

29th STREET

Written by:  
George Gallo

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David Permut  
George Gallo  
PERMUT PRESENTATIONS  
450 North Roxbury Drive  
Suite 201  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210  
(213) 285-0940

This film is dedicated to  
FRANK JOSEPH PESCE, SR.  
known as "Frankie Fish" on 29th Street

29th STREET

After the MGM/UA logo FADES from sight, we find ourselves in a sea of total black. The SOUND of the WIND kicks in gently and we slowly FADE IN as CREDITS BEGIN.

Our first IMAGE is not what we expect. We are lost in a sea of deep purple bulbous haze. We're in the clouds, high above the city of New York as evening grows slowly into night. As FRANK SINATRA kicks into a live version of "Come Fly With Me," we begin to experience one of the most amazing SHOTS we've ever SEEN on a motion picture screen. We drift downward through the clouds. Begin to see the city below. The twinkling lights of the World Trade Center. Downtown Manhattan. The Brooklyn Bridge. Now, as SINATRA belts out the song to the crowds at the Copa, WE swoop over the Brooklyn Bridge, making out cars moving below, and begin rushing toward the FDR Highway that runs along the East River. The CREDITS are reaching their conclusion as we get CLOSER to the highway. Moving alongside cars below. Finally, WE pick out one car, making good time on the highway. A '72 Buick Riviera. And as we get CLOSER we can SEE the driver inside.

In this one SHOT we've already, in a sense, told our story. Out of an entire city, we've picked out this one individual, who has been singled out himself, as we will soon see...

INT. BUICK - EVENING

FRANK PESCE, early twenties. The prototypical New York Italian young man, dressed to the nines, cigarette in mouth, hair slicked back, taps nervously on the steering wheel to the Sinatra song as it concludes with the CREDITS. Frank looks worked-up. Something deep running through his mind. Frank lowers the radio on the next Sinatra tune.

CUT TO:

A myriad of IMAGES and SOUNDS. Get used to it. This is a story of quick moves and constant changes.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

A SALVATION ARMY BAND playing "Hark, The Herald Angels Sing." SANTA ringing a bell. Snow swirling down. Headlights. Taxis. Busses. Last minute SHOPPERS. As Frank's car glides by, tires crunching over new fallen snow, a TITLE appears:

NEW YORK CITY, CHRISTMAS EVE 1972.

CUT TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Frank's Riviera pulls up and is stopped by a GUARD.

GUARD

Sorry. This is for lottery  
finalists, only.

Frank rolls down his window.

FRANK

(oddly, almost grim)  
I'm a finalist.

GUARD

(re: clipboard)  
Name?

FRANK

Pesce. Frank Pesce.

CUT TO:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Another BLAST of SIGHT and SOUND. It's like we're on a roller coaster. WE move through the doors and into the belly of of Madison Square Garden, packed to the gills with CROWDS. NEWS PEOPLE. Past PEOPLE who LAUGH nervously. CHATTER. BANTER. A high school marching band belts out "Jingle Bells" on the floor below. A huge sign hangs over the floor from the rafters that reads " Welcome Finalists Of First New York State Lottery."

ANGLE ON FRANK

as Frank moves through the crowds and is led to a section of his own by a smiling FEMALE USHER. Several empty seats beckon.

FEMALE USHER

Where's the rest of the family?

FRANK

(forcing a smile)  
It's just me.

Frank takes his seat. Nervously lights another cigarette and looks at a huge metal bin filled with five hundred names at the center of the Garden floor, one of which has his name. A drum roll starts. How much time has passed? The bin starts turning by TWO WOMEN dressed as Santa Clause. Frank eye-balls the bin. Names falling atop each other. A sea of paper. It stops. SILENCE falls over the Garden. Frank locks his eyes. The M.C. pulls a name from the bin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

M.C.

And the first place winner of six  
point two million dollars is...

Frank locks into a grim stare.

M.C.

...Mr. Frank Pesce.

Frank has never unlocked his stare. The band plays "Jingle Bells" as the rafters open up with fake snow. Frank doesn't smile. He just gets up and rushes down the aisle as spot lights sweep to find his section.

Frank is already out of the section and into the aisle, and running for the nearest exit. From the NOISE we go to...

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

The silence of falling snow and Frank making snowballs in front of the Saints and baby Jesus in the manger. Frank starts hurling snowballs at the church in a frenzy.

FRANK

Are you happy?  
(throws snowball)  
Are you happy, God?  
(throws another)  
You had to do this to me?

Frank keeps lunging for new snow. Packing snowballs and hurling them.

FRANK

Why? Why did you do this to me!

FATHER LOWREY appears on the steps of the rectory. Shocked.

FATHER LOWREY

(thick Irish accent)  
Good heavens, what are you doing  
Frankie? On Christmas Eve?

Frank throws snowballs at him.

FRANK

Get back in there, Lowrey! What  
the hell good did you ever do me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Father Lowrey ducks back into the rectory dodging the snowy onslaught.

FRANK  
I'm a Catholic. I'll do whatever  
the hell I want!

Frank's Catholicism won't help him a second later as three NYPD cars with SIRENS and LIGHTS blazing skid all around him and stop. Frank keeps throwing snowballs in a frenzy at the church as the COPS grab him and wrestle him toward one of the cars.

CUT TO:

INT. SGT. RINALDI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Police SGT RINALDI, a man of nearly fifty looks out of the window of his office at the snow storm which is worsening. A small Christmas tree sits behind him and a TV PLAYS quietly in the background. Father Lowrey paces the room very troubled.

FATHER LOWREY  
He's normally a good boy. He  
drives me a bit nuts askin' me  
questions about God and the like,  
always meaning well. But this,  
I don't know. It's down-right  
sacrilegious is what it is.

One of Frank's arresting officers enters. Rinaldi turns, as does Father Lowrey.

PATROLMAN  
Sgt. Rinaldi. The atheist is  
here.

RINALDI  
Bring him in.

The patrolman nods and Frank is lead in, in cuffs, having been locked up the last hour or so. A few other of the arresting officers also enter with him. Rinaldi leads him to a chair opposite his desk.

FRANK  
(nervously)  
Look, you gotta let me go. I  
don't have a lot of time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RINALDI

This priest wants to press charges. You messed up his manger.

FRANK

I'm sorry, Father Lowrey.

FATHER LOWREY

Alright. Alright. But why'd you do it, boy?

FRANK

Just let me go. I'll come back later and talk to you all you want.

Rinaldi opens up a large envelope marked "F. Pesce." Dumps the contents on his desk. Cigarettes. Lighter. Belt. Wallet. An envelope. Frank locks on the envelope. Rinaldi takes it and opens it. It's not sealed and he already knows the contents. Drops it on the desk between Frank. It's filled with hundred dollar bills.

RINALDI

What's this?

FRANK

Ten thousand dollars.

RINALDI

You wanna tell me about it?

FRANK

I hadda do some last minute Christmas shoppin'.

RINALDI

You wanna play games? You'll spend Christmas in a goddamn cell!

Father Lowrey bites his lip over the language.

FRANK

Look, my father's life is in danger! I can't sit around and bullshit with you guys!

RINALDI

(to Patrolman)  
Un-cuff him.

The cop does. Rinaldi gets up and leans over Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RINALDI

Y'know, Frank. I checked out what you said. You're brother is a cop. You've got no prior record. You look like a nice Italian kid. So, you better tell me what the hell you were doin' throwin' snowballs at a church and scarin' this priest half to death on Christmas Eve.

On the TV in the background, the voice of BILL JORGENSEN asks on WNEW, "It's Ten P.M. Do you know where your children are?." Then, the news begins. BILL JORGENSEN appears on the TV screen. The top story, the New York State Lottery drawing just a few hours ago. Frank raises his head.

JORGENSEN

...and the winner tonight, Frank Pesce of Queens, New York, who will take home six point two million dollars. Mr. Pesce, apparently wasn't at the drawing ceremony tonight...

Rinaldi looks at Frank. The arresting officers. Frank just stares at the set, blankly.

FRANK

Turn it off, will you?

Rinaldi does. Stands over Frank confused by his sickly reaction.

RINALDI

That's you? The same guy?

FRANK

Yeah...

RINALDI

We've got a lot to talk about, don't we?

FRANK

Yeah, I guess we do...

The arresting officers stare. Frank shrugs, looking at them all. Finally says the worst.

FRANK

I don't have the ticket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

That hangs in the air for a while.

RINALDI  
Where is it?

FRANK  
It's gone for good.

Frank just shrugs, exasperated.

FRANK  
Are you sure you wanna hear all  
of this?

Rinaldi sits opposite him, suddenly, with all the concern of  
a caring parent.

RINALDI  
Yeah. Of course I want to hear  
it.

Frank covers his face up with his hands.

FRANK  
Well, this is a story of real  
heartache.  
(searches for words)  
I'll have to go all the way back  
to the beginning in order for it  
to make any sense.

RINALDI  
Just talk to us.

Rinaldi and the arresting officers LISTEN as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. BELLVIEW HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY (1950'S)

FRANK (V.O.)  
I was born at Bellview hospital  
on 29th Street. The youngest of  
three children. I was named after  
my father.

INT. MATERNITY WARD HALL - DAY (1950'S)

Frank's father, MR. PESCE, otherwise know as Frank, Sr., stands  
at a pay-phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank's older brother, VITO, who is four, stands alongside his father who is YAMMERING on the pay-phone, smoking a cigarette. Sister, MADELINE, seven, is also present.

MR. PESCE

(into phone)

No, Shadow, listen. That's twenty-five on the Yankees. Twenty-five on Brooklyn.

A NURSE approaches them.

NURSE

Mr. Pesce? Would you like to see your son?

MR. PESCE

(into phone)

Shadow. I'll call you back.

(hangs up, then to

Nurse)

Yeah, I'd love to see him.

CUT TO:

INT. MATERNITY WARD - DAY (1950'S)

Mr. Pesce stares with near-tears in his eyes at infant Frank in the incubator. Vito at his side. Mr. Pesce tapping on the glass, making faces.

FRANK (V.O.)

My mom said, "He always cried when he saw us for the first time."

Me. My brother. My sister.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY (1950'S)

MRS. PESCE hugs and kisses the infant Frank with Mr. Pesce, Vito and Madeline around her. SALVATORE PESCE, Frank's Grandfather and GRANDMA PESCE enter the room with big, proud smiles to see their grandson, Frankie.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET DAY (1940'S)

We see Salvatore Pesce, Frank's Grandfather, getting out of an old truck and walking around to the back with his PARTNER.

FRANK (V.O.)

My grandfather was a strong man with a tremendous sense of pride. He was the neighborhood ice man back when people didn't have refrigerators.

SALVATORE

(heavy Italian accent; smiling)

People will always need ice, Luigi...

Salvatore Pesce pulls out a huge block of ice with tongs and heads up the steps into a brownstone.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY (1940's)

Salvatore Pesce lugs the ice-block up to the sixth floor, footsteps echoing in the hall.

FRANK (V.O.)

But like everybody in my family, he was enormously stubborn and thinkin' back on it, he didn't make a hell of a lot of sense.

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY (1940'S)

Salvatore Pesce and his partner turn with dismay as they unload ice from a truck. Their jaws slowly drop as they watch a brand new refrigerator being unloaded by WORKERS from a Sears truck across the street.

PARTNER

(to Salvatore)

It's the beginning of the end, Salvatore.

Salvatore Pesce spits, angrily.

SALVATORE

I'll never put one of those things in my house.

FRANK (V.O.)

And he didn't...

CUT TO:

INT. SALVATORE PESCE'S APARTMENT - DAY (1950'S)

GRANDMA PESCE yells at her husband as she negotiates with an ancient ice-box door. The door is nearly broken. She slams it shut.

GRANDMA PESCE

(heavy Italian accent)

Salvatore! It is 1958! Wake-up and join the rest of the world. Mrs. Grappuso bought a steak two weeks ago, put it in her refrigerator and it still hasn't gone bad.

SALVATORE

Get off my back! I will not have a refrigerator in this house!

(re: ice-box)

Keep chipping!

CUT TO:

EXT. SALVATORE PESCE'S BACKYARD - DAY (1950'S)

Behind the brownstone, Frank, eight years old, sits on the steps as his father and grandfather talk behind him, also seated. Mr. Pesce is dressed to the nines with slick-backed hair.

SALVATORE

These refrigerators killed me. Some guy invented something and poof - he took away my life. Next thing ya know, the damn things'll be makin' ice cubes.

MR. PESCE

Don't worry about it, dad.

SALVATORE

I'm not worried about me, Frankie. I'm worried about you. Your kids. I'm beggin' you not to end up like me. You're still young, Frankie. Maybe you can go back to school and learn a trade. Luigi went to Detroit to work assembly lines. Building Edsels. Now, those are fine looking cars.

MR. PESCE

Hey, dad, people'll always need truck drivers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SALVATORE

You don't know that, Frankie.  
Maybe we should move to Detroit.  
At least you can be sure the  
American car business'll never  
have trouble. What happens if  
you turn fifty and you lose your  
job. What then?

Grandma Pesce starts heading for the building in a huff. She  
mumbles as she passes them up the stairs.

GRANDMA PESCE

The damn meatballs went bad, Mr.  
Ice-box. When are you gonna  
learn?

CUT TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY (1950'S)

Mr. Pesce, Mrs. Pesce, an eight year old Frank, a twelve year  
old Vito, and a fifteen year old Madeline, walk together through  
Times Square. Young Frank is mesmerized by the news that  
parades in electric lights across the Time building.

MR. PESCE

What are you looking at, Frankie?

YOUNG FRANK

(re: news arcade)

That.

They both turn and watch the news march by.

YOUNG FRANK

What's that say?

MR. PESCE

It says that today is President  
Eisenhower's birthday.

YOUNG FRANK

I wanna get my name up there.

MR. PESCE

Only great people get their names  
up there.

YOUNG FRANK

How can I get my name up there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

Oh, you've gotta do something big,  
kid.

YOUNG FRANK

How big?

Mr. Pesce stretches his arms as far as they can go.

MR. PESCE

This big.

Frank runs and hugs his dad.

FRANK (V.O.)

I think, ever since then, I wanted  
to do something big with my life.  
And, I wanted, more than anything  
to get my name up on that  
building. Then, I'd know I had  
really done something big.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOPS ON 29TH STREET - DAY (1950's)

Frank, eight years old with JOEY VITELLO, also eight, trot along  
the rooftops to watch an Italian parade that marches in the  
street below. We HEAR the band PLAYING in the street.

FRANK (V.O.)

Lucky things happened to me ever  
since I was a kid...

Frank suddenly stops short as if spotting something. Joey  
turns.

JOEY

Come on, Frankie. Let's watch  
the parade.

FRANK

(re: something off  
screen)

Look at this.

Frank is looking at a brand new Rolleiflex camera sitting on  
a corner of the rooftop. Joey's eyes bug-out and runs back.

JOEY

Wow!

Frank picks it up. He and Joey check it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Can you believe it? It was just  
layin' here.

JOEY

It's probably as "hot" as the day  
is long.

FRANK

Yeah. Hey, let's take it down  
to Irv's and sell it to him.

Joey agrees. They run off.

CUT TO:

INT. IRV'S PAWN SHOP - DAY (1950's)

An old musty pawn shop. Junk, old guitars, clothes and dust  
galore. IRV, about fifty-five years old, looks just like what  
you'd expect Irv to look like, working in a 29th Street pawn  
shop. Frank and Joey have just shown Irv the Rolleiflex camera.

IRV

I'll give you five dollars.

FRANK

Fi..dollars? Are you nuts? It  
must be worth a couple of hundred  
bucks.

JOEY

Yeah, Irv. Don't be a fuckin'  
stiff.

IRV

What a mouth you got. You kiss  
your mother with that mouth?

JOEY

Yeah, and your wife, too.

Irv looks like he's about to crack Joey.

FRANK

Don't do that. You know who his  
father is.

IRV

(backing off)

Ten bucks and that's it, ya little  
bastards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOEY  
We'll take it.

Irv hands them a ten-spot. Young Frank and Joey head for the door.

FRANK (V.O.)  
This pawn shop was one day gonna  
be the most important place I ever  
bought somethin' in. But I'll  
get to that...

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY (1960'S)

A twelve year old FRANK and a twelve year old, JOEY VITELLO,  
hang around a bike parked at the curb in front of a candy store,  
looking very suspicious.

FRANK (V.O.)  
When I was twelve years old, I  
was still hangin' out with Joey  
Vitello, and I committed what  
might be considered my first  
criminal act.

