 He got lost.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATER

It's exactly what you'd expect; a bunch of "baddies" and in
 the midst of it are James and Max. A JAILER comes over, opens
 the door.

JAILER
 You two. Bail's been posted.

James and Max leave.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Trish meets James and Max on the steps, admonishes them.

TRISH
 What the hell is going on? You
 wanna tell me why you broke into
 some man's store?

JAMES
 (softly, almost
 undecipherable)
 I had to get the chairs.

TRISH
 What?
 (to Max)
 What's he saying?

JAMES

(softer)

To find the chairs.

TRISH

Baby, what the hell are you saying?
Was he trying to get me an antique
ring?

MAX

Well, yes, in a way, you could say
that, this act would have helped
him in that quest.

TRISH

Baby, you're rich now. You don't
have to be breaking into stores.

JAMES

Yeah, I do. I, I, I, sold the
chairs to the antique dealer.

TRISH

What'd he just say? Sounded like he
said he sold the chairs.

MAX

Your fool fiancé sold the damn
chairs.

TRISH

What?!

Trish goes ballistic, smacking James in the head.

TRISH (CONT'D)

What the hell did you do that for?

JAMES

I owed money on my cab.

TRISH

We talked about this, James. This
is the problem. You never listen to
me. It's like I say something and
it goes in one ear and right out
through that empty head of yours
and out the other side.

JAMES

I did something stupid, what do you
want me to say, I tried to buy the
chair back but I didn't have the
money.

MAX
There's irony for you, huh.

TRISH
Shut up, Max.

JAMES
Baby, I'm sorry. But we're gonna
get the chairs back. I promise.

TRISH
James, I can't even look at your
face right now, just shut up. Right
now I'm so mad. Shit I gotta return
all my new furniture.

James reaches out for her, she pulls away.

TRISH (CONT'D)
Don't touch me, I can't believe it.
I hooked up with you, god damn it.

Trish storms off.

MAX
I guess we're not getting a ride
back to the car?

Off James.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

Knocking on the door, Trish answers it. Standing before her
is ANITA (30s). Trish looks confused.

TRISH
Anita! Oh, God. I forgot to call
you. Come on in.

ANITA
What's the matter?

TRISH
What isn't?

INT. INSIDE THE CAR - DAY

James drives, Max rides shotgun.

JAMES
Okay. We got two weeks before our
court date.

MAX

Yeah, about that. You know I'm never going to be able to be a detective now that I have a rap sheet.

JAMES

Don't worry, Man. We're gonna find these chairs, I'm gonna give your money and you can open your own damn agency.

INT. ANITA'S CAR

Anita drives, Trish rides shotgun.

ANITA

What a damn fool! I'm telling you. You gotta get rid of that man.

TRISH

He's not all bad, he just doesn't pay attention.

ANITA

We're talking about five million dollars! Shit. I would lose his sorry ass. Besides, how do you know he isn't taking the money for himself? Or spending it on hookers!

TRISH

James is bad, but he'd never do that.

Trish spots James' car

ANITA

Well, speak of the devil.

TRISH

He told me he was going to the Antique store today.

ANITA

Let's follow them. See what they're up to.

TRISH

Yeah. Let's.

EXT. SEEDY AREA - DAY

James' pulls up, they get out. Max holds one of the receipts in his hand. Across the street is a dilapidated, three-story brick building. A sign above reads: *Nola's Kneadle Point Shoppe*.

JAMES

You sure this is the right place?

MAX

Says here, some woman named Nola, bought one of the chairs, had it delivered to this address.

They start walking towards the building.

PULL BACK - to reveal Anita and Trish pulling up a discreet distance away.

INT. NOLA'S KNEADLE POINT SHOPPE - DAY

A pretty BLONDE RECEPTIONIST sits at an Antique Louis XIV desk. Soft music plays. Behind her and throughout the room WOMEN, in various stages of undress, wear leather or spandex.

It's some sort of a brothel, but the guys are oblivious.

BLONDE

Hello gentlemen. May I help you?

They both stare at her, not sure what to say.

JAMES

Yeah. Uh. Is Nola here?

BLONDE

Oh, Nola doesn't actually work here. Is there something I can help you with?

MAX

(to James)

Great. Now how are we supposed to find the chair?

BLONDE

I'm sorry. Did one of you just ask for "The Chair?"

JAMES

We both want the chair.

BLONDE
Oh. Adventurers.

The Blonde gets up, pulls out a form from a cabinet behind her. At this moment, both men lean forward quickly taking a peek at the chair on which she was seated. It's not their chair.

The Blonde turns, catches them in the act, thinks they are checking her out, and rolls her eyes.

BLONDE (CONT'D)
(filling out the form)
That will be two hundred. Each.

MAX
Two hundred dollars!

James quickly elbows him.

JAMES
That's fine. Give the lady the money.

Max reluctantly shells out the cash.

MAX
This is a weeks pay. Pay which I won't be able to make up because I've been fired.

BLONDE
How did you guys hear about us?

JAMES
From this woman Marie. Marie Antoinette just 200 hundred years down the street.

BLONDE
Cool, we will send her a referral fee.

Max and James look at each other with a weird look.

She presses a button and the door slides back, revealing a long, dark, narrow hallway.

MAX
(to James)
Are you sure this is a good idea?

JAMES

What's the worst that could happen?
Bunch of old ladies, sewing an
shit?

BLONDE

The Chair is one of our most
popular services. This way,
Gentlemen.

(motions to a cubicle)

Please undress here.

JAMES

Undress?

BLONDE

Yes.

MAX

The needles must be sterile.

After a few moments, they emerge wearing little towels. The
Blonde leads them past... a TURKISH BATH.

JAMES' POV: an enchanting atmosphere, filled with the sound
of splashing water. A ray of light filters through the dome-
ceiling, illuminates marble walls.

TWO MEN relax, face-down on the marble near the water, while
two half-naked women, dip small copper bowls into a water
basin and tip the water over their bodies, bathing them.

James and Max are shocked.

JAMES

Damn! Is this where you ladies do
your needlepoint and shit?

BLONDE

That's down here.

JAMES

Keep your eyes open, the chair is
here somewhere.

They continue on down the hall, and the blonde leads them to
a room, opens the door.

INT. DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

James and Max struggle to see. The door slams behind them and
a candle is lit, dimly illuminating a room that looks like a
medieval torture chamber, with curtains at either side.

In front of them a huge WOODEN CHAIR, like the kind you'd find in an executioner's dungeon. Adjacent is an OPERATING TABLE, complete with leather straps and next to it an instrument table with NEEDLES of varying sizes.

JAMES

This what white people do for fun?

MAX

Don't look at me. I'm allergic to metal.

At that moment, two very scary WOMEN (the "HELPERS"), clad in bondage garb, emerge from behind the curtains grab James, and tie him into the special "torture chair."

MAX (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm out of here.

He turns to grab the door behind him, but there's no doorknob. He's trapped.

WOMAN

Not so fast, Skinny.

JAMES

What are all those needles for? Oh, this is not happening! Max what the hell is this place?

MAX

You said it was a knitting club.

The women take out whips, begin whipping them. They SCREAM.

