

The Brooklyn Kid

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BACK SEAT, CHECKER CAB - DAY

Two white pills marked RORER 714 sit in an open palm.

KID (V.O.)
*I knew they'd take at least a half hour
to kick in, but I figured, fuck it.*

KID SALLY (20) a tall, muscular, charismatic Italian with magic blue eyes, tosses the pills in his mouth and swallows.

KID (V.O.)
*If you're gonna kill yourself, you might
as well at least try to do it stoned.*

Rain blows into the cab as EDDIE ZINKO (20), a sharp-dressed guy with a cigarette and a flat cap, gets in beside Kid.

EDDIE
(to the Cab driver)
Take us to the Twin Towers.

KID (V.O.)
*And why do it? Why jump off one of the
tallest buildings in the world?*

EXT. CHECKER CAB, TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Kid looks to the sky, where the tops of the Twin Towers disappear into the black storm clouds looming overhead.

KID (V.O.)
Answer's pretty simple, really.

SUPER: "NEW YORK CITY - 1975"

KID (V.O.)
It was the only way I could die.

Eddie grabs Kid by the arm and stops him.

KID (V.O.)
*That's my best friend, Fast Eddie Zinko.
He's also my manager.*

EDDIE
Hey, Kid. You really intend to go through
with this... Don't you.

KID (V.O.)
*And if I didn't know any better, I'd say
he was egging me on.*

EXT. ROOF TOP, TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Dark clouds crowd the roof. A heavy rain pelts concrete.

Eddie and Kid approach the ledge and admire the city, a panorama of skyscrapers, bridges, and rivers.

KID
You sons of bitches!

Kid climbs up onto the wall that divides the roof's ledge.

KID (CONT'D)
You sons of bitches want me to jump!
Don't you! Sitting there in your leather
chairs, behind your big desks, just
hoping I'll do it!

Kid stands inches away from a thousand foot drop.

KID (CONT'D)
First you tried to kill me in Chinatown.
Then you tried again on the bus! You
didn't want me in law school! You didn't
want my music! You want me out of the
way! You want me dead! Dead!

Eddie watches on, soaked from the rain, as Kid pulls out an old pair of drumsticks and plays AIR DRUMS over the ledge!

KID (CONT'D)
Well here I am! Are you happy now? And
God, as for you! You've made a mistake!
Giving thieves and murderers all the
money and power. You know me. I'm not a
bad guy. And this is how you repay me!

Kid slaps his right hand against the crook of his left arm, Italian for UP YOUR ASS and gives it to the whole city!

KID (CONT'D)
Well fuck youse all! You hear me? I'm
coming back, and I'm gonna climb up into
your skyscrapers, and I'm gonna drag
youse all out into the streets!

Kid climbs up onto the wall, raises out his arms, and addresses the whole city at once.

KID (CONT'D)
I'm gonna screw you every way I can!

A sharp gust of wind whips around Kid. His sticks GO FLYING!

KID (V.O.)
*And naturally, that's when the Quaaludes
 hit me like a ton of bricks.*

The world spins around him, and as he loses his balance...

Kid jumps.

KID (V.O.)
*Wait a second. Maybe we're getting a
 little ahead of ourselves here. Let's
 give this shit some context.*

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT, 1956 - DAY

On a hot afternoon, Kid (1) lies back in his crib.

KID (V.O.)
*That's me, Salvatore Marino. In nineteen
 fifty five I was born in Flatbush
 Brooklyn, and you never saw a kid more
 spoiled by his grandparents.*

Kid's grandma VERA, sits fanning herself at the kitchen table. Her old friend LAURIE reads the news beside her.

LAURIE
 Vera. We almost hit the number! We played
 seven fourteen and wouldn't you know it,
 seven sixteen came out!

KID (V.O.)
*This here's my Nana Vera, and that's
 Laurie, my comare.*

VERA
 I bet it was that son of a bitch husband
 of mine that bet the extra two dollars.

KID (V.O.)
*You see, back before they had lotto,
 people played the numbers.*

INT. AQUEDUCT RACETRACK, 1956 - DAY

Horses approach the starting gate.

KID (V.O.)
*All you did was bet you could guess the
 last three digits of the total mutual
 handle at any given race track on any
 given day.*

People buy tickets, check odds, drink beer, and review the programs. Others dine on food and wine in the jockey club.

KID (V.O.)

The odds of guessing were a thousand to one, and payback was five hundred to one. So if you bet a nickel and hit the number, you won twenty five bucks! Any win could be a windfall, and that made it serious business.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT, 1956 - DAY

Vera shakes her head in disappointment.

VERA

Bah! If that bum came home after the eighth like I told him and didn't bet his lousy deuce I'd be in the chips tomorrow!

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! A noise echoes out from the bedroom.

Vera and Laurie get up to investigate.

They run in to find a nude, shit-covered Kid standing up in his crib slapping a crap-laden diaper against the wall.

LAURIE

Vera! Look at what the little monster's doing. He's getting *mede* all over!

VERA

I think he's trying to tell us something.

Vera steps closer to examine the wall.

LAURIE

What the hell are you saying? The brat covered the wall with shit!

VERA

Look Laurie! There, don't you see! It looks like... Yes! Yes, it's a number!

Laurie puts down the diaper and leans in closer.

LAURIE

Holy Mary mother of - Vera that's a one! And next a three, and the last... a seven! One three seven!

They both do the sign of the cross.

Vera picks Kid up in her arms and rocks him gently.

VERA

It's a sign, Laurie. He's charmed, and he wants us to play it. Miss Fantasia was right. And if she was right about the veil, then she's right about this too.

KID (V.O.)

Oh, yeah. My veil. How could I forget?

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH, 1955 - NIGHT

Vera lights candles at a shrine.

KID (V.O.)

While most immigrants had grown skeptical and given up the superstitions of the Old Country, my Nana Vera kept up with her rituals just to be on the safe side.

INT. MATERNITY ROOM, 1955 - NIGHT

Vera recites her rosary to a picture of Saint Anthony.

KID (V.O.)

Before I was born she spent all night praying to Saint Anthony to divert the evil spirits. But most of all, she prayed that after twenty three years Miss Fantasia's prediction would come true. Her grandson would be born with a veil.

INT. JOSIE'S APARTMENT, 1932 - DAY

JOSIE, the neighborhood gossip observer, peeks out her top floor window, down at a house across the street.

A group of WOMEN swarm around the house's entrance.

KID (V.O.)

It all started when my Pops almost died from a fever as a kid.

JOSIE

Who the hell does that Vera think she is!

INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING, 1932 - DAY

Josie bangs on a door until a middle-aged Laurie answers.

INT. VERA'S HOUSE, 1932 - DAY

Josie and Laurie push into the house and make their way into

THE KITCHEN

where they find young Vera at the table, a big string of garlic around her neck, and black rosary beads in her hands.

LAURIE

Vera. Vera what's the matter?

Vera puts down her beads and cries into Laurie's shoulder.

VERA

The horns are on Tony again! It's his third pneumonia this year. Someone has the Evil Eye on him. I'm sure of it.

JOSIE

Did you call Miss Fantasia?

KID (V.O.)

Miss Fantasia was the local witch doctor, gypsy, fortune teller, and exorcist. She was married to God, and was better trusted in the neighborhood than any hospital doctor.

VERA

She's already in there. Says she's gonna cure him once and for all.

They follow Josie into the

BEDROOM

where little Tony (10) lies unconscious in bed with a string of garlic around his neck too.

MISS FANTASIA, wearing even more garlic than Tony, circles him as she mumbles incantations and sprinkles holy water.

Sweat glistens over her fat face and neck, and her spotted skin is flush with blood and heat.

Tony's face starts turning blue.

VERA (CONT'D)

No! No, my Tony!

Miss Fantasia's chanting grows louder and louder until she suddenly stops, turns, and JUMP-SCARES the women.

MISS FANTASIA

The muses! They're speaking... They're -

Miss Fantasia's EYES BULGE out from her head, as if some invisible man were THROTTLING her neck. She chokes.

MISS FANTASIA (CONT'D)

Tony's first son will be born with a veil, and it's he who'll lead the charmed life, if his lust for power does not ruin him! The most beautiful women will adore him! With his eyes he will see through people! He will know what others don't!

Miss Fantasia takes a labored step and drops to her knees.

MISS FANTASIA (CONT'D)

But will he know mercy?

Her face turns purple as she gasps for air.

MISS FANTASIA (CONT'D)

His power won't be from the devil! Call him Salvatore, for our savior! Salvatore! Savior! Salvatore! Savior! Salva -

The strangle hold around her neck LIFTS her off the linoleum floor and THROWS her into the plaster wall like a rag doll!

The women JUMP-SCARE again! Vera faints.

Josie tip-toes forward to investigate the body.

TONY (O.S.)

What happened?

Josie and Laurie JUMP-SCARE to Tony standing behind them: out of bed, his fever gone, and his skin a healthy pink.

JOSIE

It's Miss Fantasia. She's dead!

Tony does the sign of the cross and they follow suit.

KID (V.O.)

*After that my Pops never got sick again.
They all swear it was a true miracle.*

INT. BIRTHING ROOM, HOSPITAL, 1955 - DAY

Vera rubs her rosary beads as she mutters a prayer.

Tony (33) wears garlic as he sits at his wife JEANIE's side, who's pushing her baby out into her DOCTOR's waiting hands.

Vera drops her rosary beads and gasps.

Baby Kid's born covered in a thin membrane, looking something like a butterfly in a cocoon.

KID (V.O.)

In the Old World they called it a veil, a sign of good luck and mystic protection. And there was mine. Right there.

The Doctor peels away the membrane, picks baby Kid up by his feet, and gives him a SLAP on his behind.

Kid doesn't cry. Instead he lets out a one syllable moan.

DOCTOR

Did you hear that? Did he say something?

VERA

I think he called you a schmuck.

INT. BEDROOM, BROOKLYN APARTMENT, 1956 - DAY

Baby Kid lies in his crib with his face turning blue.

KID (V.O.)

And it worked, too! One day I was practicing how to hold my breath.

Jeanie checks on Kid and faints. Tony picks up his tiny blue body and dunks him in a bathtub of cold water and ice.

KID (V.O.)

But my Pops had to come by and spoil my concentration. Yup. As early as then I knew that I was pretty much invincible.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT, 1956 - DAY

Vera and Laurie dress Kid (1) in fresh clothes.

Vera picks up Kid and Laurie follows, but before they go, they take one last look at Kid's shitty artwork.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT, 1956 - LATER THAT NIGHT

Vera's husband TODDO leans back from his empty plate, GRUMBLES, and opens the news. Vera watches him like a hawk.

TODDO
Look, Vera! The Yankees won.

Vera snatches the paper from his hands.

VERA
Oh for Christ's sake.

She turns to the mutual handle: \$7,645,137.

VERA (CONT'D)
Toddo! We hit it! I had twenty bucks on one thirty seven! Can you believe it? That's ten thousand dollars!

Toddo jumps from his seat and celebrates with his wife.

TODDO
Hey uh, could I have a hunnert for the big A tomorrow? I got a sure - wait. One thirty seven? That's not our number!

VERA
You know how I got it, Toddo? Sally Boy gave it to me! We won because of his veil! Unlike you and *your* good for nothing veil. Look at you! You're a bum!

TODDO
Come on now. All I want is a hunnert.

VERA
This time it's gonna be different, Toddo! Sally Boy's gonna be somebody!

KID (V.O.)
And after that, my life was just as charmed as they said it would be.

MONTAGE - KID GROWS UP

-- INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Vera bathes Kid (4), dresses him in a tiny suit, and hand-feeds him spinach while they watch Popeye on TV.

KID (V.O.)
My Nana bathed me, dressed me, and cooked me every meal I'd ever eat.

-- EXT. STREETS OF BROOKLYN - DAY

Kid (6), in a suit, holds hands with Vera. They enter an ice cream shop.

KID (V.O.)

I always got what I wanted. I was always spotless, and I always wore suits.

-- INT, ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

Kid spills some ice cream on his suit vest. Vera spits in her hand and wipes it clean.

KID (V.O.)

After all, my Pops figured if I was gonna be a great lawyer one day, I might as well get used to looking the part.

-- INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A NUN hands out graded tests. Kid (12) got a 95! His name's signed SAL THE GREAT.

KID (V.O.)

Turns out I was a whiz at school too. I won every spelling bee, aced every test.

-- EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Kid plays tag with a dozen girls. When he's about to tag a GIRL out, she kisses him.

KID (V.O.)

And boy, did the girls love me.

-- INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Kid opens his locker and a half-dozen love letters fall out.

KID (V.O.)

I mean they really loved me.

-- EXT. UNDER THE BLEACHERS - DAY

Kid sits across from a BLONDE. She nods at him, expectantly. He grabs her breasts.

KID (V.O.)

And I loved them.

-- EXT. SCHOOL YARD GRADUATION - DAY

Kid (13) gets called on stage and receives a slip of paper. He cries like a baby.

KID (V.O.)

I cried when I graduated. No more flipping baseball cards. No more class president. And high school wasn't co-ed, so that meant no more girls either.

-- INT. EYE DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Kid struggles to read letters off an eye chart.

KID (V.O.)

And charmed or not, puberty wasn't kind.

-- INT. ORTHODONTIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Kid wears black-rimmed glasses.

The dentist fills his mouth with wires.

KID (V.O.)

I went near-blind. My teeth grew crooked.

-- INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - DAY

Vera ladles extra pasta onto Kid's plate, but he's barely touched his food as it is.

KID (V.O.)

I couldn't eat because of the pain, and my body turned into a toothpick!

-- INT. TAILORS - DAY

Kid barely fits into his suit. The TAILOR does the sign of the cross and Vera starts crying.

KID (V.O.)

I never smiled. I had no ass. My hair grew thick, oily, and wild. I was a mess.

WHAP! WHAP! WHAP!

Everyone looks to the window where a COOL GUY's rapping his drumsticks on the glass as he walks by. Two HOT GIRLS follow behind him, laughing and smoking a joint.

The Tailor and Cool Guy make eye-contact. Cool Guy stops. Tailor stands. Cool Guy flips him off. Tailor gives chase.

Kid follows

OUTSIDE

as the Tailor races down the street after them.

Kid TRIPS over his long pant legs and FACE-PLANTS the sidewalk. His eyes focus in on the dropped drumsticks.

-- INT. KID'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kid shuts his door, locks it, and pulls the drumsticks out from his pocket.

-- INT. KID'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kid raps away with the sticks on four piles of books.

KID (V.O.)

*That first pair of sticks became my best
friends. And wouldn't you know it,
they're the God damned reason I'm in this
mess in the first place.*

END MONTAGE

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Kid (16) walks towards the schoolyard with a basketball.

A BOY around Kid's age in bright yellow SUNGLASSES smokes cigarettes with another BOY far across the street.

SUNGLASSES

Hey, you! Where you going?

KID

Who me? Uh, to shoot some baskets!

SUNGLASSES

That's a drag! Why don't you come over here and smoke with us instead!

KID

No thanks!

Kid blows them off and dribbles up the block.

SUNGLASSES

Yeah, well midgets can't play basketball!

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Kid closes his eyes as he rocks a drum solo on a full kit of drums. Sunglasses peers in through the basement window...

And when Kid finishes the solo and opens his eyes...

He JUMP-SCARES! Sunglasses beckons him to come outside.

EXT. BRICK ALLEY - DAY

Sunglasses is flanked by LOU (15), who's short and scrawny, and PAULIE (16), who's big and fat by comparison.

Kid walks up to them, drumsticks clutched hard in his fist, as if he were expecting a fight.

Sunglasses takes them off. It's Eddie (16).

He walks up to Kid, sticks his hand out, and shakes.

EDDIE (SUNGLASSES)
They call me Fast Eddie.

KID
I'm Sal...

EDDIE
Kid, you play those drums real cool, so you can't be as square as you look. This here's Little Lou and that's Paulie.

Lou offers Kid a bottle of Thunderbird wine.

KID
Oh uh, I don't drink.

LOU
What do you mean you don't drink?

EDDIE
Don't hassle him. Maybe it slows down his drumming. If he can play like that, he don't have to drink. Hey umm... Look. I'm sorry I called you a midget.

Kid gives a wiry smile.

KID (V.O.)
From that day on, Eddie and I were inseparable. I'd finally found a friend.

EXT. KID'S BACK PORCH - ANOTHER DAY

Kid and Eddie sit on the stoop eating Italian ices.

<p>EDDIE</p> <p>Man Kid, this Florida trip's gonna be the best ever. I figure we take Paulie's car, and we'll stay down at the Castaways. We'll say we need one room for two, and Paulie and Lou can sneak in.</p>	<p>KID (V.O.)</p> <p><i>And yet, all I ever dreamed about was being on stage with Hendrix, Clapton, or Jagger. I wanted to be the fastest drummer in the East. A Manhattan gunfighter with sticks faster than bullets.</i></p>
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EDDIE

Hey, Kid! What the hell's wrong with you? Did you even hear a word I just said?

KID

Eddie. I got something better.

EDDIE

Better? What's better than Florida?

KID

Becoming a rock star. Being rich and famous. Driving around in limousines and having chicks at my feet.