Frank and Joey swipe the bike, jump on it together and pedal  
down the block.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT (1960'S)

Two late '50's patrol cars are parked out front. Mr. Pesce and  
a scared Frank are in the doorway. Mr. Pesce thanks the police  
for all their help as the COPS take the stolen bike away.

INT. PESCE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank enters first and Mr. Pesce shuts the door and corners him.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Then my father gave me these  
immortal words of advice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

(to Frank)

I'm gonna say this once and I'm gonna say this once only. Never. Never. Never, ever bring the cops to this house again.

Frank stares at his dad.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE ACADEMY - DAY (late 1960's)

A hundred COPS are being handed shields for the first time and shaking hands with the POLICE COMMISSIONER and MAYOR. Vito Pesce's name is called out, and he proudly takes his shield as he shakes hands down the line.

FRANK (V.O.)

It's sorta ironic that my brother, Vito, became a policeman. His dream was to be a good cop.

ANGLE on the PESCE FAMILY in the stands. We DOLLY past their faces. An older Mrs. Pesce claps for her son. A twenty-three years old Madeline Pesce, whose grown into a sexy young woman, clapping also. Frank, about eighteen, claps for his older brother and whistles. And an older Mr. Pesce ducks all the COPS that sit around him, covering his face with his hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

One of the most bizarre seventeen year old faces we've ever seen stares directly at us in CLOSE-UP.

FRANK (V.O.)

The guys I grew up with we're all a bunch of characters and I'm sure they had a lot to do with shaping me into the man I am today. There was Lenny Nipton. We called him "Needle Nose," who was probably responsible for the invention of plastic surgery.

NEEDLE NOSE

(ultra nasally)

Hey, Frank. Let's go lookin' for girls tonight, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WE PAN to another FACE. This guy is permanently locked in 1959. Slicked-back hair. A curl forever on his forehead. He SINGS directly at US. His name is "Dom the Bomb."

FRANK (V.O.)

Then there was Dom the Bomb.

DOM THE BOMB

(singing)

"Hello Frank. How are you today?  
It's a beautiful day on the  
streets of New York. I feel like  
a song..."

Dom the Bomb keeps on singing.

FRANK (V.O.)

In all the years I've known him,  
I don't think I've heard him speak  
but twice. He was always singing.  
He would never stop. The tough  
thing was to keep him away from  
a microphone at a party.

DOM THE BOMB

(singing)

I love this town! And I love you!

FRANK (V.O.)

This guy ruined more weddings and  
christenings than anybody else  
in the state of New York.

WE PAN away from him to a seventeen year old face that's attached to a body of three hundred-plus pound, ROCKY SAV, eating a hotdog.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then there was Rocky Sav, whose  
one goal in life was simply to  
lose two hundred and fifty pounds.

ROCKY SAV

(mouth full)

I gotta lose weight, Frank. I'm  
gettin' too fat. But what am I  
gonna do? I got gland problems.

WE PAN away from him to a simple looking face that's oddly cocked to one side. His name is, SAL LAS BENAS. Sweet natured. Simply, a good soul with kind eyes, who talks with a lisp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAL  
(spitting when he talks)  
Hi, Frank. Wanna go do something?

FRANK (V.O.)  
Poor Sal Las Benas. Possibly the  
nicest guy you could ever wanna  
meet. But he spit when he talked.  
And it was impossible to hang  
around this guy if you were  
wearing a new shirt.

SAL  
(still spitting)  
Maybe we'll go do something later,  
huh?

WE PAN to the last face. JOEY VITELLO.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Then there was Joey Vitello. At  
eighteen he was already "Mr.  
Organized Crime."

Joey has every hair in place. Three piece pin-stripe suit.  
Rolex. Diamond pinky ring.

JOEY  
(looking over his  
shoulder, nervously)  
Hey, Frank. Wanna make some  
money? Ten thousand dollars cash,  
tax free? Just carry a little  
package up to 125th Street and  
laugh all the way to the friggen  
bank. Cops? What cops? Would  
I steer you wrong?

REVERSE ANGLE ON FRANK

Who looks at all the guys talking and singing to him at once.  
He's laughing along with them.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - AFTERNOON

Frank walks across the street with Joey Vitello. Joey is in  
a three-piece suit as he will be throughout the story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

Of all the guys, I was the closest to Joey Vitello. Joey's father, Joe, Sr., was one of the highest ranking mob guys in the tri-state area.

Frank and Joey hit the sidewalk and look behind them. Two FBI cars with government plates are parked at the curb and watching them. Joey waves them a friendly "hello."

FRANK (V.O.)

The feds sat on Joey Vitello's building night and day, hoping to catch them up to something.

The outside of Joey's brownstone looks the same as any other on the block. Frank and Joey trot up the steps into the building.

FRANK (V.O.)

Joey's old man had the best front I've ever seen in my life, because outside, this building looked like every other shit-hole on the block.

CUT TO:

INT. JOEY VITELLO'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Inside, the place is a palace. Gold leaf. Chandeliers. Frank and Joey sit on a tremendous sofa watching the game on an Advent TV screen.

FRANK (V.O.)

Inside, the joint looked like the Taj Mahal.

EXT. QUEENS STREET - DAY

We glide down a street in Queens, the way it would look from a passing car. It's a hard-core Italian neighborhood. Maddonas sit in front of homes. Kids in the street. Guys working on cars in the street.

FRANK (V.O.)

My father's dream was to own a house of his own. With his own lawn. It's what he lived for.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)  
So, when I was seventeen, he got  
it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE IN QUEENS - DAY

WE SEE the house on a block where all the houses are identical.

FRANK (V.O.)  
He got his other dream too. A  
lawn of his very own.

WE SEE the lawn. It's about the size of a crap table.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Frank walks quickly, looking both sad and tense. As he turns  
a corner, he sees Mr. Pesce coming.

FRANK  
Hey, dad...

Mr. Pesce approaches slowly. Tears in his eyes. But keeping  
it together.

MR. PESCE  
Yeah, I know. Grandpa died.

Mr. Pesce wipes his eyes with a handkerchief.

MR. PESCE  
Well, I guess we gotta make  
arrangements, huh?

FRANK  
(deeply concerned)  
Are you okay?

MR. PESCE  
Yeah...  
(starts walking, stops)  
No... Frankie. I'm really sorry  
to ask you this, but do you have  
a couple of bucks on you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK  
(getting wallet)  
Sure. Why, dad?

MR. PESCE  
(sadly)  
I don't have a black tie.

Frank gives him ten dollars. Mr. Pesce counts. Gives Frank back five.

MR. PESCE  
This is enough.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET CHURCH - DAY

PALL-BEARERS carry Grandpa Pesce in his casket. Everyone descends the steps of the church. The family. The NEIGHBORS.

FRANK (V.O.)  
The day of the burial, the teamsters were on strike, so Rocky Sav's father agreed to drive my grandfather to his final resting place...

They load the casket into the back of a truck. As the crowds clear, we SEE the kind of truck: ROCKY'S REFRIGERATOR REPAIR.

Mr. Pesce stands at the curb, shaking his head, alongside Frank.

MR. PESCE  
(looking to heaven)  
I hope he's not watching down, seein' all of this.

As the crowds head for their cars.

FRANK (V.O.)  
My grandmother passed away less than a year later. That's the way it is with them old-timers. They seem to bitch at each other 24 hours a day and can't wait to join each other in the hear-after to continue the argument.

CUT TO:

INT. AQUEDUCT RACE TRACK BETTING WINDOW - DAY

Frank eyes bulge as Mr. Pesce peels off hundreds at the window, laying them down before the RACE TRACK EMPLOYEE.

FRANK (V.O.)

Now, my father also has the most incredible sense of values, a lot like my grandfather had. I still have a hard time makin' sense of him.

MR. PESCE

(as he peels)

One hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred...

FRANK

Hey, dad. Could I have a hot-dog?

MR. PESCE

How can anybody spend two dollars on a hot-dog? Are you nuts?

(back to window)

Five hundred, six hundred. Eleven hundred. On number 2, to win.

Frank rolls his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank pays for a pizza from a DELIVERY MAN. Mr. Pesce is on the phone, but watching Frank's every move. Vito, Madeline and Mrs. Pesce wait at the table. Mr. Pesce hangs up as the Delivery Man leaves.

MR. PESCE

How much did you pay for that?

FRANK

Seven bucks.

MR. PESCE

It probably cost 'em a quarter to make it.

FRANK

So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

So? I ain't no sucker. Why should I pay 'em 27 times what it's worth?

FRANK

No, but you'll put six hundred bucks on a horse that comes in dead last.

MR. PESCE

Go eat your pizza.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - MORNING

Mr. Pesce rides the crowded subway in work clothes holding his lunch basket. The train is crowded, shoulder to shoulder, with BUSINESSMEN in suits. Only Mr. Pesce wears work clothes. He eyeballs the businessmen, looking and feeling out of place.

FRANK (V.O.)

My dad worked in New Jersey. So everyday he had to take the subway to Penn Station.

CUT TO:

INT. PENN STATION - MORNING

Mr. Pesce crosses the crowded terminal.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then he would catch a connecting train all the way to New Jersey.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRUCKING YARD - NEW JERSEY - EARLY MORNING

WE SEE a trucking yard after a summer rain. The George Washington Bridge and Manhattan skyline loom in the background across the Hudson River. TRUCKERS head toward their vehicles. Mr. Pesce climbs into his. Starts it up, and SPLASHES away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

...and he broke his ass five days a week driving a truck through city traffic. He really wanted to get his own trucking service together, but somehow, he could never make it happen.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Mr. Pesce puts his lunch pail on the steps of the house, grabs the hose and hooks up his swaying water sprinkler.

FRANK (V.O.)

Every afternoon, like clockwork, he would come home from work and set up the sprinkler. He loves that lawn more than anything.

Mr. Pesce finds a candy wrapper on the lawn. Sacrilege. He crumples it and tosses it into the street. He turns to the house and SHOUTS to the second floor window.

MR. PESCE

Who the hell was on this lawn?

Mrs. Pesce appears in the window.

MRS. PESCE

What are you shoutin' about?

Frank appears alongside his mother.

FRANK

Nobody was on the lawn.

MR. PESCE

I found a candy wrapper on it.

FRANK

So, how do y'know it was me?

MR. PESCE

It was a Zagnut wrapper. You got ten million of 'em in the refrigerator.

FRANK

Alright. Maybe I was on it. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE  
You gotta treat the lawn with  
respect, Frank.

INT. PESCE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Madeline stirs a big pot of sauce.

FRANK (V.O.)  
My sister, Madeline. With a mouth  
that could put any sailor to  
shame.

Madeline picks up a lid from a pot. Burns her hand. Hurls it.

MADELINE  
Fuckin' shit!

Mr. Pesce shakes his head from the dining room.

MR. PESCE  
Who's gonna marry you with a mouth  
like that?

CUT TO:

INT. QUEENS TERRACE - NIGHT

A big Italian wedding hall. BAND MEMBERS with tuxedo's play  
"That's Amore." Everyone from the Pesce family wears tuxedos.

FRANK (V.O.)  
My sister got married when I was  
eighteen to this Sicilian guy  
named Tony.

We see TONY, a real grease-ball. He dances cheek to cheek with  
Madeline as couples dance across the dance floor. But Frank's  
side of the family stares across at the groom's side with blood  
in their eyes. The groom's family is a row of grease-balls much  
like Tony.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Now it's common knowledge that  
people of different races and  
creeds don't get along sometimes  
until they get to know each other.  
This is also true of Italians.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)  
But Italians don't even like  
Italians that come from different  
parts of Italy. Sorta like a guy  
from Mississippi would love to  
come across a guy from New York  
in the woods.

Mr. Pesce stares down the groom's father from across the hall.  
Frank at his side. Then they both get up and head over to the  
bar.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON BAR

Frank and Mr. Pesce down their third shot.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Now, there's this stuff called  
"Grappa." My old man doesn't  
drink it much, but whenever he  
does he starts itchin' for a good  
fight.

A WOMAN in a mini-skirt walks by. Frank and Mr. Pesce turn to  
check her out.

MR. PESCE  
Shit. I'd never let my wife dress  
like that.

A GUY next to Mr. Pesce turns.

GUY  
That is my wife.

MR. PESCE  
Are you with the groom's family?

GUY  
(intense)  
Yeah. What's it to you?

Mr. Pesce decks him. In seconds, an all-out BRAWL starts.

DIXIELAND MUSIC kicks in.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

WE SEE the Trattoria restaurant in the Pan Am Building. PEOPLE dine inside and outside at the umbrella tables.

FRANK (V.O.)  
I always had trouble holding a job for more than two weeks. Don't ask me why.

INT. TRATTORIA RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The place is packed with PATRONS. WE STOP at a table with TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN. Frank, in a suit, picks their check up off the table. They look up with confusion. Frank is real "flirty."

FRANK  
Hi. I'm the assistant manager, Frank Pesce, and I'd like to pick up your check this evening.

The women bubble over with thanks.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER TABLE

The MUSIC keeps SWINGING. THREE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN sit at a table. Frank picks their check up with a flirting look in his eye.

FRANK  
Hiya, girls. I'm Frank Pesce, assistant manager and I'd like to pick up your tab for the evening.

The women all bubble over with thanks, again.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER TABLE

FOUR BEAUTIFUL WOMEN sit at another table. Frank picks up their check.

FRANK  
No need to pay tonight. I'm Frank Pesce, the assistant manager of this joint, and I'd like to pick this up for ya's.

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A CORNER OF THE RESTAURANT

The MANAGER corners Frank.

MANAGER

You're job is to sell food. Not  
give it away. What does this look  
like? The fuckin' Salvation Army?

The DIXIELAND MUSIC KEEPS SWINGING.

CUT TO:

INT. ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT OF BELLVIEW HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Frank sits with Mrs. Pesce doing clerical work with another  
CLERICAL WORKER. The MUSIC KEEPS ON SWINGING in the background.

FRANK (V.O.)

My mother worked at Bellview in  
the accounting department, so she  
got me a job there after I got  
thrown outta the restaurant. But  
I went really nuts there.

CUT TO:

INT. STOREROOM - NIGHT

Frank grabs a stethoscope and a white coat.

FRANK (V.O.)

To keep myself amused I got a hold  
of a few odds and ends...

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

Frank walks down the hall looking like an Intern.

FRANK (V.O.)

...and I started parading around  
the joint giving out medical  
advice.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Frank talks with a beautiful YOUNG NURSE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Well, there's a lot of different ways to cure a headache, sweetheart.

Frank winks.

YOUNG NURSE

(suspiciously)

What kind of doctor are you?

FRANK

(seductively)

Ooooh, I'm a specialist.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELLVIEW HOSPITAL - MORNING

Frank is hustled out by TWO SECURITY GUARDS. They snatch away his stethoscope and point for the street.

CUT TO:

INT. PENN STATION - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Droves of COMMUTERS move about. Running for taxis. Train departures and arrivals are hawked on the P.A. in the background. The MUSIC CONTINUES.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN INFORMATION CENTER - NIGHT

Twenty or so MEN and WOMEN sit at consoles wearing operator-type headsets, giving callers information on the trains.

FRANK (V.O.)

This other job I had was at the train information center at Penn Station. People called me up and busted my balls all day long, asking me stupid questions about arrivals and departures.

WE SEE Frank at on such console.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

(into headset)

No ma'am, the 7:10 train does not leave at 6:30. Ma'am, I'm positive. Ma'am, the 7:10 train can't leave at 6:30. They call it the 7:10 train because it leaves at 7:10. Oh, you thought that was just the number on the train. I see.

Frank disconnects her.

FRANK

Asshole...

CUT TO:

Frank in the middle of another conversation.

FRANK

That's right. Every twenty minutes.

(incredulous)

Is there a movie on it? It's not AMTRACK, it's a subway. Where ya from? Missouri?

Frank disconnect the person.

FRANK

Idiot...

CUT TO:

Frank in the middle of another conversation. This time he's really exasperated. He's begging this person to believe him.

FRANK

No, not 7:45. Ma'am, trust me. On my mothers eyes. The train to Pelham leaves at 8:30. I got a computer here. I got a train schedule here. And a big board here. And they'll come up with 8:30. Ma'am, that train schedule you got in front of you must have been printed in 1910, because I'm tellin' ya, the train to Pelham leaves at 8:30, not 7:45.

The woman on the other end obviously continues to argue with him. Frank rolls his eyes and finally loses it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Alright, alright, I'll tell you what. Come on down here at 7:45 and if the fuckin' thing starts leavin' jump on it!