A loud GONG sounds and a velvet curtain opens. The women kneel and MISTRESS FREDRIKA emerges. She's enormous, she's butt ugly and she's a MAN.

JAMES

Oh shit!

She pulls up James' towel, checks out the "goods."

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

(holding up a long needle)

I'm so looking forward to this.

JAMES

You touch me with one of those needles, I'm gonna shove all of 'em up your ass, Bitch!

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

This one needs a lesson in obedience.

She pulls a nipple clamp off the instrument tray, attaches it to James' nipple. He SCREAMS like a baby. Pull back to reveal more hideous instruments of torture: a cattle prod, scissors and a large jar of Vaseline. She picks up the cattle prod.

JAMES

Oh I know you're not thinking of using that on me?

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Silence, Slaves.

JAMES

Okay that's it, Bitch. Nobody calls me a slave!

James tries unsuccessfully to get up from the chair, but his bindings are too tight. Mistress Fredrika motions to the women to get something from behind the curtain. They emerge with THE CHAIR.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Max! Look! It's the chair.

MAX

Oh shit. I almost forgot why we were here.

James rattles his bindings. Mistress Fredrika notices how he reacts to seeing the chair, misinterprets his odd behavior.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

(to her helpers)

We've got a real weirdo here, but I really like him, something about him.

(to James)

You like the chair, don't you? You want the chair?

James looks at Max, who nods for him to go along with it.

JAMES

Yes, Mistress Fredrika. May I please touch the chair?

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

That's better. Good boy, see me and you are gonna be friends.

She motions for the ugly helpers to release him. He makes a big show of being "in love" with the chair. Then starts "play humping" it.

JAMES

That's right. I love this chair.

ON MAX as an ugly woman sticks her hand in Vaseline and rolls him over.

MAX

Oh, no. Let's not go there. Please.

James takes a whip, starts whipping the chair.

JAMES

Bad chair. Very bad chair.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

(to the other helper)

The job isn't what it used to be.

The Helpers nod understandingly. Suddenly James busts the chair against the wall, breaking its legs, just as...

TRISH and ANITA bust the door open, and see James, naked, his naughty bits strategically covered by the top of the chair, whip in hand.

ON THE TABLE is Max, also naked, and shivering.

JAMES

Oh shit! What are you doing here babe?

TRISH

Oh shit is right. Is this what you're into? You sick bastard. Momma was right about you.

ANITA

I knew it. I told you to lose this crazy motherfucker.

MAX

Somebody, get me outta here. I'm in pain.

JAMES

Anita, you could get a job here.

TRISH

Shut up.

JAMES

Baby, this isn't what it looks like.

Trish looks at the chair, thinks for a moment.

TRISH

What's that doing here?

JAMES

Baby, that's what I'm trying to tell you.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Just to let you know, your Man paid extra for this treatment, and if I were you I would keep that man, he is really cute.

Mistress Fredrika and the Ugly Women leave.

JAMES

I'm sorry. But we're trying to find the chairs, it's a long story.

TRISH

"Find them?"

MAX

Yeah. The antique store owner sold the chairs separately babe and we are trying to find them.

TRISH

Here I am thinking you been cheating on me, this is so much worse.

JAMES

Baby, I'm not about to let this slip away from me, not in this life time! We will find those chairs and I will get the money, I don't care what it takes!

TRISH

You mean you and this loser friend of yours are just gonna go breaking into shops and massage parlors and God knows what kinda places and tear apart the chairs till you find the right one? You think it's that simple?

JAMES

If that's what it takes then yes.
And Max is not a loser, he's my
buddy and he's an expert on
criminology.

Max, still tied to the operating table, smiles thinly at Trish.

TRISH

Expert? Since when did he become an
expert? Trouble expert maybe.

JAMES

Come on Hun, he passed all the
police academy tests except for the
psychological one...

TRISH

Well. That's what I am trying to
tell you, you two are a nut case, I
can see both of you spending lots
of time in jail.

MAX

I do not know why I failed the
psychological test, hey James. Do I
look like I suffer from any shit.

JAMES

(frowns)
You do.

TRISH

Oh, that's it, James. I'm done
here, let's go.

Trish storms off, Anita smirks at James, then follows.

INT. LOCAL BAR - EVENING

James and Max lean over the counter as a bartender hands them
a couple of beers.

JAMES

Who's next on our list?

MAX

Next? James. No way. In case you
don't remember, let remind you what
happened earlier today... a woman's
hand was just inside my sphincter.

JAMES

At least it was a woman's hand.
That damn she-male stuck a needle
in my gonad and he enjoyed every
minute of it! The worst of this is
I've lost Trish.

(beat)

Max. We can't stop now. We've keep
going man please don't do this to
me right now, I lost my cab
business, I am losing Trish, you
gonna do me like that ?

Max downs his beer.

MAX

I'm starting to think I'm insane.
There's absolutely no reason I
should want to do this.

JAMES

Five hundred big ones! Five hundred
thousand ways to happiness.

MAX

You know it's not like it's going
to get any easier.

JAMES

It can't be worse than what we just
went through earlier today, my ass
still hurts.

MAX

I guess you're right. Shiii...

CUT TO:

A FULL SHOT OF A KLEENEX - being pulled out of a box, a TIMID
LITTLE MAN dabs his eyes with it and then blows his nose.

INT. DOCTORS KAMILLE'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

The office is warm, comfortable and nicely decorated. Doctor
Kamille (60s) is an Indian Sikh, with a thick accent.

DR. KAMILLE

Mister Thomas, I assure you those
green men who molested you, are the
creation of your own mind. Let's
double up on your Prozac.

EXT. DR. KAMILLE'S OFFICE - BEVERLY HILLS - SAME

James and Max read the sign on the door.

JAMES

He's a doctor! Okay, look. You go on in, pretend like you have a sore throat and distract him.

MAX

With my luck this guy will be a proctologist.

(beat)

And why do I have to go?

Max relents, steps inside as the Timid Man opens the door.

INT. DR. KAMILLE'S OFFICE

Max enters holding his hand to his throat, he coughs a bit. When he walks in he sees there's no exam table. He doesn't quite understand.

DR. KAMILLE

(extending his hand)

Bernard? Bernard Slayton?

MAX

Nice to meet you Dr. Slayton. Is Dr. Camel here?

DR. KAMILLE

No, I'm Dr. Camel, uh, it's pronounced Cam-eel.

(looking at his calendar)

You're my ten-thirty?

Max sees "the chair" stares at it.

DR. KAMILLE (CONT'D)

Are you okay Mister Slayton?

Max continues to stare at the chair.

DR. KAMILLE (CONT'D)

Mr. Slayton?

Max finally gets that Dr. Kamille thinks he's someone else.

MAX

Oh, yes. I'm Mister Slayton? I'm Slayton. Yes.

He looks up at Dr. Kamille's turban.

MAX (CONT'D)

I was just admiring your hat. You keep a snake under there? That's what you Australians do, right?

DR. KAMILLE

I'm Indian, you idi-. Please, Mr. Slayton, take the seat.

MAX

Don't mind if I do.

Max picks up the chair and starts to walk out.