Eddie leans back and takes a good long look at his skinny friend, with his thick glasses and a mouth full of braces.

EDDIE

What are you crazy? How's an ugly little punk like you gonna get famous?

KID

But Eddie. That's why I need you. So how about it? Will you help me?

EDDIE

Sure Kid. What do you want me to do?

KID

Be my manager.

EDDIE

All right. I'm your manager then.

KID

Ok, well. Now that you're my manager, what do you want me to do?

EDDIE

Comb your hair... Buy cool clothes... And you know what. I'll give you a new name.

KID

I have a name. Kid Sally. Fastest drummer in the world.

Eddie tosses away his ices and puts his arm around Kid.

EDDIE

We're gonna grab the world by the balls.

KID (V.O.)

But neither Lou nor Paulie knew a thing about music. So first we needed a band.

INT. CHURCH DANCE - NIGHT

Teenagers crowd the dance floor. Eddie hangs back by the punch bowl, sizing up the BAND.

KID (V.O.)

Eddie combed every dance he could find.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Eddie smokes a joint with the Band while talking up a storm.

KID (V.O.)

Selling them all with promises of the big time, foxy chicks, and bags of weed.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Eddie, Lou, and Paulie crack open some beers.

KID (V.O.)

And just like that, Eddie'd assembled the most talented musicians in New York.

They lean back and watch as O.V. (16) plays guitar, MARK (16) plays bass, and Kid sits on drums.

KID (V.O.)

O.V. with a voice of silk on guitar, Mark, the song-writing poet virtuoso on bass, and the hottest, swingiest, most versatile drummer in the United States, Kid Sally. A three-piece powerhouse of sixteen year olds ready to take the country by storm.

They finish their set to Eddie's clapping.

EDDIE

Ok! Now you guys just need a name!

Cold silence... Lou raises his finger and opens his mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Eddie hands out DUCKY SUNDAY fliers to a group of Rabbis.

KID (V.O.)

*The bookings came easy for us early on,
mostly cause Fast Eddie could talk the
cane off a blind man. He told the rabbis
we were Jewish.*

INT. CONFESSION BOOTH, CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Eddie slips a flier to a Priest through the confessional.

KID (V.O.)

He told the priests we were Catholic.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Eddie talks a black Minister's ear off.

KID (V.O.)

*One time he even told a minister that two
of us were black, just to get the gig.*

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Eddie explains their predicament to the band.

KID (V.O.)

*We figured he'd finally lied himself into
a corner, and we'd have to cancel.*

INT. STAGE, CHURCH - NIGHT

Kid, O.V. and Mark walk out on stage.

For a heartbeat the Minister's disappointed.

KID (V.O.)

*Instead, he hired two kids off the street
just to stand there and pretend to play!*

Out walk two black BOYS with guitars. The Minister claps.

KID (V.O.)

Eddie never took no for an answer, and we all had nowhere to go but up.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Two thousand TEENAGERS crowd the stage. RABBIS and other adult chaperones line the aisles and back rows.

KID (V.O.)

Our first real debut was the B'nai Brith Winter Ball. Two thousand fickle teenyboppers just waiting to be shaped into a murderous disillusioned lynch mob, or an applauding, whistling, cult of idol worshippers.

INT. BACK STAGE, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Mark nervously fixes his hair. Kid bites his nails and adjusts his braces. Eddie tries to remain calm.

EDDIE

Alright boys, you're gonna be great tonight. You're gonna knock 'em dead. No mistakes. Smooth as silk. They're gonna love you! Love you I say! Love you!

O.V. VOMITS into the trash can.

INT. STAGE, AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Eddie grabs the microphone as the band takes center stage.

EDDIE

Mozeltov! Here's the act you've all been waiting for. A band that's headed for fame and fortune. Ladies and gentlemen, the one, the only, Ducky Sunday!

The crowd roars as the house lights flash on, and Ducky Sunday drives into a rock and roll original.

KID (V.O.)

I loved the energy of that crowd, man. The tension. The drama. The excitement of standing out there under the spotlight.

Kid rides the crowd's energy waves as he plays his ass off.

KID (V.O.)

And that's when I knew. Right then and there. I wanted to feel that way forever.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Paulie, O.V., Mark, and Kid (17) pass a joint between them.

KID (V.O.)

*But after a busy year of local dances,
Ducky Sunday had played itself out.*

When Eddie walks in they look to him expectantly, but Eddie shakes his head and sits down, defeated. O.V. cries.

KID (V.O.)

*There just wasn't enough work without the
backing of some big shot record label.*

INT. BOOKING OFFICE - DAY

Kid shakes hands with MR. SHINNS, a wiry booking agent.

KID (V.O.)

*Just to make due I started working for
Mr. Shinns. I'd play anything. Weddings.
Bar mitzvas, anniversaries. Anything.*

EXT. VIERRA CLUB - NIGHT

The Grim Reaper holds the door open for Marilyn Monroe.

Abraham Lincoln smokes a cigar nearby.

INT. VIERRA CLUB - NIGHT

People in costumes crowd the buffet table.

Kid plays the drums beside a middle aged SAMMY on trumpet and an OLD GEEZER on the accordion.

KID (V.O.)

*And there I was, the next rock superstar,
on stage with a washed up ham and a
gargoyle, playing for a bunch of old
ginzos in Halloween masks.*

Kid hides his face behind the cymbals as Vera waves at him.

KID (V.O.)

*Dumb ginzos, how the hell can you dance
to this music? This music is shit. It's
so bad it twists my stomach into knots.*

The song ends, and Kid's already halfway off the stage.

THE CROWD
 Play Oh Marie! Yeah! Oh Marie!

Kid slinks back over to his drum kit, and they start playing.

SAMMY
*Oh, Marie. Oh, Marie. - What a sucker you
 made out of me. - I gave you my salami, -
 But you gave me all your baloney.*

The Women throw Sammy daggers, while the Guys have a laugh.

CUT TO:

Kid slips his drumsticks into his pocket, and sits down beside his Uncle Jimmy (35) at a table near the buffet.

UNCLE JIMMY
 What's the matter, Sal?

KID
 I feel like a damn prostitute Uncle
 Jimmy. Playing with these idiots.

UNCLE JIMMY
 Nooooooooo.... You weren't that bad.

KID
 It's like at this rate, I'm never gonna
 get anywhere! What am I even doing here!?

UNCLE JIMMY
 Come on Sal! You're charmed! Everybody
 knows it. My own nephew, born with a
 veil. You wait and see! You're gonna be
 somebody Sally Boy! A real somebody!

Kid nods silently as he picks at a plate of manicotti.

UNCLE JIMMY (CONT'D)
 And not a bum like your good-for-nothing
 grandpa Toddo.

EXT. THE STREETS - NIGHT

Kid struts down the sidewalk as he kicks along a tin can.

A nearby van stops short! It backs up and rolls to a stop.
 Music BLASTS as the window opens. Smoke spills out.

Paulie's at the wheel and he gives Kid the peace sign.

INT. THE VAN - NIGHT

There's Lou and Eddie, Paulie, O.V., Mark, and a gaggle of HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS. Kid climbs into the front passenger seat.

KID

Whoa! What's going on in here?

EDDIE

Celebrating! I got us a deal with Paramount, Kid! We're gonna cut a record!

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Kid, O.V. and Mark perform a song in the studio, while Eddie and two SOUND GUYS watch through a glass window.

KID (V.O.)

Once a week we were in that studio.

INT. STUDIO BOOTH - DAY

Ducky Sunday celebrates with pizza and beer. Kid writes TALL IN THE SADDLE on a cassette and hands it off to Eddie.

KID (V.O.)

And six months later we had the finest rock and roll album Flatbush'd ever seen.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

Eddie and Kid sit across from a PARAMOUNT EXECUTIVE.

KID (V.O.)

Didn't matter how much we liked it though. Some Bigwig exec thought it was -

PARAMOUNT EXEC (M.O.S.)
Too risqué.

KID (V.O.)
Too risqué.

KID (V.O.)

And the project was shelved.

Kid leans back, stunned. Eddie frowns.

KID (V.O.)

Ducky Sunday's goose was cooked.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kid sits motionless on the couch, STARING at his drum kit while a party takes place in fast-forward all around him.

KID (V.O.)

They said we just weren't ready. Thing is, I was gonna get ready, or die trying.

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

O.V. and Lou take shots at the bar. Mark and Paulie make out with two HOT CHICKS. Eddie dances up a storm on the floor.

KID (V.O.)

For the next three years, while Fast Eddie and the gang were out with their girls, drinking, and fooling around.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kid (18) stares in the mirror while lifting a bar bell.

KID (V.O.)

I practiced drumming three hours a day, and worked out another three.

INT. CLASSROOM, UNIVERSITY - DAY

Kid studiously takes notes during a lecture.

KID (V.O.)

All while going Pre-Law at C.U.N.Y.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kid (20) plays the drums at a million miles an hour.

He's put on some muscle mass and his braces are long gone.

KID (V.O.)

Like a diamond cutter, I honed my body and my mind. Paradiddle. Triplet. Drag. Ruff. Flam. Rolls. Three stroke. Five stroke. My stick tips had hit skins and pads a billion times before I mastered the sound of machine gun fire.

Sweat pours from Kid's body, but he never slows down.

KID (V.O.)

I became the diamond head of a drilling machine, and I wasn't gonna stop, not til I struck oil.

EXT. CUNY CAMPUS - DAY

Kid makes his way to class with books under his arms.

KID (V.O.)
*And for the first time since Paramount,
Ducky Sunday was on the verge again.*

INT. PRODUCER'S OFFICE - DAY

Kid meets with PETERS (50), a slime-ball in a cheap suit.

KID (V.O.)
*Fast Eddie'd met this slick producer at a
sweet sixteen, August Peters, and somehow
convinced him we were a hot new band.*

Kid signs on the dotted line, but the pen's out of ink.

KID (V.O.)
*Everyone else was over the moon, but even
with my veil I wasn't so sure. Doesn't
matter what you do, somebody's always
trying to fuck you.*

Peters smiles through his teeth as he offers another pen.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kid nurses a beer while reading a law book. Eddie and the gang party with some GIRLS, but Kid's focused on his work.

KID (V.O.)
*My teachers all had a different take.
Power elite theorists. Structure
functional analysts. Socialists. It all
meant just one thing: work for the
system, and get only what they give you.*

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Kid reads his law book while New York scurries around him.

KID (V.O.)
*Bury yourself in television and forget
that you're alive. Fast cars. The latest
fashion. Liquor. Drown in it. Work hard
enough and you can have it all. Get
yourself a two week vacation after
busting your balls the other fifty.*

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Kid watches from the gallery as MR. FANCY PANTS gets torn apart in cross-examination by the PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.

KID (V.O.)

*Everybody was on the take. Bribes.
Corrupt Real Estate deals. Tax shelters.
A mayor could buy an empty lot for
peanuts, decide it's the site for the
city's new power plant, and sell it back
for millions in profit.*

Mr. Fancy Pants grabs the Attorney by his neck and squeezes.

The JUDGE bangs his gavel as the BAILIFF restrains him.

KID (V.O.)

*Everybody had their price, from the
lowliest bowery bum to the President.
America was for sale, and at the right
price you could buy us all.*

INT. CLASSROOM, UNIVERSITY - DAY

Kid doodles a band logo during his PROFESSOR's lecture.

KID (V.O.)

*But you couldn't buy me. You couldn't buy
Kid Sally. Whether by talent or craft,
brains or brawn, peace or violence, I was
gonna beat the system or die.*

PROFESSOR

That's it for today! You're all excused.

His CLASSMATES rise and beat a hasty retreat. Kid stands.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Not you, Mr. Marino!

Kid gathers his books and makes his way to the front.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

You didn't hear one word of my lecture,
today. Did you?

KID

*It's like this Professor. I've got a
million dollar deal in the works, and if
it goes through I'll be a rich man! I'm
sorta caught up thinking about it.*

PROFESSOR

Well get your head out of the clouds!
Business can wait, but your LSATS are
next week! Flunk those, and there's not a
school in the country that'll accept you.

KID

You have my word Professor. First thing
I'm gonna do when I get home is study.

INT. HOP KEE RESTAURANT, CHINATOWN - DAY

Eddie, Paulie, and Kid crash their beers together.

ALL THREE OF THEM

Success!

EDDIE

In two weeks Ducky Sunday makes history!
Here's a toast it's a million seller!

ALL THREE OF THEM

A million seller!

KID

Man, I'm bloody starving! Where's Steve?

The place is pretty crowded, but STEVE, a waiter around their
age, manages to hear his name and appear.

STEVE

Hope you're having a happy Halloween!

PAULIE

Oh, hop clown! Mo moodo pleez, Bluce Lee.

Everybody, especially Steve, laughs at his remarks.

PAULIE (CONT'D)

What good tonight my flen? Clabs in
season? Me like, steak n bloccoli.

STEVE

Shh. Quiet. Madame Fu's right there.

Kid watches as the draconian owner, MADAME FU, an old tiger
in a green dress, warmly welcomes SCARY CHINESE GUY and his
entourage of MEN IN SUITS. She sits them right beside Kid.

Plates of food are immediately brought out to their table.

Kid's never looked so helpless as he drools over the food.

KID

I'm gonna die if I don't eat fast! Just
get me something, anything!

Steve and Paulie share a confident nod, their order already
neatly written on an overflowing meal ticket. Steve runs off.

Kid opens his chopsticks and drums on a tea cup.

EDDIE

What's the matter, Kid? You look ragged.

KID

Fooooood... Hunnnngryyyy...

Steamed lobsters and full-roast duck pass right by Kid. He dips his napkin in duck sauce and licks it like a madman.

Hot wonton soup gets served for Kid. He does the sign of the cross and leans in close for a big whiff of it.

Kid fills his spoon, as right in front of him two CHINESE BOYS enter the place. Kid locks eyes with theirs.

One pulls out a .38 Revolver, the other a .25 Baretta.

KID (V.O.)

You've got to be fucking kidding me.

.38 SHOOTS and hits Scary Chinese Guy in the shoulder. His chair spins round and he falls at Kid's feet.

.25 FIRES off three quick shots. BAM! BAM! BAM! Two hit a wall, while the third hits an OLD BLACK LADY square in the head. Her face falls into a dish of Shrimp Cantonese.

Pandemonium breaks out! People scatter! Paulie and Eddie dive for cover under their table! Kid sits there unfazed...

EDDIE

Hide you son of a bitch! You're gonna be famous! You can't do this to me!

But Kid doesn't move. He doesn't even blink. He's frozen.

.38 snaps off a shot at a FAT SUIT, blasting open his chest and knocking him out of the chair.

And as the carnage unfolds around him...

Kid starts eating his soup.

KID (V.O.)

Now I know what you're thinking. I must be crazy right? Insane? Delusional? Well the way I figured it was this.

.25 fires erratically, keeping the restaurant at bay while .38 EXECUTES three of the Suits, one by one by one.

KID (V.O.)

*My veil would protect me, so it was
impossible for me to get hurt.*

Kid makes eye contact with .38 as he approaches. Scary Chinese Guy begs for his life, but .38 SHOOTs HIM DEAD.

KID (V.O.)

*And if I was wrong. If my whole family
was wrong, and I wasn't charmed, and the
veil was bullshit.*

Kid and .38's eyes lock. He raises his gun, Kid his spoon.

KID (V.O.)

Then I didn't want to live anyway.

They freeze: gun at Kid's head, spoon at Kid's mouth.

.38 (V.O.)

*(in Chinese, subtitled)
Should I dare to kill a man of such
profound courage?*

Kid makes his move. He eats his wonton and chews it!

.38 (V.O.)

*(in Chinese, subtitled)
It would take a great warrior to chew
wonton in the face of my revolver.*

Kid and .38 squint their eyes at one another.

.38 (V.O.)

*(in English)
But he can identify me.*

.38 squeezes the trigger.

CLICK! The revolver's out of bullets.

KID (V.O.)

Or maybe I just counted the shots.

.25 grabs .38 by the arm. They run up the stairs and out into Chinatown, to vanish in a sea of Chinese faces.

Eddie climbs up from the table and scowls.

EDDIE

*Chalk one up to you, you lucky bastard!
Now as your manager, I advise we get the
hell outta here!*

INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - DAY

Paulie and Eddie smoke cigarettes. Kid stares out the window.

KID (V.O.)

I felt out of control, lost in a superstitious daydream. Was it real? Was I really charmed? I felt invincible. I felt... I felt like partying.

EDDIE

Maybe we should turn around and speak to the press. Kid Sally, the fearless.

KID

Paulie! Pull in that bank!

EXT. BANK - DAY

Paulie and Eddie stand behind Kid as he counts his cash.

PAULIE

But Kid, that's all your money.

EDDIE

Whatever the plan is, count me in.

KID

Call up Lou. Tonight we taste success.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Eddie, Kid, Lou, and Paulie slug vodka from a bottle and smoke bowls of hash with the limo's partition up.

KID

C'mon, we're almost there. Let's get dressed! Paulie. Hand me that bag!

EXT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

The marquee reads DIAMOND BRODY TONIGHT ONLY!

Out from the limo steps Eddie dressed as Caesar, Lou as Groucho Marx, Paulie as Gunga Din, and Kid as Doc Holliday.