Frank disconnects her. The SUPERVISOR on a headset jumps upon hearing this. He comes down a few steps from his console and heads toward Frank like a ball of fire.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUEENS SUBWAY - NIGHT

The MUSIC STOPS. The train ROARS away, spewing SPARKS, leaving Frank in the train station on a pay-phone.

FRANK (V.O.)

Y'know, I hate cold spaghetti more than anything, so I would call my mom from the Queens station every night when I got off the train.

FRANK

(into phone)

Ma...

INTERCUT

Mrs. Pesce, at the stove on the phone.

MRS. PESCE

Yeah.

INTERCUT FRANK

FRANK

(into phone)

I'm at the station. Start boilin' the water.

INTERCUT MRS. PESCE

MRS. PESCE

Yes, your highness.

She hangs up. MUSIC FADES OUT.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE DINING ROOM - EVENING

Everyone finishes up a meal of spaghetti and meatballs. Vito, in his police uniform, Mrs. Pesce. Frank, wearing an all brown suit and tie. Mr. Pesce take bites as he reads the paper scanning an ad for "Ortho-grow."

MR. PESCE

I have a family announcement to make. I wanna congratulate my youngest son, Frank Jr., for having been fired today.

FRANK

(looking up from his plate)

What are ya, kiddin'?

MR. PESCE

No. You held that job for eleven days. That's a record with you. I'm pointing out your progress.

Vito laughs. Frank shoots him a look.

MR. PESCE

I got something else. I've been thinking about that lawn out there. Blue Grass of Kentucky. What do you think?

FRANK

What the hell is it?

MR. PESCE

(knowingly)

It's the best grass there is.

FRANK

Grass is grass, ain't it?

Mr. Pesce leans back with total amazement over the utter ignorance of Frank's statement.

MR. PESCE

Boy, oh, boy, you don't know a damn thing about anything, do ya, kid?

MRS. PESCE

Please stop driving us crazy with this lawn, will ya please?

VITO

Yeah, Pop. Enough already.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank gets up, finishing dinner.

FRANK  
The spaghetti was great. Thanks,  
Ma.

MRS. PESCE  
Where're you going?

Frank turns his arm outward, presenting his brown suit.

FRANK  
I'm goin' out. Can't you tell?

MR. PESCE  
Did you get another job?

FRANK  
What do you mean, "another job"?

MR. PESCE  
(re: suit)  
You look like you work for U.P.S.

Vito laughs out-loud.

FRANK  
I've got a date.

MR. PESCE  
With who?

FRANK  
A girl.

MR. PESCE  
What girl?

VITO  
Maria.

MR. PESCE  
Who's Maria?

VITO  
(to Mr. Pesce)  
She's that Puerto Rican girl he's  
been seein'. The one you told  
him to stay away from.

FRANK  
Jesus. Three months he's a cop,  
he's narcin' on everybody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. PESCE

I told you to stay away from her!

FRANK

Dad! She's a nice girl.

MR. PESCE

I don't care how nice she is,  
she's a Puerto Rican, and Puerto  
Rican's don't like Italians! You  
go up to Spanish Harlem, you're  
gonna get hurt!

FRANK

Dad, her brother Julio loves me  
like a brother.

Mr. Pesce goes back to the Ortho-grow ad in the paper. His eyes  
never leave the newspaper.

MR. PESCE

(re: Frank)

Suit yourself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPANISH HARLEM STREET - NIGHT

SALSA MUSIC FLOODS THE SOUNDTRACK. Frank gets out of his car,  
a 1968 Pontiac. He passes a group of PUERTO RICAN TEENAGERS  
hanging out on the stoops. Frank nods with a huge naive smile  
and moves up the steps of her building.

FRANK (V.O.)

Maria. Maria Rios. The first  
love of my life.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

THE SALSA MUSIC CONTINUES FULL FORCE as Frank sits with MARIA  
at the kitchen table. She's gorgeous. Eyes like dark limpid  
pools. Maria's MOTHER loves Frank. Laughs with him. Maria's  
FATHER stares Frank down, not sure what he thinks, while JULIO,  
Maria's brother, looks at Frank with the iciest stare  
imaginable, digging a kitchen knife into the formica table top.

CUT TO:

INT. LATINO CLUB - NIGHT

Frank and Maria dance up a storm as the SALSA MUSIC PLAYS.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

"Hombre" with Paul Newman is on the marquee. WE CRANE DOWN revealing Frank and Maria moving on the line that enters the theatre. The MUSIC abruptly STOPS as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. MARIA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Frank shuts the door and moves down the SILENT stoop. The wind picks up on the empty street. He raises his collar to the wind just as Julio and another figure, JULIO'S FRIEND, step from the shadows. Frank smiles.

FRANK

Hey, Julio.

They close in. It's too late. Frank sees it coming from Julio's jacket. An old bed spring. Julio sticks Frank in the ribs with it. Frank collapses on the sidewalk, CHOKING. Julio and his friend disappear into the night as Frank, in pain and shock, grips the sidewalk, cheek pressed against the cold concrete.

FRANK

Oh, God. Oh, my God. Oh, God, help me please...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

Emergency ward doors SMASH open and Frank is brought in on a stretcher. A DOCTOR SHOUTS orders at the WORKERS and INTERNS as he is wheeled off to the emergency room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

DOCTOR PUCCINI, who's, guess what, Italian, hovers over Frank. Mr. Pesce, Mrs. Pesce, Vito and Madeline are present. Doctor Puccini discusses Frank's condition with him. The whole family looks at Frank as if they have been told bad news by the doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

Then, there was Dr. Puccini, this guy who had an "eye tick." It made everything he said look like and out and out lie.

FRANK

What is it?

DOCTOR PUCCINI

Well, it maybe nothing, but...  
(rolls eyes)

FRANK

What? I'm okay, ain't I?

DOCTOR PUCCINI

Yes, Frank, you're fine. The stab wound missed all of your major organs.  
(rolls eyes)

FRANK

Yeah, but?

DOCTOR PUCCINI

Well, the x-rays show that you have a tumor on one of your ribs right below the stab wound. We're going to have to go in there and remove it. You're lucky you were stabbed, Frank. Otherwise we never would have spotted it.

Mrs. Pesce starts crying, hearing it again.

FRANK

Oh, God, no. Is it cancer?

DOCTOR PUCCINI

We won't know until we remove it.

FRANK

Oh, no. Oh, God, no.

(gasping)

Am I gonna be alright?

Doctor Puccini rolls his eyes once more.

FRANK

What's with those eyes!

CUT TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Frank, in his robe, talks with Mr. Pesce, with the rest of the Pesce family sitting in the background watching the waiting room television. Frank is a nervous wreck.

FRANK

Where'd you get this shoemaker?  
He's gonna cut me open and look  
inside? One minute he's lookin'  
at me, the next minute, the air  
conditioner.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Frank stands at the window overlooking the city lights.  
Obviously a nervous wreck.

FRANK (V.O.)

I didn't realize at the time that  
my life was takin' a major turn.  
That this event was to set up my  
reputation in the neighborhood.  
And how it would all play into  
what would finally happen on that  
Christmas Eve at Madison Square  
Garden...

EXT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

Eerie. SILENT. Empty. Frank leaves his room in his robe and  
walks down the hall to the desk where an ancient NUN is seated.

FRANK

Excuse me, Sister?

NUN

Yes, Son?

FRANK

Look. I wanna know what's goin'  
on with me and nobody's bein'  
straight here. I got a tumor and  
I'm gettin' operated on tomorrow  
morning and I wanna know now; is  
it cancer?

The old Nun regards Frank and then says philosophically:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NUN

Whatever is God's will is God's will.

LONG SHOT

That includes the entire hallway, Frank and the Nun seated at the desk. Frank faints, with a RESOUNDING THUD that ECHOES through the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Frank is home now. A knock-out private nurse is in his room who's name is LISA. A blonde about six-feet tall. She's bending over a table when we first see her, making up Frank's pills and juice. Frank stares at her butt like he's seeing the Second Coming.

FRANK (V.O.)

It was my dad's idea to get Lisa, the private nurse to help me over the surgery. Lucky for me, the tumor was benign.

Lisa turns around revealing a good bust-line under her tight fitting outfit. She smiles with thick red lips and deep blue eyes. Frank smiles at her. That happy UP-BEAT SWING MUSIC starts BLEEDING BACK into the soundtrack.

FRANK

Y'know, you and I are spending a lot of time together Lisa, and ah, I gotta admit that, well, I'm a man and I have a man's desires.

Lisa kisses Frank passionately. He fumbles to pull off her clothes as she pull off his, revealing the bandages from his surgery.

FRANK (V.O.)

She was a great nurse and took real good care of me.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Frank walks down the street looking like a million bucks, passing his old neighborhood with a huge grin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The MUSIC swings.

FRANK (V.O.)

Needless to say, I recovered quickly. And, even though we lived in Queens, I was always on 29th Street because that's where the action was...

Frank enters the corner Italian social club.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - DAY

Needle Nose Nipton, the geek, Dom the Bomb, Rocky Sav, Sal Las Benas, the spitter, and Joey Vitello, Mr. Organized Crime, all sit around a poker table playing cards with Frank. At another table alongside of them sit another GROUP OF MEN, older, who play poker also. They are Frank's father's age. The generation before Frank's. Their names are CHICKENS, JOE NUMBERS, TOMMY THE GEEP, (with a hard "g"), JOHNNY-CAKE, MICKEY THE DWARF, and TONY THE WHIP. Chickens calls out to Frank from his table.

CHICKENS

You're my good luck charm,  
Frankie! I've been winnin' since  
you came in here.

WE PAN across the older faces at the next table.

FRANK (V.O.)

There was Chickens, Joe Numbers,  
Tommy the Geep, Johnny-cake,  
Mickey the Dwarf, and Tony the  
Whip. All my dad's friends. Guys  
he went to school with. Since  
my accident, I started getting  
this reputation that I was lucky,  
a lucky kid, who was leading a  
charmed life.

The club is run by JIMMY CARLO, an overweight local mob guy who's bark is much worse than his bite. Carlo ambles over to Frank and looks over Frank's shoulder as Frank collects money for having won the hand.

FRANK (V.O.)

The Club was run by Jimmy Carlo,  
the local book-maker, who smelled  
like he was constantly sucking  
on a clove of garlic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARLO  
(looking at Frank's  
cards)  
What did you have here?

FRANK  
(re: garlic)  
Down wind, will ya, Jimmy? A  
flush.

CARLO  
(dumbfounded)  
A flush? And you didn't raise?  
(slapping forehead)  
How do you get these kinda cards  
and be so stupid?

JOEY  
(to Carlo)  
How does a guy get stabbed up in  
Spanish Harlem and have it turn  
into the thing that saves his  
life?

NIPTON  
Look at this. I got three aces.  
And I lost. I lost with three  
aces.

FRANK  
Come on. Give back the cards.

NIPTON  
(to Joey)  
Look, Joey.

JOEY  
Terrific. Stick 'em up your ass.  
You'll always have 'em.

Carlo ambles over to the other side of the table. Sits next  
to Joey and Nipton.

CARLO  
(re: Frank)  
The kid's got luck. You see?  
Luck. But he don't know what to  
do with it. Now, I'd know what  
to do with it, but I don't have  
the luck...

Carlo suddenly drops his head down and starts to SNORE like a  
bear. The guys all stare at him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (V.O.)

Jimmy Carlo. A narcoleptic, so he said, although I never really knew what that meant. He would nod out without warning, and a second later snap out of it.

Carlo does snap out of it. Looks around for another second and gets re-situated.

CARLO

How long was I out?

JOEY

Three and a half weeks.

CARLO

Wise ass.

(to Frank)

See? I don't have the luck.

Frank shrugs. Smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. ENTRANCE TO QUEENS MIDTOWN TUNNEL - DAY

Jimmy Carlo's brand new Buick Electra heads for the tunnel with Frank at the Wheel and Carlo at his side.

FRANK (V.O.)

I took Jimmy Carlo home from the club every evening in his car. He always wanted the air-conditioning on full blast and the windows down, don't ask me why.

INT. CARL'S CAR - DAY

Frank drives, looking around the car interior. Carlo nods in and out.

FRANK

Hey, Jimmy. Why exactly do you nod in and out the way you do?

CARLO

(snapping awake)  
Narcolepsy. I'm a narcoleptic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK  
I know. That's what Joey Vitello  
said. But that's kinda sick,  
ain't it?

CARLO  
(nodding out)  
What...

FRANK  
Well, like wantin' to sleep with  
dead bodies and .hat shit...

CARLO  
(wide awake)  
What are you, nuts? That's  
necrophilia! I'm a narcoleptic,  
you idiot! That means I fall to  
sleep all the time!

FRANK  
(visibly relaxing)  
Oh...

Then, an uncomfortable SILENCE builds.

CARLO  
I'll bet you guys all think I'm  
Mother Hen, don't ya?

FRANK  
(confused)  
Oh, no. Nobody thinks that.

CARLO  
Yeah, ya's do.

FRANK  
No.

CARLO  
(getting mad)  
Don't tell me! If I say ya's do,  
than ya's do! Alright?

Frank wants to get off this confusing subject.

FRANK  
Yeah, you're right. They all say  
it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARLO  
(exploding)  
Who says it?

Carlo goes nuts. Frank rolls his eyes as Carlo goes off on a tirade and then falls asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

E.C.U. on the Television. Live footage from Viet Nam. It's terrifying.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Now, the Viet Nam War was raging full force. Guys from the neighborhood were comin' home in boxes every week.

ANGLE ON LIVING ROOM

Frank sits in front of the TV, obviously scared. His father, mother, brother Vito and sister Madeline, all watch the set.

MRS. PESCE  
No son of mine is going to Viet Nam to get killed.

MR. PESCE  
It's his duty as an American.

MRS. PESCE  
Baloney! He's not goin'!

FRANK (V.O.)  
My brother, Vito, joined the National Guard, so he got out of it.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. PESCE'S CAR - MORNING

Mr. Pesce drives quietly. Vito is in the front seat. Frank, Sal Las Benas, the spitter, and Joey Vitello, Mr. Organized Crime are in the back. The car glides down Wall Street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

We all got letters in the mail  
and had to go to the Draft Board  
to sign up, so we were about to  
do what was right for our  
country....

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITEHALL STREET - MORNING

Mr. Pesce's car slows to a stop in front of 42 Whitehall Street,  
a huge government building. Doves of 18yr-olds climb the  
steps. Mr. Pesce gets out with Vito. Frank, Joey and Sal get  
out of the back seat. Mr. Pesce turns to Frank. He's shaken,  
but keeping it together.

MR. PESCE

(to Frank)

Well, go in there and do what's  
right. Who knows? Maybe it'll  
be good for ya.

FRANK

(nervously)

Yeah...

VITO

Good-luck, Frank. I know it's  
tough, but you'll be doin'  
something good for your country,  
like me.

FRANK

Yeah, sure. Mr. National Guard.  
Two days a month. You won't have  
to pick up a gun 'till the  
Russians hit Patterson, New  
Jersey.

Vito looks like he's about to lunge on Frank.

MR. PESCE

(holding out arms)

Let's not start that shit again.

Frank and Vito eyeball each other. Then Frank turns and climbs  
the steps with Joey and Sal.

CUT TO:

INT. 42 WHITEHALL STREET - DAY

A huge room filled with chairs. Hundreds of New York TOUGHS are there to sign up for the draft. Packs of BLACKS. PUERTO RICANS. ITALIANS. IRISH. All congregated in their groups. Harassing each other. It's organized bedlam.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Nearly a thousand 18yr-olds from every section of the city were there.

These kids are tough. Mean looking. If we didn't know better, we might think we were in a state penitentiary right now.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Getting a load of these guys, I figured we could win the Viet Nam War in fifteen minutes.

Frank, Joey and Sal move to a group of chairs and sit. Suddenly, a black tough Staff Sergeant, name of JONES, walks quickly to the front of the room and QUIETS the room down fast.

SGT. JONES  
(shouting)  
Quiet down you shit-heel street trash mother-fuckers!

The room does get QUIET except for a few phantom PROTESTS from the back. Frank, Joey and Sal sit still.

JOEY  
Maddonna, this guy looks tough.

SAL  
(to Frank, spitting)  
Yeah, he looks real tough, don't he, Frank?

Frank brushes off his shirt sleeve from Sal's soft spray.

SGT. JONES  
(shouting)  
Alright! As of this minute, you are all property of the United States Government!

Now the room is SILENT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SGT. JONES  
 (still shouting)  
 Now, anybody, who has been  
 arrested, who is out on bail right  
 now, please step to the right side  
 of the auditorium...