DR. KAMILLE

Mr. Slayton. I didn't mean for you to actually take the chair.

(beat)

So, when we spoke on the phone, you said when your lover left you, you felt scared almost threatened. Perhaps you'd like to elaborate?

Max looks uncomfortable. He wasn't expecting this.

EXT. DR. KAMILLE'S OFFICE - SAME

The real MR. SLAYTON, a broken, bloated, shell of a man approaches Dr. Kamille's office door. He puts his hand on the knob. James puts his hand on Mr. Slayton's.

JAMES

I wouldn't be going in there right now.

Mr. Slayton looks scared.

MR. SLAYTON

Why?

JAMES

Because I said so, you gotta problem with that.

(thinks for a minute)

Where you from?

MR. SLAYTON

I live in SANTA MONICA.

JAMES

That's not a long kick...
 (whispers)
 in case I need to kick your ass.

Mr. Slayton cowers, then puts it together.

MR. SLAYTON

Oh you're him! You're the thief,
 you are trying to kidnap me, right?
 Thief! Thief!

JAMES

Whoa, what the F, take it easy.
 Don't be calling a black man a
 thief in Beverly Hills.

Mr. Slayton goes ballistic, crying, and hysterical. People on the street take notice. James tries to cover Mr. Slayton's mouth.

INT. DR. KAMILLE'S OFFICE

Max is sobbing, telling Dr. Kamille his life story, it's pathetic. As he talks he moves the chair and himself closer to the door.

MAX

And after Shelly, Karen, Jody and
 Giselle... Irene left me too.

DR. KAMILLE

And you think these horrible
 experiences with women, led you to
 homosexuality?

MAX

Yes... what? No. I mean, I'm not
 gay.

DR. KAMILLE

Denial is a large part of your
 problem, Mr. Slayton. On the phone,
 you mentioned your last lover was a
 large black male with a raging
 temper. Actually you sounded really
 wacko to be honest with you,
 perhaps if you could come to terms
 with your feelings you'd be able to
 accept yourself. Perhaps then, he
 wouldn't have always been so angry
 with yourself, although there's
 never cause for violence...

(MORE)

DR. KAMILLE (CONT'D)
 (smiling)
 ...unless it's consensual, what
 kind of work do you do Mr. Slayton.

MAX
 (looking very confused)
 I used to do nothing. Now I am
 retired.

Just then, James barges in with hysterical Mr. Slayton.

DOCTOR KAMILLE
 What is this outrage? What is going
 on, who are you people?

Dr. Kamille reaches for the security phone. Max thinks
 quickly.

MAX
 That's him. That's my crazy lover!
 He's crazy. Just look at him.

James doesn't know what to do so he starts acting insane.

JAMES
 I'm a crazy motherfucker. Crazy,
 crazy, that's me. Dr. Camel.

DR. KAMILLE
 It's Cam-eel.

MR. SLAYTON
 (referring to James)
 This is the thief. The thief who
 stole my lover's heart! And now
 he's trying to stop me from seeing
 you DR.

Max and James are at a loss - too much drama.

MR. SLAYTON (CONT'D)
 You're my Bobby's lover, aren't
 you?

MAX
 (explaining to James)
 Dr. Camel here is a head-shrinker.

JAMES
 (notices the chair)
 Look at you. You're sitting on the
 chair. Get the fuck up! Get the
 fuck out of that chair.

MAX

Don't tell me what to do!

DR. KAMILLE

(trying to understand)

You don't like it when he sits on chairs?

JAMES

No. And you wouldn't either if you were me.

DR. KAMILLE

You'd rather have him on the floor?

MAX

No, he has a "thing" for chairs.

Dr. Kamille scribbles some notes.

JAMES

I am NOT humping that chair again!

Dr. Kamille scribbles faster.

DR. KAMILLE

(to Max)

And you like it when he does that?

MAX

(screaming)

No, I don't like it. Wait. What the hell am I talking about? That's it! That's enough! I've had enough of this shit. I'm tired of listening to you tell me what to do. Tired of chasing a these crazy ideas. I had a good job.

JAMES

You worked at Walmart.

MAX

I get discounts sometimes.

(beat)

You were right James, I think mental illness does run in your family, but I think it must be contagious because I must have been crazy to listen to you.

DR. KAMILLE

This is good. Let your feelings flow from you like the Ganges.

MAX
I'm outta here.

Max leaves.

JAMES
Wait! What about the chair?

In a fit of rage, Max picks up the chair and smashes it against the wall.

MAX
Fuck you, and fuck your chair!

Dr. Kamille and Mr. Slayton move to a corner.

DR. KAMILLE
Don't hurt us! Take it easy.

JAMES
Here.
(he picks up the chair)
Do like the good doctor says,
"release your anger."

The men regard the chair - this may be their only chance. Max pulls out a knife, as does James, and they both tear apart the chair. Max rips into the upholstery. Dr. Kamille and Mr. Slayton cower, terrified, in the corner.

MAX
There's nothing here!

JAMES
Look down there to the left, maybe
you'll find some old feelings and
shit.

Max smacks James in the head (ala "Momma"), then storms out.

JAMES (CONT'D)
I'll take him to KFC, get him a
couple wings, he'll be fine. Sorry
about this doc, really sorry.

He turns to leave, then notices a piece of paper in a hollowed out spot on one of the legs. He picks it up. It's a note from his Uncle Jack.

JAMES (CONT'D)
(reading)
Are you having fun yet?
(sotto)
Motherfucker!

He runs out after Max.

EXT. STREET - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

James catches up to Max.

JAMES

Max. Wait! Please. Look. It's a note from Uncle Jack.

But Max doesn't look at it. Finally he turns around.

MAX

I can't. I can't do this. Don't you get it? I just rehashed every high school female trauma I ever had, and for what? This is another one of your Uncle's sick jokes.

JAMES

We're three chairs away! Three chairs away, and two of them are together in the next spot. Please, Man. Don't give up on me now.

Max is regretting this decision already.

MAX

Next place. You go in first.

James nods in agreement.

INT. CAR - DAY

James and Max pull up to a STATELY MANSION in Beverly Hills. It's surrounded by a large brick wall, gated-entry and high-tech security cameras surround the property.

JAMES

Okay, here we go, Mr. Carlo Aparo's mansion.

MAX

I don't know James, this doesn't look like a good idea. That's a nice fucking house man, whoever in there must be important.

JAMES

No shit. Of course they're important. They're mob guys.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

The Aparo family, I am fucking dying to know why he would buy the chairs.

MAX

The guy who owns the deli on Fifth and Lincoln?

JAMES

No, you damn fool. Carlo Aparo the head of the biggest syndicated crime ring in the West coast. He's been in every paper.

On Max, just not "getting it."

JAMES (CONT'D)

He's like Tony Soprano of LA, I heard that mother fucker once killed a guy because he gave him a bad haircut.

MAX

Oh shit. That's dangerous. Thank God I am not a barber, although my aunt wanted me to be one.

JAMES

Who gives a shit what your aunt wanted man, let's focus here.

MAX

See with all that shit... No, no, no. Listen, this time, we gotta have a plan.

He consults his training manual, shaking.