Another limo pulls up and out steps DIAMOND BRODY (40), a rock and roll god, and his band of HIP MUSICIANS!

A PHOTOGRAPHER grabs Eddie by the arm.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Would you gentlemen pose for a picture
with Brody? Right over here please.

KID

(aside)
But Eddie. He thinks we're big shots.

EDDIE

So what. We could use the free publicity.

Diamond and his band poses for a photo with Kid and Eddie.

Lou tries to get in the shot. The Photographer shoos him off.

INSERT - CUE MAGAZINE

The Spread: *DIAMOND BRODY AND KID SALLY AT RADIO CITY*

BACK TO SCENE

When Diamond enters the club, the remaining CELEBRITY SEEKERS surround Kid and his gang and beg for autographs.

Eddie laughs and signs a few. Lou and Paulie follow suit.

A TEENAGE GIRL offers her notebook to Kid.

He looks her square in the eye.

KID

You don't want my autograph. I ain't
somebody yet.

Kid turns away and pushes past.

KID (V.O.)

*I felt like shit. What the hell was I
thinking? A taste of success? We didn't
even succeed yet! I hated playing rock
star. I wanted to be a rock star.*

The Girl chases after him and grabs Kid by the arm.

Kid turns to face her. She offers up her book again.

TEENAGE GIRL

You're somebody to me.

KID

Why do you want my autograph? I wasn't
kidding you before. I'm no Terry King.

TEENAGE GIRL

I think that you're nice, and every time
I see your name written in my book, I'll
remember what a nice person I met.

Kid's heart melts. He takes the book and pen from her.

KID

What's your name?

TEENAGE GIRL

Cindy. But my friends call me sin. S I N.

KID

Why do they call you that? You look like
an angel to me.

He signs her book. She reads it and winks at him.

TEENAGE GIRL

Believe me Kid. I'm no angel.

Kid gives her a double-take as Paulie and Lou grab his other
arm and pull him away into Radio City.

INT. RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

Kid and the gang get settled in their front row seats.
Everyone's in costume. A WOLFMAN sparks up a joint.

Diamond and his Band make their way on stage.

WOLFMAN

Diamond Brody! Owwwwooooooooo!

EXT. BACK EXIT, RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL - NIGHT

Kid and Eddie walk towards their limo, where they find the
Photographer marveling over Lou's big bag of Quaaludes.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hey, Kid. We're all heading over to Club
Eighty Two, but first we're getting
coffee. Care to join us?

Lou nods emphatically, and rubs his fingers together. CASH.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kid, Lou, Paulie, and Eddie sit with Diamond, his Band, and
the Photographer around a table of empty plates and coffee.

A WAITRESS gives Kid his separate check.

KID
Eighteen bucks for scrambled eggs!

EDDIE
Shut up Kid. You're not in Danny's diner.

Kid takes out a sweaty wad of cash and counts it.

KID (V.O.)
*Fuck it. I was blowing a bucket-full, but
I was determined to have a great time.*

INT. BATHROOM, FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Everyone's in the bathroom, money out, as Lou distributes Quaaludes like candy. Even the BATHROOM ATTENDANT gets some.

KID (V.O.)
*Forget all about the murders. About the
LSATS. About the deal of a lifetime.*

Kid studies his two for a moment... and swallows them dry.

KID (V.O.)
*Nothing was gonna stop me from having the
God damn night of my life.*

INT. CLUB 82 - NIGHT

It's costume night and the club's an orgy of celebration. The music's blasting and the dance floor's packed.

VERONICA DARLING (22), one of the world's top three fashion models, sits at her empty VIP booth dressed as the devil.

She rests her chin on her fist and pouts, totally bored.

Her eyes remain fixed on CLEOPATRA, who's dancing on her knees giving MARC ANTHONY a blowjob not five feet away.

And when Diamond and Kid strut in like they own the place, the crowds converge in on the arriving celebrity.

Veronica takes notice of their entrance and WAVES. Diamond spots her and walks over while Kid and his gang hit the bar.

Veronica and Diamond embrace and kiss-kiss cheeks.

DIAMOND
(flamboyant)
Veronica, darling. Tonight's been a total drag. This tour has me missing all the good parties. Terry's furious with me.

VERONICA
Well you look fabulous.

DIAMOND
Believe me honey, this face has lines
that shouldn't be there. Thank God I'll
have my own label soon.

Veronica takes notice of Kid at the bar.

DIAMOND (CONT'D)
There's no need, dear! Champagne's
already on the way. Asseyez-vous s'il
vous plait. I want to hear everything.

VERONICA
Who's that guy you came in with?

DIAMOND
Who him? I'm not sure? Some lost puppy
musician? He did bring the party favors.

Diamond and Veronica size up Kid from a distance, who's busy
lining up shots with Lou, Paulie, and Eddie.

VERONICA
Silver shoes? I bet he could fuck me to
death.

DIAMOND
Veronica Darling! You are the devil!

Veronica unzips herself to show a bit more cleavage.

VERONICA
Save me a bottle. I might be a while.

DIAMOND
What are you doing?

VERONICA
You know me Diamond. I like to choose.

Veronica kisses him on the cheek and turns away.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
And I *never* get turned down.

Kid leans back, stoned out of his mind. A cigarette hangs
forgotten in his mouth while he watches Cleopatra fuck.

Veronica sidles up beside him at the bar.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
So... You like that scene?

KID
Whatever.

Kid tries to ignore her, but she keeps getting closer.

KID (V.O.)
*God damn it. If there's one thing I hated
it's a money-grubbing cock-tease. Bitch
prolly never bought a drink in her life.*

Veronica steps in front of him, bats her lashes, and shines those million dollar bright blue eyes of hers right at Kid.

KID (V.O.)
And that's how I met her.

VERONICA
Would you like to dance with me?

KID (V.O.)
Veronica Darling. The love of my life.

Kid leans in close... and ashes in the tray behind her.

KID
Fuck off.

Kid turns away and flags down the Bartender.

VERONICA
Excuse me?

KID
You heard me... Fuck off!
(to the Bartender)
Yeah, I'll have another.

VERONICA
Don't you know who I am? I'm Veronica
Darling. You know, *Everyone's Darling*.

Kid groans in annoyance and downs the vodka shot.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Look at me when I'm talking to you!

Veronica grabs his ass and squeezes. Kid spins.

KID
What the hell do you want?

Veronica's struck speechless by his magic blue eyes.

VERONICA

Uh... I could uh...

KID (V.O.)

I felt my veil covering her face like warm sunshine, and it pissed me off.

Kid puts out his cigarette while she finds her words.

KID (V.O.)

Sure she was hot. I mean really, really hot... Like smoking hot. But she was also just another entitled bitch that thought the world owed her a living. Fuck her.

VERONICA

You got downs? You look nice and high, so I thought maybe you could get me some?

KID

Figures.

VERONICA

What figures?

KID

It figures all you'd want is something for nothing. All you sexy women everywhere think that just for looking good you can get everything for free.

VERONICA

So, you think I look good, huh?

KID

Get outta here.

VERONICA

Hey! I was gonna pay for them!

KID

Really?

VERONICA

Sure. What did you think? I have money. I could buy this whole club if I wanted to.

KID (V.O.)

Rich and beautiful? Let's not be hasty.

KID
Well... if it's downs you want, I got
some out in the limo.

VERONICA
The *limo*? Are you from money too?

Kid flashes a smile and lies through his teeth.

KID
I'm not poor.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

The door swings open and Kid and Veronica spill in. She pulls out a champagne bottle and pops the cork.

KID
What are we celebrating?

She pours them each a glass.

VERONICA
Oh, nothing. I just...

She leans in close and licks his face, bottom to top.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
I don't like to fuck on an empty stomach.

Kid lowers the partition and slips the DRIVER a ten.

KID
Take a walk... A long walk.

They both watch as Veronica pulls off her nylons, giggling.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

The Driver hoofs it across the street towards a bar.

The limousine BOUNCES and SHAKES.

INT. LIMOUSINE - LATER

Kid and Veronica lie back on leather seats in the afterglow of their acrobatic sex. They're both out of breath.

VERONICA
Hey... Kid?

KID
What... Darling?

VERONICA

How much you want... for the ludes?

KID

Three bucks each.

Veronica opens her purse to remove a twenty, and a tiny music box falls out. Kid picks it up and examines it.

KID (CONT'D)

What's this?

VERONICA

Oh... Just something I like to keep close. You know. To remind me of my mom.

KID

Did she give it to you?

Veronica takes it from him and delicately winds the key.

VERONICA

No. She used to sing it to me.

She opens the box and it plays the melody to Claire de Lune.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

(singing in French)

*By the light of the moon likeable Lubin.
/ Knocks on the brunette's door. / She
suddenly responds who's knocking like
that? / He then replies open your door
for the God of Love!*

Kid stares, captivated by her. She shuts the box.

KID

It's beautiful. What does it mean?

VERONICA

I'll tell you someday. You're a musician right? You could play, and I'll sing.

KID

Oh, well I can only play the drums.

VERONICA

Not even the guitar?

KID

I'm what you call specialized. Fastest drummer this side of Farrisburg Illinois.

VERONICA
Illinois?

KID
My Grandparents. I summer there.

He senses her disappointment, however slight.

KID (CONT'D)
What if I learned the guitar? Just for you? Just so we could play together.

VERONICA
You'd do that? You promise?

KID
Sure I do.

She kisses him on the forehead.

VERONICA
You're sweet. Now about those ludes.

She puts the music box away and hands him the twenty.

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Will you take some with me?

INT. CLUB 82 - NIGHT

Veronica leads Kid by the hand towards her VIP booth, where Diamond's sniffing coke with Lou and the Photographer.

FEMALE GROUPIES have filled up the booth around them.

Veronica never lets go of Kid's hand as he sits on a Groupie's lap and pats Diamond on the cheek.

KID
Listen, Brody. I wanna be your drumma.

Veronica pulls Kid up onto his feet.

VERONICA
I'm sorry. Kid's a little stoned out. But he did tell me he's the best in the city.

Kid gives a drunken nod of approval.

DIAMOND
Sure he is Darling, but it's a set band.

VERONICA

There must be something you could do.

Diamond snorts another line and adjusts his nose.

DIAMOND

Well, with me gone, Mainstay'll need a replacement. Let me give you J.B.'s number. Maybe he could use the kid.

Kid's attention shifts back to Cleopatra, and that's when he spots a TRANSVESTITE lingering in a nearby booth.

The Tranny digs around in his purse, pulls out a GUN, and aims it unnoticed at Diamond's head.

Kid slips away from Veronica, sidles up alongside the Tranny, and whispers in his ear.

KID

Nice gun... Can I touch it?

The Tranny pushes the .22 into Kid's stomach.

KID (CONT'D)

I'm gonna give you some free advice.

Their eyes meet... Kid's veil works its magic.

KID (CONT'D)

Nobody's worth dying over.

Kid puts his hand over the gun still pressed against him.

After a long stare, the Tranny's disposition softens, and he releases the revolver into Kid's hand.

Kid empties out the bullets, tosses them into the Tranny's straw bag, and pockets the unloaded revolver.

KID (CONT'D)

Now beat it before you get in trouble.

Kid stands up, steps aside, and watches the Tranny walk away.

Diamond hands Veronica a pink napkin with J.B.'s number, and she adds her own name and number on it, complete with hearts.

When Kid reappears at her side, she gets in close and slips the pink napkin into his chest pocket.

VERONICA

You wanna have that dance now?

Kid gives Lou a nod, and motions towards Eddie and Paulie.

KID
Sorry, Darling. But I gotta split.

VERONICA
Will I see you again, Kid?

KID
I don't know.

VERONICA
Well you've got my number.

KID
Sure, I'll call you sometime.

Kid turns to follow Lou, when Veronica stops him.

VERONICA
Kid, listen. If you ever... You know...
Need me for anything...

KID
For what? For money? You think you can
buy me?

VERONICA
No! It's just with the rented limo, and
the drugs. I don't know. I didn't mean it
that way.

KID
Yes you did. You're just what I thought
you were, a spoiled bitch.

VERONICA
No, Kid. No.

KID
What you can't get with your body and
your reputation, you try to buy. Well
baby, take a good look, cause this kid's
not for sale.

Kid kisses her cheek and stumbles out.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Paulie, Eddie, and Lou are all passed out.

Kid lowers the window, coughs up some phlegm, and spits.

He searches his pockets, finds the pink napkin, and without noticing the numbers, blows his nose and throws it away.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Kid wakes up face down on the floor in his tighty-whities with a half-empty bottle of vodka clutched in his hand.

KID (V.O.)
I woke up dreaming of Veronica.

Kid searches his clothes, reading every napkin and piece of paper there is. He finds the gun and balks in surprise.

KID (V.O.)
But there was work to be done, and I had a hangover to kill, and for that...

Kid leans against the wall clutching the gun, staring at his drum kit, and the open law book waiting for him on the stool.

KID (V.O.)
I needed beer, and a quick lay to help get Everyone's Darling off my mind.

INT. LIMELIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Lou, Eddie, and Kid push into the club, sound system blaring as five hundred people dance and drink.

Kid approaches MARIA (23), a hot brunette who's showing off a bit too much leg as she leans over the bar.

KID
Lemme guess. You want a drink.

Maria spins around and hugs him.

MARIA
Kid! Where've you been?

KID (V.O.)
Maria was one of those girls that could put any guy under the table. She drank like Dean Martin on poker night.

Kid and Maria laugh and take shots of tequila.

KID (V.O.)
And it was always buy me drinks, buy me downs, buy me coke.
(MORE)

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

But all those dive gigs with Bill Shinns' orchestra left me broke and horny and in need of a good, cheap, time. That meant Maria.

Kid stares into her eyes and runs his finger down her blouse.

KID (V.O.)

But ABC was gonna change all that. I was gonna be somebody, or I was gonna be dead. There ain't no in-between about it.

Kid rubs his hand down Maria's ass and kisses her neck, when the front door SWINGS open!

And in strides CREAM JACKSON (24), a black giant of a man in a lavish fur coat.

KID (V.O.)

Then there he was.

He slips off his furs and reveals a bright green velvet suit.

The light sparkles as it catches his NY Knicks pinky ring.

KID (V.O.)

Large as life.

Kid watches on in futility as Maria's gaze breaks away and drifts towards Cream, along with the eyes of everyone else.

Cream stops at the bar right beside Kid. Maria's acutely aware of the size of his money roll when he whips it out.

KID (V.O.)

Cream, fucking, Jackson.

Cream pays for a freshly poured double Dewars with a twenty, leans in close to Kid, and whispers something in his ear.

KID

What'd you say to me?

CREAM

I said, who's the girl?

KID

She's my wife!

Cream flashes a hundred point smile.

CREAM

Would you like to see me fuck your wife?

KID
You know what Cream, if she'll let you
fuck her, then be my guest.

CREAM
Thanks my man.

Cream faces Maria whose eyes drift up to his lips.

CREAM (CONT'D)
Hey girl, how'd you like to do some lines
and go for a spin in my Rolls?

Maria's eyes light up. She swoons. Kid chokes on his beer.

MARIA
You have coke?

KID (V.O.)
*Fuck. Maria loved coke. She fucked plenty
of guys just for their coke.*

Cream pulls out a big plastic bag of the white stuff, not a
care in the world for the huge crowd of eyes on him.

MARIA
You're the man, Cream. Let's go Papi.

Maria takes hold of Cream's arm and tries to lead him away.

CREAM
I guess she wants to come with me.

Kid nods and looks to the floor, thoroughly humbled.

KID (V.O.)
*I wanted to break a glass in his smug
fucking face.*

Cream stares until Kid lifts his chin and meets the gaze.

KID (V.O.)
*And that's when he gave me this look. I
saw it in his eyes, like his whole life
was flashing before him. Like his fate
and mine were tied at the fucking seam.*

Cream lets go of Maria's hand and steps closer to Kid.

KID (V.O.)
*He remembered back to college, when the
rich boys stole his women with their
fancy talk and expensive cars.*

(MORE)

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

He took one look at Maria, one look at me, and I knew in his heart he felt guilty.

CREAM

Hey man. Hold out your hand.

Kid sticks out his hand to shake. Instead, Cream flattens Kid's palm out and dumps him a heaping sprinkle of coke.

CREAM (CONT'D)

That's for your trouble.

Kid's left standing there stunned with a pile of cocaine in his hand as Cream and Maria part the crowds and disappear.

EDDIE

What's the matter, Kid? Got ripped off by some pimp?

Eddie holds out his hat and collects the illicit contraband.

KID

Don't you know who that was?

FLASH FORWARD SEQUENCE

-- INT. CLIFFORD'S OFFICE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - NIGHT

Kid paces the floor of the office, FURIOUS.

KID (V.O.)

That was Cream Jackson.

Fresh blood covers his white button down shirt.

EDDIE (V.O.)

The basketball star?

Eddie's a warm corpse at Kid's feet. Shot to death.

KID (V.O.)

Yeah.

Kid holds a revolver in his bloody hand.

EDDIE (V.O.)

No wonder she split. That guy's loaded.
He drives a Silver Shadow.

Kid raises the gun and takes aim. Rage boils behind his eyes.

He takes a step forward

KID (V.O.)

I know.

and PRESSES the gun barrel against Cream's forehead.