Two-thirds of the room gets up and shuffles off to the right. Frank, Joey and Sal stare dumbfounded as the auditorium is thinning out fast. Sgt. Jones stares too, as M.P.'s collect the men at the right side of the auditorium.

SGT. JONES  
 (dumbfounded)  
 You gotta be shittin' me!

JOEY  
 (to Frank)  
 See? If we had stolen that car  
 a few weeks ago, we might be outta  
 here right now.

SGT. JONES  
 All right. The rest of you,  
 follow me upstairs to take your  
 tests! Right now, move it!

Frank, Joey and Sal get up with the remaining third and follow Sgt. Jones.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A long line. Frank, Joey and Sal are on it. Sgt. Jones is walking up and down. Way up at the head of the line is a sign that reads "Urinalysis."

FRANK  
 (to Joey)  
 What the hell is this?

JOEY  
 I don't know. Some kind of a  
 test.

Sgt. Jones passes by. Frank calls out to Sgt. Jones.

FRANK  
 Excuse me, sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sgt. Jones walks over to him, not believing Frank has the gall to ask him something.

FRANK

(to Jones)

I really don't think it's fair that we got to take a test for something we didn't study for.

SGT. JONES

(dumfounded)

You gotta be shittin' me, boy! This is a goddamn urine examination!

FRANK

(scared)

Oh, I'm sorry. I misunderstood. I thought it was something else.

SGT. JONES

(moving in closer)

What's your name, boy?

FRANK

(nervous)

Pesce, sir. Frank Pesce.

(smiling)

Pesce means "fish" in Italian.

SGT. JONES

I don't give a good goddamn what it means!

FRANK

Sorry, sir.

SGT. JONES

Is there somethin' wrong with you?

FRANK

No, not that I'm aware of, sir.

SGT. JONES

Do you have a high school diploma?

FRANK

(more nervous)

No, sir.

SGT. JONES

You don't have a high school diploma?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

No, sir. No diploma. No, sir.

Sgt. Jones eyeballs Frank and backs off, moving away. Joey and Sal are afraid to look at him.

CUT TO:

INT. EYE TEST ROOM - DAY

Frank is up at bat at the eye test. He's handed a card by the EYE DOCTOR. Joey and Sal are behind Frank.

EYE DOCTOR

Read the chart.

FRANK

One of my eye's isn't good. The left one's okay, though.

EYE DOCTOR

You can't see anything out of your right eye?

FRANK

I can see "stuff," I can't read that chart.

EYE DOCTOR

Do you wear glasses?

FRANK

No, I don't like the way they look on me.

EYE DOCTOR

But if you were freezing to death you'd wear a coat, wouldn't you?

FRANK

How ugly's the coat?

EYE DOCTOR

Get off the line.

The Eye Doctor makes a mark in his book.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - DAY

Frank walks down the hall with Joey and Sal heading for another test. Sgt. Jones passes them in the hall with some files. Turns upon seeing Frank and instantly yells out.

SGT. JONES  
Hey! Frank Pesce!

Frank stops, nervously. Joey and Sal stop behind him. Sgt. Jones storms over.

SGT. JONES  
Did I ask you, or did I not ask you if you had a high school diploma?

FRANK  
Yes, sir. You asked me. I remember you askin' me.

SGT. JONES  
And what did you tell me?

FRANK  
That I didn't have one.

SGT. JONES  
(re: files)  
Well, according to my records, you do have a high school diploma!

FRANK  
Yeah, I got one. But not on me.

Sgt. Jones stares slack jawed. Neither Jones nor Frank blink.

SGT. JONES  
Go upstairs and see the psychiatrist, right now, Pesce.

FRANK  
Yes, sir.

Frank shrugs at Joey and Sal.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Pesce sits in his chair in front of the TV, grimacing at a letter from the U.S. Government. Frank stands next to him. Vito, in his policeman's uniform eats across from Mrs. Pesce in the dining room. Vito's laughing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VITO

Ten million guys are tryin' to get out of the army and you do it by accident.

MR. PESCE

It says here that the United States Government thinks you are a calculated risk. That means they think you're nuts.

VITO

So? Now they know what the whole neighborhood knows.

MR. PESCE

I'll tell ya, kid. You got a horse-shoe up your ass.

FRANK (V.O.)

Out of all of us, one person did come home a war hero, believe it or not.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Sal Las Benas, the spitter, walks proudly down 29th Street in a Sergeants Uniform. Duffle bag over his shoulder. NEIGHBORS call out to him. WAVING. SHOUTING. NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN give him the eye. It's like a James Cagney scene where he's returning from the Second World War.

FRANK (V.O.)

Sal Las Benas. Awarded two purple hearts. Look, I know it's hard to believe, but it's true.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR LOT - DAY

The MUSIC KICKS in as Frank, Vito and Mr. Pesce wander around a car lot on an autumn day in Queens.

FRANK (V.O.)

Vito and I decided to get a car together. A '69 Toronado.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VITO  
Make sure it's white. With a vinyl top.

FRANK  
I know how to order a car, Vito. Relax, will ya?

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Frank gets out of a bronze Toronado with vinyl on the sides. Vito's jaw drops. Mr. Pesce shakes his head. MUSIC CONTINUES.

VITO  
What the hell is that?

FRANK  
The guy said "Ivory Gold Mist." I thought it was white.

VITO  
(disgusted)  
Ivory Gold Mist...

FRANK (V.O.)  
That was just the beginning with this car. Eventually, it would end up havin' a life of it's own.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Pesce in working clothes, seated in his chair, reads an ad that caters to the gardener "with everything for your garden needs," including hoes, rakes, fertilizer and the like. VINNY, the cat, can be seen lapping up milk at the doorway of the kitchen, the newest addition to the family.

MR. PESCE  
Y'know, black cats are bad luck, Frank.

FRANK  
His name's Vinny, dad. He was following me around all day. I had to bring him home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON TELEVISION

Bill Jorgensen, WNEW anchorman, speaks to the viewers.

BILL JORGENSEN

And tonight's winning numbers in  
the New Jersey lottery are...  
7,14,28,36,38 and 40. The bonus  
number is 27.

RESUME LIVING-ROOM

as Mr. Pesce scribbles down the numbers on the newspaper, and  
then pulls out a wad of lottery tickets that borders on the size  
of three decks of cards. He starts to go to work comparing his  
lottery tickets to the winning numbers, placing the losers in  
a new pile before him.

MR. PESCE

(re: tickets)

Shit. Shit. Shit. Shit, too.  
More shit.

(stops)

Oh, wait.

(looks at ticket, then)

Shit. Shit.

FRANK

(shaking head)

What a sucker bet. You'll never  
win playing this shit.

MR. PESCE

Go play on the third rail, will  
ya?

Mr. Pesce goes back to the tickets with the precision of an  
accountant.

BILL JORGENSEN

on TV)

And today, state legislators have  
brought up a bill which, if  
passed, would bring the lottery  
here to New York State...

Mr. Pesce perks up.

MR. PESCE

See? Only me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

It's a stupid bet. Twenty million  
to one odds.

The sports scores come on the news. Mr. Pesce turns up the scores with the remote control. Pulls out a matchbook that has his bets scribbled on the inside cover. Then he glances over at Mrs. Pesce, cleaning up the dining room table.

MRS. PESCE

You think I don't know what you're  
up to?

MR. PESCE

(total denial)  
I don't have any bets on these  
games.

MRS. PESCE

Baloney!

Mr. Pesce goes back to the scores on the matchbook.

MR. PESCE

Don't get married, Frank.

Mr. Pesce keeps listening to the scores. Checking the matchbook. Then his eyes light up. Instantly, Mr. Pesce turns to Frank. Obviously, he's got a few winners.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Vinny the cat lies stretched out on the lawn. Frank smiles, enjoying the picture of the contented cat. Mr. Pesce comes around the side of the house with a hoe and a bag of peat moss that could fertilize Kansas. He spots Vinny and chases him off the lawn.

FRANK

What are you doin'?

MR. PESCE

The heat from his body is burnin'  
up my lawn.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHEA STADIUM - DAY

Frank, holding Vinny in a cat-box carrying case, along with Joey Vitello, wearing a three-piece suit in the sweltering heat, Dom the Bomb, singing, Needle Nose Nipton trying not to trip over himself, Sal Las Benas, spitting and Rocky Sav, hugging forty dollars worth of junk food, all take their seats.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then another event happened that would change my life forever. And also, cement my reputation as the guy with the horse-shoe up his ass.

DOM THE BOMB

(singing)

Peanuts. Popcorn. Hot dogs on the bun. I love the Mets. They're so damn much fun...

JOEY

Hey, hey, shut-up with the singing, huh, Dom?

DOM THE BOMB

(singing)

Okay, Joey. Let's enjoy the game.

Frank takes Vinny out of the box and sits him on his lap. Then, Sal spits a few drops at Frank as he talks.

SAL

I love baseball, Frank.

FRANK

(wiping off his shirt)

Yeah, Sal. Give us the news, not the weather.

A VENDOR comes by.

VENDOR

Peanuts! Popcorn! Cracker-Jacks!

FRANK

(to vendor)

I'll take Cracker-Jacks.

Frank gets tossed a box. The money gets passed down to the vendor. Frank opens it and starts feeding some to Vinny. Joey eyeballs Frank and Vinny, not getting the relationship.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOEY

You two are gettin' real close,  
ain't ya's?

FRANK

Yeah.

(re: Vinny)

Look how he loves these  
Cracker-Jacks.

Rocky Sav stares off into space. Frank looks at him.

FRANK

What the hell are you thinkin'  
about?

ROCKY

I think I just developed a theory  
on life.

FRANK

Oh, yeah? And what's that?

ROCKY

(excited)

Okay, listen. Because it's very  
complicated. First you're born,  
see? And you're like a baby, a  
child. And then you start to  
"mayture" a little until you hit  
your "aidolessensy." Then you  
grow older. Then, you're like  
really old. And then you die.  
And that's it.

They all bust out LAUGHING.

ROCKY

Okay, laugh. But it makes a lotta  
sense.

Frank pulls the prize out of the Cracker-Jack box.

JOEY

What'd ya get?

FRANK

Two little dice.

SAL

(spitting)

That's cute. I got those too a  
few times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Frank eyeballs the game and starts dropping the dice from one hand to another. Joey starts watching the combinations that Frank's coming up with. He starts staring with a gasping mouth. Frank turns.

FRANK

What are you lookin' at?

JOEY

If you were at a crap table right now, you'd be rich.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank and Joey cross the street, heading for the social club. Both have real attitudes.

FRANK (V.O.)

I was about to become a legend on 29th Street. The man with the golden arm.

They enter the social club.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK-ROOM OF SOCIAL CLUB - NIGHT

In a word, bedlam. Smoke. Yelling. Gambling. Dice being tossed. Money exchanging hands. Everyone is there. Frank, Joey, Dom the Bomb, Needle Nose, Sal Las Benas, and Rocky Sav. Also, the older guys, Chickens, Joe Numbers, Tommy the Geep, Johnny-Cake, Tony the Whip, Mickey the Dwarf and other assorted faces. Dice hit the back of the table and bounce back. Frank gets handed back the dice. Shakes them. Tossing. The place starts going nuts.

Jimmy Carlo's jaw starts to drop at Frank's rolling of the dice which just seems to be non-ending. The PIT BOSS looks at Jimmy nervously, like, "if this kid keeps it up, we're gonna run out of money."

FRANK (V.O.)

That night, I did something that had never been done before on 29th Street. I broke the book.

Frank's friends hug and kiss him as the pay-off is in the thousands.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - NIGHT

Frank enters, a ball of fire. He moves gracefully across the room counting money.

FRANK

(counting)

....four hundred, five hundred,  
six hundred, seven hundred, eight  
hundred.

(he pockets the money)

Hey, dad!

Frank moves into the dining room where his father is seated, wearing glasses, doing paper-work. Vinny the cat sits on the table alongside Mr. Pesce.

INT. PESCE DINING-ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Pesce is filling out forms. Busy. In thought. Writing. Typing up numbers on an adding machine.

FRANK

Dad! You're not gonna believe  
what happened!

MR. PESCE

I heard. You broke the book.

Frank sits down, across from his father, surprised.

FRANK

You heard?

MR. PESCE

Yeah, I heard. Jimmy Carlo called  
up here, screamin'. You think  
it's a joke? Screwin' around with  
those mob guys? How much did you  
make?

FRANK

Eight hundred.

MR. PESCE

You broke the book and only made  
eight hundred dollars?

FRANK

I just bet the line.

MR. PESCE

You're gonna give me a  
heart-attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK  
(re: papers)  
What are you doing?

MR. PESCE  
I'm doin' the income taxes. Don't  
bother me, alright?

Frank picks up the I.R.S. form. Starts reading.

FRANK  
(re: form)  
Joe Pesce. Richard Pesce.  
Theresa Pesce. Leo Pesce. Who  
the hell are all the people?

Mr. Pesce grabs back the form and buries it under a pile of  
paper.

MR. PESCE  
Get outta here, will ya? I'm  
busy.

Mr. Pesce calls out to Mrs. Pesce.

MR. PESCE  
Honey!  
(a beat)  
Honey!

Mrs. Pesce comes down the stairs in her robe.

MRS. PESCE  
What is it? I'm watchin' the TV.

MR. PESCE  
C'mon. Ya gotta sign the tax  
return.

Mr. Pesce stands up. Places the tax return in front of her and  
covers the final figure with his thumb.

MR. PESCE  
Alright, sign here.

MRS. PESCE  
Move your thumb.

MR. PESCE  
I'm holdin' it for ya.

MRS. PESCE  
Will you let me see?

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Two big Cadillacs pull up in front of the social club. Several MOB GUYS get out, all exuding importance.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then, about a year ago, a big event took place. A bunch of heavy weights from Mulberry Street came to set-up shop on 29th Street.

One of the heavy-hitters is a huge lumbering guy named, BOBBY BAD-HEART. The other, his son, a little guy named BLONDIE, who really does have blonde hair. They all move inside the social club.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - DAY

Bobby Bad-Heart sits at a table with his son, Blondie, at his side, across from Jimmy Carlo. As they babble, sip espresso, and move their arms around a lot, LAUGHING, we PAN from face to face. Assorted BODYGUARDS from the car stand around them.

FRANK (V.O.)

The head guy, Bobby Bad-Heart, a mob captain, wanted to move a gambling operation up to 29th Street. His son, Blondie Bad-Heart, was gonna run the place with Jimmy Carlo, because Bobby Bad-Heart had, guess what, a bad heart. I needed money so I went to look for a job as a guy at the front door.

The deal is set. Bobby Bad-Heart and Jimmy Carlo shake hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER OF 29TH STREET - DAY

Frank and Joey talk on the street corner.

FRANK (V.O.)

So, I talked to Joey about gettin' a job there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOEY

I'll see what I can do.  
Bad-heart's daughter married a  
Sicilian like your sister did,  
so maybe that'll help a little  
too. Y'know, she's got acute  
angina.

FRANK

I heard she's got big tits, too.

JOEY

You idiot. I'm talkin' about her  
heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAKERY ON 29TH STREET - DAY

We SEE a typical neighborhood Italian Bakery.

FRANK (V.O.)

They took the old bakery next door  
and turned it into a gambling  
joint, after having a little talk  
with Billy the Loaf, the guy that  
owned it...

INT. BAKERY - DAY

EIGHT HOODS are having the "talk" with BILLY THE LOAF. The talk  
consists of eight hoods threatening to hit Billy the Loaf in  
the head with a bread pan.

CUT TO:

INT. BAKERY - DAY

FRANK (V.O.)

Next thing I know, they were  
movin' in.

Franks steps inside. It's already taking shape. A few GUYS  
sweep up. A huge crap table is being moved in and carried into  
a back room. An espresso bar is set up. Booze bar. Blondie  
is talking to two of his BODYGUARDS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

Meeting Blondie was going to get me one step closer to where I would end up on that fateful Christmas Eve...

Blondie turns around and looks at Frank.

BLONDIE

You like listen' to other people's conversations?

FRANK

Sorry. Look, my name is Frank. I was told to talk to you.

BLONDIE

Yeah, and by "who?"

FRANK

I can't say.

BLONDIE

You know somebody?

FRANK

Yeah, but I can't say who.

BLONDIE

Who do you know?

FRANK

I told you. I can't say.

BLONDIE

What's the guy's name?

FRANK

(shrugging, then)  
Joey Vitello.

BLONDIE

(pointing)  
Y'know, you should never mention names.

FRANK

(to bodyguards)  
Am I nuts or did he ask me?

The guards remain stone-faced.