JAMES

This ain't exactly Mission Impossible.

MAX

(reading)

"When in doubt, blend."

James watches as a truck of PARTY PLANNERS arrives, the gate opens and James casually strolls in. Max hangs back reading, then sees...

MAX (CONT'D)

Ah, shit, James!

As the gate begins to close he follows.

JAMES

(yelling)

If I die in here I am gonna fucking
kill you with my bare hands.

They try to mingle with the other WORKERS. Max, in his uniform looks very much the role of SECURITY. As the truck doors open and the workers begin moving things out James and Max spot a couple boxes labeled: CHARACTER COSTUMES.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Damn! They're having a party today.
You know what this means?

MAX

Free lox and champagne?

JAMES

No man look at you, it means we can
find out if the money in those
chairs while this rich family is
busy partying.

INT. DR. KAMILLE'S OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Kamille is describing James and Max to several POLICEMEN, who are recognized from the police station scene. They hold up MUG SHOTS of James and Max. Dr. Kamille identifies them.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACKYARD - MANSION - DAY

A children's party is in full swing. Lots of kids. Mayhem.

James and Max sneak around the back looking for a way inside.

AT THE BARBECUE GRILL -- two huge bulky guys flipping burgers for Mr. Aparo party with all kind of men around. It looks like the Soprano Family Reunion.

JOEY

(telling a story heavy
Italian New Yorker
accent)

So I call this guy randomly who I
don't even fucking know and I go,
"Is Tony there?" And the guy says,
"No, there's no one here named Tony
and he hangs up." So I wait a few
seconds and I call back again, and
ask for Tony.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

This time the guy gets mad "No, I just told you nobody here named Tony asshole, hangs up again, I wait a few seconds, I call back and I say, "Hey this is Tony. Did anybody call me?"

Everyone LAUGHS. James pulls Max back.

JAMES

Oh, shit!

MAX

What's the matter?

JAMES & MAX'S POV: Mr. Aparo (70s) cuts pastrami for his sandwich with a CHAINSAW, while children play in the area.

JAMES

We gotta problems.

MAX

(horrified)

Do you know these people?

JAMES

That's Mr. Aparo, I have seen his picture before on TV.

MAX

Shit man, he looks scary.

JAMES

I know huh.

MAX

James, I am really scared man, these people carve their sandwiches with machetes on a barbecue day, can you imagine if they are taking care of business on a Monday?

JAMES

(angry)

Would you stop scaring the shit outta me, we gotta do this ummmmm, I got an idea, come on.

CUT TO:

A FULL SHOT OF MAX dressed as the MASTER OF CEREMONIES, in an ill-fitting tuxedo and top hat. He finishes up a magic trick and the children go wild.

MAX

We're going to play some more fun games, but first I'd like to introduce you to my good friend, Peter Cottontail, the Easter Bunny.

The KIDS clap and cheer until they see...

JAMES, dressed in a furry, white, bunny-suit that doesn't quite fit him. His black legs, stick out of the white pads on the bottom, his black arms shoot through the sleeves. His ears are lop-sided and his fake buck teeth askew. He holds a limp carrot in his hand. He looks deranged.

JAMES

Ho. Ho. Ho.

His buck teeth fly out of his mouth, and hit one of the kids in the head. He bends to pick them up and the back of the suit rips, exposing his buttocks.

Some of the GIRLS in the front row, begin to CRY.

MAX

(to James)

What the hell are you doing?

JAMES

I'm being the Easter Bunny.

MAX

You look like the Easter Terrorist!

JAMES

What the fuck was I supposed to do, this costume's designed for a midget.

Parents begin to gather round. James and Max smile wanly.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay kiddies, we're gonna play a really fun game.

The children look mystified.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's called, "Chair, Chair."

MAX

(whispers)

"Chair-Chair"? What the hell kind of game name is that?

JAMES

(whispers)

It's a game name that's gonna make us rich, so shut the fuck up.

(to the kids)

Okay, here's how it works. The Easter Bunny, that's me, has hidden some very special candy in one of the chairs in this house, whoever finds it also gets an iPod, so everyone start looking for your prize.

The children take off inside the house.

MAX

Are you crazy?

JAMES

Ya maybe man, I am trying my best here. We had a plan. I was gonna keep them busy while you went inside and looked for the chairs. But you had to go all David Copperfield on me, doing those corny magic tricks for the last half hour.

MAX

I had a captive audience.

JAMES

Captive audience my ass, You're just afraid to go in the house.

MAX

Yes I am afraid. Besides, you promised, you'd go first this time, check things out then I'd follow you. We talked about it. Did you forget?

JAMES

Who cares who goes in first, come on man.

MAX

I do.

JAMES

You're confusing me with someone who gives a shit. Shut up and get your ass inside.

MAX

No. You go with me or I'm not going.

JAMES

Okay, fine. Come on.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The children turn over chairs while their parents help them. James and Max sneak upstairs.

INT. OFFICE (UPSTAIRS) - CONTINUOUS

Sal and Joey listen while Carlo Aparo talks to them. The door is ajar.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

James peeks through the crack. Then moves on. He motions for Max to be really quiet.

James sees a SMOKING PARLOR, fine cigars in boxes, hunting pictures on the walls, nice wood furniture and... *the chairs*.

JAMES

(whispering)

This is it. They're here.

INT. PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

James and Max each pick up a chair and head quietly down the hallway. Max loses his balance, his top hat dips over his eyes. He fumbles then loses grip of the chair and it hits a credenza with a loud THUD.

JAMES

You idiot. Shhh!

INT. OFFICE - MANSION

Mr. Aparo hears the noise, motions for Joey and Sal to take a look. Joey pulls his gun, opens the door to see James, dressed as the funky-bunny holding one chair and Max behind him, his top hat completely covering his eyes, holding the other. Mr. Aparo and Sal eye each other with confusion.

MR. APARO

What the hell is this? Who the fuck are you?

MAX

(nervously)
I don't know.

JAMES

Oh, don't mind him. He can't remember things when he gets nervous. We're the entertainment team from hug your kids on Easter company.

JOEY

What are you doing up here? All the children are downstairs?

JAMES

We needed some more chairs.

James continues down the hall. Sal stops him, pulls off his ears.

Mr. Aparo nods his head to Joey, who heads downstairs. Tells Sal to take James and Max to the bunker.

JOEY (O.S.)

Okay everyone, back outside. The Easter Bunny's gonna be tied up for a while.

INT. THE BUNKER - DARK SPOOKY ROOM WITH NO WINDOWS - LATER

James and Max are led down to an underground room hand cuffed. From the kitchen, we hear the sound of a CHAINSAW.

When they round the corner terrified, we see Joey using the chainsaw to cut his sandwich while three other guys are beating the shit out of one guy who is chained to a chair and face is covered with blood.

MR. APARO

Joey, what did I tell you about using the chainsaw, I hate that noise.

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

JOEY

Sorry, Boss. I'm just so used to cutting with it.

Mr. Aparo waves his hands, "not to worry."

MR. APARO

(to the chained guy)

So, Tommy, Tommy. How many times I gotta tell not to use drugs huh?