KID (V.O.)

Wait a second.

Cream's on his knees, pleading with his blood shot eyes.

KID (V.O.)

*I think I've skipped ahead here again.
Let's see. First there's a thing or two
you've gotta know about Cream Jackson.*

MONTAGE - CREAM JACKSON

-- EXT. CREAM'S PENTHOUSE TERRACE - NIGHT

Cream sits alone near the balcony. A BUTLER serves him a glass of brandy.

KID (V.O.)

*He had finally made it. That's right,
Cream Jackson was at the top. No longer a
hood, but a respectable man.*

-- INT. CELEBRITY HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Cream's hounded by HIGH CLASS SOCIALITES as soon as he makes an entrance.

KID (V.O.)

*Revered by sports fans. Invited to all
the best celebrity parties.*

-- INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Cream and his LAWYER bow politely to a table of JAPANESE BUSINESS MEN.

KID (V.O.)

*Offered lucrative business propositions
by established corporate media heads.*

-- INT. CROWDED FIVE STAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cream skips past a long line of hungry, waiting people.

KID (V.O.)

*Tables at exclusive restaurants were
always available.*

The MAITRE D' brings him straight to a prominent table, where a group of GORGEOUS WOMEN join him.

KID (V.O.)
And the women. Oh the women.

-- INT. CREAM'S ROLLS ROYCE - NIGHT

Cream gets a blowjob from TWIN REDHEADS while he reads the sports section.

KID (V.O.)
Man, did they love him! Girls just loved to get a slice of that rookie superstar.

-- INT. CREAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cream leans back in bed. His girl, TALIA SHARPE (25), dances at his feet in lingerie.

KID (V.O.)
He was living with Talia Sharpe, widely considered the hottest of Triple Threat, a term the fashion mags gave to the three top paid international models.

INSERT - PLAYBOY MAGAZINE COVER

Talia, Veronica Darling, and ANDI JUBILEE (20), the brunette and youngest of the Triple Threat, pose as Santa's Helpers.

-- INT. CREAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cream unzips a suitcase over his head and makes it rain packets of coke like snow.

KID (V.O.)
Cream loved life at the top. He loved signing autographs and having white women blow him at the snap of his finger.

-- INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY

Cream dribbles up the key like a maniac and SLAM DUNKS before an explosive crowd.

KID (V.O.)
But most of all, he loved being a god on the court.

INSERT - COVER OF THE DAILY NEWS

Above a photo of the slam dunk: CREAM CREAMS CELTICS!

-- INT. KNICKS LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Cream's TEAMMATES pat his back in celebration, then leave him to sit alone.

KID (V.O.)

Yup, Cream knew he was livin' the good life, alright. And he was never going back to the ghetto, no matter what.

-- EXT. STREET CORNER, SOUTH DETROIT - DAY

Cream (13) sits on his bike while he watches his MOM lean into a car window.

KID (V.O.)

You see, Cream was raised by his mom in South Detroit. And while she spent her life hustling to keep up a ten bag habit.

-- INT. SHITTY APARTMENT - DAY

Cream (13) stares at the ceiling while his Mom leads a PIMP into her bedroom.

KID (V.O.)

All he could think about was making something of himself. Cream wanted to be somebody and he'd kill to get the chance.

-- INT. CREAM'S MOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mom SCREAMS OUT in pain. Cream BUSTS IN with a baseball bat.

KID (V.O.)

Didn't take long, neither. Cream killed his first man at the age of thirteen.

Pimp's putting out a lit cigarette on Mom's ass.

Cream takes ONE HARD SWING and turns Pimp's head to jelly.

KID (V.O.)

He did two years in a reformatory, only to get released and learn his mom died from overdose the day before he got out.

Mom hugs Cream and cries into his shoulder. He comforts her.

-- EXT. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN CAMPUS - DAY

Cream (18) struts across campus in a U.M. blazer.

KID (V.O.)
*But ordinary life wasn't in the cards for
 him. Not for Cream Jackson.*

-- INT. U.M. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

The team's in the middle of practice when Cream walks out in his jersey.

Everybody stops what they're doing and stares.

KID (V.O.)
Not when you're six foot eight.

The Coach tosses Cream a ball. The whole team watches as he rushes the basket and SLAM DUNKS it in.

KID (V.O.)
*Now don't get me wrong. Cream wasn't a
 one trick pony. No. Cream was a machine.*

CUT TO:

Cream sweats buckets as he dribbles in slow motion.

KID (V.O.)
*Cream practiced all day, every day. Lay-
 ups. Jumpshots. Set shots. Defense.
 Rebounds. He'd dribble til' the ball
 bouncing was machine gun fire.*

Cream's at the verge of exhaustion, but he doesn't stop.

KID (V.O.)
*Hook shots. Dunking. Foul shots. Hours
 and hours. He was gonna be great.*

Cream dribbles past a Guard, and shoots!

KID (V.O.)
But he wanted to be the greatest.

SWISH! The shot scores, but Cream's already turned away.

-- EXT. U.M. GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

Cream (22) walks to the podium and receives his diploma to thunderous applause.

KID (V.O.)

Before junior year Cream had broken all the records for scores and rebounds, and by the time he graduated, offers were pouring in from every team in the NBA.

-- INT. NEW YORK KNICKS PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

Cream receives his jersey in front of the cameras.

KID (V.O.)

He was determined to revel in the spotlight, to finally get the last laugh on the bastards that killed his mother. The ones who said he'd grow up to be a no-account nigger. He was gonna show em all.

END MONTAGE

INT. KNICK'S LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Cream (24) sits down, puts on his jersey, and takes a moment to stare at a picture of his Mom that's hung in his locker.

COACH (O.S.)

Cream. A word.

Cream turns to find COACH HOLZMAN and TOM PATTERSON, his agent, standing right behind him with stone cold faces.

CREAM

Yeah Coach? Oh hey Tom. Something wrong?

TOM

Cream. I'll give it to you straight. There's word going around the league to rough you up.

CREAM

Aww, shit.

COACH

Listen here, Cream. All they wanna do is upset your poise and rhythm, so you're not so calm and confident on the court. You can't let 'em get to you Cream. You gotta rise above it.

Cream squirms on the bench, knowing where it's going.

CREAM

Naw Coach. Come on.

COACH

We've talked about it, and well, Tom and I have decided you're playing tonight in knee and elbow pads. In fact, we want them on you the rest of the season.

CREAM

Come on, Coach! You know I can't jump in those damn knee wrappings.

TOM

Look Cream, we don't mind the hard playing or a little of the rough stuff. But an injury could cut your career before it got started.

CREAM

But those pads'll ruin my game more than some bruises! How am I supposed to dunk in those, man? You tell me!

COACH

Enough of the show boating Cream.

Coach offers the pads to Cream, but he knocks them away!

TOM

Cream, it's happened before. I've seen it happen to young guys just like you.

CREAM

Man, nobody's like me! Don't you know who I am? I'm the fucking Cream, baby!

Cream stands up and shuts his locker.

TOM

Cream, those legs of yours are worth a billion bucks. And if anything happens to them you ain't worth a dime.

CREAM

Nothing's gonna happen tonight but the rings I run round the Lakers!

Cream storms away.

CREAM (CONT'D)

Don't think I can handle the rough stuff?

Cream punches a locker on his way out.

CREAM (CONT'D)
Well here I come baby! Cream's coming!

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Cream's got the ball. He dribbles up court and gets checked by a Laker. Cream pushes past him, shoots and scores.

KID (V.O.)
They didn't know how tough he was. They couldn't! They didn't know the trials and tribulations that he'd been through.

Cream gets shoved, checked, and pushed around the court, but every time he gets up. Every time he breaks away and scores.

KID (V.O.)
How many fights he'd been in. How many times he'd been stabbed. Shot. Beat up.

Cream squares off with a Laker. Eyes lock. Cream charges!

KID (V.O.)
But Cream knew. He fucking knew.

Cream knocks him to his ass, reaches the basket, and jumps!

KID (V.O.)
And he was gonna show em.

Cream SLAM DUNKS and the backboard SHATTERS!

KID (V.O.)
He was gonna show them fucking all.

Cream lands catlike on his feet, screaming in primal fury, one voice lost amidst the chorus of roars from the crowd.

KID (V.O.)
Cream always rises to the top.

BZZZZT! The BUZZER signals the game's end.

Cream looks to the score board. 118-105 KNICKS WIN.

Cream stands upon the remains of the backboard, a conqueror.

Watching the triumph of the crowd, the amazement of his team, the humility of the Lakers, the disappointment of his coach.

KID (V.O.)
Cream. Fucking.

INT. LIMELIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Kid stands beside Eddie, who's got a pile of coke in his hat.

KID

Jackson.

EDDIE

Yeah, I heard you the first time. Come on Kid, don't you have a test to study for? Let's go put this coke to good use.

KID (V.O.)

Shit. As usual, Eddie was right. This was no time to be fucking around.

INT. KID'S BASEMENT - DAY

Kid flips through the pages of his law book, while Eddie does lines off a playing record.

KID (V.O.)

Cream got the girl cause he made something of himself. Now it was my turn.

INT. CLASSROOM, UNIVERSITY - DAY

Kid cracks his knuckles as the LSATS get distributed.

KID (V.O.)

After a week of study and blow my mind was razor sharp. Laser focused.

The Professor eyeballs him. Kid gives back a confident nod.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Kid drums on the bus sign with pencils while he waits.

KID (V.O.)

I left that test feeling like the million bucks I'd have next Tuesday.

INT. BUS - DAY

Kid winks at two High School Girls as he strides past.

The bus stops and a horde of STUDENTS gets on.

A few dozen illegal boarders enter from the back.

Kid finds himself suddenly surrounded by a rowdy group of black TEENAGERS. They shove each other around, laughing.

Kid gets shoved and he laughs too, up til he catches a glimpse of his wallet disappearing into a THIEF's pocket.

Kid GRABS Thief by the arm and pretty soon it's a fight.

Kid's caught in a HURRICANE OF FISTS. He grabs Thief by his collar and PUSHES him into the gang.

Mace gets SPRAYED in Kid's face and he claws at his eyes.

Kid gets BEAT DOWN the back stairs of the crowded bus.

Through the mace Kid spots a KNIFE and turns on reflex. Its sharp blade pierces his scalp and grates against his skull.

KID'S BLOOD SPILLS over his face, and taken by a mortal rage he pushes his way up and out through the crowd.

Thief falls to the ground and Kid steps over his head, snapping Thief's neck under the force of a dozen people.

Kid stumbles to the front and grabs the BUS DRIVER's collar.

KID
Stop the bus!

He SLAMS on the brakes and Kid beats a hasty retreat.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - DAY

Kid darts across Utica Avenue without looking. Cars SWERVE and SCREECH to a stop as he runs like a wounded animal.

INT. KID'S HOUSE - DAY

Kid walks through the door, blood spattered across his face.

He stumbles into the living room where his mom Jeanie's watching TERRY KING, a handsome actor, on television.

She screams as Kid passes out in her arms.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Kid lies asleep in a hospital bed. His face is bandaged, his vitals monitored, and IV drips hang over his bedside.

Grandpa Toddo sits beside him reading the paper while the Knicks game plays silently on TV. *Cream SLAM DUNKS the ball!*

Kid's eyes flutter open.

TODDO
 Hey there Sally Boy. Easy now, easy.
 You've been in a coma.

Kid realizes the room looks like it's had a dozen people camped out in it. Extra chairs, magazines, and food trays.

TODDO (CONT'D)
 I've been concerned. Everyone has. It's been a long three days.

KID
 Grandpa... You were born with a veil right? I thought it's supposed to give you a charmed life.

TODDO
 And you wonder why you got hurt, and why I'm such a bum eh?

Kid nods. Toddo sets down his paper and slides closer.

TODDO (CONT'D)
 Alright. I got a story for you, and I'm not gonna tell it again so listen up. See, everybody would say my biggest mistake is my gambling. But that ain't it. That's just a recreation.

INT. SPEAKEASY, 1920'S - DAY

Toddo (20) plays poker with his best friend JOHNNY, the Italian strong-arm PUNCHY, and a few other GUYS.

TODDO (V.O.)
When I was around your age, your Grandma Vera had a speakeasy under our old apartment, where me and the local gang used to drink wine and play cards.

Toddo shows three Aces and rakes in the pot.

TODDO (V.O.)
One boiling hot day, we were all pretty drunk, and my veil was working. I was winning big.

Punchy's pissed off. He grumbles as the cards are dealt.

TODDO (V.O.)
This guy, Punchy Maldinado, kept getting madder and madder, losing and losing.

Punchy looks at his cards. A FULL HOUSE! Twos over Threes. He pushes in all his money, and bets his watch too.

Toddo calls. Punchy shows his hand. Toddo shows FOUR QUEENS!

TODDO (V.O.)
But when I took him for broke he called me a cheater, pulled out his sticker, and tried to cut me.

Punchy shouts, pulls out a knife, and lunges! Toddo throws himself out of the way, and the knife STABS Johnny's neck.

TODDO (V.O.)
The bastard missed, and stabbed Johnny in the throat. Johnny Shine... My best friend in the world.

He dies in Toddo's arms as Punchy runs away.

TODDO (V.O.)
I hunted that conuto for years, but he never showed his face in the neighborhood again. And life went on. Without Johnny.

EXT. AQUEDUCT RACETRACK, 1920'S - DAY

Toddo parks his brand new Ford Model T and steps out in a thousand dollar suit. Vera exits wearing a mink stole.

TODDO (V.O.)
A few years later me and your Aunt Annie were making money hand over fist, more than we knew what to do with.

EXT. HORSE STABLES, AQUEDUCT RACETRACK, 1920'S - DAY

Toddo and Vera watch the JOCKEYS warm up their horses.

TODDO (V.O.)
So for kicks I used to go to the track with Vera and make some bets. Win a little lose a little, didn't matter.

INT. HORSE STABLES, AQUEDUCT RACETRACK, 1920'S - DAY

Toddo watches Vera as she pets the mane of a horse.

TODDO (V.O.)
I took her to see the horses, and who do you think was workin' the stables?

KID (V.O.)
Punchy Maldinado.

Toddo spots Punchy shoveling manure nearby.

TODDO (V.O.)
Damn right.

Toddo forces Punchy into an empty stable.

TODDO (V.O.)
I grabbed the son of a bitch by the collar, threw him in a pile of hay, and pulled out my gat.

Vera screams at Toddo and tries to pull him away.

TODDO (V.O.)
Vera was hysterical, clawing at me, screaming Toddo, don't kill him, please please. I didn't want to ruin your Grandmother's weekend so I said:

Toddo aims his gun at Punchy's panicked face.

TODDO
 This is from Johnny Shine, and you're gonna remember him with every step you take for the rest of your life.

Toddo points the gun at Punchy's knee, and FIRES!

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Toddo leans back in the chair. Kid shakes his head.

TODDO
 We left him bleeding in the hay.

KID
 But what was your mistake Grandpa?

TODDO
 My mistake was that I didn't kill him!
 That crippled bastard haunted me the next forty years!

Toddo stands up and lets out an achy groan.

TODDO (CONT'D)
 Every business, every real-estate deal, every money-making scheme I ever had, he ruined. He ruined ME! He stole my veil!
 (MORE)

TODDO (CONT'D)

My luck. My magic. He took it from me! He took everything!

Toddo lingers a long silent moment by the door.

TODDO (CONT'D)

He died in sixty three trying to torch my house. Fire bomb went off in his hands and he burned himself to death.

KID

Jesus, Grandpa!

TODDO

Remember, Sally Boy. When the time comes to make a hard choice, don't be weak like me... I'm gonna tell Jeanie you're awake.

Toddo exits. Kid grabs the phone receiver and dials.

KID

Hey, Eddie? Yeah, yeah I'm awake. Listen.

Kid leans back with the phone to his ear, watching Cream kick ass on TV as *the Knicks crush the Bucks in the Garden*.

KID (CONT'D)

I've been thinking. If this deal falls through, we're nothing. You'll have to get a nine to five job. I'll have to spend four years in law school.

Cream goes in for a lay-up and gets checked hard by a Buck. He comes crashing to his butt, then gets up, super pissed.

KID (CONT'D)

We'd be better off dead instead of being two schmucks, working their whole lives, scrimping and saving and winding up zombies of the system.

Cream dribbles up the key and SLAM DUNKS the ball!

KID (CONT'D)

No, I mean sure, of course we're gonna succeed! But if we don't, let's jump off the Twin Towers! Ha ha. No, I'm serious!

A Bucks guard takes a long outside shot.

The ball hits the rim and bounces high into the air!

KID (CONT'D)

Better to go down in a blaze a glory! Ha ha. Come on! We'd be legends! Ha ha.

Cream and the Buck center both leap for it! Out of nowhere a running Buck trips and SLAMS into Cream's knees mid-jump.

Cream CRASHES to the ground. His unprotected knee EXPLODES on contact with the hard wooden floor of the court.

KID (CONT'D)

Ha ha - ok - you got a deal - I'll see ya tomorrow - Bye.

Kid hurriedly slams down the receiver, grabs the TV controller by its long wire, and raises the volume.

A CROWD has formed around Cream on the court.