CUT TO:

INT. GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

There is a KNOCK. Frank peeps through the hole. Then opens the huge iron door, letting in two MOBSTERS.

FRANK (V.O.)

Now, in these clubs, they're'd be all these guys from different families and not all of 'em got along so well. These guys killin' each other was pretty much inevitable, anyway, but Blondie didn't want it happenin' in his place, so I had to make sure they were "clean" at the door.

FRANK

Hi. Welcome to the joint. You guys packin'?

The first mobster hands Frank a .45. The second hands him a .45, a .38, a .44 magnum, brass knuckles and a black-jack.

FRANK

(arms full)

Thanks, guys. Have fun.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank walks down the street approaching his house. Mr. Pesce sits in a lawn chair on the walkway to the house with the New York Daily News in his lap. He's just staring happily at his lawn. The sprinkler swings from side to side. Frank walks up to his dad.

MR. PESCE

(re: lawn)

Isn't it a big difference?

FRANK

What?

MR. PESCE

(re: lawn)

Blue Grass of Kentucky.

Frank looks at the lawn.

FRANK

Hey, Pop. It don't look no different to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

That's because you don't have the "eye."

FRANK

(confused)

Eye? What eye?

MR. PESCE

The eye. The eye.

(waves hands across the air)

I see things differently than everyone else, 'cause I got the eye. Now, if you had the eye, you'd know what I was talkin' about. But you don't have the eye.

FRANK

Well, Pop. I wish I had it because I don't know what the hell you're talkin' about.

MR. PESCE

I'm just listenin' to another drum, Frank.

FRANK

Oh, now there's drums, too? Boy, there's a lot of shit happenin' out here, huh?

Mr. Pesce grabs the paper and holds the Daily News headlines at Frank. It reads: "Lottery Comes To New York State. First Drawing, Christmas Eve."

FRANK

(re: headlines)

So, what? You and twenty million other people read that today.

MR. PESCE

There's always hope, Frank.

Frank walks up the steps into the house.

INT. PESCE KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Frank's mother is dumping spaghetti into the strainer. Madeline is stirring the sauce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK  
Perfect timing.

Frank takes a few strands of spaghetti and pops it into his mouth.

MRS. PESCE  
Out of there. And wash your hands. Bringin' in all them germs from the outside and stickin' them right in the spaghetti... Where's your father?

FRANK  
He's out there with the Blue Grass of Kentucky with an eye, listenin' to drums.

MADELINE  
Don't give him a hard time tonight. He got laid-off from work

It hits Frank hard.

FRANK  
What?

MRS. PESCE  
You heard her. Call your father.

FRANK (V.O.)  
That was serious. We were just gettin' by as it was. I knew we were in for some hard times. And remember, the idle mind is the Devil's playground. In my father's case, it was about to become an amusement park.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Sinatra sings on the SOUNDTRACK as Frank hangs out, talking with Joey in front of a Candy Store. Doves of NEIGHBORHOOD GUYS buy lottery tickets.

FRANK (V.O.)  
At the same time, the neighborhood was goin' nuts.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)  
Everybody had lotto fever. Me?  
I wouldn't have anything to do  
with it.

Frank laughs at Rocky Sav and Sal Las Benas coming out of the  
Candy Store.

FRANK  
What are ya gonna do with your  
millions, Rocky?

ROCKY  
If you don't play. You don't win,  
Frank.

FRANK  
Oh, that's original.

CUT TO:

INT. STATIONARY STORE - DAY

Mr. Pesce buys a stack of tickets in a Queens neighborhood  
store.

FRANK (V.O.)  
My father probably could've  
supported the New York State  
Lottery Commission by himself.  
He was goin' for the big one.

Mr. Pesce counts up his tickets with precision.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULBERRY STREET - NIGHT

We glide down Mulberry Street at night, wet streets, Italian  
Restaurant, Bars, Italian Bakery's, PEOPLE with umbrellas  
walking passed these establishments, all this SEEN as it would  
be from a moving car.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Meanwhile, somebody opened up  
their mouth and told Blondie  
Bad-Heart that I could really  
throw some mean dice.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)

So, he took us down to Mulberry Street to this real big gambling joint down there, one night. It was a fun time. I made history down there. But it was a night I'd live to to regret.

CUT TO:

INT. MULBERRY STREET GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

NOISE. PEOPLE. SMOKE. ACTION. BEDLAM. MOBSTERS. BEAUTIFUL WOMEN hanging off mobsters arms. DICE. MONEY. MONEY CHANGING HANDS. MONEY SLAMMED on the crap table. PIT BOSSES. This place is no joke. Frank enters, lead by Blondie, Joey Vitello follows. Frank head whip-lashes around the joint, taking it all in.

ANGLE ON CRAP TABLE

Blondie gets his hands on the dice. Hands them to Frank. Pulls out a shit-load of hundreds. So does Joey Vitello.

BLONDIE

Go for it.

JOEY

Yeah, kick some ass, Frankie.

Frankie kisses the dice. Shakes them. Throws.

PIT BOSS

A nine.

People start betting. Blondie tosses a hundred down. Joey follows suit. The place is HUMMING with NOISE. Frank gets the dice and shakes them. Tosses again.

PIT BOSS

The dice say "four."

More cheering. Betting. Blondie and Joey get paid off and let it ride. Frank gets the dice handed back to him. Then spots a guy at the far end of the crap table, who's got daggers in his eyes, who's obviously losing. His name is MARCO CASSONE. He's huge. And he personifies "bad news." Frank finally breaks the evil-eyed stare and turns to Blondie.

FRANK

Who's this guy at the end givin' me the look?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blondie looks. His smile vanishes.

BLONDIE

Oh, shit, that's Marco Cassone.

FRANK

Who is he?

BLONDIE

He started his own grave-yard in Jersey, that's who he is.

JOEY

Yeah, he'll kill ya and go out for calzone afterwards. He don't give a shit.

FRANK

(waving it off)

Ah, fuck him. I know people, too.

Frank shakes the dice. Taunting Cassone with gyrations.

FRANK (V.O.)

That guy at the end of the table was gonna give me the Christmas Eve I'd never forget.

Frank throws the dice. More money for Blondie, Joey and those betting on Frank. Another loss for Cassone. Cassone pulls out a wad and dumps it against Frank. People at the table start realizing there's a little war going on between Cassone and Frank. Blondie and Joey rattle sabers by betting equally big wads on Frank, smiling back at Cassone. Frank gets the dice. Shakes them like mad.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then it happened. I made history. I was about to do somethin' nobody had ever seen. Ever. Anywhere.

Frank tosses the dice. They hit the back of the table. Roll back toward the middle and stop.

The place falls SILENT.

One dice has landed atop the other.

Every last person stares gawking. Frank. Blondie. Joey. Cassone. The Pit Boss. Everyone just stares.

PIT BOSS

No dice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Now, INSANITY BREAKS OUT. There's thousands on this table. People start SCREAMING that it can't be "no dice" if it's on the table.

BLONDIE

I never seen nothin' like that in my life.

Cassone won't unlock eyes with Frank. If pupils were bullets, Frank would be down at the morgue. Then, it's total PANDEMONIUM. In seconds, the joint is being WRECKED. Chairs THROWN. PEOPLE FALLING over the crap table. A good looking woman gets HIT in the turmoil.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Mr. Pesce opens the oven door as Frank enters having just woke up. He's poking at something inside the oven.

MR. PESCE

Keep screwin' around with these mob guys and see what happens to ya.

FRANK

Ah, what the hell are you talkin' about?

MR. PESCE

You're a legend on Mulberry street. Frankie Fish's kid. "The man with the golden arm." The man with the golden arm and head up his ass! When are you gonna settle down? Find a girl? Get a job?

FRANK

Dad. What's that smell? Kinda like old gym shoes or somethin'.

Mr. Pesce places a hot round bubbling red and white object on the table.

MR. PESCE

It's pizza.

FRANK

(shaking head)  
That don't look like no pizza.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

Just shut up and have a piece.

Frank grimaces and sits before it.

FRANK

You made this?

MR. PESCE

(cutting it up)

Yeah, and y'know what this cost me to make? One dollar. One dollar. That shit you buy costs seven bucks.

Frank takes a bite. Chews. Grimaces. Pulling it out of his mouth.

MR. PESCE

What's wrong?

FRANK

You can get better pizza in Korea.

EXT. PESCE BACKYARD - DAY

Vinny the cat knocks over a garbage can to get at Mr. Pesce's pizza.

FRANK (V.O.)

The only member of our family to appreciate my father's pizza was Vinny.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE CLUB - NIGHT

Frank, Joey, Dom the Bomb, Needle Nose and Rocky Sav, all dressed to the nines, sip drinks and move through the crowds at a local dance club. The guys are all laughing up a storm. Dom the Bomb is SINGING to an overweight GIRL. Joey taps Dom the Bomb on the shoulder. He turns.

JOEY

Hey. Did you hear what happened to Rhode Island?

Dom the Bomb shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOEY

(re: overweight girl)

She ate it.

Frank and the guys LAUGH. Dom the Bomb waves them off. Then Frank turns. He spots CAROL. Looking like a vision across the club. She's so lovely.

FRANK (V.O.)

It was Carol Muldoone. The Neighborhood knock-out. She wouldn't have nothin' to do with nobody.

JOEY

Forget it. It'll never happen.

But Carol smiles at Frank. Frank's eyes light up. Then he looks over his shoulder, not sure if she was looking at him. But when he turns back, she's still smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Frank and Carol walk hand in hand down 29th Street. Madly in love.

FRANK (V.O.)

But it did happen. In no time at all, we were madly in love. No one in the neighborhood could believe it. They didn't attribute it to me, but my lucky streak. And word got out fast that me and Carol, the neighborhood knock-out, were an item.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONX ZOO - DAY

Frank and Carol are at the gorilla cages. It's feeding time. They're both chuckling.

FRANK

Loot at them eat. They're a lot like people, y'know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAROL  
(thoughtfully)  
They're better than people. They  
don't hurt each other. They don't  
lie. They don't cheat.

FRANK  
(thinking)  
Yeah. But they don't write operas  
or paint masterpieces, either.

Carol looks at Frank and smiles. She kisses him softly and  
gently.

CAROL  
Y'know, you're a lot smarter than  
you let on, Frankie Pesce.

FRANK  
You think so?

CAROL  
Why do you think I'm here?

She kisses him, again. Sweetly.

CUT TO:

INT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Mr. Pesce stands at the jewelry counter with a SALES-WOMAN.  
He's looking at watches. Holding one in each hand.

MR. PESCE  
(re: watch)  
And how much is this one worth?

SALES-WOMAN  
Ah, that's seven hundred and  
fifty, sir.

The sales-woman smiles and then steps away for a moment. Mr.  
Pesce looks at her. Then, feeling enormously guilty, pockets  
the watch and starts walking out of the store, head down.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Pesce sits, smoking a cigarette, while the HEAD OF SECURITY  
stands opposite him with TWO SECURITY GUARDS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Also, the STORE MANAGER.

MR. PESCE

Do I look like the kind of guy  
that would steal a miserable  
watch?

Frank enters. Looks at his father.

FRANK

What the hell's goin' on here?

HEAD OF SECURITY

Do you know him?

FRANK

Yeah. He's my father. And he's  
no crook.

MR. PESCE

That's what I keep tellin' 'em.  
I mean, if I was gonna steal  
jewelry, I would've went for the  
Rolex watches. That  
Presidential's goin' for five  
grand.

Frank glances at Mr. Pesce, knowing better. Then Vito enters  
in his police uniform. Scowls at Frank. The security officers  
all smile.

VITO

(to Frank)

How the hell could you? What the  
hell is wrong with you? You make  
me sick!

FRANK

Hey, moron. It wasn't me. It  
was him.

VITO

(spinning)

What?

MR. PESCE

They're tryin' to pin me with  
stealin' a watch.

Vito turns to the Store Manager and security guards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VITO

This has gotta be a mistake.  
(re: Frank)  
I wouldn't put anything past  
him...

FRANK

Gee, thanks...

VITO

(re: Mr. Pesce)  
But, not him. Not my father.  
If he says it's a mistake, then  
it's a mistake. Why don't I pay  
for the watch and let's forget  
the whole thing.

The Store Manager and security guards glance at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. MACY'S DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Frank, Mr. Pesce and Vito exit. Vito is shaking his head. Mr. Pesce holds the watch.

FRANK

So, what really happened?

MR. PESCE

I don't wanna talk about it.

VITO

You don't wanna talk about it?  
You did try to swipe that watch,  
didn't ya. It's not even a man's  
watch.

Mr. Pesce pauses at the car. Turns.

MR. PESCE

That's right.. Tomorrow makes  
thirty years your mom's been  
married to me. It's for her.  
I just lost my head, okay? Can  
we drop it?

Frank and Vito stand sadly, looking at each other. Mr. Pesce gets into the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

We gotta come up with some money  
to help 'em out.

VITO

(slowly)

Alright. But, nothing illegal.  
Remember, Frankie, I'm a police  
officer.

EXT. STREET IN HUNTS POINT - NIGHT

The street looks and feels like something out of a bad dream.  
Frank parks his car. Vito following in Mr. Pesce's car. Frank  
gets out of his car with a crow-bar. SMASHES the windshield.

FRANK (V.O.)

Anyway, next thing you know, Vito  
and I were tryin' to get rid of  
my car for the insurance money...

INT. MR. PESCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Vito watches from behind the wheel, grimacing.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Frank, Mr. Pesce and Vito stand in front of the house watching  
a tow truck pull up in front, towing Frank's car, smashed  
windshield and all, slowing to a stop.

FRANK (V.O.)

But, they found the car,  
completely untouched, except for  
the damage I'd done, just where  
we left it in the Bronx.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Mr. Pesce reads a letter from the insurance company with a  
grimace, like he's got a bitter taste in his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

To make matters worse, we had a five hundred deductible on the car. The broken windshield cost three hundred and eighty bucks and forty for the tow. So, now we had to pay four hundred and twenty bucks just to get my car back in the shape it was.

Mr. Pesce turns around holding the letter. Frank and Vito sit at the table looking glum.

MR. PESCE

We don't have four hundred and twenty bucks! Whose great idea was this?

FRANK

Dad, I'm tellin' ya. The car really did get stolen.

MR. PESCE

Ah, horseshit, it did.

VITO

Dad, I'm a police officer. I would never do anything as crooked as what you're sayin'.

Mr. Pesce exits the room, mumbling. Frank looks at Vito.

VITO

(leaning closer)  
You can't get rid of that car. You got that lucky star. No matter where you hide it, it'll come back.

FRANK

Oh, you're full of shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. LEO'S GAS STATION - NEW JERSEY - DAY

Frank and his COUSIN LEO, an Italian version of Lenny from "Of Mice and Men," walk around Frank's car in front of Leo's garage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

I paid my cousin, Leo, a visit  
and together we figured out a way  
to dump the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Frank's car SPLASHES into a swamp after Frank and Leo have  
pushed it in. The car starts sinking into the muck. The  
turnpike ROARS with life about a quarter mile away. The Statue  
of Liberty can be SEEN far off in the harbor.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. PESCE'S CAR - DAY

Mr. Pesce drives silently. Frank at his side, Vito in back.  
All are wearing suits and ties like going to a big event.

FRANK (V.O.)

Thirty days later we were told  
to go down to the insurance  
company and pick up the check.  
The month had come and gone and  
no one had found the car, as I  
was sure would be the case.

EXT. INSURANCE COMPANY - DAY

The car pulls up and stops on a busy street in Queens. Mr.  
Pesce gets out along with Frank and Vito. All three walk toward  
the door of the insurance building, picking up speed.

MR. PESCE

(blocking Frank and  
Vito)

Hey, hey, hey. Let's not look  
like three cavoons goin' up there,  
alright?

VITO

How do we look like cavoons?

FRANK

Yeah, we just look like a family  
goin' up there to collect a check.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

We look like a pack of fuckin' wild dogs. Stay down here. I, the innocent party, will go up by myself.

Mr. Pesce goes inside while Frank and Vito hang down by the car.

CUT TO:

INT. INSURANCE COMPANY - DAY

Mr. Pesce sits opposite an insurance agent by the name of STILLS.

STILLS

It seems nobody's found your son's car, Mr. Pesce.

Stills pulls the check out of the drawer. Places it on the desk.

MR. PESCE

That's too bad. The kid's heart-broken.

Stills feels sorry all of a sudden. Takes the check back.

STILLS

Well, then let's check the computer one last time and see what we come up with.

Mr. Pesce sits very nervously as Stills punches up the car on the computer. Waits. Reads. Then his eyes light up. Turns to Mr. Pesce.