(screams)

God damn it, we are in the criminal enterprise business, we don't use drugs.

TOMMY

I swear to you, Mr. Aparo, whoever said this is lying to you, I don't use drugs.

James and Max are looking at these people terrified and shaking.

MR. APARO

(to Joey)

Joey, take a blood sample from his nose and send it to the lab to find out if he has any traces of drugs in his blood.

JOEY

OK boss.

Joey takes a little jar and fills it with couple of blood drops from Tommy's bloody nose.

JOEY (CONT'D)

(tells the guy)

You better pray it comes back negative Tommy, you know we're doing this for your own sake right?

Mr. Aparo turns to James and Max.

MR. APARO

Now, you two, what am I gonna do with you? If you tell me Who sent you, I might let you go, how about that? Is it Venny Amato, that piece of shit.

He looks at the chairs.

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

And of all the things in my house,
why these chairs? Were you planning
to plant a bomb in there?

JAMES

(shaking)

What can I say, I like chairs.

MAX

He really does. I've even seen him
hump one.

Joey and Sal make an "Ew Gross" face at each other.

MR. APARO

Are you mocking me? You think I'm
some kind of asshole? Your sexual
perversions are of no interest to
me you scum bags. What were you
coming here for? How much did that
piece of shit pay you, huh?

JAMES

No. No sir, you got it all wrong,
nobody sent us. We came here on our
own.

MAX

Yeah Mr. Aparo, do we look like we
can be sent anywhere.

MR. APARO

Actually you do, I am gonna send
both of you to hell unless you
start telling me what were you
doing in my house. Joey, what do
you say we break some of their
bones and find out?

JOEY

I thought you will never ask Boss.

JAMES

No, no, hold on please. See Mr.
Aparo I'm what you call a chair
aficionado. Some folks collect
cigars, some collect coins, I
collect chairs.

MR. APARO

Okay, maybe we break your friend's
bones?

(MORE)

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

I'm what you call a bone aficionado, I got a collection of 'em buried in a swamp in Jersey.

Sal and Joey and bloody Tommy and the guys are laughing.

MAX

Oh, no. That's a really bad idea. I have very weak bones. Bad collector's material, beside my vitamin D level is really low.

MR. APARO

(really mad)

Shut up, usually both of you will be dead by now but you're lucky, I don't feel like killing anybody today. It's Easter you know, I don't wanna be insensitive, unless I really have to. I'll give you a few minutes to tell me the truth. I am gonna go see the kids, you better have something when I get back.

Everybody leaves the room.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON Max and James' heads. They seem to be confused.

MAX

Man, I told you this was a stupid idea. We should never have come here.

JAMES

What the hell are you talking about? Look. We got the chairs.

As we pull back and inverse the shot to reveal - James and Max, tied, upside down, to the chairs.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I think I can manage to get loose. If I can, we can rip up these chairs and --

MAX

If you can get loose, you will untie me and we will both leave.

JAMES

What do you mean leave? No way, I gotta find out if the bonds are in these chairs.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Mr. Aparo eats a nice antipasto salad. Watches his children playing outside, with the real Easter Bunny - a midget, whose costume has been stretched apart. The TELEVISION plays in the b.g.

ON THE SCREEN - a news report.

REPORTER (V.O.)

And the Beverly Hills police are warning people to be on the lookout for escaped criminals, James Jackson and Max Rosenfeld.

THEIR MUG SHOTS hit the screen.

REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The men are violent and appear to have some sort of obsession with chairs.

MR. APARO

What the hell?

He scratches his head, calls Joey.

INT. THE BUNKER - MOMENTS LATER

Max and James still tied up.

MAX

Trish was right. You don't listen. You screwed up my life. I don't care if you find the money, what's the point of finding the money when we are dead, we still have to get out of here, and we'll be lucky to get out alive. You think they're just gonna let us walk away? You gotta tell them the truth.

Mr. Aparo, the guys, Joey and Sal enter the bunker.

MR. APARO

So what's the story behind these chairs?

(MORE)

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

(beat)

Okay, Joey bring me the lathe.

JAMES

What's "the lathe?"

MR. APARO

Just a little something to provide incentive to talk.

SAL

What do you say we just shoot them boss?

JOEY

It's not like anyone will miss them?

MR. APARO

Yeah, go ahead.

Sal takes out a gun, holds it to James' head. COCKS it.

JAMES

Wait, what about the lathe? Can't we try that first? We might like it, Okay, okay. I'll tell you the truth, see My Uncle Jack died and left me a note saying there was five million dollars in one of these chairs. You see I had these chairs before I sold them to the guy you bought them from, but I did not know about the money at the time.

MR. APARO

What? You can't fit five million dollars in a chair. Was he crazy?

JAMES

Yeah, he was in a mental institution.

MAX

James, when you say it that way, it really doesn't sound so good.

JAMES

Look. It's simple. My Uncle died. Yeah, he was crazy, but he was rich. He left me this dining set.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I sold it, to pay off my cab, and then I found a note saying he hid five million dollars in one of the chairs so we tracked down all the people who bought the chairs from the antique shop. I even let some dude stick a needle in my balls trying to find the money. I just need to check these last two, please.

MAX

I thought we're still missing one?

James rolls his eyes at Max - he can be such an idiot.

JAMES

(lying through his teeth)
No. There were four.

MR. APARO

Were there four or five? Man that's some kinda of story, you see I don't even like those chairs if it was not for my wife, I don't know why the hell she made me buy them, but I guess everything happens for reason. So was it four or five?

JAMES

Four. Four! I swear.

MR. APARO

Is he telling the truth?

JAMES

Like I said, he forgets things when he gets nervous.

MAX

It's true.

MR. APARO

What is?

MAX

(feigning ignorance)
I don't know. What?

MR. APARO

OK, we're gonna check the chairs.

One nod to Sal and Joey and the first chair is sliced apart with the chainsaw. James watches expectantly. There's nothing inside.

The henchmen get to work on the second chair. Inside the leg is a letter. Mr. Aparo opens it.

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Give up yet, James? Hah. Hah. Uncle Jack." Marone, he was some kind of an asshole this uncle of yours?

JAMES

Oh, yeah, you have no idea. Mr. Aparo.

MR. APARO

Well, this note proves you're not lying and you weren't trying to kill me. I tell you what, your uncle is one sick son of a bitch.

He nods to Sal and Joey, they release them and they leave with fear thanking Mr. Aparo on the way out.

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

(stops them)

If you tell anybody about this place I'm gonna find you and kill you, you hear?

They exit. Mr. Aparo nods once again to Sal and Joey.

MR. APARO (CONT'D)

I want you to follow these two idiots like their shadows, take couple more guys and find out how many chairs the set had.

Sal and Joey nod their heads.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

James and Max drive away. A close distance behind them, Joey and Sal follow in one car and two other guys in another car.

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - AFTERNOON

A lone palm tree rises up into a yellow afternoon sky. Behind it, the sparkling blue of the Pacific Ocean and the city of Venice. A dry, hot Southern California day. Even the wind is lazy and a little bored.

EXT. STRAND - VENICE BEACH - AFTERNOON

Max and James walk the strand in Venice Beach.