SPORTS ANNOUNCER (ON TV)

Cream Jackson's down and it doesn't look good. He went up for a rebound and Johnny Travis just came plowing into him. This can be disastrous for Cream, whose rookie season last year was nothing short of astounding. Uh oh, looks like they're calling for a stretcher. Coach Holzman's not too pleased.

EXT. NEWS STAND - MORNING

A truck stops. Stacks of newspapers get tossed off.

INSERT - COVER OF THE DAILY NEWS

The Headline: CREAM JACKSON CRUSHES KNEE, CAREER ENDED

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Talia walks into Cream's room with a suitcase.

TALIA

Why didn't you wear your pads? Huh! Every God damn body told you to wear those God damn pads. But did you listen? Noooo... Like always you had to be big bad Cream!

Cream lies in bed, his whole right leg in a cast.

CREAM

Shut up, woman. You don't know nothin.

TALIA

Don't call me woman no more, cause I ain't. I'm going to Europe to do a movie.

CREAM

Oh yeah? And how many white cocks did you have to suck to get that part?

Talia sets the suitcase right next to Cream on the bed, and leans in close... but just far enough away he can't reach.

TALIA

You're gonna be suckin' white cocks too, you stupid cripple. I just spoke to your accountant. He said with the money you got left, in six months you'll be on the streets. Live in a shack somewhere, and you might last a year. Now you tell me -

CREAM

- Get outta my room you witch! I'm gonna rip your head off when I get outta bed!

TALIA

Cream. You ain't never gettin' outta bed.

Talia laughs, picks up her suitcase, and struts out.

Cream fumbles for the phone and knocks it off the table.

He cries out in savage frustration. A carnal wail that shifts from anger to profound sadness. Cream sobs into his pillow.

INT. KID'S KITCHEN - DAY

Kid stumbles up to the fridge in his finest suit.

KID

Hey, Ma! What's for lunch?

JEANIE (O.S.)

What do you want?

KID

Make me a steak! You know I play better when I eat steak.

JEANIE (O.S.)

So my son's gonna be a star.

Jeannie enters the kitchen.

JEANNIE

You better not forget your family.

KID

Don't worry, Ma. I got you covered.

Jeanie ignites the burner. Kid takes a seat and picks up a French dictionary from the table. He idly skims through it.

JEANIE

What about law school?

KID

Why do you think I'm wearing this suit?
My LSATS came back, and I got a meeting!

Kid bends down and pulls out a small guitar from under the table. Jeanie winces as he struggles to tune it.

JEANIE

Well you better not fuck up your future
just cause of music. No son of mine's
gonna end up like my bum of a father-in-
law. You can do both. Even if it means
taking a sabbatical from law school for a
year while you tour.

Jeanie drops the steak into the sizzling pan.

KID (V.O.)

*Just like Cream, my problem was that I
was too fucking good. If I wasn't just so
God damn talented, I wouldn't feel like
shit for not being famous! Yet there I
was, the fastest drummer ever to grace
the United States sitting there like a
nobody. Unknown... Well fuck that!*

Kid stands up and storms out of the Kitchen.

KID (V.O.)

*I was gonna be somebody, or I was gonna
jump off the Twin fucking Towers!*

INT. WAITING ROOM, THE PROFESSOR'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

Kid sits waiting. He spots a magazine with Cream on the cover, reaches over to grab it, and turns it upside down.

INT. THE PROFESSOR'S LAW OFFICE - DAY

Kid sits across from his Professor, who's got a strange look on his face. Half-sympathy for Kid, and half-pity.

After a long pregnant pause...

PROFESSOR PRESCOTT

I'm sorry to say, but after reviewing your LSATS, your two point eight index, and your five twenty board score...

KID (V.O.)

The rest of his speech was a dull drone. I pictured myself in a giant bathtub, hanging onto a stopper to keep from going down the drain.

Kid rises mid-speech, and walks out of the office.

KID (V.O.)

And just like that, the ABC deal was ten times more important. It was my stopper.

INT. BATHROOM, LAW OFFICE - DAY

Kid dry heaves over the toilet. His tie hangs into the water.

EXT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - DAY

Kid, Eddie, Paulie, O.V. and Mark exit the car. Everybody but Kid's smiling, laughing, and slapping each other five.

INT. LOBBY, ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - DAY

Kid air drums with his sticks while they wait on the couch.

GEORGIE (64), an ABC executive, walks in looking like he just caught his best friend in bed with his wife. Kid pales.

EDDIE

You guys uh, wait here a sec.

Eddie rushes over and meets Georgie away from the group.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Georgie baby, good to see you.

GEORGIE

Bad news, Eddie. You know your guy, August Peters?

Eddie tries to keep his composure. Kid watches from afar.

KID (V.O.)

Turns out that motherfucker cross-booked studio time with five different bands, and Ducky Sunday was one of them.

INT. BANK - DAY

August Peters shakes hands with a BANK ATTENDANT.

KID (V.O.)

The studio automatically issued a cashiers check for two hundred and fifty thousand fucking dollars.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Peters exits with a duffel bag and rushes into a waiting cab.

KID (V.O.)

But by the time the error was kicked up the food chain, it was too late.

EXT. TROPICAL RESORT, RIO DE JANEIRO - DAY

A NAKED HOOKER lies flat on a cabana table. Peters sniffs a line of coke off her ass as a BUTLER serves him Pina Coladas.

KID (V.O.)

And that was the last anybody'd ever heard of August Peters. Rumor had it he'd left his wife and moved to Rio.

INT. ENTRANCE, ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - DAY

Eddie stomps up to a pay phone, drops in a dime, and dials.

INT. FANCY OFFICE, ABC STUDIOS - DAY

The PRESIDENT of ABC sits at his desk, a font of aggravation.

PRESIDENT

You're cancelled. That's all there is to it. But I'll tell you what. You produce your own album, send it to me in six months, and I'll see what I can do.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Produce it myself? And where the hell am I supposed to get fifty thousand dollars?

PRESIDENT

I don't know, Mr. Zinko. Try Rio.

INT. ENTRANCE, ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - DAY

Eddie approaches his band.

EDDIE
Let's go boys. The deal's off.

EXT. ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - DAY

Storm clouds have rolled in. Rain falls, cold and hard.

KID (V.O.)
*We walked out of that place like we were
on our way to the gas chamber.*

INT. / EXT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE, BROOKLYN - DAY

O.V. cries in the passenger seat. Nobody else says a word.

Kid pulls out a packet of Quaaludes and stares at them...

And when the car stops at a red light, Kid opens the door and hops out! Eddie scrambles after him.

EXT. ROOF TOP, TWIN TOWERS - DAY

Kid climbs up onto the wall in the wind and rain, stretches out his arms, and yells at the top of his lungs.

KID
I'm gonna screw you every way I can!

A sharp gust of wind whips around Kid. His sticks GO FLYING!

KID (V.O.)
I think this is about where we started.

The world spins around him, and as he loses his balance...

Kid jumps...

And stumbles to the floor of the roof. Eddie rushes over.

KID (V.O.)
Wait. You didn't think I jumped, did you?

Kid's exhausted. He struggles to stand like he just went ten rounds with Muhammad Ali.

KID (V.O.)
No no. That's not what this is all about.

Eddie offers out his hand, and helps Kid to his feet.

EDDIE
Kid... I couldn't have said it better myself.

KID
I got it Eddie! It just came to me!
Our band's new name...

Kid gestures out at the panoramic view of the city.

KID (CONT'D)
The Skyline Raiders.

KID (V.O.)
*I might have been alive, but Ducky Sunday
was dead. And out of its ashes it was
gonna rise up more powerful than ever...
But first we needed fifty grand.*

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM

Sheets of twenty dollar bills roll off a printing press.

KID (V.O.)
*In December of seventy five, Brooklyn was
drowning in counterfeit twenties.*

CHINESE WOMEN cut the money from its sheets.

Baskets of twenties get tossed in clothes dryers with poker chips and wet towels.

KID (V.O.)
*Nobody knew who was behind it. Maybe some
corporate director or a rich entertainer.*

Stacks of twenties get counted, banded, and packaged.

KID (V.O.)
*But every day like clockwork they were
printed, bagged, and shipped across town.*

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

Eddie, Kid, and Paulie sit in a booth by the back, each inspecting twenty dollar bills in a small pile on the table.

KID (V.O.)
*The twenties were quality merchandise. So
realistic only a serial number check or a
black light gave them away.*

They nod to themselves, satisfied.

KID (V.O.)
And Eddie. Well Eddie had a plan.

INT. DISCO - NIGHT

Dancers revel beneath the neon flashing lights.

KID (V.O.)
*Cocaine was the hottest item in the city.
 Especially in discotheques.*

People sniff lines of coke right off the bar.

A TOUGH GUY approaches a DRUNK doing coke and grabs his arm.

KID (V.O.)
Everybody was in on it.

Tough Guy flashes a police badge. Drunk runs away, freaked.

Tough Guy shares a laugh with the BARTENDER, sits down in Drunk's seat, and finishes the leftover line of coke.

INT. BATHROOM, DISCO - NIGHT

A COKE DEALER peddles his wares out like hotcakes.

KID (V.O.)
*And every bathroom was the same. Decked
 out Cubans in silk socks and pointy shoes
 sold tiny rectangles of aluminum foil.
 Each one puffing their goods like a used
 car salesman.*

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Tough Guy beats the shit out of the Coke Dealer.

KID (V.O.)
*There was easy money to be made. There
 was also the risk of death, or worse.*

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Coke Dealer gets his mug shot taken.

KID (V.O.)
A nice, long, prison term.

INT. DIVE BAR - DAY

A CHINESE GUY thumbs through a small stack of hundreds.

KID (V.O.)

*But we were cornered. Desperate to get
our album cut no matter what it took. So
we pooled up all our money between us.*

Chinese Guy sets a briefcase of twenties on the table.

KID (V.O.)

And just like that we'd gone underground.

EXT. DIVE BAR - DAY

Kid, Eddie, and Paulie put on sunglasses simultaneously.

KID (V.O.)

Illegal. Illicit. Dangerous.

They strut towards their car like bad-asses.

INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - DAY

Kid loads his revolver up with bullets.

EXT. MACY'S - DAY

Kid and Eddie exit the car. Kid adjusts his hidden gun in full sight of a Salvation Army Santa, and donates a twenty.

KID (V.O.)

*Be a gangster, or be a slave. Do or die.
No half measures. No turning back.*

INT. THE NORTH POLE, MACY'S - DAY

Kid and Eddie stand in line waiting to see SANTA CLAUS.

A PROTECTIVE MOTHER gives Eddie a long look, then ushers her Kids further up the line away from them.

When it's finally their turn, a midget Columbian ELF opens the gate to the throne where jolly Saint Nick sits waiting.

SANTA

Ho ho ho! Aren't you a little old to
still believe in Santa?

EDDIE

I'm not here for you Santa.

SANTA

Then why visit the North Pole?

EDDIE

I came for the snow.

Santa gives Elf a look, who nods back knowingly.

ELF

Sorry boys and girls! Santa's taking a candy cane break. There's free hot cocoa if you wait at Clara's Candies.

Santa motions for Kid and Eddie to join him in his house.

INT. SANTA'S HOUSE, THE NORTH POLE - DAY

Santa saunters in and stops by the Christmas tree.

Eddie and Kid enter, followed by Elf who shuts the door.

EDDIE

So where's Mrs. Claus?

SANTA

Died in the blizzard of seventy one. New Years Day.

Eddie groans, unsure if he's kidding or not. Santa sits.

EDDIE

Shit. Sorry Santa.

SANTA

It's alright. I've been seeing someone new, and I think it's going somewhere. Not that it's any of your business.

EDDIE

So's Santa got a present for us or what?

SANTA

I don't know. Have you been good boys? Do I need to check my list?

EDDIE

There's no need for that, Santa.

Eddie slaps down the briefcase, snaps the locks, opens it up, and spins it round to face Santa, who stares down at:

TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS in crisp, clean, twenties.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

With that you can buy yourself a new list. Hell, buy twenty.

Kid takes a step back, his breath held.

But Santa seems happy! He digs around in his sack of presents and pulls out a pink and blue striped gift with a gold bow.

SANTA
Merry Christmas.

Eddie unwraps it to reveal a large brick of white crystals.

KID
Come on. Let's go.

EDDIE
One sec, Kid.

Eddie takes out his pocket knife, pierces the bag, and sniffs a bump. With an ecstatic nod he confirms its authenticity.

SANTA
Eighty percent pure. Best snow there is.

Eddie slips the coke under his coat and they turn to leave.

EDDIE
See you next year, Santa.

Santa flips through a few bills from the briefcase.

SANTA
Why's the money so clean?

Kid and Eddie freeze... then slowly turn around.

EDDIE
Would you like us to dirty it up for you?

SANTA
Hey Jimmy.

Elf comes to attention by the door.

ELF
Yeah, Santa?

Santa burns holes in Eddie's head with his stare.

SANTA
Best turn on the tree. Think these two might be on the naughty list after all.

Elf pulls a string of lights off the tree.

EDDIE
Come on Santa! You know me!

SANTA
Ho... Ho...

Santa picks up a baseball bat and circles round towards them.
Elf holds the lights up to the briefcase. Santa EYES Eddie.

ELF
They're fake!

SANTA
Ho.

Kid pulls out his gun and points it at Santa's head.

KID
Drop it!

Santa laughs, and takes slow, deliberate walk forward.

SANTA
You're not gonna shoot Santa Claus! Not
with all these kids around... Children.

Kid cocks the revolver's hammer and steadies his aim.

KID
I'm not fucking kidding.

SANTA
Just give me the gun now...

Santa reaches for it... Kid steps back and SHOOTs!

Santa DUCKS from a bullet thought meant for his head, but the
gun's pointing up in the air!

SCREAMS echo from outside.

Kid grabs Santa by the collar and PUSHES him into Elf!

They both go TUMBLING into the Christmas tree and fall over.

Kid grabs Santa's hat and the briefcase of cash, presses the
gun into his belt, and he and Eddie make a break for it.

INT. THE NORTH POLE, MACY'S - DAY

Kid and Eddie exit Santa's house in a frenzied panic.

Santa runs out after them, pointing!

SANTA
Stop! Stop!

CHILDREN everywhere look to Santa confused.

SANTA (CONT'D)
He stole your presents! Get him!

Kid and Eddie push their way through an angry mob of booing Children. By the time they're out they're covered in cocoa.

EXT. MACY'S - DAY

Kid and Eddie run out onto the sidewalk.

A MOUNTED COP nearby watches them from atop his horse.

Kid trips! His gun goes flying from his belt into the street.

Right between the horse's legs.

MOUNTED COP
Hey, you!

Paulie pulls up in his car!

The Cop draws his gun, but Kid crawls underneath the horse, snatches his fallen revolver, and dives into the car.

Eddie slams the door behind him and they speed off!

INT. / EXT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - DAY

Kid and Eddie look out the rear window, where the Cop is racing after them at full-gallop!

Paulie HONKS his horn as he swerves around traffic.

EDDIE
How the hell could you be so clumsy!

Paulie GUNS IT towards a RED and blows through the light.

The Cop chases after and gets SLAMMED SIDEWAYS by a taxi!

The horse gets crushed and the Cop's FLUNG into traffic.

KID
Holy shit! We just killed a cop!

EDDIE

We didn't kill no cop. He killed himself.

KID

Stop the car! Paulie! Stop! I gotta see
if he needs help.

Paulie pulls over and Kid gives his gun to Eddie.

KID (CONT'D)

Throw it off the bridge.

EXT. STREET INTERSECTION, MANHATTAN - DAY

Kid pushes through the gathered crowd.

The horse is dead and the traffic stopped.

Two MEN help the Cop... He's bleeding... but still conscious.

Kid backs out of sight, crouches to his knees... After a few
long, deep breaths he hoofs it towards the subway entrance.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Kid sits back, watching the graffiti fly past outside.

INT. CLUB 82 - NIGHT

It's Christmas Eve at the club and the place is packed!

A LIVE BAND plays rock and roll for a wild crowd.

Kid adjusts his stolen Santa hat, then kicks back in his
private booth to watch the revelry.

Lou gets slipped a wad of hundreds from the Bartender.

Eddie's at the bar, his hand up a HOT ELF's skirt.

Paulie and O.V. dance on the stage like fools.

KID (V.O.)

*By Christmas we were knee deep in
felonies and almost half way there.
Twenty five thousand. Success was so
close I could --*

A new song starts playing as Veronica Darling strides into
the club like a Goddess. She slow-motion flips her hair.

He watches her, the center of attention, as she politely
greet everyone vying to be at her side.

Kid's eyes narrow as TERRY KING (40), in a flashy white suit, walks up to Veronica and slips his hand round her waist.

KID (V.O.)

Terry King? What's she doing with him?

INSERT - STAR MAGAZINE

***The Headline:** HOTTEST IN HOLLYWOOD, and there's Terry, right alongside Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman.*

BACK TO SCENE

Veronica giggles at something Terry says, when she spots Kid out of the corner of her eye.

VERONICA

Hey, Terry. Dance with me?

She leads him to the dance floor and makes Kid jealous with her provocative moves. Kid fumes at his table.

The song ends, and Veronica leads Terry to a nearby booth where Kid can conveniently listen.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

That was fun.