STILLS

Ivory Gold Mist?

MR. PESCE

(sickly)

What?

STILLS

The car. Is it Ivory Gold Mist? 1969 Toronado? Ivory Gold Mist?

Mr. Pesce just stares through Stills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STILLS

It seems your son's car was found over the weekend. In Budlake, New Jersey.

Mr. Pesce stares blankly.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSURANCE COMPANY - DAY

Frank and Vito are pitching pennies on the sidewalk and are arguing which one is closer to the wall. Mr. Pesce comes out of the building and spots them.

VITO

This one is closer.

FRANK

Your ass, Vito. I practically got a "leaner."

Mr. Pesce comes over with his hands out to strangle Frank. Frank turns just in time to catch his choke hold.

MR. PESCE

Budlake, New Jersey? Are you outta your fuckin' mind?!

Vito jumps in between them to break it up.

VITO

Dad, stop, stop, stop!

Vito pushes Mr. Pesce off of Frank.

FRANK

(to Mr. Pesce)

What the hell's wrong with you?

MR. PESCE

They found the car!

VITO

Where?

MR. PESCE

In Budlake, New Jersey. What a coincidence, huh? We've got family there. I don't think the insurance company'll put that together, do you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vito keeps Mr. Pesce off of Frank.

FRANK (V.O.)

So, I ended up selling the car to my cousin, Leo. Two days after the sale, it got stolen.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE BACK-STEPS - LATE AFTERNOON

Mr. Pesce sits on his back stoop eating a piece of cake. He finds a birthday candle on the plate. He sucks the icing off the candle and tosses it away. Frank steps out. Smiles at his father.

FRANK

Happy birthday, dad.

Mr. Pesce nods. Doesn't answer. Watches the sun go down over the endless rows of identical back-yards.

MR. PESCE

You're gonna blink and you'll be fifty.

FRANK

What?

MR. PESCE

(slowly, with thought)  
Last week I was forty. The week before that I was twenty-five. And the time just flies by. I never took anythin' seriously and here I am. Your grandfather had this conversation with me and I didn't listen to him. But, I'm askin' you to listen to me. Don't end up like me, Frank. Don't end up puttin' your weekly paychecks on a horse-race, because your wife decides to eat steak or you wanna buy a nice suit you see in the window...

CUT TO:

INT. SHELDON TOY COMPANY - DAY

Frank shakes hands with a REPRESENTATIVE of Sheldon Toys. A few other EMPLOYEES stand around them. Frank is all smiles.

FRANK (V.O.)

I decided to do my part to get some money for us, so I got a job at Sheldon Toys as a salesman. It was the best job I had, yet. But I needed my own car...

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Frank pulls up in a brand new 1972 Buick Riviera. It's white with a vinyl top. Vito, who's standing in front of the house, shakes his head.

VITO

Yeah, sure. You order a car for yourself and it comes out just fine.

CUT TO:

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Frank gives a demonstration of a Sheldon electric car, an exact replica of a New York City Police car. Crunched inside, he shifts the car and moves around the store with the TOY STORE OWNER watching and smiling.

FRANK (V.O.)

I went from store to store. All I had to do was demonstrate these cars for everyone and take orders.

CUT TO:

INT. F.A.O. SCHWARTZ - DAY

Frank demonstrates another model of the car at the famous toy store.

FRANK (V.O.)

Christmas was about four months away. So, people were orderin' these things like crazy.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)

The other thing I had to do was take any defective cars back to Sheldon. Which was about the time my father started really goin' nuts.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - DAY

Mr. Pesce enters. Frank follows. Chickens, The Dwarf, Joe Numbers, Johnny-Cas, all the regulars are present. So is Jimmy Carlo, sipping an espresso at the bar. A T.V. plays in the background. Mr. Pesce slips four hundred to Jimmy Carlo. Frank exhales. Mr. Pesce turns to Frank.

FRANK (V.O.)

My father would take my money down to the club every Friday.

MR. PESCE

Don't breathe on my back.

FRANK

I can't watch this.

MR. PESCE

Good. Go to the movies or somethin', will ya?

CUT TO:

INT. BLOOMINGDALES T.V. DEPARTMENT - DAY

Frank watches the game on forty different sets, wandering around the department.

FRANK (V.O.)

So, I would watch the game at Bloomingdales T.V. department.

Frank tensely roots for the Knicks. They make a basket. Frank CHEERS out loud in the store. The game is over.

FRANK (V.O.)

I couldn't believe it. One time we actually won.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOCIAL CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank walks toward the social club.

FRANK (V.O.)

So, I went right back down there  
before my father could do any more  
damage.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank is talking with Jimmy Carlo.

FRANK (V.O.)

But Jimmy said that my father  
doubled his money and took the  
eight hundred bucks, put it on  
a horse, got it up to eleven  
hundred and took off like a bat  
out of hell with Johnny-Cake and  
Joe Numbers, saying somethin'  
about goin' to Roosevelt Raceway.

Frank looks sick, shaking his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. Pesce gets out of his car and starts strolling up to the  
house. Frank sits on the steps out front.

MR. PESCE

Hey...

Mr. Pesce starts moving past him. Frank gets up.

FRANK

So?

MR. PESCE

I lost four hundred.

FRANK

(visibly relaxed)

Oh, good. For a minute I was  
worried.

Frank gets up. Extending his hand like he expects a pay-off.  
Mr. Pesce moves past him and starts up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Hey, dad. Why don't you let me hold the rest.

MR. PESCE

There's no money, Frank.

FRANK

I thought you just said you lost four hundred.

MR. PESCE

Right. I lost four hundred bucks.

FRANK

Well, you had eleven hundred when you left the club.

MR. PESCE

Yeah, I did.

FRANK

Well, then you got seven hundred on you, right?

MR. PESCE

No. I don't have shit on me.

FRANK

How could you lose four hundred out of eleven hundred and not have anything on you?

MR. PESCE

I lost the four hundred you gave me.

FRANK

(upset)

Then you lost eleven hundred!

MR. PESCE

No. I lost the four hundred you gave me.

FRANK

Then where's the other seven hundred?!

MR. PESCE

It's gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Then you lost it all!

MR. PESCE

Yeah, technically.

FRANK

What, technically! You had eleven hundred on you and now you got shit. That's eleven hundred dollars you lost.

MR. PESCE

I don't count that other seven hundred.

FRANK

Oh, you don't count it?

MR. PESCE

No.

FRANK

That other seven hundred's no good? It ain't real money? It don't pay off the mortgage? The phone bills? The electric company?

MR. PESCE

It don't count because it was their money. I gambled with their money. I'm sorry I lost your four hundred, but their money is their money.

FRANK

You had "their" money in your pocket, didn't ya?

MR. PESCE

(rubbing chest)

Don't give me a heart-attack, will ya?

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - MORNING

Mrs. Pesce picks up Frank's pants. Frank's wallet falls out and drops on the floor. She doesn't notice and moves off into the kitchen. But, Mr.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pesce zeros in on the wallet like a hungry vulture spotting a bar-b-que.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then, somehow, my father got a hold of my wallet and here's when the trouble really started.

Mr. Pesce picks up the wallet. Opens it. Inside is Frank's I.D. for the Sheldon Toy Company. Mr. Pesce's wheels start turning.

CUT TO:

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Mr. Pesce, nicely dressed, is talking with a SALESPERSON.

FRANK (V.O.)

He started goin' store to store, sayin' he was me, and collecting any defective cars he could get his hands on.

Mr. Pesce pulls a brake cord on one of the cars.

MR. PESCE

(to Salesperson)

Ah, this one's no good, too.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Pesce secretly pulls an electric car from the open trunk and sneaks it down into the cellar from the driveway entrance.

FRANK (V.O.)

Only he didn't return them to Sheldon.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE CELLAR - NIGHT

There are nearly thirty electric cars all over the cellar. Mr. Pesce, with the perfection of a surgeon, fixes each and every car, making them all as good as new.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

He fixed them down in the basement  
and started sellin' them to all  
the kids in the neighborhood.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Frank comes home from work spotting a kid in an electric car.  
Stops with a smile to talk to the kid, and then notices another  
kid riding by in one.

FRANK (V.O.)

I shoulda smelled a rat early on,  
when I came home and spotted a  
couple of kids from the  
neighborhood ridin' around in  
those things. When I asked them  
where they got 'em, they told me  
"Santa Claus."

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY AT SHELDONS TOY STORE - DAY

Frank walks down the hall to the accounting department.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then came that fateful day. I  
picked up my check later than  
usual one night...

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - NIGHT

Mr. Pesce and Vito let Frank out of the car on the corner near  
their old apartment.

FRANK

I'll see ya's later.

They drive off into traffic.

FRANK (V.O.)

I wanted to cash my check but all  
the banks were closed and I had  
nowhere to go.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (Cont'd)  
For some reason, don't ask me why,  
I went to Irv's, the pawn-broker.  
And this was the move that was  
to change my life and bring me  
to where I ended up... on  
Christmas Eve...

Frank heads toward Irv's Pawn Shop.

CUT TO:

INT. IRV'S PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

Irv, much older now, is still there. Frank is talking to Irv over the counter. The pawn shop is still musty and filled with junk.

FRANK  
Hey, Irv. I gotta cash my check.

IRV  
So, go to a bank.

FRANK  
No, I gotta cash it now. I need  
the money for the weekend.

IRV  
You gotta buy somethin', Frank.  
Minimum of ten bucks.

FRANK  
Buy somethin'?  
(looks around)  
What am I gonna buy? A fuckin'  
ukulele? A pair of binoculars?

IRV  
I ain't Chase Manhattan. Minimum  
of ten bucks.

Frank pulls out the check.

FRANK  
Alright. Give me those piece of  
shit binoculars over there.

Irv turns and takes them down. Reads the price tag.

IRV  
Nine dollars...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Oh, come on, Irv.

IRV

I'll have to charge you ten.

FRANK

No...

Frank spots an ad for the New York State Lottery next to the cash register.

FRANK

Alright, give me a lottery ticket.

Irv takes a lottery ticket and hands it to Frank. As Frank's hands touch it...

FRANK (V.O.)

And that was it. That was the ticket. That won it, right then and there.

CUT TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Frank stops at a news-stand with Carol.

FRANK (V.O.)

I visited Carol for lunch where she worked in mid-town...

Frank picks up a copy of the Post, and then looks up at the Time-Life building, watching the NEWS PARADE across in blinking lights, the same building he viewed as a child. Frank turns to the news-vendor.

FRANK

(re: News Arcade)

Hey, can you pay to get your name up on the News Arcade?

NEWS-VENDOR

No, but you can pay for that newspaper.

Frank pays the guy.

FRANK (V.O.)

And then it happened...

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Wall to wall PEOPLE packed should to shoulder. Frank reads the New York Post.

ANGLE ON NEWSPAPER

It's the instant winners. Frank's not in there. Then he scans the 500 finalists for the big drawing. There's a name in there. FRANK PESCE, JR.

RESUME FRANK

As his eyes bug out.

FRANK

Holy shit!

(It hits him harder)

Holy shit! I don't believe it.

I don't believe it!

Heads start turning. Staring at Frank.

FRANK

I'm a finalist in the Lottery!

Here! Here!

Frank pulls out his lottery ticket. Waves the newspaper.

FRANK

Here! Here! Right here! Here's my ticket. This ticket right here! I got a shot at 6.2 million dollars!

Everybody on the train starts CLAPPING and CHEERING for him. Frank LAUGHS and DANCES around the train.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE LIVING-ROOM - DAY

Frank comes flying into the house wielding the newspaper. Mrs. Pesce is pouring sauce on Vito's second helping of pasta. They both look up, staring at Frank's noisy entrance.

FRANK

Ma! Vito! You're not gonna believe this!

Frank shows Mrs. Pesce and Vito the newspaper. They SCREAM a second later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

On one hand they couldn't believe it. On the other hand, they didn't seem too surprised.

Suddenly, the door closes with a BANG. Frank, Vito and Mrs. Pesce all turn toward Mr. Pesce who is standing at the front door with three newspapers under his arm. The News, the Post and the Times. Mr. Pesce just stares at Frank with an odd stare.

FRANK

Are you okay?

No answer from Mr. Pesce. He just stares at Frank, shaking his head.

FRANK

What's with the "look"? And why do you have all those papers?

MR. PESCE

You're up for 6.2 million dollars and you're askin' me, "what's with the look?"

FRANK

Jesus, you don't look happy.

MR. PESCE

(shaking head)

You got a horse-shoe so far up your ass you don't know what to do.

(a beat)

I got two thousand tickets upstairs in the drawer. How many did you buy?

FRANK

(shrugging)

One.

Mr. Pesce stares blankly. MUSIC KICKS IN.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank walks down 29th Street looking sharp. Everyone waves at him like he's their best friend as a Sinatra tune PLAYS whimsically on the SOUNDTRACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

Suddenly, everyone was my best friend.

CUT TO:

QUICK MONTAGE OF FACES

CLOSE-UPS ON EVERYONE - QUICK CUTS as Sinatra keeps SINGING.

CARLO

I always liked this kid.

JOEY

Always knew you had it in ya, Frankie.

IRV

And he bought the ticket at my store.

MRS. PESCE

Come on down and say a few words to everyone at the hospital, would ya? They'd all love to meet ya.

MADELINE

That's my brother.

FATHER LOWREY

And he promised me a new wing for the church when he wins.

LOCAL GIRL

(cracking gum)

I never realized how sexy he was.

MR. PESCE

I don't get it.

VITO

Do you know what the Police Athletic League is, Frankie?

CAROL

How 'bout a nice house up in Glen Cove, Long Island, huh, Frankie?

MR. PESCE

Your grandfather said, "God protects the dumb."

CUT TO:

EXT. QUEENS STREET - DAY

We see a black stretch limo moving through Queens.

FRANK (V.O.)

About a month before Christmas, Sheldon Toys did finally put it together, especially when over two hundred cars were missin' and they were all traced to me.

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - MORNING

The stretch pulls up and stops. The DRIVER gets out and trots around, opening doors for a few SHELDON EXECUTIVES, who don't look pleased to say the least. They head for the house.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Frank's eyes open. It's his worst nightmare. Mr. Pesce has made another "pizza." Mr. Pesce is waving it at him.

MR. PESCE

Frank. Wake up. I really think I nailed it this time.

FRANK

(waking up)

Oh, Christ, get that outta my face!

Mrs. Pesce enters. She looks really serious.

MRS. PESCE

Frankie!

Frank turns.

FRANK

What is this? Grand Central Station? I can't get a little sleep on my day off.

MRS. PESCE

There's some men at the door from Sheldon Toys. They're really pissed-off and they're looking for you.

Mr. Pesce freezes up, having put it together already.

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - MORNING

Frank comes out of the house in his robe, bare feet, and holding a cup of coffee, looking half-asleep. The Sheldon executives stand at the top step.

FRANK

What seems to be the problem, gentlemen?

SHELDON EXEC #1

Mr. Pesce, we're here to talk about some missing merchandise.

FRANK

(confused)

Yeah...?

Frank takes a few steps. Sipping his coffee. He walks slowly down the steps to the walkway with the Execs following.

SHELDON EXEC #2

We've been trying to reach you. We've been sending you letters.

FRANK

I didn't get any letters.

Suddenly, way in the background, a neighborhood kid cruises along in an electric car. No one notices.

SHELDON EXEC #3

There seems to be nearly two hundred of our model ten cars missing from the inventory. Someone has been going around, collecting defective cars and not returning them to our factory.

FRANK

I don't know nothin' about it.

Another electric car swings into frame, moving up the street with a KID inside. Then a third.

SHELDON EXEC #1

The cars that are missing are from your territory, Mr. Pesce.

MR. PESCE

Hey. I'm no crook, alright? I'm tellin' ya, I don't know anything.

A fourth, fifth and sixth car start appearing, way up the street. Down the street. Frank starts looking around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seeing all of them. Mrs. Pesce appears in the window. Watches. Then spots Mr. Pesce hiding at the corner of the house, below.

SHELDON EXEC #1

Do you have your I.D. card, Mr. Pesce? Perhaps someone's gotten a hold of it.

The cars keep accumulating. Frank smells the rat. Then turns. Mr. Pesce is at the corner of the house, LISTENING. Frank spots him. Guilt is all over Mr. Pesce's face. Cars are all over the neighborhood.

FRANK

(blankly)

No, I got my card...

The Execs can't help but spot the MOVEMENT and SOUNDS around them. They look around them. See the cars. Frank looks at Mr. Pesce like he's going to murder him. The Execs look at Frank.

SHELDON EXEC #1

So, you don't know anything, huh?

Frank EXHALES with a submissive exhaustion.

FRANK

I don't know. You tell me.

The cars keep WHINING about them. One kid BLOWS his little HORN.

SHELDON EXEC #1

You'll be hearing from our attorneys, Mr. Pesce.

The Execs all turn and head back to the stretch. Frank watches them for a second, and then turns to Mr. Pesce, who comes out from hiding.

FRANK

Oh, you did it this time... You really did it to me this time...

The stretch SCREAMS out, then SLAMS it's BRAKES, having to stop for a kid in an electric car at the corner.

FRANK

Are you happy? Are you fuckin' happy? Not only did you get me fired, they're gonna take me to court!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The stretch ROARS off.

MR. PESCE

You didn't do anything. Relax,  
will ya?

FRANK

Dad, you can't go on like this.

MR. PESCE

I paid off the bills, didn't I?

MRS. PESCE

(from window)

You have reached an all-time low.

MR. PESCE

Oh, you stay out of this, will  
ya? I'm in no fuckin' mood for  
you!

Vito pulls up in his car. Gets out in his uniform and  
approaches the house.

MRS. PESCE

Vito! Arrest that man!

VITO

Who?

MRS. PESCE

Your father. Lock him up and  
throw away the key!

VITO

What the hell's she talkin' about?  
And what's with all these kids  
in these cars? They're everywhere  
for three blocks.

The kids keep BUZZING about.

FRANK

Dad ripped them off and sold 'em  
all over the neighborhood.

VITO

Oh, dad, that's no good.

INT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Pesce comes into the house, followed by Frank and Vito.  
Mrs. Pesce comes down the stairs.

VITO  
Don't rat on dad.

FRANK  
I ain't no stool pigeon.

MRS. PESCE  
(re: Mr. Pesce)  
You should be ashamed of yourself.  
This is the example you give your  
sons.

MR. PESCE  
Enough. I don't feel good.

MRS. PESCE  
You'll get no sympathy from me.

MR. PESCE  
I don't want sympathy. I want  
quiet.

Mr. Pesce starts holding his left hand. Rubbing it. Mrs. Pesce  
goes back up stairs and disappears.

VITO  
What have ya got, dad? Arthritis?

Mr. Pesce bends his arm.

MR. PESCE  
I can't take this aggravation.

VITO  
Dad, you're doin' it to yourself.

MR. PESCE  
A man's gotta feed his family.  
That's a man's responsibility.  
They took away my job. I feel  
like they took away my guts. Ah,  
shit.

Mr. Pesce starts rubbing his arm. Vito goes into the kitchen.  
Mr. Pesce looks at Frank.

FRANK  
Don't look at me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE

I know you're mad at me.

FRANK

Yeah. I lost my goddamn job because of you.

MR. PESCE

Ah, shit...

Mr. Pesce grips his chest.

FRANK

Enough theatrics.

MR. PESCE

I'm not jokin', Frank. Somethin's wrong.

Mr. Pesce grimaces again, holding his chest.

FRANK

Let me guess. You're havin' a heart attack...

MR. PESCE

I don't know what the hell I'm havin'.

FRANK

Well, whatever it is, it's your best performance.

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Mr. Pesce steps outside and takes a breath. Then he looks with bewilderment all around him. He takes two steps and then tumbles the last four to the concrete. He grimaces again. Holding his chest. Tears well up in his eyes. He fights to breathe. Groaning out-loud. No-one hearing him.

MR. PESCE

Frrrrr-ank.

Grimacing more, gripping his chest with absolute and total fear.

MR. PESCE

Frrrrr-ank.

Finally, with all the strength he has inside, he lets out an animal MOAN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE.

FRRRR-ANK!

Mr. Pesce falls backwards onto the landing. His head slams against the screen door. He lies motionless. The inner door is half open.

INT. PESCE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vinny the cat, is the only one to witness Mr. Pesce's fall. Vinny jumps off the chair and, thinking Mr. Pesce is playing, starts rubbing his claws on the screen door. Frank comes out of the kitchen and moves into the living room, HEARING the SCRATCHING.

FRANK

(re: scratching)

What are you doin', Vinny? You wanna go outside?

Frank heads for the door and suddenly sees his father lying still, through the screen door. Frank's face goes white.

FRANK

Jesus!

CUT TO:

EXT. EMERGENCY WING OF QUEENS HOSPITAL - DAY

An ambulance with LIGHTS and SIRENS blazing SCREAMS into the parking lot and pulls up to the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - NIGHT

Bed after bed separated by partitions. SILENCE. Save for the occasional COUGH of a PATIENT. Frank, Carol, Vito, Mrs. Pesce, Madeline her husband Tony are gathered around Mr. Pesce in his hospital bed. Mr. Pesce looks horrible and can barely talk.

FRANK (V.O.)

My father had suffered a major heart-attack. Because we had no money and my father's insurance had been suspended, they had to stick him in a ward.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VITO

The doctor said you'll be okay,  
dad, if you just rest.

MR. PESCE

(barely audible)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for the  
stuff I did to ya's... taking  
the cars... getting laid off...

Mrs. Pesce starts crying.

FRANK

Stop talkin' like that.

They all nod at Mr. Pesce and start to shuffle off into the  
ward. Frank turns last.

MR. PESCE

Hey, Frankie...

FRANK

(turning)

Yeah, dad.

MR. PESCE

I need water. The nurse comes  
around every four or five hours.  
(gulping)  
They don't give you shit here.  
Not even water. I feel like I'm  
dehydrating.

FRANK

I'll take care of it, dad.

Frank kisses his father's forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

Frank talks to the HEAD NURSE, alone, who's seated behind her  
desk at the station.

FRANK

My father's dying of thirst in  
there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEAD NURSE

I understand your concern. But your father's not in a private room. He's in the ward.

FRANK

Well, I wanna sit in there with him.

HEAD NURSE

You can't because of insurance reasons. If you want a private nurse to sit with him 24hrs, I could arrange that.

FRANK

Fine. Will she take a check?

HEAD NURSE

No, none of the private nurses will. They've been burned too many times.

CUT TO:

INT. ENTRANCE OF HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Frank comes out of the elevator. Vito stands with Mrs. Pesce, Carol, Madeline and Tony.

FRANK (V.O.)

You don't know real fear until you see your father, the strongest guy on earth, who saved you from everything your whole life, suddenly lying helpless surrounded by a roomful of death.

FRANK

Hey, Vito.

Vito excuses himself and walks over to Frank.

VITO

What is it?

FRANK

I want dad to get a private nurse.

VITO

You know what that costs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Fuck what it costs.

VITO

I know, I know. But I can't borrow anymore money from the guys.

Frank is off somewhere in his head.

FRANK

I'll come up with it.

VITO

Hey. Don't do anything stupid. Y'know what I mean by "stupid." Like "illegal stupid."

Frank heads out of the hospital. Vito watches him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRONX STREET - NIGHT

The Bronx street looks like Dante's Inferno. Flaming garbage cans. A few huddled FIGURES around them. Frank's car slows up and stops before a dilapidated brownstone.

FRANK (V.O.)

Normally I would have borrowed the money from Joey Vitello, but a few days earlier he had gotten pinched and was being held without bail in New Jersey. With no other place to turn, I ran an errand for someone in the neighborhood, who shall remain nameless.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank looks up at the brownstone. Picks up a brown paper bag from under the seat. Grabs a gun out of the glove compartment. Gets out of the car, accidentally leaving the shells, still in the box, behind.

FRANK (V.O.)

Maybe this is why I lost the ticket. Because you don't do bad and not pay the price.

INT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A six story walk-up. The place stinks of piss and is littered with bottles. Frank looks around and starts moving up the staircase under naked light bulbs that bleed a nasty yellow light into the hall. The joke is over. It's all over his face as he climbs up the stairs..

INT. FOURTH FLOOR STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Frank turns the corner looking more worked up by the minute. His thoughts are soon disturbed by the sound of the door to the street opening. Frank looks nervously over the railing, downward.

Two sets of hands are working their way up the rail. We actually HEAR Frank's heart-rate increasing. Another SOUND from above.

Frank looks upward. Two sets of hands work their way down the railing. He's trapped. MUSIC of dread BLEEDS IN.

FRANK (V.O.)

Jesus. Dear sweet, Jesus, was  
all I could think. This is where  
I'm gonna die...

Frank's heart rushes, pumped with adrenaline. He reaches for the gun in his pocket. The hands keep moving, from above and below, toward him.

FRANK (V.O.)

I thought about my name in the  
paper. What my body would look  
like in this hall. My mother.  
That this would definitely kill  
my father. "Your son was found  
shot to death in some  
junkie-building in the Bronx."

The hands work ever nearer.

Frank pulls out the gun. Hands sweating.

FRANK (V.O.)

I was ready. I'd use the gun if  
I had to...

The figures are about to converge. Frank's hand shakes. The cylinder of the gun pops open. Frank's eyes bulge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

I couldn't believe it. I'd left  
the bullets in the car. Dead  
meat. All done. Finished. Front  
page of the New York Post.

Frank lowers his arm to his side, the gun concealed as the  
FIGURES appear from above and below. The MUSIC STOPS. The  
figures, people who merely live in the building say "hello" to  
each other and keep going their merry way. The only thing they  
shoot at Frank is a glance. When they've gone, Frank exhales  
and quickly catches his breath.

CUT TO:

INT. FIFTH FLOOR DOOR - NIGHT

Frank KNOCKS. The door opens. An eye peeling over the chain.

FRANK

C'mon. Open up. I haven't got  
all night.

The door opens, revealing a PUERTO RICIAN DRUG DEALER.

INT. DRUG DEALER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In two words, a shit-hole. Garbage. Bare radiator. A  
television set. A couch which you've seen better in junkyards.  
The drug dealer, looking sick and thin, locks eyes with Frank.

FRANK

Give me the money.

DRUG DEALER

(heavy Spanish accent)

Let's see.

FRANK

I got three guys in the car  
that'll be up here with guns  
blazin' if I ain't down in thirty  
seconds.

DRUG DEALER

Relax, Holmes. Money's in the  
bathroom.

The drug dealer extends his hand. Frank hands him the bag.  
The drug dealer takes it, heads for the bathroom and goes  
inside.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The drug dealer rolls up his shirt. Grabs a hypodermic needle from the cupboard. Opens the bag like an animal to find several pounds of heroin inside.

INT. DRUG DEALER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank paces back and forth, scared to death.

FRANK  
Come on. Today.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The drug dealer has just given himself a fix. Reaches under the sink for the money. Loads of hundreds. Grabs one to stop the bleeding from his arm, and rubs the oozing puncture.

INT. DRUG DEALER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The drug dealer emerges, high as a kite, holding the bag of money.

DRUG DEALER  
Good shit, Holmes.

Frank snatches the bag of money and turns and exits quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Frank jumps inside. Tosses the bag of money on the seat and STARTS up the car fast, throwing it into drive.

CUT TO:

EXT. FDR HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Frank's car RACES up the entrance ramp and TEARS onto the highway.

INT. FRANK'S CAR - NIGHT

Catching his breath, swimming in fear, Frank tries his best to focus on the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

I hadn't even checked the bag for the money. It could've been toilet paper for all I knew.

Frank reaches inside and pulls out the wads of hundreds. One after another fall through his hands.

FRANK (V.O.)

There was a phrase I'd heard about and even used in my life even though I was never sure what it really meant. But I was about to find out in no uncertain terms.

Frank stops. Feels wetness. Drops the cash back in the bag and raises his hand into the passing lights.

FRANK (V.O.)

Blood money...

Frank's hand is covered in blood. It's like the needle of the dentist's drill striking right through the enamel to the raw, exposed nerve. He wipes his hands frantically. Then, in a total panic, CUTS the wheel across three lanes of traffic. CAR HORNS BLARE all around him.

EXT. FDR HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Frank SCREECHES to a stop on the shoulder. Pops open the passenger door. Throws-up into the night and then breaks down into uncontrollable SOBBING.

From that lonely desperate IMAGE, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - DAY

Frank and Vito help Mr. Pesce out of the car, Mrs. Pesce carries his bag.

FRANK (V.O.)

Two weeks later we brought him home.

Mr. Pesce instantly stares at his lawn. He seems very displeased.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (V.O.)

He said we'd ruined his lawn while he was gone. That's when I knew he was alright. He was back to terrorizing everybody.

CUT TO:

EXT. 29TH STREET - DAY

Frank and Joey stand at the corner of 29th Street and 3rd Avenue as if waiting for a car.

FRANK (V.O.)

A law firm from Madison Avenue called and offered me seventy-five hundred for the ticket. My father wouldn't even let me talk to them. Then somebody from Mulberry Street found out that I was one of the finalists and asked Joey if he could meet me.

A black caddy pulls up to a stop. Frank and Joey get inside the back and the caddy moves back into traffic.

INT. BACK SEAT OF CADDY - DAY

Joey sits at the window. Frank in the middle. Alongside, much to Frank's surprise, is Marco Cassone the guy he beat at the crap table on Mulberry Street. Marco LAUGHS as he looks at Frank.

FRANK

You?

CASSONE

Yeah, why? What's wrong with me?

FRANK

No, nothin'. It's just the last time I saw you, you looked like you wanted to kill me.

Cassone LAUGHS again.

CASSONE

Nah, that's just that night. Y'know, a lotta guys get killed because people are in bad moods.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASSONE (Cont'd)

You're a legend down on Mulberry Street, y'know that? What you did that night with them dice.

(a beat)

You got it on ya?

FRANK

Yeah, but I gotta tell ya. My father don't want me sellin' this thing.

CASSONE

He don't for ten grand?

FRANK

(shocked)

Ten grand?

CASSONE

Ain't that what I just said? Word is that you got a shot at this thing. With your luck and all. But then again, maybe you won't. But if you wanna sell it, do the right thing, kid and keep it in the family. Don't sell it to them Jew lawyers. Remember, I'm with you. You're with me. And everybody's with us. Capisch?

Frank turns to Joey.

FRANK

(quietly)

Keep it in the family? I've know this guy two fuckin' minutes.

Cassone LAUGHS again.

CASSONE

Well, you just think about it. I'm easy to find.

(to driver)

Louie. Pull over.

The car slows and stops.

CASSONE

Alright, get out.

Frank looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

This is 53rd Street. What am I gonna do up here?

CASSONE

Come on. Get out. You're blockin' traffic.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A cold afternoon. Mr. Pesce, bundled up, gets a little exercise walking slowly down the sidewalk, shooting glances at his lawn. Frank and Carol get out of Frank's Riviera and approach Mr. Pesce.

FRANK (V.O.)

To me, ten thousand bucks seemed like ten million. But my father felt differently.

MR. PESCE

I don't wanna be the father of the idiot who gave away 6.2 million dollars for ten thousand bucks.

FRANK

But what if we lose? We'll lose ten thousand bucks.

MR. PESCE

No, ya idiot. You won't lose ten thousand bucks, you'll lose a dollar. Where's that ticket? You're makin' me nervous.

Frank pulls it out. Drops it. It blows a few feet in the wind and Frank scrambles to get it. Mr. Pesce rubs his chest as Frank stomps on it to keep it from blowing away.

MR. PESCE

(to Carol)

How can you be in love with this idiot?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH PLAYGROUND - DAY

Frank stands alone in the church playground dribbling a basketball in the winter chill. Leaves blow about his feet. There's a "King of Kings" thing happening in the December sky.

FRANK (V.O.)

I started goin' nuts. I spent days on end, just tryin' to figure out what to do.

FRANK

Alright, God. Help me out here. If I make this basket, that means I'm gonna win, hands down, for sure, no bullshit.

Frank throws the ball. It rolls around the rim and goes out of the basket. The ball bounces back to him.

FRANK

(to God)

Alright. Two outta three.

Father Lowrey watches Frank from his rectory window.

CUT TO:

INT. PESCE KITCHEN - DAY

Frank sits at the table reading a newspaper, intently.

FRANK (V.O.)

This afternoon everything seemed okay. It was only hours before the drawing. I was reading the newspaper and saw an article about Sheldon Toys. They were going under. So I didn't have to worry about my law-suit problems, anymore.

Frank smiles. The phone starts RINGING off the wall.

FRANK (V.O.)

But then, I got a phone call that made my blood run cold.

Frank walks over to get the phone.

FRANK

(picking up phone)

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE

(phone)

Is Frank Pesce there?

FRANK

(on phone)

I think you're lookin' for my  
father. Who's this?

VOICE

(phone)

Louie Tucci. Tell ya father he's  
three weeks behind, and I ain't  
Santa Claus.

DIAL TONE. Frank hangs up slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank drives, deep in thought, dressed as we saw him at the  
beginning of the story.

FRANK (V.O.)

I started putting it together the  
best I could. No one could figure  
out how my father was payin' off  
the doctor bills that were pilin'  
up...

CUT TO:

EXT. SOCIAL CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

"Hark The Herald Angels Sing" enters the SOUNDTRACK. Christmas  
decorations hang in the windows of stores and brownstones.  
Frank, bundled up in an overcoat and scarf, heads for the social  
club that has Christmas lights in the window.

FRANK (V.O.)

My father was too proud to go  
borrow that kind of money on 29th  
Street. So, he musta went out  
of the neighborhood.

INT. SOCIAL CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

The place is strewn with Christmas decorations, a Christmas tree and the radio PLAYS Christmas MUSIC which is somehow hysterical in itself. Jimmy Carlo, with a plate of calamari in his hand, instructs one of the GOONS about how the garland is hung incorrectly and how to fix it. Frank enters, and everybody in the joint wishes him a "Merry Christmas." Chickens, Joe Numbers, Tommy the Geep, Mickey the Dwarf, the whole crowd. Joey, Needle Nose, Rocky Sav, Dom the Bomb, who SINGS "Hark The Herald Angeles Sing" to the RADIO, and Sal Las Benas, who wears a new tie that he's very proud of.

FRANK (V.O.)

I had to find out how rough a character this Louie Tucci really was...

Sal gets up and walks over to Frank.

SAL

(spitting)

Hey, Frank. Look at what my mom gave me. An early Christmas present. A new tie.

FRANK

(smiling, wiping)

Good. This was a new shirt, Sal.

Sal just keeps looking proudly at his new tie. Jimmy Carlo sits at the bar, eating the calamari.

CARLO

Well, couple more hours and you'll know if you're a millionaire. I wish ya nothin' but the best, ya lucky bastard.

FRANK

Hey, Jimmy. You know a guy named Louie Tucci?

CARLO

Christ! I'm eatin'.

This scares Frank even more.

FRANK

What about him?

CARLO

He's the worst bag of shit around. Works outta Brooklyn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

(scared)

I think my father owes him money  
and he's three weeks behind.

CARLO

(looking up and serious)

If your father is three weeks  
behind to him, he bet'er start  
packin' his bags.

Suddenly, TWO GOONS enter with blood in their eyes.

GOON #1

Where's Frank Pesce?

Frank turns. Joey spots them. Gets up not liking the look or  
sound of it. Jimmy Carlo turns, too.

FRANK

Who wants to know?

The Goons walk over with a threatening attitude.

GOON #1

Why? You know him? Huh,  
fuck-face?

CARLO

(to Goons)

Get outta my club right now.

FRANK

No, no. I'm Frank Pesce. What's  
it to ya, asshole?

The Goons move closer. Carlo blocks them.

GOON #1

You owe some people some money.

FRANK

I don't owe anybody shit. Get  
outta my face.

The Goons reach over Carlo, shoving him aside and grabbing at  
Frank.

GOON #1

You little fuckin' worm.

Joey jumps in. Everybody in the place is on their feet and  
everyone starts YELLING all at once. Grabbing at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOEY  
(to Goons)  
Hey, hey, hey! You don't know  
what you're doin'! Trust me.

GOON #2  
(to Joey)  
Yeah? And who the fuck are you?

CARLO  
(to Goon #2)  
Trust me. You don't wanna talk  
to him like that!

GOON #2  
(re: Frank)  
This guy owes Louie Tucci ten  
fuckin' grand!

Frank has panic in his eyes.

CARLO  
(to Goons)  
Hey. You're wrong. You got that?  
You wanna start a war over this?

It starts to quiet down a little.

CARLO  
(re: Goons)  
You guys tryin' to make a name  
for yourselves? How dare you come  
in here on Christmas Eve and start  
this shit!

We can HEAR the CHRISTMAS MUSIC, again. The Goons face  
everybody off.

GOON #2  
(to Frank)  
We're comin' to your house  
tonight. We'll give you a fuckin'  
Christmas present you'll never  
forget.

CARLO  
C'mon. Get outta here. Both of  
you. You got the wrong guy.

The Goons are hustled out by Carlo. Frank breathes heavy.  
Confused. Carlo turns to Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARLO

(to Frank)

And you. You better come up with the money. All of it. Especially the way they just got embarrassed in here.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank SCREAMS up in his car. SLAMS the brakes and gets out, running for the house.

FRANK (V.O.)

I didn't even want my father to know about the threat, fearin' he might die of another heart-attack.

INT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank runs into the house. SLAMS the door. Vito, wearing a suit, walks over. Christmas carols PLAY on the radio.

VITO

Alright, Frankie. How do I look?

FRANK

Where's dad?

VITO

He's out.

Frank runs up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Frank bolts down the hall. Mrs. Pesce steps out, hearing the COMMOTION. She's dressed to the nines.

MRS. PESCE

What's wrong with you?

FRANK

Where the hell is daddy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. PESCE

He's out with Madeline and Carol.  
He's picking up his suit from the  
cleaners.

FRANK

Forget the drawing. Stay home.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank rushes into his room. Opens the dresser and pulls out  
the ticket. Mrs. Pesce comes into the room, confused.

MRS. PESCE

What are you talkin' about?

FRANK

(spinning around)  
Forget the drawing! They're ain't  
gonna be any goddamn drawing!

Frank pockets the ticket and moves past her, out of the room.  
Mrs. Pesce YELLS after him.

MRS. PESCE

What are you talkin' about,  
Frankie?

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank runs down to his car. It has started to snow. Swirling  
flecks falling to earth. Frank jumps into the Riviera, starts  
it up and ROARS away. Mrs. Pesce watching with confusion from  
the upstairs window.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MULBERRY STREET - NIGHT

Christmas decorations. The snow thickening. Frank gets out  
of the car and heads toward the gambling hall where the big  
fight occurred.

FRANK (V.O.)

That was it. I hadda find Marco  
Cassone, the guy that made me the  
ten thousand dollar offer for my  
ticket. I was a wreck. Scared  
to death.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BOUNCER hovers in the doorway, smoking a cigarette. He stops Frank.

BOUNCER  
What can I do for ya?

FRANK  
I'm looking for Marco Cassone.

BOUNCER  
What about?

FRANK  
Look, I don't have a lotta time.

The Bouncer motions with his head towards a car.

BOUNCER  
Try that guy over there.

Frank heads over to a caddy, parked, engine running and windshield wipers going. The electric window slides down.

THUG  
What do you want?

FRANK  
I'm lookin' for Marco Cassone.  
Is he in there?

THUG  
No.

FRANK  
Don't you work for him?

THUG  
What do you want? My resume?

FRANK  
My name's Frank Pesce. I got this lottery ticket that Cassone wanted to buy. He offered me ten grand for it a couple of weeks ago...

THUG  
Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know all about it. Come on, hurry up, I'm cold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

I wanna sell it. But it's gotta  
be now cause the drawing's in two  
hours.

THUG

You got the ticket on ya?

Frank pulls out the ticket. WE SEE IT IN EXTREME CLOSE-UP.  
The Thug pulls out a huge roll of money. Starts counting.  
Frank breathes hard as he counts out the hundreds.

FRANK (V.O.)

So I sold it...

Frank gets handed the money. He hands over the ticket. The  
caddy starts up and pulls away, tail-lights receding into the  
building curtains of snow. Frank is left holding the cash in  
the cold.

FRANK (V.O.)

I guess he's a happy guy, tonight,  
because he won 6.2 million  
bucks...

Frank folds his collar up against the snow and the wind and  
trudges back to his car, slipping the money into his pocket.

FRANK (V.O.)

But I saved my father. Hey, I  
hadda do what I hadda do, y'know?  
But who knew I'd win?

Frank gets into his car. Starts it up and he too, fades into  
the driving snow.

FRANK (V.O.)

Then I stopped off at the Garden  
to see the results.

(sadly)

Lucky me, huh?

As snow falls gently over the city covering it in a blanket of  
white, MUSIC CONTINUES.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DETECTIVE RINALDI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The snow falls outside Rinaldi's window. Rinaldi sits there.  
Still. Deeply moved. As does Father Lowrey. The other cops  
sit quietly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank sits with his head lowered, talking to the floor.

FRANK

The rest you know. I went crazy at the church and then you guys picked me up and brought me here...

Frank looks up with wet, tired eyes.

FRANK

Do what you want with me. I just gotta get that ten grand home for my dad before those guys show up.

Rinaldi looks at Father Lowrey. Lowrey feels terrible.

FATHER LOWREY

Go home, boy. Forget it ever happened.

Frank HEARS it. Smiles weakly. Then the smile vanishes. He still has to go home. The MUSIC CONTINUES...

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Frank sits in the back. Two of the arresting officers are driving him home. He sits in a trance, staring out at Midtown Manhattan through a windshield wiper that fights hard to clear the Christmas Eve snow. MUSIC CONTINUES.

CUT TO:

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

The police car pulls up and slows to a stop. The snow flies furiously. Frank is let out by the cops as their POLICE RADIO HISSES in the background.

COP ONE

You want us to walk you up?

FRANK

No, I'll be alright.

Frank trudges slowly toward the house as the cops get back into their car and ride away. As he climbs the steps, passing the lawn covered in snow, the MUSIC FADES and SOUNDS from the house spill into the street. SOUNDS of SINGING. HAPPINESS. Everyone inside is SINGING CHRISTMAS CAROLS. Frank shudders. All this only makes it worse.

INT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Frank enters, bringing the cold inside with him. Mrs. Pesce, Carol, Madeline, her husband, Vito, assorted COPS, all friends of Vito's are there. Also, Joey, Rocky Sav, Dom the Bomb, Needle Nose, Sal Las Benas, Jimmy Carlo, Chickens. Everyone CHEERS as Frank enters. They rush around him, either shaking his hand or hugging and kissing him. Frank is in pain, knowing the truth. Carol kisses Frank. Mrs. Pesce give him a big hug and kiss.

MRS. PESCE

God bless you, Frankie.

FRANK

Where's dad?

MRS. PESCE

He's in the kitchen makin' a pizza.

Frank nods and moves through the endless well-wishes toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Packed with PEOPLE. More CHEERS from Frank's entrance to the kitchen. Mr. Pesce turns and smiles deeply at Frank.

MR. PESCE

The man of the hour is finally home!

There's CLAPPING. The SINGING still goes on. Frank can't smile. He's zombie-like, just having to talk to his father alone.

EXT. PESCE HOUSE - NIGHT

Louie Tucci's car pulls up in the snow. The two Goons get out along with LOUIE TUCCI, a masby-faced mobster with all the charm of a junkyard dog. They head for the house. Move up the stairs. The three-some lock eyes, HEARING the party going on inside, and then start POUNDING on the door. Chickens opens the door with a smile that dissipates quickly as Tony and the Goons push past him and move inside.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Frank finally gets over to Mr. Pesce.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Dad, I gotta talk to you. No bullshit.

MR. PESCE

In a minute. The pizza's ready.

FRANK

No. Now, dad.

The SINGING stops. Heads turn. Then Frank and Mr. Pesce look to see what's happened. Tucci and the Goons stand in the doorway across the crowds. Frank is scared shitless.

FRANK

Relax, dad. I got it taken care of.

MR. PESCE

Hang on a second.

TUCCI

You know why I'm here. Pay up.

MR. PESCE

(to Goon)

Everybody. Quiet down a minute. Because, I want everybody to hear what I gotta say.

FRANK

Hey, dad. Maybe you oughta relax.

MR. PESCE

Quiet a second, Frankie.

The room hushes down.

MR. PESCE

You know, I'm never, ever gonna be in debt to anybody again for the rest of my life.

Frank rolls his eyes.

MR. PESCE

(to Tucci and Goons)

And I'm never, ever gonna have to be afraid again of morons like you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK  
(nervously)  
Hey, hey, hey, dad. Knock it off.  
You don't know what happened  
tonight.

MR. PESCE  
(to Tony)  
You see, now that I'm a goddamn  
millionaire I don't have to deal  
with shit like you, anymore.

Tucci starts looking insane.

FRANK  
Dad, you better shut-up right now.  
You don't know what happened  
tonight.

MR. PESCE  
(to Frank)  
Don't ruin my moment, will ya?  
I've been waiting for something  
like this my whole life.

Frank clams up with fear. Mr. Pesce turns back to Tucci and the Goons and everyone else in the room.

MR. PESCE  
Tonight, I learned why my son,  
Frank, was born. As you get  
older, you start gettin' harder  
and harder, and you forget about  
the things that really matter.  
Bills don't matter. Cars and  
horses, that shit don't matter.  
Money don't matter.

TUCCI  
Well, my money does matter. So,  
why don't you fuckin' hand it  
over...

Frank throws the envelope with the ten grand at Tucci, who catches it out of reflex.

FRANK  
There it is! Ten grand! All of  
it! Now take it and get the fuck  
out!

Everyone in the room is confused. Mrs. Pesce looks panicked. So does Vito and others who are close in Frank's circle. Mr.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Pesce smiles at Frank as if he's not surprised. Frank turns to everyone in the room.

FRANK

I sold the ticket, everybody.  
I heard this guy was comin' after  
my father and I couldn't let  
anything happen to him. So go  
home. The party's over.

Dead SILENCE.

MR. PESCE

You "think" you sold the ticket.

FRANK

No, I sold it. That's how I got  
the money.

Frank stares at Mr. Pesce with total confusion.

MR. PESCE

No. Your mother figured that  
somethin' was up and that you were  
gonna do somethin' stupid. Jimmy  
Carlo told me what happened at  
the club tonight, so I hit him  
up for a loan and sent somebody  
downtown to meet you there. You  
sold the ticket to yourself.

Mr. Pesce pulls out his wallet and produces the winning ticket.

MR. PESCE

We got it, Frankie. Right here.

Everyone in the room goes nuts with CHEERING, CLAPPING and WHISTLING. Frank can only stare in shock at his father. Tucci and the Goons turn and exit through the crowds. Frank can not unlock his shocked gaze at his father. As the CHEERING dies down, Dom the Bomb clears his throat and starts to SING "Auld Lang Sine," absolutely beautifully. Frank has yet to unlock his stare at Mr. Pesce. Mr. Pesce turns and pulls out the pizza he's made. Mrs. Pesce takes it and starts cutting it up. Vinny the cat licks his lips with anticipation.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Frank, still in shock, walks down the hall past everyone SINGING. Mr. Pesce moves up behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. PESCE  
Hey, Frankie.

Frank turns.

FRANK  
Yeah?

MR. PESCE  
You did a good thing, Frankie.  
I wanna thank you for it.

The emotions fly deep within Frank. He doesn't look into his father's eyes for fear of crying.

FRANK  
Yeah, well, thanks for being  
smarter than me, dad.

Frank starts to move away.

MR. PESCE  
(smiling)  
You did it for me, didn't ya.

Frank turns and looks at his father.

FRANK  
Yeah,...

MR. PESCE  
I guess that means you love your  
old man. Don't it.

Frank can't hold back the tears anymore.

FRANK  
Yeah...

Frank and Mr. Pesce hug tightly as tears stream down both of their faces as SINGING continues all around them.

FRANK (V.O.)  
Well, that's pretty much it,  
people. That's my story.

Frank and Mr. Pesce break their hug and move off into the living-room to join in the SINGING of "Auld Lang Sine."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Last minute Christmas SHOPPERS scurry about. Dodging the snow. Hailing cabs. A sweet piano plays a series of heart-felt chords on the SOUNDTRACK.

FRANK (V.O.)

From time to time, I think back on Rocky Sav's theory of life. Y'know, "you're born, you grow old and you die." Maybe that's all there is to it. And we just keep making it more complicated than we need to.

The snowfall increases.

FRANK (V.O.)

My father's gone, now. But I remember how years later, when we up at the new house in Glen Cove, over-looking his new lawn of Kentucky Blue-Grass about half the size of a football field... I said to him, "I guess there's a happy ending for us after all..."

WE PAN up the Times Building in the snow. The same building Frank and Mr. Pesce gazed upon when Frank was eight years old.

FRANK (V.O.)

"A happy ending?," he said...

(a beat)

I wouldn't have had it any other way.

And through the snow we pick up the news arcade that parades across in blinking lights. As the MUSIC builds, we SEE the following:

(ON NEWS ARCADE)

"Congratulations to Mr. Frank Pesce. Winner of the first New York State Lottery. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all."

And on that IMAGE, we SLOWLY FADE TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:  
ROLL CREDITS

THE END