MAX

So that's it then. I'm out of a job. You lost your girl and your cab. We both lost our dignity and for what?

JAMES

There's one more chair.

MAX

James, face it. There is no money!

James can't believe it himself.

JAMES

See, you give up too easy. That's why you failed that test four times.

MAX

That's not why I failed the test. You know I got nervous.

JAMES

I know you're a pussy. A quitter. See, I know I'm gonna find that chair and the money. You need to think "positive."

MAX

You know what you are? You're all talk. You should listen to me. You should have listened to Trish. She told you not to sell the furniture, but no, you had to do it your way. Your way or the highway.

JAMES

Where you going?

MAX

I'm leaving. I'm done. I gotta look for a job.

JAMES

Don't walk away from me now. Ah Max! Come on.

MAX

Fuck you.

EXT. VENICE - DAY

Two beat patrol COPS spot James and Max; they draw their guns, making a big show of it, too big. James notices, he races past Max.

JAMES

Run! Run! Run!

Max doesn't wait. He runs, but he doesn't know what he's running from.

BEHIND THEM... on foot.

POLICE

(into walkie talkie)
In pursuit of suspects.

EXT. PARKING LOT - VENICE - AFTERNOON

James jumps into Max's car.

JAMES

Come on, man!

MAX

Why are the cops chasing us?

JAMES

How the hell should I know? What do I look like, an information booth? Get the fuck inside.

Max slides his body into the window as James takes off speeding.

EXT. STREETS - VENICE - DAY

A CAR CHASE ensues... James drives over the curb, cuts through gas stations, basically drives like a madman.

A POLICE CAR - with two different policemen, takes over the pursuit. James reaches the...

EXT. MARINA FREEWAY - DAY

He enters going the wrong way.

MAX

Did anyone ever tell you that your driving skills suck?

JAMES

Did anyone tell you that you drive too damn slow?

MAX

At least I go the right way!

JAMES

We are going the right way. Right away from the cops.

The POLICE follow... a HELICOPTER soon joins in the chase.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - SAME

Anita and Janika are watching the car chase, when Trish walks in and sees James and Max being pursued by the police.

TRISH

What's going on?

ANITA

Oh Girl, your man's on the news like O.J. Simpson!

JANIKA

Get us some more popcorn. I wanna watch this to the end, I told you he is no good.

TRISH

(really upset)

What? Oh my God! Mama stop it.

EXT. FREEWAY - LATER

James and Max are now followed by three COP CARS. Suddenly, a LARGE TRUCK enters from a nearby on ramp. The Car barely dodges past the truck.

The truck serves, skids across the freeway and falls over, cutting them off from the police.

JAMES

Shit! We gotta get outta here.

MAX

No! I gotta get away from you.
You're are one crazy motherfucker!

EXT. FREEWAY - NEAR UNDERPASS - DAY

James pulls over and they ditch the car. Max flags down the next car to come through. It's a white, windowless VAN. The door opens. It's Mistress Fredrika, happy to see them, and one of the helpers Women is in the driver seat. She smiles at Max.

MAX

Oh no!

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Wanna a ride fellows! Get in.

Upon seeing Mistress Fredrika, James grabs his balls.

JAMES

Oh, fuck no!

In the b.g. SIRENS from approaching cops.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

It's now or never.

James and Max regard each other. What's worse? Mistress Fredrika or the Police? They jump into the van. It's blood-red interior and plush shag carpet doesn't exactly welcome them inside.

JAMES

Bitch. You touch my sack, I'll
break your balls.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Relax. I'm not on the clock. You
boys have been very bad. You're all
over the news.

JAMES

For what?

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

You almost killed some Doctor and his patient.

JAMES

(to Max)

Dr. Camel! Dr. Camel!

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Dr. Kameel. That's what he said on the news.

She winks at Max. He looks around. She winks at him again. He sinks into the plush red carpet.

INT. BEVERLY ANTIQUES STORE - SAME TIME

Sal and Joey question the Owner.

OWNER

What the hell do you care how many chairs there were? That's privileged company information, which means it's none of your business.

JOEY

What do I look, stupid or something?

OWNER

Yeah, kind of.

SAL

I wonder how stupid your furniture would look covered in gasoline and four foot flames?

The Owner cringes.

OWNER

There were six chairs. I only have one slip left. Here it is.

JOEY

See how easy it is when you cooperate?

SAL

(into phone)

Yeah, Boss. It's just like you said. There's one more chair.

Sal holds the last receipt, the one James and Max couldn't find.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - AFTERNOON

RANDY JACKSON, PAULA ABDUL and SIMON COWELL sit in their chairs as a MAKE-UP ARTIST applies powder to their faces.

RANDY
I hope we have a better show
tonight.

On the stage is the chair. A SANJEYA-TYPE "KRISHNA" rehearses his big number. THE CAMERA - pans around him...

SIMON
(yelling)
Horrible. Absolutely horrible. I've
heard better singing from cats!

PAULA
(to Simon)
You're such a dick.

Simon waves his fist at her.

SIMON
You wanna get into it, again?

Paula rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH - LATER

The van pulls up, Mistress Fredrika opens the door.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA
This is as far as we go.
(motioning to the church)
We've got a two-thirty with several
Priests.

James and Max hop out.

JAMES
Ew. That's just wrong.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Tell me about it. They get a group discount.

MAX

Thank God I'm Jewish.

UGLY WOMAN

(winks at him again)
Rabbi Hiller's my best client.

MAX

Yuck.

MISTRESS FREDRIKA

Take care of yourselves.

JAMES

Thanks for the ride.

Mistress Fredrika holds up a needle, sharpens it.

MAX

Yeah, stick it to the man.

The van drives off.

MAX (CONT'D)

Great. Now, I'm going.

JAMES

What? You can't leave now. Where you gonna go?

MAX

I'm getting away from you. What I was trying to do before you almost killed me on the freeway. You're crazy, and you're making me crazy.

JAMES

Max! Wait up.

Max pulls away, walks across the street.

EXT. GOOD GUYS APPLIANCE STORE - AFTERNOON

The men argue outside when they see a COP CAR approaching. They duck inside.

CUT TO:

A FULL SHOT OF KRISHNA SINGING

Pull back to reveal fifty or so, TELEVISION SETS all with the same image and we are...

INT. GOOD GUYS APPLIANCE STORE - AFTERNOON

Max and James continue their argument.

MAX

Get the fuck away from me!

JAMES

Not until you apologize.

MAX

Apologize? For what? What the hell did I do?

JAMES

You let me sell the table and chairs in the first place. You should have stopped me.

MAX

What? Why was that my job? Like you would have listened to me!

JAMES

Fuck you.

MAX

No. Fuck you.

The men tear into each other. Max swings at James' head. James punches Max. They're both lousy fighters but before long they're rolling around on the floor, trying to kill each other.

JAMES

We were so close.

MAX

To what? There never was any money!
It was all in your head!

James readies for another punch then sees... THE CHAIR on NATIONAL TELEVISION!

Max hits him in the head. James turns Max's face so he sees the television image as well.

JAMES & MAX
The chair! The chair!

AT THE DOOR - the police come in.

JAMES
Be cool. Be cool.

They enter a storeroom.

EXT. AMERICAN IDOL - BURBANK - LATER

People line up to get inside, amongst them are Carlo Aparo, Sal and Joey.

SAL
Boss, you sure this was a good idea? You're not supposed to leave the house.

CARLO APARO
Fuck that. What do you think, I listen to the police? This is an easy five million. We get the chair, we leave. We're back in time for Mrs. Aparo's pasta.

The men smile, shake their heads, "Mmmm."

INT. GOOD GUYS APPLIANCE STORE - SAME

Max and James are dressed as GOOD GUYS EMPLOYEES. The cop struts around, looking things over. James tries to be cool.

The cop approaches.

COP
I'm looking for these two men. Thought I just saw them come in here.

JAMES
(looking at his picture)
Oh, that's one fine looking black man. Superb, I might say. What a good looking fellow. Hard to believe this man could have committed a crime. Hah.

COP
Have you seen them or not?

JAMES

No, haven't seen them. Don't know them. Never seen them before in my life.

Max steps over.

MAX

Could I interest you in a new oven range, Officer?

JAMES

He's looking for some wanted men. He doesn't need anything. Just let the nice cop be on his way, okay? We'll just be helping other customers and shit.

James grabs Max, pulls him away. The Cop thinks for a minute, then reaches into his pocket pulls out the picture.

COP

Just a second. What about you?

He shows the mug shots to Max.

COP (CONT'D)

You seen these two?

MAX

Oh, no. But that guy looks like Denzel Washington, right? What a handsome fellow.

The Cop looks at them strangely.

COP

(recognizing them)

Hey wait a minute. I know you two. You guys sold me and my wife that defective microwave last month.

The MANAGER steps over.

MANAGER

Is something wrong Officer?

COP

Yeah, these two employees of yours been pushing bad products.

The Manager looks at James and Max.

MANAGER

I've never seen these two men in my
life.

JAMES

Oh shit!

The Cop realizes who they are, fumbles for his gun. James and
Max take off out the front door.

EXT. GOOD GUYS APPLIANCE STORE

James sees the POLICE CAR, jumps in. Max follows.

MAX

What the hell are you doing?

JAMES

We're going to get that last chair.

EXT. STREETS - LOS ANGELES

James, turns on the siren, hauls ass through the
intersections.

JAMES

Look at me, I'm running red lights!

MAX

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

ON THE POLICE RADIO - an announcement.

POLICE RADIO

Attention, all units - felons
spotted at Good Guys in Venice.
Please respond.

MAX

This is unit...R2-D2...

James rips the handset from Max.

JAMES

R2-D2? You crazy? Give her the
number of the vehicle.

MAX

(into handset)
Yes, this is unit 451, we are in
pursuit.

POLICE RADIO
What's your twenty?

JAMES
(into handset, trying to be
official)
Suspects heading south on
Sepulveda.

ON SEPULVEDA BLVD. - near the 405/Wilshire.

James and Max in the police car, HEAD NORTH, while seven police cars with sirens blaring rip past them heading the opposite direction.

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - LATER

Preparations for the show are in full swing. RYAN SEACREST addresses the audience.

RYAN SEACREST
Thank you all for coming. Tonight's show is going to be fantastic. We have a special surprise for you, a new contestant will be joining us. So stay tuned. When we return we'll here from our favorite Indian crooner, Krishna. Enjoy the show!

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, and the hustle and bustle of a television show, making ready for air time is apparent. It's a frenzy.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - GUARD GATE - LATER

James and Max pull up in the stolen police vehicle. The GUARD (an old codger) stops them.

JAMES
Official police business. We need access to American Idol. We've got a...
(reading off a report in
the car)
and a 311 in progress.

GUARD
Ooh, I was in the Reserves. Let's see if I got all that, you got a "disturbance" and some "indecent exposure"! Oh, is it one of the girls?

MAX
No, it's Simon. He's finally
flipped.

GUARD
Should I call in a Code 20?

JAMES
(not knowing what he's
saying)
Yeah, sure. Do that. Now let us the
fuck in.

The Guard opens the gate.

GUARD
Wait, you'll need these.

He hands them two ALL ACCESS backstage passes. As they drive
onto the lot, the Guard picks up the phone.

GUARD (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yes, ABC news? We need media
coverage...

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

James and Max mill about, behind the stage, looking for the
chair...

ON THE STAGE - Krishna finishes his song, the crowd CHEERS.

PAULA (O.S.)
That was inspired. I really liked
it. Made me think of how much fun I
used to have singing, before I had
my breakdown.
(she sobs a little)
It's alright, I'm okay.

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - STAGE - SAME

RANDY
Hey Man, I just gotta say, "I felt
it." You really belted it out.

KRISHNA
Thank you.

SIMON

I think you just broke one of my eardrums. I'm sorry but, you truly suck.

The CROWD "BOOS" Simon. Defeated, Krishna skulks off.
BACKSTAGE - he bumps into James.

KRISHNA

I hope you have better luck.

James nods, then sees THE CHAIR, on the stage.

JAMES

Max! There it is.

James runs towards the stage, a BURLY GUARD holds him back.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey, what's that? Don't you see this. It says, "ALL ACCESS" that means I can go wherever I want.

MAX

(trying to be tough)
And he wants on that stage.

BURLY GUARD

(actually tough)
Only if he's a performer.

MAX

He is.

JAMES

I am? I am. I am!

BURLY GUARD

Oh, you're the surprise contestant?
Why didn't you say so. Who's he?

JAMES

He's my manager.

BURLY GUARD

(to Max)
You need to get in the music booth,
and you need to get into your
costume.

MAX

Don't worry, I got your music
covered. You're gonna be great.

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan Seacrest is on the stage.

RYAN SEACREST

Well, we didn't all agree with Simon on Krishna but then, we never agree with Simon. Our next contestant is a new girl whose beautiful voice is sure to win Simon's approval. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Chandra...

The curtain opens to reveal James, wearing an ill-fitting evening gown and a lousy wig. The music plays... it's Barbra Streisand's "MEMORIES."

James starts to sing, the absolute all-time worst version of this song you will ever hear.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - SAME

Trish is still crying over James's last predicament. Almost all the appliances are gone, except for the Samsung TV.

ANITA

Oh, Honey. You gotta snap out of this funk you in. No man is worth all these tears.

TRISH

I pushed him, Anita. I pushed him too hard. I should have been more understanding.

Momma enters the room, with a bag of Doritos.

JANIKA

Trish you been crying for three hours, you better snap on out of it cause my show is on. Hell, I missed the beginning. Anita, would you turn on the TV?

Anita turns on the television. American Idol comes up. They watch dumbstruck as...

TRISH

What the hell? Oh my god, that's James.

James sings "Memories."

ANITA

Oh Girl, that's awful. He shoulda kept his day job, and what the hell he is wearing?

Trish notices the chair James is sitting on.

TRISH

Oh my God! That's it!

Trish gets her coat.

JANIKA

Where you going?

TRISH

To get five million dollars.

Anita and Janika quickly follow.

INT. AMERICAN IDOL - BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

BACKSTAGE - Max is crying, he's so proud.

ON THE AUDIENCE - Carlo Aparo and his men move to the side of the stage.

THE POLICE - arrive - and cover the exits.

THE NEWS, MEDIA, and PRESS arrive - they set up cameras and position themselves along the aisles.

ON STAGE - James finishes. The crowd is so horrified, they can barely speak.

RANDY

I don't know what to say, it was so, so, so bad, I'm speechless.

PAULA

Thanks "Chandra." Now I have to go back to therapy.

Simon gets up, APPLAUDING the travesty.

SIMON

At last, a real singer. Where have you been hiding? Now that's truth. I really felt it.

The audience reacts, BOOING and HISSING Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You were good, actually I kinda like it.

Max, beaming with pride, steps out onto the stage with some roses for James.

ON THE PRESS & THE POLICE - finally recognizing James and Max.

REPORTER

Hey! It's them. They're the wanted guys!

The POLICE draw their guns. JAMES and MAX each grab a side of the chair, James runs left and Max runs right. They drop the chair... in the middle of the stage.

JAMES

Idiot!

They run back for it and pick it up. James runs down the center of the stage, with the chair over his head.

Sal and Joey run after them. James and Max run into Carlo Aparo still in the audience. They all fight over the chair.

THE REPORTER recognizes Carlo Aparo.

REPORTER

It's Carlo Aparo! Isn't he supposed to be under house arrest?

They start taking pictures of him.

POLICEMAN

Look, it's the Crime Pin leader!

Now it's an all out brawl. Everyone punching everyone.

AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE SET - Trish, Anita and Momma. They run down into the fray, trying to get a piece of the chair, too.

Carlo Aparo sees Simon, he smacks him in the head.

CARLO APARO

My niece was on the show last month. That's for being a prick.

PAULA

(to Carlo Aparo)

Hit him once for me, too, will you?

CARLO APARO
With pleasure.

He hits Simon one more time.

Randy Jackson tries to get away, runs into Anita.

RANDY
(re: Anita)
Whoa, why don't you try auditioning
hun, I can help you, you know.

ANITA
Shut up fool.

JAMES
Thank you! Thank you very much!

ON THE CHAIR - James cuts it apart, just as Sal and Joey tug at it, splitting the upholstery sending hundreds of JUNK BONDS and BANK NOTES flying into the air.

EVERYONE STOPS and watches them...

MAX - takes a running leap and jumps on his back.

MAX
Citizens arrest! Citizens arrest!

James spots Trish - he embraces her. They both hold bank notes in their hands and jump for joy.

THE POLICE - surround everyone. Guns drawn.

INT. AMERICAN IDOL SET - LATER

Things have calmed down significantly. The audience and the Reporters have been removed. All who remain are; James, Max, Trish, Anita and Momma.

Randy, Simon - sporting a black eye, Paula and Ryan are seated next to them.

Sal, Joey and Carlo Aparo are hand-cuffed.

The POLICE COMMISSIONER listens as James tells the story.

JAMES
And that's why we had to find the
chairs.

COMMISSIONER
That's quite a story.

A COP steps in, pulls the Commissioner aside.

COP

(whispering)

The reporters outside are running a story with the title "Commissioner of the Year"

COMMISSIONER

(to Cop)

Really?

COP

Yeah. They're all so excited about how you brought in Carlo Aparo and how clever it was of you to use Max as part of your plan.

COMMISSIONER

All you nice people can go.

The Commissioner looks over at Max.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

Not you...

(he sighs deeply)

Looks like this is the year, you finally make the force, Rosenfeld.

ON MAX - elated.

MAX

You mean a real cop?

COMMISSIONER

Come see me in my office tomorrow.

MAX

What about the test?

COMMISSIONER

Consider it open-book.

JAMES

And what about my money?

COMMISSIONER

You're the proud owner of five million dollars. And you can start your generosity by repaying the city for all the damage, some donations will be nice too.

TRISH

Oh, Baby! You did it! I always had faith in you! What'd I tell you, "think..."

JAMES / TRISH

Positive. "Positive."

ANITA

What are you gonna buy first?

JAMES

(smiling)

A bag for your head, and a ring on your hand.

RANDY

Right on, Man.

INT. TRISH'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY - MORNING

Trish is making coffee, James knocks, she opens.

JAMES

Good morning babe, are you ready to collect?

Gives her a big kiss.

TRISH

Of course I am.

James grabs the sugar shaker and pours sugar in her coffee and gives her a big kiss.

JAMES

Come on babe I am so exited.

EXT. BANK - ESTABLISHING

James carries a briefcase. Trish walks along side him. They head to the bank.

TRISH

Now remember, even though we're gonna be rich, you still need to listen to me, you hear? Cause I'm not gonna be getting into it with you, uh uh. If you had listened to me we wouldn't have had to go through this mess in the first place.

James stops in the street, puts hand over Trish's mouth.

JAMES

Trish. I will always listen to you from now on. I promise. Just let me enjoy this day, will you please?

He kisses her.

INT. BANK - DAY

The BANK PRESIDENT and several employees are there to greet them.

BANK PRESIDENT

Mr. Jackson?

JAMES

Oh, man! Am I so glad to be here, you have no idea what we went through to find these babies. If we can cash these and you can give us a check we'll be on our way.

BANK PRESIDENT

I'm afraid it is a bit more complicated than that.

The Attorney Michael Bowden steps out from behind a walled area.

JAMES

What's he doing here?

ATTORNEY

Your Uncle has one last condition in his will.

JAMES

What? What condition? You know what kind of condition I'm in? Fuck that!

TRISH

Listen to him, James.

JAMES

I'm not listening to him or anyone. I want my damn money!

TRISH

Baby, what'd we just talk about?

JAMES

(thinks for a minute)
She's right. You're right.
(to the Attorney)
Go ahead. Let's have it.

ATTORNEY

Your Uncle had a feeling you might try and sell the chairs and left specific instructions that if you did so a second precedent would go into effect.

JAMES

Okay. So what's the deal?

EXT. MENTAL HOSPITAL - DAY

A cab drives up to the gate. James exits.

ATTORNEY (V.O.)

As stipulated by the will and enforced by civil code, 5858.9 in order to receive your money...

James exits the cab, walks up the steps.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL HALLWAY

ATTORNEY (V.O.)

You will spend one year working in the California Institute for the Mentally Challenged. At the end of the year, you will be entitled to receive the full amount of the bonds, five million dollars, the bonds will be cashed today and placed in an interest-bearing account, until that time.

James, wearing scrubs, mops the hallway. The Man in the Suit, the one who thought he was the CEO of GETRICH.COM approaches.

MAN IN SUIT

You missed the big meeting! Shame on you. Shame.

JAMES

Get your sick ass away from me!
(to the sky)
Uncle Jack!

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

You're one sick fffff, I know you want me to work hard for the money but not like that, God damn it.

HELEN

Mr. Jackson, if you could refrain from using foul language while you're here, we'd appreciate it. After all, this is a mental institution.

JAMES

I know that. I see that. You don't need to be reminding me every five minutes.

HELEN

(re: the floor)
You missed a spot.

Off James's reaction...

FADE OUT.

THE END