TERRY

You know what'd be a lot more fun? Let's split this dead party and fuck.

VERONICA

Are you kidding me, Terry?

TERRY

What do you say babe? Wanna come home with me and take it in the ass?

Veronica slaps him. Kid stifles his laughter.

VERONICA

Pig.

Veronica storms over to the bar, and Kid doesn't miss a beat.

He chases after Veronica and sidles up beside her.

KID

Hey, can I get another beer! Oh, hi Veronica. Merry Christmas!

VERONICA

Well look who finally decided to show up.

KID

What?

VERONICA

You know what. Why didn't you call me?

KID

I would have, but I lost your number.
I've wanted to see you, though! Real bad.

VERONICA

That bad huh? Well I've been here almost every night the past month... I haven't been hard to find Kid!

KID

I was in a coma!

VERONICA

Yeah, right.

KID

Seriously! I was stabbed and everything.

Kid tries to show her his scar but she turns away.

KID (CONT'D)

Come on, Veronica. Please.

Veronica spins back to face him.

VERONICA

God, you're such an idiot. Here I am giving you the chance of a lifetime, and you can't even say you're sorry.

KID

I'm sorry!

VERONICA

How did you so succinctly put it before?
Oh, that's right. Fuck off!

Veronica walks away. Kid's left standing there, devastated.

KID

Wow...

For a few heart crushing moments he watches her go...

KID (V.O.)
She was incredible.

Kid's suddenly struck with inspiration! He races over to Lou.

KID (CONT'D)
 Hey, Lou. Gimme some money.

LOU
 Sure thing, Kid.

Lou pulls out a thick wad of twenties.

KID
 No, no. Real money. Here.

Kid takes Lou's hundred dollar bills and runs off.

LOU
 Hey! Kid! What are you doing?

KID
 Being an idiot!

Veronica approaches her friend Andi, the youngest model in Triple Threat, who's sipping down martinis at a table.

ANDI
 Veronica! What happened with Terry? And who was that cute boy at the bar?

VERONICA
 Not now Andi.

Veronica snatches Andi's martini and downs it.

The club's music suddenly CUTS OFF to a chorus of BOOS.

Kid drags a stool out on stage with a guitar in his hand.

Kid sits down, pulls up the mic, and TUNES the guitar. LOUD.

KID
 Hi, I'm Kid Sally. I uh, I only just learned how to play, so if you'll bear with me here...

HECKLER
 You suck! Get off the stage!

ANDI
 (to Veronica)
 Hey, that's that boy. Do you know him?

Veronica's speechless.

KID

This one goes out to the most beautiful girl I ever met. Look, I know I fucked it up, but if you give me a second chance, I promise I'll never let you down again. I'm sorry. And Veronica, darling...

All eyes shift to Veronica. She blushes into her glass.

KID (CONT'D)

I always keep my promises...

Kid plays on guitar the melody to Claire de Lune.

KID (CONT'D)

(singing in French)

*By the light of the moon, my friend
Pierrot. / Lend me your quill to write a
word. / My candle is dead, I have no more
fire. / Open your door for me. For the
love of God.*

Veronica's struck with emotion. She rises and walks towards him, summoned closer to his singing like a Siren's call.

Andi follows Veronica towards the stage.

KID (CONT'D)

(singing in French)

*By the light of the moon, Pierrot
replied. / I don't have any pens, I am in
my bed.*

Veronica climbs up on stage, leaving a befuddled Andi next to Paulie and O.V. who are both equally shocked.

She kneels beside Kid and takes the guitar out of his hands.

VERONICA

You're terrible.

KID

Does that mean you forgive me?

Veronica takes off his Santa hat, wraps her hands around his face, and kisses him. The audience CHEERS and CLAPS.

PAULIE

Atta boy! Kid Sally!

Couples in the audience kiss, moved by the romantic scene.

O.V. kisses Andi and gets slapped in the face.

Veronica breaks the kiss, winks, and tosses Kid his hat.

VERONICA

Don't press your luck.

Veronica turns and hops off the stage. Kid just sits there, stunned, until she spins back and offers up her hand.

INT. BEDROOM, WALDORF HOTEL - NIGHT

Kid and Veronica spoon in bed, both drifting off to sleep.

Veronica turns around to face him. She twirls his hair.

VERONICA

You know what... I think I love you.

Kid rolls onto his back and lets out a sigh.

KID

You can't love me. Not yet.

VERONICA

Yes, right now. Just the way you are.

Kid disarms, and snuggles in closer to her.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Kid... If I ask you something, you promise not to get mad?

KID

You're not gonna propose... Are you?

VERONICA

If I did, would you say yes? I'm teasing!

KID

Ok, ok. I promise.

VERONICA

How much more do you need?

Kid sits up and turns on the light.

KID

What are you talking about?

VERONICA

Gimme some credit, Kid. I know who your manager is, and I know what he's doing. Just tell me. How much?

KID

Twenty five thousand.

Veronica pulls her cheque book from the night stand.

VERONICA

Done.

Kid starts to protest and she covers his mouth with her hand.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

I already know what you're gonna say! Kid Sally can't be bought, and he won't accept charity! So let's just call this what it really is, a capital investment. I expect a return.

Now Kid's the one who's speechless. She writes the cheque.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Unless you have a problem with me being your boss?

KID

No, it's just... Even if we had the studio time, we still need a label. ABC doesn't want us for months.

VERONICA

Didn't you ever call what's his name? Over at Mainstay.

KID

I told you. I lost the numbers.

VERONICA

Well Diamond's throwing a New Years Eve party. I'm sure he'll be there. We can go together. Mix business with pleasure?

KID

It's a date.

Kid sits back against the wall and lights a cigarette.

VERONICA

Clifford! That's his name. J.B. Clifford.

INT. HOLLANDER'S OFFICE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - DAY

J.B. CLIFFORD, the arrogant President of Mainstay Records, storms in and SLAMS a news article onto the desk.

HOLLANDER, his best talent agent, examines the article.

HOLLANDER
Gem records?

J.B.
Diamond's formed his own label!

Hollander crushes the paper and tosses it in the trash.

J.B. (CONT'D)
How could you let this happen? You should have handled it when you had the chance!

HOLLANDER
I did! I mean I tried! It's not my fault!

J.B.
And just how the fuck are we gonna stay afloat with two blowjob singers and five talent-less hacks?

HOLLANDER
I... I don't know.

J.B.
You're the talent agent! Find us some talent or I'll find myself a new agent!

J.B. storms out and SLAMS the door! The intercom BUZZES!

HOLLANDER
God damn it Judy!

JUDY (V.O.)
Mr. Jackson's here to see you.

Hollander's genuinely surprised.

HOLLANDER
Cream Jackson?

JUDY (V.O.)
Yes. Should I tell him you're busy?

He leans back, a smile slowly forming on his face.

KID (V.O.)

*And that was the second time that
inspiration struck John Hollander.*

HOLLANDER

No... Tell him to wait.

KID (V.O.)

*You see. He and Cream had history. And
Cream. Cream was his ace in the hole.*

MONTAGE - HOLLANDER AND CREAM

-- EXT. AQUEDUCT RACE TRACK - DAY

Hollander cheers his horse on, a dozen tickets gripped tight in his hands.

KID (V.O.)

*What you gotta understand about Hollander
is, he was an addict. He'd bet on
anything. Dice. Cards. Ponies. Anything.*

Hollander has won! He pumps his fist in celebration.

-- EXT. HOLLANDER'S HOUSE - DAY

Hollander argues with his WIFE as he rushes out the door with a suitcase.

KID (V.O.)

*I mean this guy loved gambling even more
than his own family. He had to do it.*

She chases after him, a baby in her arms, and THROWS a shoe into his back. He opens the door to a waiting taxi.

-- INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Hollander gets his dice blown by a HUGE-BREASTED WOMAN at a craps table.

KID (V.O.)

*If there was action to be found,
Hollander was there.*

He tosses the dice! Everyone cheers as they roll and bounce.

The dice fall on double sixes. Hollander has lost.

KID (V.O.)

Trouble is, he was a fucking loser.

-- EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Hollander gets the shit beat out of him by two THUGS.

KID (V.O.)

No matter how hot he'd get, sooner or later, Hollander always wound up in the hole.

THUG

You got two days, or you're fucking dead!

-- INT. HOLLANDER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Hollander opens the Mainstay Records rental bill. PAST DUE.
FORECLOSURE IMMINENT

KID (V.O.)

He stole from the label to bide some time, but a reckoning was at hand.

Hollander sticks the barrel of a gun into his mouth.

KID (V.O.)

And in his darkest moment of desperation.

Hollander spots a picture of Cream in the Sports Section.

KID (V.O.)

Inspiration struck.

Hollander puts down the gun and picks up the paper.

INSERT - DAILY NEWS SPORTS SECTION

The Headline: U.M. SOPHOMORE ON SCHOLARSHIP BREAKS RECORDS

-- EXT. U.M. CAMPUS - DAY

Cream sits on a bench, alone.

He watches a group of BASKETBALL PLAYERS from afar as they hang out with HOT GIRLS by a row of EXPENSIVE CARS.

KID (V.O.)

Hollander knew that someone as dedicated as Cream, someone who came from nothing, might be swayed to taste success early.

Hollander sits down next to Cream. They shake hands.

KID (V.O.)

It was a match made in heaven.

-- INT. U.M. GYMNASIUM - DAY

U.M.'s down by 1! Only a few seconds remain. Cream shoots...
And he misses! U.M. HAS LOST!

KID (V.O.)

*Yup. If not for Cream, Hollander would
have been dead and buried years ago.*

-- INT. U.M. SPORTS BAR - DAY

But Hollander has won! The rest of the crowd groans as he
celebrates like an outcast!

KID (V.O.)

*And even though he'd never play again,
Hollander still saw Cream as his way out.*

END MONTAGE**INT. HOLLANDER'S OFFICE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - DAY**

Cream sits across from Hollander. His leg's in a cast, and
two crutches lie on the floor beside him.

HOLLANDER

We had a deal, Cream.

Cream flashes Hollander his famous smile.

CREAM

Shit. That was a million years ago.

HOLLANDER

We're not supposed to be seen together.

CREAM

Well you better get used to me if I'm
gonna be workin' here.

HOLLANDER

You know that can't happen.

CREAM

But you're gonna make it happen, right?

HOLLANDER

Are you threatening me, Cream?

CREAM

Listen, man. I got some expensive habits.
You know all about those.

Hollander shifts in his chair, feigning defeat.

HOLLANDER

We can't pay you much... And you'll have to work for it.

CREAM

Can't do Holly baby. I need a nice price.

HOLLANDER

The label's almost broke.

CREAM

Well you better think of something hot shot, or you're gonna have a hundred bookies gunning for your ass when I come clean. Broke? Shit.

Cream glances around at the Gold Records on the wall.

CREAM (CONT'D)

Looks like you're doing good to me.

Hollander leans forward and whispers.

HOLLANDER

How much you know about cocaine?

CREAM

Almost as much as I do about basketball.

KID (V.O.)

The plan was pretty simple really, at least as far as Cream was concerned. And that's probably what sold him on it.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Cream shakes hands with a REALTOR.

KID (V.O.)

Cream sold his penthouse.

B) Cream shakes hands with a CAR SALESMAN.

KID (V.O.)

Sold his Rolls.

C) A PLANE takes off from JFK Airport.

KID (V.O.)

Got his ass out of New York.

D) COVER OF DAILY NEWS - CREAM RETIRES TO MEXICO

KID (V.O.)
And moved down to Mexico.

E) Cream shakes hands with a BANKER.

KID (V.O.)
Then all he had to do was take every last dollar to his name.

F) Cream stands over three large bricks of cocaine.

KID (V.O.)
Trade it in for cheap coke.

G) Cream signs a basketball for US BORDER PATROL AGENTS.

KID (V.O.)
And use his celebrity to bring it back.

BACK TO SCENE

Cream shakes hands with Hollander.

CREAM
 You got yourself a deal.

HOLLANDER
 You're making the right decision here
 Cream. Don't worry. We'll make a killing.

KID (V.O.)
*And as far as Hollander was concerned,
 J.B. and Cream were just two little
 fishes swimming in his pond.*

Cream crutches his way out of the office.

HOLLANDER
 Oh, and Cream! Happy New Year!

Cream laughs and smiles, and hobbles away.

KID (V.O.)
*Yup. He was gonna bait them, hook them,
 gut them, cook them, and leave their
 bones out to dry in the sun.*

INT. DIAMOND BRODY'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Diamond's upscale party's the toast of the town and everybody who's anybody is there. A live rock and roll band plays loud.

Amongst the host of RICH AND FAMOUS PARTY GOERS:

Paulie and Mark do lines at a booth. Lou raids a buffet table. Eddie hob-knobs with the rich crowd.

O.V. sits chatting over drinks with Andi as her handsome and well-built boyfriend BO nibbles on her neck.

Veronica and Kid make a scene as they dance together.

When Terry King enters the party, Veronica stops dancing, takes Kid by the hand, and intercepts him at the door.

VERONICA

Terry! Terry... Terry, there's someone I'd like you to meet.

TERRY

So you're the young rogue that tamed the wild Veronica Darling, huh?

KID

That's right.

VERONICA

He didn't tame me, Terry. He swept me off my feet. He's a real gentleman, he doesn't just play one on TV.

She hugs Kid and kisses his cheek.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Anyway. I have a favor to ask. I figure you owe me one from before.

TERRY

Ok, Darling. I give. What do you want?

CUT TO:

Terry shakes hands with Hollander and J.B. near the bar.

TERRY

Hi John. J.B. How's business?

HOLLANDER

Looking up. Got a few nice prospects too.

TERRY

So uh... Why are you two here?

HOLLANDER

What do you mean? We come every year.

TERRY

Well Brody's telling everybody you tried to force him into a contract. Said you guys were real dicks about it too.

They look to where Diamond is ranting up a storm to Lou, a heaping pile of cocaine in a communal bowl on his table.

J.B.

He's obviously inebriated.

Hollander slithers away.

TERRY

Well if you're looking for new talent, there's somebody I'd like you to meet.

Veronica and Kid walk up. Terry pats Kid on the back.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Kid, I'd like you to meet J.B. Clifford, the President of Mainstay Records.

J.B.

You're Kid Sally, right?

KID

Yes, sir.

J.B.

There's talk about you going around in the business.

Kid tries to hide his excitement.

J.B. (CONT'D)

There's rumors you run a gang indulging in some rather illicit activities.

KID

Well sir, I'm not gonna lie. It's all true. At least it was. Veronica here's producing my band's next album this January, and it's gonna be a smash.

J.B.

They said you're slick operators, capable of some very sophisticated activity.

TERRY

Hey, what are you talking about? I introduced you to Kid cause he's a great musician, and you could use him! Not cause of that other stuff.

J.B.

Yes, of course. It's just... a modern day Al Capone is so refreshing.

KID

I always kind of thought of myself as Billy the Kid.

Women SCREAM as Diamond Brody suddenly FALLS DOWN the second story staircase, and tumbles to the floor in a heap.

A hush falls over the party and the music stops.

Terry leaves the group and rushes over to where Diamond lies at the bottom of the steps. He pushes past the crowd.

TERRY

Diamond... Are you ok?

Terry gives him a little shove. No response.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Help! Someone get help!

INT. / EXT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - NIGHT

Paulie and Eddie sit up front in the parked car.

Veronica cries into Kid's shoulder in the backseat.

PAULIE

What the hell's taking them so long?

EDDIE

Maybe they got arrested. Brody was hitting Lou's coke pretty hard.

PAULIE

Nah, we'd have seen them get walked out.

Eddie shrugs and turns on the radio.

KID

Hey Eddie, turn that up.

Eddie raises the volume. Auld Lang Syne is playing.

Kid opens up the car door and takes Veronica's hand.

KID (CONT'D)
Dance with me?

VERONICA
Kid, I'm not in the mood.

Kid lifts her chin with his finger.

KID
Please?

His gaze meets hers. She finds herself helpless to protest.

She follows him outside...

And beneath a light flurry of snow, they dance arm in arm.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A similar snow falls as Brody's coffin lowers into his grave.

Familiar faces from the party wear black in mourning.

Veronica grips Kid's hand tight as she watches the ceremony, but Kid's gaze is on J.B. and Hollander.

Their eyes are red, and their sorrow prominently worn.

CUT TO:

The ceremony's over and the crowd has begun to disperse.

Kid and Veronica walk together across the cemetery.

KID
When we meet with J.B. tomorrow, I want you there with us.

VERONICA
Are they gonna produce the record?

KID
I don't know, but listen.

He stops and takes her by both hands.

KID (CONT'D)
Even if they do, I still want you involved.

VERONICA

Kid. If this is about the money -

KID

- It's not. Really, it's not. Produce it, don't produce it. I just want you. Ok?

VERONICA

You want me, or you need me?

KID

I need you. From now on, we're in this together... I mean... if you want to be?

She nods silently, tears in her eyes, and they kiss.

INT. CLIFFORD'S OFFICE - DAY

Kid, Eddie, and Veronica sit across from J.B. at his desk.

J.B.

I don't want to waste anybody's time, so I'll cut to the quick. It's too risky for us to produce a new artist.

EDDIE

But we've got enough cash to cut the record ourselves!

J.B.

You've got a full set list prepared right? I mean the songs are all finished?

EDDIE

Yeah.

J.B.

Then why don't you prove to me there's an audience for your music. Prove your band can gain traction. That it's not a risk.

EDDIE

And how do you expect us to do that?

J.B.

A concert.

KID

We've done that! What we need's an album!

J.B.

Forget the gigs you've done. I mean a real event.

(MORE)

J.B. (CONT'D)

Spend your production money booking someplace big, and the rest can go towards publicity. I'll make sure the critics show up. You pull a good crowd and some good reviews, and I'll sign you then and there for a five record deal.

EDDIE

Could we have a minute to discuss?

Eddie, Kid, and Veronica stand and step away from the desk.

KID

Well?

EDDIE

It's a great deal Kid, and I think we should take it. We'd be crazy not to.

KID

Veronica. What do you think?

VERONICA

It's too risky to spend it all on a -

EDDIE

- Oh, come on. You're not gonna listen -

KID

- Quiet Eddie. Let her finish.

VERONICA

I get it. You're confident. Well so am I. I know it's not the same, but I've done a million fashion shows, and sometimes it doesn't matter how pretty the models are, or how great the clothes look, shit can always go wrong. If you cut a record, you'd own the record. A show's ephemeral.

Veronica lets her words sink in. Kid and Eddie nod.

VERONICA (CONT'D)

Then again, this is a real opportunity. You can always make more money... Hell. I think you should do it. Throw the concert of the year Kid, and I'll be in the front row cheering you on.

KID

Darling, don't you know? You're always backstage when you're with me.

Eddie rolls his eyes and she laughs.

VERONICA
You're such an idiot.

They kiss. Eddie sneaks over to J.B. and shakes his hand.

EDDIE
J.B. You got yourself a deal!

EXT. CLUB 57, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

A huge crowd lines up outside, WILD with energy.

The Marquee: SKYLINE RAIDERS TONIGHT ONLY

KID (V.O.)
Club Fifty Seven was no stranger to excitement. But on the first of February in seventy six, the excited whisper of the crowd created a force an actual ozone layer that hung over fifteenth street.

A stretched limo drives by. Kid leans out the window.

KID (V.O.)
You could smell it. Breathe it. People were giggling, shouting, howling.

Kid rolls up his window and the limo drives past.

KID (V.O.)
Some said it was from getting high and standing in the cold, but the next day in the news they called it a happening.

Eddie watches the crowd gather across the street with a cup of coffee in his hand and a smug smile on his face.

Above the crowd a three story banner of the Manhattan skyline is silhouetted in black, with SKYLINE RAIDERS in red.

KID (V.O.)
And it was happening alright, all created by the master of hype, the king of rumor, the Houdini of the P.R. world, Fast Eddie Zinko himself.

INSERT - NEW YORK TIMES - HALF PAGE ADVERTISEMENT

MANHATTAN WILL BE RAIDED 2/1! BEWARE: THE SKYLINE RAIDERS!

KID (V.O.)

While Veronica's half took care of the club, Eddie spent our coke money on four weeks worth of advertising.

INT. RADIO STATION - NIGHT

Eddie shakes hands with a D.J. and walks away.

KID (V.O.)

And made sure that every last D.J. in the five boroughs was talking about it.

The D.J. checks his palm and finds a bag of coke.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Kid, Veronica, Paulie, and Eddie drink at the bar. Veronica waves and shouts and points to the television.

KID (V.O.)

He even got us a damn TV commercial!

INSERT - THE TV COMMERCIAL

New York City explodes! A mushroom cloud rises from rubble.

In Red Letters: *BEWARE! THE SKYLINE RAIDERS ARE COMING!*

TV NARRATOR (V.O.)

February First! Club Fifty Seven!

EXT. CLUB 57, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Two spotlights circle the sky giving an air-raid effect.

KID (V.O.)

The end result was nothing short of electric.

The crowd cheers as they start letting people in.

INT. CLUB 57 - NIGHT

Tech crews work on setting up the instruments on stage.

KID (V.O.)

We even expanded the band, adding Andi's boyfriend Bo to the mix on piano.

A large piano gets wheeled out, followed by Andi and Bo.

KID (V.O.)
And Sammy from Shinns on horns.

Sammy and Mark share a few beers in the corner.

Kid peers out through the curtain as he watches the crowd filter into the club and mingle by the bars.

Veronica approaches and gives Kid a hug and a kiss.

VERONICA
 You look nervous.

KID
 Me? Nervous? Are you kidding? Me nervous.
 Did you bring the smelling salts?

INT. DRESSING ROOM, CLUB 57 - NIGHT

Everybody's eating, drinking, and smoking.

Kid sits beside Veronica as he nurses a beer. His face is pale, all the blood drained from his face.

Eddie walks in with a big cardboard box.

EDDIE
 Ok! Listen up!

He gets everyone's undivided attention.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Tonight we take it to them! We're gonna hit hard and play hard. We got the songs, we got the equipment, and we got the talent. We can't lose... We can't lose.

Eddie pulls a joint from Mark's mouth and hits it.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 We're gonna blow the roof off this place and have the crowd foaming at the mouth! It's gonna be pandemonium! And you know why? Because we're the raiders! Raiders!

He starts up a RAIDERS chant and everyone joins in.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
 Alright! I got one more surprise!

Eddie pulls out a knife, and opens the cardboard box.

INT. CLUB 57 - DAY

The Skyline Raiders are ready to take the stage.

Kid's dressed in a black commando outfit, with a P.T. boat Captain's hat, and a replica of a machine gun.

O.V.'s in a Green Beret costume. Mark's a sailor, Bo's a pilot, and Sammy's a drill sergeant. They all have fake guns.

EDDIE

Remember your cue.

The Raiders head upstairs towards the balcony, while Eddie pushes his way out onto the stage and takes the microphone.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Ladies and Gentlemen. It is only once in a lifetime that you can be the first to say you witnessed a phenomenon. Tonight, for the first time on any stage, from New York City... the Skyline Raiders!

A roar ERUPTS from the crowd, and Eddie runs off stage.

The lights cut out. AIR RAID SIRENS wail. Police lights FLASH. Machine gun fire RATTLES in the distance.

BOOM! BOOM! KABOOM! Explosions echo over the loudspeaker.

The Raiders dash back and forth across the balcony, FIRING BLANKS at the people in their way, and onto the people below.

They CHARGE down the stairs and STORM the crowd.

The audience eats it up. They cheer and applaud in a frenzy.

The Raiders make their way on stage, where they drop their guns and take their places.

KID

One, two, three four!

They explode into their first song with ten times the force of their special effects.

In no time at all two thousand people are dancing, jerking, swaying, and screaming.

Kid plays his heart out, banging those drums with all his power under the thousand watt lights.

Sweat cascades off his body like a monsoon.

INT. BALCONY, CLUB 57 - NIGHT

J.B. watches the performance, displeased. Hollander arrives.

HOLLANDER
What's the verdict?

J.B.
They're fantastic.

HOLLANDER
So why do you look like you're having a stroke?

J.B.
What are you blind? There's a dozen other labels here. They'll never sign with us.

Hollander laughs, and holds up an envelope.

HOLLANDER
I signed them last night.

J.B. snatches the papers and looks them over.

J.B.
What the fuck Hollander?

HOLLANDER
Will you relax! I made a deal with the manager, and wanted to surprise you.

J.B.
Two hundr- We can't afford this!

HOLLANDER
I said relax! The cost of the album's already taken care of. Look. You wanted me to figure shit out, so I took the initiative and got it done.

Hollander straightens out J.B.'s tie.

HOLLANDER (CONT'D)
You just do what you do best. Sell product. I'll take care of the money.

Hollander pats J.B. on the chest, and walks off.

INT. DRESSING ROOM, CLUB 57 - NIGHT

The Raiders celebrate their great performance.

Kid pushes into the room and spots Eddie.

KID
Hey, Eddie! The President of A and M records is out there, and he loves us!

EDDIE
Yeah, ok. That's great Kid.

KID
No, man. I mean he wants to offer us a deal! A big one! He wants to talk to you.

EDDIE
Forget about it. We'll go over everything tomorrow. Let's just take it easy -

KID
Take it easy? What are you talking about? This is what we've been waiting for!

Eddie looks around and takes Kid by the arm.

EDDIE
Could we uh, talk somewhere private?

INT. BROOM CLOSET, CLUB 57 - NIGHT

Kid pushes Eddie into the wall, his rage boiling over.

KID
How the fuck could you do this to us Eddie? What the hell, man!

EDDIE
I got nervous ok! What Veronica said about risk kinda got to me.

KID
Don't you dare put this on her!

EDDIE
Look, I know that guy Hollander's a snake, but he says it's a sure thing! His half'll cover all the expenses, and our half is like an off the books signing bonus. The rest of the deal is great!

KID
Our half of what? God damn it Eddie! What the fuck are you talking about?

INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - NIGHT

Lou and Eddie sit in front. The car's parked on a corner.

Kid sits in back holding a rusty Colt 45 revolver.

KID
You sure it even still works?

PAULIE
My grandpa used to oil it every night.

KID
Used to?

PAULIE
He died when I was seven.

KID
I can't do this Eddie. This is armed robbery! What if he has a piece?

EDDIE
It has to be you. I've got a trick knee.

PAULIE
Don't look at me. I'm just the driver.

EDDIE
Come on, Kid. It's your band. You gotta be the one.

KID
Fuck you Eddie. Seriously. How could you put me in this position?

EDDIE
It'll be fine. Look, he'll shit his pants at the sight of that thing alone.

PAULIE
Guys, guys. I think that's him.

A car pulls into a tow-away zone a little down the street.

KID
After this is over, I want you to stay the hell away from me and Veronica.

EDDIE
But I'm your manager.

KID
That's not gonna change, but you and me,
Eddie. We're fucking done.

PAULIE
He's getting out. It's now or never.

EDDIE
Whatever you want Kid. I'm sorry.

KID
I don't give a shit.

Kid pulls a ski mask over his face.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Cream slaps the driver's side door to his car shut, circles round, and stops at a pay phone. He drops in a dime.

CREAM
Come on man. Pick up. It's cold out here.

KID (O.S.)
Freeze bitch.

Cream turns to find the massive Colt 45 aimed at his face.

KID (O.S.)
Unless you want your brains spread out
across Park Avenue, you're gonna do
exactly what I tell you to do.

CREAM
I got twenty bucks in my pocket. Take it,
it's yours. I don't want any trouble.

Kid steps out under the streetlight, his face masked.

KID
Kiss the dirt.

Cream lets the phone dangle by its wire, and lies down.

Kid glances in the car's window and spots a duffel bag.

He tries the door but it's locked.

KID
Toss me your keys.

CREAM
There ain't nothing in there man.

KID
Shut the fuck up Cream. The keys. Now.

Realization crosses Cream's face that Kid recognizes him.

CREAM
Oh hell no. Ain't no fan gonna rob Cream!

KID
Dammit! You wanna die tonight?

CREAM
Fuck you!

Cream lunges forward on his hands and knees and tackles Kid to the ground. Kid's gun goes flying back along the pavement.

Cream grabs onto Kid's neck and throttles his throat.

INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - NIGHT

Paulie and Eddie freak as they watch Kid get taken down.

EDDIE
Oh, shit! Paulie, pull over there!

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Kid struggles under Cream's weight and strength.

Paulie drives over and knocks down the tow-away-zone sign.

Eddie hops out with a wrench and SMASHES Cream's back.

Cream cries out in fury, releases Kid, and PUNCHES Eddie across the jaw with a powerful right hook, dropping him.

Kid crawls towards the gun but Cream TACKLES him again.

Cream forces Kid onto his back, pulls off his mask, and gives him a few strong punches across his face.

Eddie KICKS Cream in the knee, incapacitating him with pain!

Kid rolls away, grabs the gun, and stands up.

Eddie runs Cream's pockets and pulls out his car keys.

EDDIE
Come on, Kid!

Eddie unlocks the car and Kid grabs the duffel bag. They pile into Paulie's car and speed off down the street.

INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - NIGHT

Eddie opens up bag, and it's filled with bricks of coke.

KID
Don't you tell a God damn soul about
this, Eddie.

EDDIE
No shit.

PAULIE
He got you pretty good, Kid.

Kid wipes some blood from his nose, hands Paulie the
revolver, lights up a cigarette, and lowers the window.

KID (V.O.)
The next month was a fucking blur.

INT. KID'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kid pushes into the house, still steaming with anger.

Jeanie intercepts him at the door and cries with worry when
she sees his battered and bloodied face.

KID (V.O.)
*I told everybody Eddie and I'd gotten in
a fight, and that explained why we
weren't talking.*

INT. RECORDING BOOTH, ELECTRIC LADY STUDIOS - DAY

The Skyline Raiders play while Eddie watches from the booth.

Kid's face is badly bruised black and blue.

KID (V.O.)
*We spent every day in the studio,
desperate to finish our album before we
lost any of our heat.*

EXT. KID'S HOUSE, BROOKLYN - DAY

Kid and Paulie load a couch into a van.

Veronica hugs Jeanie on the front porch.

KID (V.O.)
*Veronica asked me to move in with her,
and I found myself in love with the idea.*

INT. JEWELRY SHOP - DAY

Kid browses diamond rings.

KID (V.O.)

And if the most beautiful girl in the world wanted me to live with her, well, like any Marino, I was gonna up the ante.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kid and Veronica share wine across a candle-lit table.

He toys with something in his pocket, lost in thought.

VERONICA

What's wrong?

KID

Let's get out of here.

VERONICA

We didn't even eat yet.

KID

I mean New York. Let's go somewhere. The record's basically done. Pick a place. Anywhere, and we'll go together.

VERONICA

What about Illinois?

KID

Illinois? You mean Farrisburg? Where my Grandparents live?

VERONICA

Sure, why not. It'd be fun!

KID

I mean of all the places we could go. Paris, Rome, San Tropez, anywhere, and you want to meet my family?

Veronica nods. Kid leans back in his chair.

INT. SLEEPER CAR, TRAIN - DAY

Kid and Veronica stow their luggage.

VERONICA

I'm going to the bathroom.

Veronica turns her back. Kid pulls out a diamond ring.

KID
Hey, Veronica. Wait.

She turns, but Kid has his back to her. He pauses...

VERONICA
What?

Kid turns and holds up... a joint.

INT. BATHROOM, TRAIN - DAY

Kid and Veronica force themselves into the tiny compartment.

Their bodies press against one another with barely any room to stand, let alone sit or move.

VERONICA
Ooh, I like this. This is very cozy.

She lights up the joint and they take a few puffs.

They share a moment as their eyes lock. Looking deeper, she can see his lust for her. She leans in for a kiss...

VERONICA (CONT'D)
Ow, what's that? Something's poking me.

KID
Ha ha. You want to do something about it?

VERONICA
No it really hurts. That. In your pocket.

She reaches into his pocket, and he tries to stop her.

KID
No, wait! No.

Out comes the ring and it falls to the ground.

VERONICA
Kid! Is that what I think it is?

She stares down at the diamond ring. She tries to reach for it, but they're both so cramped it's impossible to pick up.

KID
This isn't how I wanted it to go.

When she looks up he's staring at her, blushing and nervous.

VERONICA
You really are an idiot.

She giggles and kisses him, all smiles.

KID
Is that a yes?

She starts unbuckling his belt.

VERONICA
Shut up and fuck your fiance'.

EXT. HALLWAY, TRAIN - DAY

The bathroom door opens, and Kid and Veronica spill out into the hall in their underwear. An ELDERLY COUPLE walks by.

Veronica bends down, picks up the ring, and slips it on.

VERONICA
Kid! Oh Kid, it's beautiful!

The Old Man oggles Veronica, and his Wife slaps him.

KID
We're getting married!

OLD MAN
Congratulations!

EXT. / INT. HICKS HOUSE - DAY

Kid and Veronica meet GRANDMA and GRANDPA HICKS on the porch.

KID
Hi, y'all. This is my fiance' Veronica.

Veronica kisses them hello.

GRANDMA HICKS
Come inside and lets get you settled.

She leads them into the family room, where a fat black iron coal-burning stove stands sentry.

KID
What room should we take?

GRANDMA HICKS
Sal, you said this girl was your fiance'
right?

(MORE)

GRANDMA HICKS (CONT'D)

Well when you introduce her as your wife, you can both have the guest room. For now, you sleep on the porch... I bet you kids are starving, hmm? There's some food in the oven.

KID

Could you put it in the icebox? We're going out to celebrate.

INT. THE PUMP BAR - NIGHT

Kid and Veronica drink shots at the crowded bar.

She looks out onto the floor, where people are line dancing.

VERONICA

I'd ask you to dance, but -

Kid grabs her hand and leads her out.

KID

Come on!

He pulls her into line and dances perfectly in rhythm.

KID (CONT'D)

I told you I spent summers here! This is the only kinda dance I know!

Nearby EARL (19), a red-faced farmhand, drinks beer with his boss, BOSS LAMBERT (17), a tall, muscular, rich, prick.

Boss motions towards Veronica dancing in line.

BOSS

Man, that girl's somethin! Ain't she?

EARL

Yeah, Boss.

BOSS

But that guy she's with looks like a real turkey. A real plucked city slicker turkey. Ain't that right Earl?

Earl gobbles and flaps his arms like wings.

EARL

You want us we should kick his ass?

BOSS
Nah, I got a better idea. Let's turn him
yella and scare him outta town.

CUT TO:

Veronica and Kid finish dancing.

VERONICA
I'll meet you at the bar.

INT. BATHROOM, THE PUMP BAR - NIGHT

Veronica washes her hands and puts on some lipstick.

INT. THE PUMP BAR - NIGHT

Veronica steps back out and spots Boss and Kid fist-fighting!
She rushes over and splits them up.

VERONICA
What the hell's going on?

KID
This redneck started some shit!

BOSS
Redneck huh? Let's take this outside.

KID
Only bums fight in the streets.

BOSS
Fine! Then I challenge you to a duel!

EARL
Ohhhh! It's on now!

KID
What! A what!

BOSS
Here in Moline County, they never took
the statute on dueling off ordinance.
It's perfectly legal for us to have a
gunfight in front of witnesses.

KID
Are you serious?

BOSS

Meet me at the old church on Dutton
Chapel Road, Saturday morning at nine,
and you'll see just how serious I am. And
if you don't show, the whole county'll
know you're a coward!

Kid's speechless. Veronica starts leading Kid away.

VERONICA

Come on Kid. Forget these assholes.

EARL

Ha ha ha. Nice going, Boss! You told him!

KID

You want a shoot out? Is that it!

VERONICA

Kid, no. Don't.

KID

Well buddy, you got one!

GUY IN THE CROWD

What's your name, stranger?

KID

I'm Kid Sally! Fastest gun in the world!

INT. KITCHEN, HICKS HOUSE - DAY

Veronica, Kid, and his Grandparents sit in silence.

The doorbell rings and Grandma goes to answer it.

GRANDPA HICKS

If you're really gonna go through with
this, I got me an idea as to how we could
bluff our way out. Follow me.

INT. GARAGE, HICKS HOUSE - DAY

Kid marvels at the glimmering pearl handle of a Colt
Peacemaker .45 attached to a quick fire gun belt.

GRANDPA HICKS

I won this from a fancy pistolero down in
Tijuana. I figure this jackass is just
trying to scare you. Ain't been a shoot
out here in a hundred years...

KID
He'll see this and piss his pants.

GRANDPA HICKS
That's the idea, boy.

Kid tries the belt on. Grandpa pulls out a knife, cuts Kid's shirt sleeves off, and fits a bandana around his forehead.

GRANDPA HICKS (CONT'D)
Yeah. You gotta look like the meanest
hombre to come East of the Pecos since
Jesse James.

INT. KITCHEN, HICKS HOUSE - DAY

Kid steps out wearing the gun belt, and finds Eddie.

EDDIE
Look, I know what you're gonna say.

VERONICA
I'm sorry Kid. I had to call him.

Kid walks forward, stares him down, and gives him a hug.

KID
I'm glad you came.

Veronica's heart melts to see them back together.

KID (CONT'D)
But what are you doing here? You're not
gonna try to talk me outta this? Are you?

EDDIE
Are you kidding? This is it! This is the
missing piece to our puzzle.

INSERT - COVER OF THE FARRISBURG JOURNAL

NEW YORK ROCK STAR TO HAVE SHOOT OUT WITH LOCAL RANCHER!

EDDIE (V.O.)
*I'm gonna call every newspaper, magazine,
and TV station I know!*

INSERT - COVER OF THE ILLINOIS TIMES

FIRST LEGAL GUNFIGHT SINCE 1907! SATURDAY AT NINE!

EDDIE (V.O.)
This'll be bigger than the moon landing!

INSERT - COVER OF THE SPRINGFIELD GAZETTE

LAWMAKERS OUTRAGED! LAW WILL CHANGE BUT GUNFIGHT TO HAPPEN!

EDDIE (V.O.)

Kid Sally, the rock and roll gunfighter!

BACK TO SCENE

Eddie can barely contain his excitement.

EDDIE

Kid! You're gonna be a superstar!

Veronica takes a deep breath.

EXT. DUTTON CHAPEL CHURCH - DAY

News vans and police cars surround the parking lot.

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS take pictures from the other side of a police line that's been set up to keep everyone back.

Kid stands quietly alone, looking like a ruthless mercenary.

THE PRESS

Are you really going through with this?
Are you gonna shoot to kill? When's your
album being released?

EDDIE

Come on folks! The Kid has to meditate
before he goes into action.

Boss, Earl, and his father, BOSS SR. watch from a distance.

BOSS SR.

That the boy you called out to fight?

BOSS

I reckon so, Pa.

BOSS SR.

Looks like you hooked up with a killer.
You don't stand a Chinaman's chance.

BOSS

So what am I gonna do Pa?

BOSS SR.

Don't worry, boy, just take your
position, and I'll go have myself a talk
with Charlie Hicks.

Veronica takes Kid by the arm.

VERONICA

Let's forget this whole silly game.
Please Kid. You can't do this to me! What
if you get hurt! What if you -

KID

Don't worry, I won't die.

VERONICA

You can't know that. Not really!

KID

My veil. It'll protect me. It always has.

VERONICA

Kid, it's just a silly superstition!

KID

You trust me right? Trust me on this.

GRANDPA HICKS

It's time.

KID

Darling. I'll be fine. I promise.

Veronica cries as she watches Grandpa usher Kid away.

They walk out to the field, where Boss and Kid take their
stances facing each other at thirty paces. Their eyes lock.

GRANDPA HICKS

Now you stay put, and don't do nothin'
unless you're told.

The crowd starts CLAPPING in unison.

A NEWS REPORTER faces his camera.

NEWS REPORTER

The two warriors are in place and they
both seem calm. These are the types of
men that made our great country what it
is today. Both men willing to lay down
their lives for their convictions.

Boss Sr. and Grandpa Hicks come face to face nearby.

BOSS SR.

Here it is, Charlie. My boy had no idea
he picked a fight with your grandson.

(MORE)

BOSS SR. (CONT'D)

We're like one big happy family, and if mine were to kill yours, it'd be like killing the family. You understand?

GRANDPA HICKS

I reckon so. I guess we better get out there and stop it from going any further.

They both spit and shake hands with a nod.

GRANDPA HICKS (CONT'D)

That's it boys! We're calling it a draw!

KID

A what?

GRANDPA HICKS

A draw!

Boss DRAWS his gun and PUMPS SHOTS at Kid!

The first bullet KICKS DIRT onto Kid's boots. The second WHISTLES past his ear. Kid snaps from his trance.

He raises his Peacemaker and FIRES!

The slug hits Boss in the thigh and knocks out his legs.

The crowd whips up into a FRENZY as Kid runs forward!

Boss fires back MISSING TWICE, as Kid reaches him and KICKS the gun from Boss's hands! Triumphant -

Kid presses the barrel of his own gun against Boss's head.

BOSS

No more! I give!

Kid holsters his gun and offers a hand to Boss. They shake.

The crowd crosses the police line and rushes forward! Eddie grabs Kid by the arm and pulls him away towards Veronica.

EDDIE

Quick! Before we get swarmed!

VERONICA

Oh my God! Baby you did it!

Kid takes Veronica's hand and they all run together.

EDDIE

Holy shit Kid! After what happened today I'm gonna make you a legend!

EXT. HICKS HOUSE - DAY

Grandma waits on the porch as Kid struts over, but his bravado sours when he notices her sad demeanor.

KID
Grandma? What's wrong?

GRANDMA HICKS
It's your Grandpa Toddo. He's in the hospital and it's gonna be soon. I've already booked your flights.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Kid's intercepted by Vera at the door. She hugs him.

VERA
He's been holding on. Waiting for you.

Kid sits down next to Toddo who's lying in bed at the edge of his life. Kid takes his grandpa's hand and tears up.

TODDO
That you Sally Boy?

KID
Yeah, Grandpa. It's me.

TODDO
Don't cry Sally Boy. I've enjoyed my life and I've outlived all my enemies. But promise me something... Please.

KID
What? Anything.

TODDO
Remember what I told you? My mistake. Promise me. When the time comes, and it will come. Don't be weak like me. Don't wait until they hurt your family... Do what you have to do... Don't be weak...

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

Cream Jackson looks every part the bum as he limps down the street with one crutch, unshaven, and clothes ragged.

He stops outside a bodega, reaches in his pocket, and pulls out a pipe, some crack, and some coins. He counts the coins.

INT. MANHATTAN BODEGA - NIGHT

Cream hobbles into the store. The OWNER eyeballs him.

OWNER
No homeless!

CREAM
Whatever, man! I got money!

OWNER
Just make it quick, ok? I don't need you
smelling up the place.

Cream makes his way up the aisle, when he suddenly comes to a halt. Cream looks down, rage boiling over within him.

He kneels and takes a box of cereal from the shelf.

Cream's on the box: MAKE YOUR BREAKFAST A SLAM DUNK!

Cream crushes the box and tears his cardboard face to shreds.

OWNER (CONT'D)
Hey! What are you doing! Stop!

The Owner tries to grab him, and Cream swings his crutch around like a maniac, knocking cereal boxes EVERYWHERE!

Cream gets TACKLED to the floor, and they WRESTLE in the cereal aisle while STORE PATRONS watch on in amused shock.

EXT. MANHATTAN BODEGA - NIGHT

Cream gets released from his handcuffs by a FRIENDLY COP.

FRIENDLY COP
Sorry about that Cream. I got him to drop
the charges. Just tone it down alright.
You got someplace to go?

CREAM
Yeah man. Thanks for watching.

Cream limps off down the street. The Cop shakes his head.

EXT. PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

Cream stands motionless behind a tree, hiding in the shadows with a brick in his hand, out of crack and in need of a fix.

His eyes are on a beer-bellied TOURIST wearing a Harlem Globetrotter shirt who's crossing the street into the Park.

When he passes by, Cream steps out and follows him. Cream picks up his pace and gets close. He raises the brick...

The Tourist TRIPS and FALLS to the ground! Instinctively Cream drops the brick and leans over to help him up.

By the time the Tourist's on his feet, Cream realizes his mistake, and kneels to grab his brick.

TOURIST

Holy shit! You're the Cream! Would you sign an autograph for me?

CREAM

Uhh... Sure.

Cream finds himself signing the guys handkerchief instead.

TOURIST

They're never gonna believe this! Cream Jackson! Wow! I met the fucking Cream!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Cream lies flat on a park bench, huddling beneath a blanket of newspapers as he tries to stay warm... But his knee hurts.

He sits up and rubs his knee... and that's when he spots it.

Kid's face on a magazine cover! Cream picks it up and stares.

INSERT - CUE MAGAZINE

GUNSLINGING DRUMMER SHOOTS HIS WAY TO FAME WITH MAINSTAY

The Photograph: Kid alongside Eddie, J.B. and Hollander.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - NIGHT

Cream climbs up the fire escape. Once up on the ledge, he takes out his brick and SMASHES in the window.

INT. HOLLANDER'S OFFICE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - NIGHT

The room's dark and quiet. Cream turns the light on, digs around in the desk, and finds a revolver.

Cream picks up the gun and pockets it, then slides a chair over by the door, shuts off the light, and sits down.

CUT TO:

Cream gets startled awake by a key turning the door's lock.

HOLLANDER (O.S.)
Calm the fuck down! I said I'd handle it.

The door opens and J.B. and Hollander walk in.

J.B.
When I say I need something signed soon,
I don't mean --

The door SLAMS SHUT behind them, and they turn to face Cream Jackson and his pointed revolver.

HOLLANDER
Cream?

CREAM
Where's my fucking coke Hollander?

J.B.
Coke? What is he talking about?

HOLLANDER
I don't have it! You said you were
robbed!

CREAM
I'm not playing games here motherfucker!

Cream waves the gun around erratically.

J.B. sidesteps away from Hollander, towards the lamp.

CREAM (CONT'D)
I know you're in league with that Kid. I
know you fucking ripped me off, and I
want my money! You fucking owe me bitch!

HOLLANDER
I... I don't...

Cream places the gun against Hollander's head.

CREAM
Lie to me.

HOLLANDER
I, I used my half to produce Kid's album.
I don't know what he did with his cut.

J.B. picks up the lamp and BREAKS it over Cream's head!

Cream grunts in pain. J.B. lunges for the gun. BANG!

J.B. slumps to the side, bleeding out, a bullet in his chest.

HOLLANDER (CONT'D)
What the fuck, Cream! You killed him.

CREAM
Aww shit. Shit. Shit. Shit.

The gun still in his hand, Cream tries to stop the flow of blood, but it's useless. The light fades from J.B.'s eyes.

HOLLANDER
I can fix this. Cream. Cream, look at me.
I can fix this.

CREAM
Fix it? This... This is all your fault.

HOLLANDER
No, Cream no. Listen to me. There's still
a way you can come out ahead of this.
It's Kid. Kid made you do this.

Cream stands up, the gun held tight in his bloodied fingers.

CREAM
Kid...

HOLLANDER
He's the one who stole your coke. Listen
to me. Let's kill him. You can kill him,
and we'll split the insurance money. With
J.B. gone, I'm in charge now. I can steal
it from the books. I've done it before.
Kid killed J.B. and we stopped him.

Cream takes a long deep breath.

CREAM
Get on the phone and call him down here.

HOLLANDER
You're making the right choice, here
Cream. Don't you worry about -

CREAM
Man, just shut up and make the call.

Hollander picks up the phone and dials.

HOLLANDER
Hello Kid? Hi, listen. J.B. wants you to
come down right away.
(MORE)

HOLLANDER (CONT'D)
 He's got big news Kid. Huge. Don't tell anybody. Just come quick as you can to his office. Ok. Bye.

EXT. / INT. PAULIE'S COUP DE VILLE - NIGHT

Paulie pulls up in front of Mainstay Records.

He reaches under his seat, pulls out his grandfather's revolver, and passes it to Kid, who's in back with Eddie.

Kid checks the old rusty revolver for bullets.

EDDIE
 You sure about this?

KID
 I'm telling you Eddie. There was something in his voice. You said it yourself, the guy's a snake. Diamond hated him. I think he's up to something.

EDDIE
 But why the piece? And why Paulie's? Why not your Peacemaker?

KID
 Come on, Eddie. Think about it. I shot a man with that gun.

EDDIE
 That you did.

KID
 Just in case, this can't be traced.

Kid tucks the revolver in his belt.

INT. CLIFFORD'S OFFICE, MAINSTAY RECORDS - NIGHT

Kid and Eddie push into the office, only to find Hollander sitting smug behind Clifford's desk.

KID
 Where's J.B.?

Hollander smiles like the snake that he is.

HOLLANDER
 Right behind you.

CREAM (O.S.)
 Hey, Kid. Say cheese.

Cream raises his gun at Kid and PRESSES THE TRIGGER!

EDDIE

Look out!

Eddie pushes Kid away and takes a bullet in the gut!

KID

Eddie! No!

Cream balks in frustration as the wrong man bleeds out.

CREAM

No, dammit! Not again!

HOLLANDER

Come on Cream! Wake up! You had to do 'em both anyway! We can't have any witnesses!

EDDIE

Kid... I think...

He dies.

Kid fumbles for his gun and drops it, then CHARGES FORWARD in an unbridled rage and BULL RUSHES Cream to the ground.

They fight in mortal struggle for control of Cream's gun.

Kid BASHES Cream's nose. Cream SPITS in Kid's face.

Hollander picks up Kid's fallen revolver and approaches them.

CREAM

Help! Shoot him!

Hollander aims the gun at Cream.

HOLLANDER

Sorry, Cream. But you murdered them both, and I stopped you.

Hollander SHOOTS!

And the rusty old revolver EXPLODES in his hand like a GRENADE, painting the wall with pieces of Hollander...

Cream's hit by shrapnel and releases his grip on the gun. Kid grabs it, stands up, and takes a few steps back.

Cream rolls around on the floor in pain.

KID
Fuck. Oh, fuck. Eddie.

Kid kneels beside Eddie and cradles his bloody corpse.

KID (V.O.)
It's just like what happened to grandpa.

He stands up and paces the floor of the office, FURIOUS.

KID (V.O.)
He wouldn't want me to be weak.

Cream leans back against the wall and spits up blood.

KID
You killed my best friend!

Kid raises the gun and takes aim.

KID (V.O.)
I can't be weak. I can't end up like him.

Cream gets on his knees and pleads with his blood shot eyes.

KID
Now I have to kill you...

CREAM
You stole my coke, man! Please. Let me go
and I swear. You'll never see me again.

KID
I can't! I have to be strong! Don't you
understand! If I let you go, my life is
over. You'll ruin me! You have to die!

CREAM
Die? Me? Shit. I'm the fucking Cream,
baby. You gonna kill a legend?

KID (V.O.)
*Should I? Should I do it? Well? You tell
me. Was he right? Does Cream have to die?*

Kid PRESSES the gun barrel against Cream's forehead.

KID (V.O.)
*Or should I show mercy? Save my soul...
Seems like it could go either way...*

Kid takes a deep breath.

KID
Goodbye, Cream.

Cream closes his eyes.

KID (V.O.)
I guess we'll just have to find out.

His finger hesitates against the trigger.

CUT TO BLACK: