

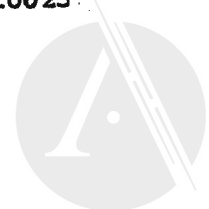
"THE BROTHER WHO FELL TO EARTH"

Written by

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1 INT. SPACE CAPSULE - NIGHT

STEEL DRUM MUSIC plays eerily, accompanying the BEEPS AND BLIPS of the capsule instruments as we see THE BROTHER operating the controls. The read-out information on his main screen is in a script that looks like formalized graffiti. A screen graphic of a bluish sphere (earth) gets larger and larger in jumps till it more than fills the screen as a HIGH-PITCHED TONE begins to SHRIEK and the STEEL DRUMS get FRANTIC and the Brother hurriedly straps himself into a cocoon-like crash device attached to his chair-

2 EXT. ELLIS ISLAND, MAIN BLDG. - NIGHT

BLACKNESS at first, then there is a TEARING, SIZZLING NOISE and a sputtering STROBE FLASH that illuminates the legend, chiseled in stone-

ELLIS ISLAND IMMIGRATION CENTER

-then BLACKNESS again-

3A EXT. ELLIS DOCK - NIGHT

we are right on the edge of the dock, looking out over the water at city and bridge lights in the distance. STEAM is billowing up in front of us as we hear BOILING WATER below. The steam thins out and we PAN LEFT till we see the lit-up STATUE OF LIBERTY in the distance at frame left. Suddenly hands appear over the dock edge immediately in front of us and the Brother heaves himself up into the picture, dripping and in pain. He glances back over his shoulder at the statue, then heaves himself onto the boards-

3B CU BROTHER

standing with some difficulty, the Immigration building seen behind him. He looks down to his legs and we TILT DOWN with his gaze, down to his knees- one leg has been torn off below the knee. We CONTINUE TO TILT DOWN as gouts of blood from the wound plop on the dock boards-

3C CU BROTHER

looking down, concerned-

2 ~~3D~~ BROTHER'S HAND

we FOLLOW it to his KNEE STUMP. He cups the stumps in his palm and squeezes. There seems to be a slight GLOW from his hand for a moment-

3 ~~3B~~ ~~3C~~ ~~3D~~ CU BROTHER

concentrating-

4 ~~3B~~ ~~3C~~ ~~3D~~ BROTHER'S HAND, KNEE

he removes his hand and the leg is no longer bleeding-

5 ~~3B~~ ~~3C~~ ~~3D~~ BROTHER

turns to look at the Immigration building and hops off toward it-

6 EXT. IMM BLDG

4B INT. IMMIGRATION BUILDING - VARIOUS SHOTS - NIGHT

moonlight streaking through high windows into the Great Hall. We see condensation MOISTURE DRIPPING, PLASTER PEELING, etc. Rust never sleeps. We hear an ECHOING NOISE-

7 ~~4A~~ INT. GREAT HALL - BROTHER

hopping along in the dark, tense. He puts an arm out to steady himself, and as soon as his hand rests on the wall we hear an old woman keening in YIDDISH. Brother snatches his hand away as if burned-

8 ~~4B~~ CU BROTHER

regarding the wall where he touched it, giving the room a look. He cautiously touches the wall again, running his hand along it, then touching it with his other hand as well. We get two, then three VOICES- RUSSIAN then SERBIAN then ITALIAN. There is apprehension and uncertainty in the sound of the voices. The

4B Brother takes his hands away and then hops away as we PAN with him, into a WIDE SHOT with him in the foreground and the Great Hall beyond him-

⑧ HIGH ANGLE

4C BROTHER

he hops over to a bench, sits, but immediately dozens, hundreds of voices call out, a babel of languages as the room comes alive with the ghosts of anxiety-

4D CU BROTHER

looking up at the walls and balconies-

4E² GREAT HALL - BROTHER'S POV

we whip around FROM SPOT TO SPOT as the VOICES keep coming-

4F CU BROTHER

frightened, overwhelmed by the emotion in the room-

GREAT HALL - BRO'S POV

TIGHTER SHOTS, voices clearer and louder-

4G CU BROTHER

he SCREAMS but no sound comes out. The voices cut dead-

4H GREAT HALL - HIGH SHOT

maybe from the balcony, looking down at the floor, very wide and distant at first, then ZOOMING IN, IN till we are TIGHT on the Brother lying curled up in the middle of the floor, eyes clenched shut, arms covering his ears. We-

FADE TO BLACK:

5 BLACK SCREEN - TITLES

we hear FOGHORNS on the river as the titles flash on. We RETURN TO BLACK, then-

FADE IN TO:

2 shot 5 6A NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - MORNING

we PAN left-to-right across the skyline of lower Manhattan, crossing past the Statue of Liberty, to a CLOSE-UP of the Brother in the foreground, looking across. We TILT DOWN his body to his legs. He has regenerated the torn-off leg, sticking bare out of his torn pants leg. We TILT all the way DOWN to his foot. It has only three large toes, each with a tiger-like claw on the end-

1 shot 6B BROTHER

looking over to the statue-

1 shot 6D STATUE OF LIBERTY - VARIOUS DETAILS - BRO'S POV

we look at her through the eyes of someone who has never seen or heard of her before. Is this what people here look like?

1 shot 6B CU BROTHER

reacting. His attention is caught by the sound of a GARBAGE SCOW blowing its HORN. He turns to look-

1 shot 6E TUG BOAT
GARBAGE SCOW - BRO'S POV

moving upriver. The sun hasn't risen yet but it's threatening to-

1 shot 6C EDGE OF DOCK

the Brother's FEET appear, one shod, the other bare. They move as he coils to dive, then jump OUT OF FRAME. We hear a SPLASH-

Bro climb BA Bro onto
grow 7B - wheelhouse
got came out
looking - hear
splash
(from see something)
(noise) goes in Noh.
GARBAGE SCOW - HUDSON RIVER

we are in the empty trailer looking up at the wheelhouse. We PAN back to the rear, seeing the Manhattan shore in the distance as the scow moves upstream, till we reach the Brother, crouching in the rear, dripping wet. He tastes the water on the back of his hand, makes a disgusted face. We hear VOICES calling something unintelligible from the front of the boat. Brother sees, then disappears over the bow of the trailer-

3 shots to the
1st cut by 125th st

EXT. HARLEM STREET - MORNING

around 125th and Riverside where the overpass comes down to the water's edge. The street is deserted as the very first rays of sun begin to slant onto the buildings. The brother limps out in front of us to fill the frame, dripping, looking around warily. He moves OFFSCREEN and we TILT UP to a street sign telling us where we are-

3 shots

9 EXT. HARLEM STREET - MORNING

we TRACK with the brother moving down a totally deserted main street. He stops suddenly as he hears FUNK MUSIC in the distance, heading his way. He ducks into a doorway to hide-

CU BROTHER

tense as the MUSIC, blasting out of a portable radio/tape deck, comes closer, closer, a shadow passing over his face as whoever it is walks right by, then receding. It is almost inaudible when he dares to move-

DOORWAY, BROTHER

peeking his head out to look down the street-

STREET - BRO'S POV

totally empty in the direction the music went-

CU BROTHER

looking relieved-

10 CITY SIDEWALK - BRO'S FEET

one shod, one bare, limping along till they come to a trash barrel with a big workman's steel-toed shoe sitting down in it. The Brother's arm appears to fish it out, he sits down INTO FRAME to try it on. It seems to fit okay. We hear a SALSA MUSIC INTRO-

11 CITY SIDEWALK - MANY FEET - VARIOUS SHOTS - AFTERNOON

shots of different peoples feet hurrying in different direction as the salsa MUSIC, very loud and upbeat, kicks in. The last pair of feet we see leads us to the Brother's mismatched shoes. We TILT UP to see him standing, bewildered and scared, in the middle of a busy Harlem street as people crowd past him-

PEOPLE - VARIOUS SHOTS - BROTHER'S POV

moving with purpose, buying, selling- the amount of humanity is a bit overwhelming-

STREET - BROTHER

we FOLLOW along with him as he begins to move down the street, passing by people yakking in different languages. A BLACK HISPANIC MAN is yelling up at a third floor window-

MAN

Tíreme las llaves o voy a subir
allá y forzar su puerta! Dígame!
Graciela! Sé que tu estás allá.
Venga a la ventana, Graciela.
No esté pendeja. Diciendo su esposo.
Graciela!

A pair of WEST INDIAN WOMEN pass by talking animatedly-

WOMAN

Every time I see the woman she chat
me, chat me, chat me till I think
me ears' fallin off so this Saturday
she come by and I say to her 'Mistress,'
I say, 'that voice you got is dangerous
weapon and I'm askin you to keep
it in holster round innocent people.

He passes three HAITIAN MEN, one describing an event to the others in island patois-

HAITIAN

(in French) So he comes out and he tells
me he doesn't care if the bathtub is leaking,
he either gets the rent from me or he calls
the police. I tell him to go ahead,
call them, he can't scare me with that shit.
So he slams the door in my face and the
next thing I know he's shut the water off

cont.

The Brother is approached by a man dressed in white fez, caftan and pants, collecting money in a donation can-

MAN

Salaam aleichem, Brother. The 130th Spirit House is dedicated to giving neighborhood youth an education in history and a background in Islamic culture. The Spirit House is funded totally through private donations-

The Brother steers past him rapidly-

MAN

(calling after) May Allah guide you, Brother!

The Brother slows as we hear a woman yelling in Korean ahead-

③ 12 FRUIT STORE - BRO'S POV

a fruit market spilling out onto the street, the PROPRIETRESS at the cash register calling to someone in the back-

PROPRIETRESS

(in Korean) The yams are getting low! And the tomatoes! And bring out more boxes!

CU BROTHER

① fixing his attention on something-

② PEARS - BRO'S POV

④ looking good. We HOLD on them for a moment, then the Brother's hand appears to take one and we FOLLOW it up to his face. He opens his mouth for a big bite, but is interrupted as the Korean woman grabs it out of his hand-

PROPRIETRESS

(in Korean) Give me that! What do you think this is, a jungle, you can just pick things off the tree? Get out of here!

The Brother looks at her, confused, as she puts the pear back where it was and makes a shooing gesture, then exits frame-

*prop back in
Bro behind*
PROPRIETRESS - BRO'S POV

5 attending to a customer with a pile of fruit at the checkout counter, weighing it-

6 CU PROPRIETRESS HANDS

we FOLLOW them as they rapidly bag, weigh, add and take in money, punching open the cash register-

EXTREME CLOSE-UP, MONEY

passing hands-

Back to Bro - she leaves her in
7 CU BROTHER

noting the entire ritual-

PROPRIETRESS

slams the register shut and go OUT OF FRAME to get something from the back of the store. The Brother steps INTO FRAME, watching her go. He turns his attention to the cash register as we TIGHTEN. He waves his hands over the keys, not sure which to push, then just lays both hands on the back of the register and cocks his head as if listening to it-

CU BRO'S HANDS

GLOWING slightly on the back of the register-

6 REGISTER DRAWER

pops open-

BROTHER

reaching in to grab an indiscriminate handful of bills-

CU PROPRIETRESS

9 seeing, yelling-

PROPRIETRESS (in Korean)
Thief! Thief! Get out of there!

9
9 cont
INT. STORE

the Brother standing, not understanding what's going on. He puts the pear he wants on the scale and thrusts the handful of money toward the proprietress as she runs out into the street, yelling in Korean-

WOMAN

Police! Police!

We turn to see past the Brother out onto the street. People are starting to look in-

BROTHER

getting scared, he puts the money next to the pear on the scale and moves out of the store-

10
EXT. STORE - BROTHER

looking down the street in the direction the woman is yelling. A WHITE COP steps around the corner-

CU BROTHER

seeing, shocked-

COP - VARIOUS DETAILS - BRO'S POV

cuts of the cop's FACE, his GUN, his STICK, his HAT-

10 cont
BROTHER

terrified, he turns and runs. We hear a POLICE WHISTLE-

11
SIDEWALK - FEET

the SALSA blasts up again as the BROTHER'S FEET in their mismatched shoes come running TOWARD US-

13
CU BROTHER & COP

as terrified look on his face as he runs TOWARD US-

12
SIDEWALK - COP'S FEET

running toward us over the same terrain, the WHISTLE blowing-

LOW-ANGLE SHOT - SIDE STREET

14 we are looking toward the main street with the corner building at the edge of the left of the frame, camera low enough so that when the Brother runs around the corner we see only his LEGS. He runs TOWARD US, closer, closer, then whoops! They DISAPPEAR out of the TOP OF THE FRAME as if he has taken to the air. The COP'S LEGS come around the corner, run up to us, stop, shift around in confusion, then we PAN with them a bit as they run off down the street. We let them run OUT OF FRAME, then PAN and TILT up to see the Brother hanging by his arms to a fire escape two storeys up from us. How he was able to jump up there we can only guess. The SALSA MUSIC ends-

WINDOW - SANTERIA SHOP - REFLECTION - DAY

15 both Christian and African saints represented in the statues on display. We see the REFLECTION of the Brother in the glass as he trudges down the street. He stops, turning his head as he notices something in the window-

13 A CU BROTHER'S FACE

16 trying to understand-

17 B CRUCIFIX

proudly displayed in the window, Christ nailed bloodily to the cross-

18 C ECU CHRIST'S HANDS

palms bloodily where the nails go in-

19 D ECU CHRIST'S FEET

twisted, bloody-

20 E ECU CHRIST'S HEAD

mournful eyes, blood streaming down his face from the crown of thorns-

21 F CU BROTHER

horrificed. He looks back onto the street with new respect for the joint. If the crucifix is any example of what they deal out this is one tough burg. He freezes, seeing-

22 G COP AND KID - BRO'S POV

a WHITE COP busting a BLACK KID across the street, the kid spread-eagled against a wall, the cop patting him down-

23 back to CU
24 back to bust
H BROTHER

25 scared again, moving away, looking for shelter. His eye catches on something above-

26 1 BAR SIGN - BRO'S POV

a small, neighborhood bar advertising itself-

140 INT. BAR

140 we look from the door to see the regulars in the small, dimly-lit bar. ODELL is behind the bar manning the pumps, FLY in the far corner playing a Asteroids-type machine. WALTER, an older workingman, sits on the stool closest to the door, and SMOKEY, an older barfly, sits right near the cash register. There are a lot of sports posters and pictures up on the walls, a few tables across from the bar counter. All the men except Fly turn to look at the new entry as the Brother walks from behind the camera into the shot-

FLY

Damn! Odell. Odell, man, this machine is fucked.

ODELL

If it is, you fucked it.

FLY

It zapped my spaceship right off the screen and they wasn't nothin even close to it.

The Brother walks to the center of the room and then men check out his clothes-

CU ODELL

checking him out, top to bottom-

BROTHER - ODELL'S POV

we TILT DOWN from his face to his pants leg that stops at the knee and his mismatched shoes-

ODELL

still looking at the Brother as he talks to Fly-

ODELL

Maybe it was internal malfunctions.
Can I help you, Brother?

FLY

(off) What you mean, internal malfunctions?

BROTHER

looking around the bar as if the men aren't there. We see Odell watching beyond him-

ODELL

Spaceship doesn't have to get hit by nothin to crash. Some of em get internal malfunctions. You know, like when astronauts cash in their tickets, that's usually what did it. (a little louder) I help you, Brother?

The Brother acts as if he can't hear and moves to sit on a stool one down from Smokey as we TRACK IN to a TIGHTER SHOT. He sits, then hops up as if burned and steps back looking at the stool with surprise-

ODELL AND SMOKEY

watching him-

CU BROTHER

zeroing in on the stool-

STOOL - BRO'S POV

blood puddling on it and dripping off onto the floor-

Special Light CU



STOOL

CU BROTHER

reacting-

STOOL - SMOKEY AND ODELL

the stool, back to normal now, in the foreground as Smokey regards it, then leans across to whisper to Odell-

SMOKEY

That's the seat McVeigh was sittin in the night Percy Williams come in an shot him. Don't nobody like to sit on that seat.

ODELL

Something the matter, Brother?

BROTHER

he backs away, looking at Odell in a daze, and sits at a table in the far corner-

FLY

(off) Damn! Did it again!

BAR

looking down past Walter, to Smokey and Odell, to Fly-

ODELL

Internal malfunctions.

SMOKEY

(staring at the stool) Seat got a power to it.

WALTER

They say it won't be long before all them satellites they shot up years back gonna be crashin down to earth. The insides wear out up there, things go haywire.

FLY

Naw, man, they just get tired.

CU FLY

still playing the machine-

FLY

You know, they start out with this orbit that's real high and wide and then the next time around it's a little closer to earth and the next time a little closer and so on till gravity hooks into it and it comes crashin down. Hear some noise up on your roof and then you got a sputnik sizzlin in the livin room.

ODELL

(off) I get you something to drink, Brother?

BROTHER

not responding, still figuring out what's what in here-

WALTER

(off) Maybe he don't drink.

ODELL

(off) He don't drink what's he come into a bar for?

SMOKEY

(off) Man is a fugitive from a chain gang. He got that hunted look on him.

ODELL

(off) Man is a wino and he should be out on the street.

MEN - BRO'S POV

all looking at him but Fly-

FLY

Odell gettin hard-hearted since he owns this bar.

WALTER

Yeah, Dell, aint nobody else after that chair he's on. Let the man sit.

cont.

SMOKEY

Got the bloodhounds at his heels.

ODELL

He's got internal malfunctions, you ask me.

The video game starts making a steady BLIP-BLIP-BLIP sound-

FLY

Damn! Odell, look at it now, look what it's doin! Look like that thing they hook up to the dude's heart for surgery on TV!

BROTHER

watching them, trying to understand-

ODELL

(off) You broke it, huh?

FLY

(off) I didn't break nothin! Damn machine just quit on me.

ODELL

(off) You sure you don't want nothin to drink, Brother?

FLY

(off) I want my quarter back.

WALTER

(off) You know what's on them satellites what come crashin down?

CU WALTER

looking at his beer as he talks, a man with a million theories-

WALTER

Diseases. Diseases we aint even got a name for. Space germs.

cont.

FLY

(off) Can't nothin live out in space,
not even germs. No atmosphere. Gimme
my quarter back, Odell.

WALTER

These ones can.

BAR - MEN

Smokey is standing, pointing to the stool the Brother sat on-

SMOKEY

Man sat down on the death seat an
an he felt it. It got a power,
that seat.

WALTER

Sit down, Smokey, you gonna get
dizzy again.

FLY

Machine has had it, man. Odell,
gimme my quarter back.

ODELL

Fly, I loaned you that quarter in
the first place. Hey Brother-

CU BROTHER

not responding-

ODELL

(off) -you speak English?

15 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES CENTER

SAM is behind his desk dealing with a client, DOLORES, while at
the next desk his co-worker NOREEN is dealing with CONCHA.
Dolores is indignant; Concha is scared-

DOLORES

All I know is ever since I been
transferred to that man they been
messin up my entitlements!

cont.

SAM

You've gotten everything eventually,
haven't you?

DOLORES

Every time I come down here I bring
this whole damn folder- I got birth
certificates, death certificates,
doctor certificates, job certificates,
landlord certificates, tax forms,
bills, receipts- an every time I
come in the one little piece of paper
I aint got is just what you want!

SAM

Mrs. Brown-

DOLORES

I was ten years younger I'd take
another job and get shed of the whole
lot of you.

SAM

Mrs. Brown-

DOLORES

That man says I got to get recertified
cause the regulations are changin- aint
nothin changin, he just lost the
damn form! You look at his desk? He
can't find the telephone on that desk,
no way he's gonna find my ADC form!

SAM

Mrs. Brown-

DOLORES

Got egg salad all over his front every
time I talk to him, it aint even
lunchtime yet-

SAM

Mrs. Brown I'll take over your
recertification if you want me to.

DOLORES

He wanted my folder but I wouldn't
give it to him. Man be losin my whole
life under that pile on his desk.
Does he wash?

cont.

SAM

(laughing) Mrs. Brown, I'm outa here in a half hour. If we're gonna get this done I need your help.

DOLORES

Shouldn't let him pass the Civil Service test, man Don't wash.
Noreen and Concha's case is progressing at the same time-

NOREEN

Necesito una carta de su casero diciendo que ha cambiado su alquiler.

CONCHA

(worried) Piensa que yo lo recibirá?

NOREEN

Quántas personas en su familia?

CONCHA

Ahora? Cuatro- cinco conmigo.

NOREEN

(looking at chart) Si su ingreso bruto mensual es menos que- mil- ciento- sesenta y cinco dolares- es posible que usted es elegible.

CONCHA

Trabajo solamente a tiempo parcial.

NOREEN

Pues, no hay problema. Ahora, tiene usted tres niños al escuela y uno a casa. Necesito una tarjeta de clínica o de Medicaid reciente, o una carta de la escuela donde estudian los niños, algo indicando la dirección de los niños.

CONCHA

Porqué? Viven conmigo.

NOREEN

Es necesario tener documentación.
Sorry.

CONCHA

No las tengo ahora-

cont.

NOREEN

Traígame la próxima entrevista.
 (phone rings) Dígame? Oh, hi.
 (to Cocha) Uno momento, por favor.
 Hi. Maybe a half hour. It
 depends on the subway. I'll take
 a cab if you pay for it. Cause
 you make more money than I do.
 The only people who don't make
 more money than I do are my clients.
 Yeah, I'll talk to you then. Bye.
 (sighs) Ahora- a dónde estamos?

16 INT. BAR - CORNER TABLE

Smokey is circling the Brother, still sitting at the corner
 table. The Brother seems aware of Smokey without looking at him-

SMOKEY

The man is deaf, the man is crazy,
 or the man is a wino.

BAR

we see down the bar again. Fly is sitting at a stool right next
 to the machine. BERNICE, Odell's wife, comes out of the back
 with a ledger book and a manilla folder full of bills-

ODELL

Takes one to know one, Smoke.

BERNICE

Odell? When did we have that new sign
 put up?

ODELL

Let's see- it was the day Mookie Wilson
 stole home-

WALTER

Late August.

BERNICE

I can't find the bill.

ODELL

That's cause your cousin put it up
 an he can't write.

cont.

Smokey comes to the bar, reaches over and comes up with a paper bag.

SMOKEY

(to Walter) Man is deaf, man is crazy, or the man's a wino.

BERNICE

Don't be smart. What you want for dinner?

Smokey tries to blow the bag up like a balloon but doesn't have the wind. Walter takes it and does it for him-

ODELL

You mean what do I want or what do I want that you can cook?

FLY

Whoooooah-

BERNICE

In that case, where are you taking me for dinner?

Smokey steps OUT OF FRAME with the blown-up bag-

ODELL

What do you want to have?

BERNICE

You mean what do I want or what do I want that you can afford?

FLY

Awright! Bernice on a TKO!

BERNICE

Who broke the Space-Shooter game?

ODELL

Fly did it.

FLY

I did not!



CORNER TABLE

Smokey stands behind the Brother, arms spread wide to pop the bag-

FLY

(off) It just got tired, is all.

BAM! Smokey pops the bag and the Brother flinches and turns to stare at him-

BAR

the men and Bernice looking over to Smokey-

BERNICE

Smokey, what're you doing?

Smokey walks over to the bar, crumbling the bag-

SMOKEY

Diagnosis. Pour me a shot, Odell.
Scotch.

FLY

Maybe it's rested up, now. Gimme another quarter, Odell.

Odell pours a shot for Smokey and pushes a quarter to Fly-

ODELL

You just gonna bust it some more.

BERNICE

How bout Chinese food, Dell? Think you can handle that?

ODELL

Long as the menu's in English. I don't eat nothin I can't pronounce. What you doin with that drink, Smokey?

CORNER TABLE

Smokey is back standing in front of the Brother-

SMOKEY

Diagnosis.

He lays the drink in front of the Brother and indicates he should drink it. The Brother takes a wary sip. He makes a disgusted face and pushes it away. Smokey turns to the bar and speaks authoritatively-

SMOKEY

Crazy.

FLY

(off) It's workin again! -- It's workin!

We FOLLOW Smokey back to the bar, downing the shot in one gulp-

SMOKEY

Man is definitely crazy.

BERNICE

How bout Szechuan West?

ODELL

You know I don't go down there.

BERNICE

Aw, c'mon, Odell. Don't be that way-

ODELL

You name one thing, one thing they got below 110th Street we aint got up here. You name it an I'll stock it in the bar.

SAM

(off) David's Cookies.

WALTER

Hey Sam! What it is, Brother!

DOORWAY

Sam enters carrying his briefcase, looking tired-

SAM

Hey, Walter-

cont.

A football comes sailing through the air and Sam drops his briefcase just in time to catch it-

ODELL

(off) Lookit them hands! Man's still got them soft hands.

Sam chucks it back to Odell behind the bar as he steps in and we PAN to include the rest of the bar-

SAM

Hey, Bernice. Smokey-

BERNICE

Hi Sam. Try not to break anything valuable.

She exits into the back room again-

FLY

You come just in time, Sam. We got a client for you.

SAM

I'm off duty.

ODELL

Check the guy in the corner out.

SMOKEY

Man's crazy. I give him the test.

WALTER

He don't talk, neither.

SAM

What am I supposed to do?

FLY

You the city man, you sposed to figure out where to put him.

SAM

(shrugs) Men's shelter.

SMOKEY

It's all smelly there.

SAM

Okay, the Hilton. You got the tab?

cont.

FLY

What they pay you for up there?

SAM

I just make phone calls. You want him
out you could call the cops.

FLY

Cops? Aw man-

SMOKEY

He known the death seat when he sat
down on it.

SAM

It's not like I got to go drum up
more business for the city, you
know-

The men just look at him. He sighs, and we FOLLOW as he crosses
and sits next to the Brother. He offers his hand to shake-

SAM

Hi.

The Brother looks at his hand strangely-

SAM

What's your name?

FLY

(off) Man don't talk, Sam.

SAM

Habla español? Como se llama?

Nothing-

SAM

Vous êtes Haitien, Monsieur?
Parle français?

SMOKEY

(off) What's that he's talkin?

WALTER

(off) Man might be a Haitian.

SAM

Qui êtes vous?

cont.

WALTER

(off) Say them Haitians got diseases, man. Voodoo germs. And you drank outen that glass he touched, Smokey.

SMOKEY

(off) Man aint no Haitian.

SAM

Can you talk? Nod your head yes or no.

Sam demonstrates-

SAM

This is 'yes', this is 'no'. Can you talk?

The Brother shakes his head very slowly-

SAM

You understand though?

SMOKEY

(off) He understands fine. He known the death chair when he sat on it.

SAM

You don't talk but you understand?

The Brother nods his head yes very slowly-

FLY

(off) Damn! Damn! Damn! It bust again! Why'nt you get somebody in here an fix this thing, Odell?

ODELL

(off) Cause you're the only fool comes in here to play an you don't even use your own quarters.

Sam watches as the Brother gets up and walks to the machine, stepping past Fly-

FLY

Who's gonna use their own quarters on a machine always busts halfway through the game?

cont.

SMOKEY

He got up on his feet.

ODELL

Maybe it'd work better if you didn't always be beatin on it. You walk in the room it starts to whimper, Fly-

SMOKEY

He's messin with the Space-Shooter.

The Brother has stepped behind the machine and laid his hands, out of sight, on the back of it-

WALTER

Only people got worse diseases than the Haitians is the Polynesians. Them poor suckers got leprosy. Seen it in the movies.

FLY

looking down amazed as we hear the MACHINE pop INTO ACTION-

FLY

He fixed it.

SMOKEY

(off) The Brother fixed it.

WALTER

(off) You got leprosy, first thing happens is your dick falls off.

We PAN with the Brother as he passes Fly on his way back to sit by Sam-

FLY

How'd you do that?

WALTER

(off)

After their dick falls off they just don't seem to care no more.

cont.

ODELL

(off) Say, Brother, how'd you fix that machine?

SMOKEY

(off) Don't go sendin somebody can fix a machine like that to no men's shelter. Man is got talent.

BAR

we see the rest of the men. Fly is happily playing the machine again-

WALTER

You go to them Polynesian islands you see some long faces, man. You don't never want to drink outen somebody else's glass like that, Smokey.

ODELL

You know Bobby's wife been takin in boarders now and then.

SAM

Bobby Carter's wife?

ODELL

Yeah, you know, big white girl-

SAM

She's an ADC, she better watch her ass-

FLY

What are you, a cop or somethin? Hey, this thing works, Odell!

SAM

Just don't wanna see her mess up her benefits. She's not my case.

WALTER

You don't wanna sit on a toilet over there, neither. Polynesia.

FLY

Walter, my man, you are a space-shot, you know that? You cruisin the stratosphere.

cont.

SAM

You know how to fix things?

The Brother nods yes-

SMOKEY

Man has got talent. Where you from, Bro?

The Brother points up with his thumb-

ODELL

Up- uptown-

SMOKEY

Man's from the South Bronx. They all crazy up there,

SAM

What if he's dangerous? It's just her and the kid and Bobby's mother-

FLY

Dangerous! Sam, you got to be a real pussy since you moved downtown. Come back home an it's all dangerous-

SAM

I never lived here, Fly.

ODELL

Sam's from Englewood.

FLY

What's that?

SAM

It's in New Jersey.

FLY

You let people know that?

SAM

I heard playing those machines too much does something to your brain cells.

ODELL

I think she's charging ~~fifteen a night~~ *Fifty a week*, room an board.

cont.

SAM

(to Brother) You got any money?

FLY

You the city, Sam, you pay for him.

SMOKEY

Every man has got a talent.

WALTER

Yeah, yours is drinkin.

SMOKEY

Yeah, an I'm the best, too.

Odell pulls fifteen dollars from the till-

ODELL

Don't tell Bernice.

FLY

Make some phone calls, Sam. Get the man a job. While you're at it, get me one too.

ODELL

Ten of six, Walter. Get your ass to work.

WALTER

My wife calls, I aint been here.

FLY

In this bar or on this planet?

SAM

I'll walk him over, it's on my way to the subway. C'mon, Brother.

Sam gets up and the Brother follows him out-

FLY

Sam, before you go, you got a quarter I can borrow?

ODELL

(to Sam) Say hi to Snow White.

SAM

David's Cookies. Later, guys.

cont.

They exit frame. Walter stands up-

WALTER

(to Odell) I was you, I'd throw
that glass he used away.

17 EXT. HARLEM STREET - SAM AND BROTHER

we TRACK along with them on a residential street-

SAM

I can't promise you anything, but
I'll make some phone calls. But
one way or the other you're gonna
have to come in to the center
and go through some paperwork.

We HOLD with the Brother as he gets fascinated by some graffiti
on the wall they're walking by. Sam keeps walking out of the
shot-

SAM

(off) I hate to do it to you, but
I got to cover my ass on this.

CU BROTHER

frowning, trying to comprehend the writing-

SAM

(off) We might be able to get
you set up somewhere, but it
takes a while- hey, Brother!

The Brother looks up the street-

SAM - BRO'S POV

motioning the Brother to come along-

SAM

C'mon, man, it's been a long day.

18 EXT. STREET - SAM AND THE BROTHER

they turn up the front steps to an apartment building. There are three sullen-looking kids sprawled on the front steps, making no effort to move out of the way-

SAM

If this doesn't pan out I'm gonna have to take you over to the men's shelter. I got a couple ideas for jobs if you really can fix things. I'll make some calls. And I'm afraid you're going to have to come in and get classified-



19 INT. RANDY SUE'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Brother sits on the floor with LITTLE EARL, who is pre-school and very quiet, watching a Mr. Rogers-type show. RANDY SUE walks in and out of the shot, sometimes visible in the kitchen in the background. Sometimes only her legs are visible. We MOVE AROUND the Brother slightly as Randy Sue raps on-

RANDY SUE

You don't talk, huh? Well that's good. You don't talk you don't talk people into things. You don't talk you don't lie.

My Bobby, he's off living with this other girl? He's always talkin people into things. He's great at that, talkin, they had it in the Olympics he'd win a gold medal, Bobby. I met him at this place, he come up to me an starts talkin, next thing I know I'm big as a house with Little Earl here. He's real sweet, Bobby, long as he don't get bored with you or see somethin better across the street.

You eat pork?

You don't eat it you're outa luck tonight. Course, you can't talk you can't complain, right?

Randy Sue is out of the room. Little Earl pulls a bandaid away from his knee to reveal a bad scrape. The Brother looks at it with him for a moment, then lays his hand over the scrape. When he removes it the scrape is healed. Little Earl thinks this is a neat trick-

RANDY SUE

The mother's gonna come home an complain now. Like she's some kind of gourmet cook or somethin. My philosophy is you got complaints, you go eat somewheres else. My mama made us clean our plates, every night, and she'd couldn't cook worth shit. She couldn't even cook- like- pudding, you know? Chocolate pudding, there'd be these big lumps, these tumors in it, you know? Like what people with breast cancer have cut out.

cont.

RANDY SUE

There was six of us. I'm from Alabama, can you handle that? Pidcock, Alabama. Up here taken care of Little Earl and the old lady and he's over makin time with some girl got no more sense than I did when I was her age. If they could see me now. Where you from? You look like you might be from the South-

No response from the Brother-

RANDY SUE

No way I'm goin back there, not with Little Earl I'm not. I burned my bridges.

She disappears from sight for a moment, then reappears to toss a pair of pants and some shoes by the Brother-

RANDY SUE

You look like you might be Bobby's size. Serves him right, he aint come by even to pick up his stuff.

She goes back into the kitchen. The Brother looks at the clothes. Little Earl watches him, trying to understand the meaning of his mother giving away his father's clothes-

LITTLE EARL

Daddy's clothes.

The Brother nods solemnly-

RANDY SUE

I swear, sometimes I feel like I been taken for a slave up here. They have em, you know, white slaves. Arabs keep em. It's like a whole nother world up here, a whole nother planet. With all the talkin he did Bobby didn't ever say how I couldn't go back. Not unless I give up Little Earl and that's one thing I won't ever do. Only thing Bobby give me he didn't take back later. I got to stay and keep Little Earl safe from all that mess outside.

cont.

RANDY SUE

The shoes are almost new, he didn't wear em but once or twice.

The TV set has been CRACKLING STATIC. The Brother crosses and lays his hands on the back of the set. The CRACKLING stops, we hear the sound much better now. Little Earl thinks this is another great trick-

RANDY SUE

The mother's okay, she's got a good heart, you know, but she resents it cause she thinks I drove Bobby away from her. I mean he couldn't wait to get out, said it was like he was in jail here. Now he says he's really in love and all this stuff, like he don't remember he said the exact same things to me when we met. Like I got no memory, like I got no feelings.

Randy Sue comes in and sits with them, staring blankly at the TV-

RANDY SUE

The worst is being alone all day. Little Earl talks about as much as you do, and when he does, you know-he's five years old.

They watch for a moment-

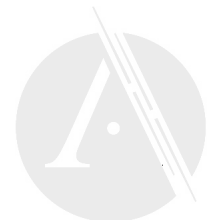
RANDY SUE

Sometimes I think I'm gonna go crazy up here, livin like this.

They watch for another moment-

RANDY SUE

You eat pork?



20 INT. SAM AND CAROL'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

they talk as they move furniture from the room and roll up the rug to ready the floor for sanding. CAROL is a tall, blond, young professional type-

CAROL

I talked to Palmer today about moving me over to acquisitions.

SAM

That pay more?

CAROL

A little. And I think it might be more interesting.

SAM

Tell em to buy some kung-fu flicks. You don't ever see any kung-fu on cable. It's a disgrace.

CAROL

It depends on the demographics.

SAM

Did you call the guy with the sander?

CAROL

Be here Saturday morning.

There is a silence as they move furniture. Sam looks bummed out. Carol sees, comes up and hugs him from behind-

CAROL

Bad one today?

SAM

Nothing new.

They resume moving furniture-

SAM

There was this guy today over at Odell's-

CAROL

We have to have Odell and Bernice over when the floor's done.

SAM

You won't get Odell down this far-

CAROL

That's so crazy.

SAM

Man's got principles.

CAROL

Anyhow-

SAM

Anyhow, this guy's walking around up there, he can't talk, not a nickel in his pocket, no ID, no social security number, nothing like that, not even a name, right, he's just out there. I mean you sit at the office and you think you're dealing with the ones at the bottom, but there's all these people who are under the radar, you know? They're not on the books and I see more and more just like this guy every day. Don't know how they live.

CAROL

Can you do anything for him?

SAM

Hate to feed somebody into the system. I mean we'd have to start by fingerprinting the poor fuck, just to see who he is. How do you get a job when you don't even have a name?

They move something else-

CAROL

You think he could do this?

SAM

You can't bring em home with you, Carol. Probably drink the polyurethane. I mean his shoes didn't even match.

21 INT. STAIRWELL - TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Bobby's mother, MAMA, trudges up the stairs to her apartment. She stops, rests, then starts up again. We hear FUNK MUSIC blasting from down in the stairwell-

22 INT. RANDY SUE'S KITCHEN

Mama looks into the skillet of what's cooking on the stove and makes a face-

MAMA

Boy didn't marry her for her cookin.

RANDY SUE

(off) He didn't marry me period.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM

Randy Sue sits on the couch painting her toenails and reading Cosmo. The Brother and Little Earl are still on the floor, watching the NEWS ON TV. The Brother has changed into the clothes Randy Sue gave him. Mama enters and sees the Brother-

MAMA

Who's he?

RS

Boarder.

MAMA

What's his name?

RS

I don't know. He doesn't talk. They brung him over from Odell's. He's nice.

Silence-

MAMA

What's he wearin Robert's clothes for?

RS

They fit.

BROTHER

looking with awe at Randy Sue's foot as she paints her toes. He's never seen anything like it-

MAMA

(off) What's Robert gonna say, he sees somebody walkin round in his clothes?

cont.

RS

(off) Bobby got hisself a new wardrobe. He don't care, Mama.

LIVING ROOM

Randy Sue gets up-

RS

You workin this weekend?

MAMA

Looks like it.

RS

Put your feet up and I'll bring you dinner.

Randy Sue exits into the kitchen and Mama sits wearily on the couch. A news item about UFO sightings over the river comes on the TV ('Air Force officials cite atmospheric conditions'). Mama glances at it-

MAMA

If Big Earl was still livin he'd straighten that boy out fast.

She sighs-

MAMA

See you got the TV fixed.

RS

(off) Naw, it just fixed itself.

MAMA

Girl, don't nothin in this world fix itself. Little Earl, get your nose away from that machine and come give your Gramma some sugar-

24 INT. PORT AUTHORITY BUS TERMINAL - NIGHT

we hear BUS ANNOUNCEMENTS, RADIOS PLAYING MUSIC, PEOPLE MOVING AND TALKING, as we see a blurry and indistinct frame. A man in black, UNO, RISES INTO the FRAME from the bottom. We realize he is on an escalator as he steps off and to one side where another man in black, DOS, waits for him, looking in the same direction. Dos holds up a picture for Uno to look at-

CU PHOTOGRAPH

strangely developed, like a color-Xerox, it is a mug-shot of the Brother--

MEN IN BLACK

Uno nods to Dos. They step past the camera OUT OF FRAME--

25 EXT. CITY STREET - EARLY MORNING

nothing kicking but one merchant rolling up the metal door over his storefront. We are on Broadway in the 40's, in the video-game and personalized t-shirt strip--

26 INT. VIDEO ARCADE

empty but for dozens of machines, Sam, the Brother, and MR. LOWE, the proprietor, who is setting up for business--

LOWE

Where's his tools?

SAM

You need tools?

The Brother shakes his head no--

LOWE

Everybody needs tools.

SAM

Look, just let him try. If he doesn't fix anything it won't cost you.

LOWE

He doesn't have parts either. You need parts.

SAM

C'mon, what's it gonna hurt? You might get some cheap repairs out of it.

LOWE

(calling) Hector!

cont.

HECTOR
(off) Si, jefe!

LOWE
We're in the Job Corps. Come
an get this guy.

27A INT. BACK ROOM, VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

HECTOR is showing the Brother a half-dozen machines covered with dropcloths to keep the dust off-

HECTOR
Here it is, my friend, the pinball
graveyard. I been buggin Mr. Lowe
to unload these turkeys for months.

The Brother pulls the dust cover off one of the machines-

HECTOR
Mr. Lowe say you don't talk.

The Brother picks up the plug to the machine, examining it as if he's never seen such a thing before-

HECTOR
Me entiende, hermano?

The Brother looks to Hector and nods-

HECTOR
De dónde? Panamá? Venezuela?

The Brother points up with his thumb-

HECTOR
Al norte? Es borinquen?

The Brother turns to look for a power source-

cont.

HECTOR

Yo tampoco. Cuando le vio creia usted es puertoriqueno. You looking for the outlet, my friend? (points) Right over here.

The Brother plugs in the machine and Hector flips it on. He motions for the Brother to follow him-

HECTOR

Quiero que enseñarle algo.

27B

They go to the door leading to the main room and peek through-

27C
D

HECTOR AND BROTHER - TIGHT SHOT

of their faces peeking through the door-

HECTOR

That's what put these suckers on the blink, man.

27D

MAIN ROOM - ACE - MEN'S POV

a young girl, ACE, in a black silk jacket with her name stitched on the back is the only player in the room this early. She is expertly and nonchalantly working the machine-

HECTOR

(off) Girl can play all day on a quarter if she don't get bored. Totalmente loca. Wears the machines down.

27E

INT. BACK ROOM

the two step back to the machines-

HECTOR

She's in here, todas las días, like a fuckin zombie. Anyhow, Mr. Lowe is a weasel-dick motherfucker on

anything, llama a Hector
Buena Suerte, hermano

27² cont.

Hector leaves and the Brother turns to the machine. He lays his hands on the back of it. They begin to glow-

28 INT. ODELL'S BAR - DAY

everybody in roughly the same position we last saw them in, Odell behind the bar, Fly at his machine, Smokey and Walter at their stools. Walter is running on with an idea. Smokey eats David's cookies from a glass bowl on the bar-

WALTER

It's a whole new breed comin up. And they don't know.

SMOKEY

Uh-huh.

WALTER

Young bloods comin up got no history. Give theirselves some African-soundin name, Jamoca Ali, Rasheed Quadruple X, they think they in touch with the past.

FLY

Don't start up with that again, Walter, it messes with my game.

WALTER

I remember when it was history here.

ODELL

Go light on them cookies, Smoke. Suckers cost a fortune.

SMOKEY

They good though.

WALTER

This was where it was, Fly, Harlem was the place.

ODELL

Still is, Walter.

WALTER

Not like it was.

FLY

Aint nothin like it was. That's history, man. Don't stand still for nobody.

FM. CU



cont.

WALTER

This was the end of the line, Fly.
You hit Harlem you had made it.

FLY

Don't see nobody here goin nowheres.

WALTER

Smokey remembers. Don't you, Smoke?

SMOKEY

Some days I do an some days I don't.

FLY

I'd rather be a cockroach on the baseboard
up here than the Emperor of Mississippi.

SMOKEY

I do remember certain Saturday nights.
I was just a little boy peepin round my
mama's leg. What it was, it was
elegant.

WALTER

It was the place, Fly. The end of
the line.

They turn as the opening of the street door lets in light and
noise-

DOORWAY - MEN IN BLACK

Uno and Dos stand silhouetted in the doorway for a moment, then
shut the door and move into the bar. They walk in a strange kind
of rhythm, looking around at the place. They sit by Smokey,
facing Odell, all the men watching them, wondering what there
story is-

UNO

Beer.

ODELL

What kind?

They look at each other as if the question is a strange one. Dos
turns back to Odell-

DOS

Draft.

cont.

Odell moves to pull their beers-

3C

UNO

On the rocks.

Even Fly stops playing his machine to stare at this one. Dos pulls out a picture, puts it flat on the bartop and turns it so it's right-side-up to Odell-

DOS

Have any of you people seen this man?

CU PHOTO

the mug shot of the Brother we saw last night-

BAR - MEN

Odell shrugs. Dos holds the picture towards Smokey, Walter and Fly. All shake their heads no after an offhand look-

BC

UNO

We have reason to believe he's been in here.

ODELL

Lot's of people been in here. What's his name?

DOS

Didn't he tell you?

SMOKEY

(indignant) How the man gonna tell his name when he don't talk?

The two swivel their heads slowly to look at Smokey, who realizes too late that he has blown it-

DOS

Where is he?

ODELL

Y'all want to show some ID?

Their heads swivel back to Odell-

cont.

FLY

Green card? What you talkin, green card! Green card my black ass! My people built this this country, sucker! You ever been to South Carolina? My people built that.

WALTER

You can't build a state, man-

FLY

All I know is, when they got off the boat they wasn't nothin there, and today it's got shoppin malls, man, and what's that shit, miniature golf. From nothing. Ax me for a green card. My people was in the Revolution, Jim, baggin the British for Uncle Sam. How long you been here?

Uno and Dos look at each other, then pick up their beers and chug them down. They put their mugs down hard and go "Ah" like in beer commercials, ice cubes rattling in their glasses. They stand and Uno puts a brand new dollar bill on the counter-

UNO

Keep the change.

They start to walk away-

ODELL

It's two dollars, man.

Dos comes back and puts another new bill on the bar. He takes a cookie. He takes another-

DOS

We'll be back.

He turns and the two of them exit, Uno taking one of the cookie and both eating as they go. The door closes behind them-

ODELL

frowning as he examines the brand-new bills-

SMOKEY

(off) White people be actin stranger
all the time.

29 INT. VIDEO ARCADE - DAY

we FOLLOW Hector up to Mr. Lowe at the cash register-

HECTOR

Takin lunch, el jefe.

LOWE

How's the colored fella doing back
there?

HECTOR

Haven't heard a peep out of im.

LOWE

They're clever with their hands,
the colored, but they forget things.
No management skills. This one
forgot his tools.

HECTOR

(exitting) No puedes manejar mierda,
jefe.

LOWE

(calling after) English, Hector, se
habla English in here!

30 A INT. BACK ROOM, VIDEO PARLOR - DOORWAY

Lowe is talking as he opens the door-

LOWE

How's it going in here, Brother?

He freezes at the door as he sees-

30B INT. BACK ROOM - LOWE'S POV

the Brother is laying back on top of one of the machines. It an all the others have had the dust-covers taken off and are lit up and functional. The Brother looks over to Lowe, deadpan, as Lowe walks into the room to check the machines out-

LOWE

Looks like you been a busy man.
Jeez-

He pushes a button- the machine responds.

LOWE

Well, since you're all finished back here, how's about keepin a lid on the kids while I duck out for a bite. All you got to do is make change.

30C CU BROTHER

staring at Lowe-

LOWE

(off) You do know how to make change, don't you?

30D LOWE

a bit dazed by all the machines being fixed-

LOWE

Hector'll be back ten minutes late like always. You can get a day's work outa the Spanish but they got no sense of time.

31A INT. VIDEO PARLOR - SCREENS - VARIOUS SHOTS

random zips, zaps and explosions-

31B ACE

playing a machine, a bored look on her face as the Brother passes-

ACE

You the new fix-it man?

31B cont.

you the new fix-it man?

The brother stops and looks at her-

ACE

Fast as you can fix these things I can wear em down. They don't make em fast enough, I'm playin like Warp Ten on everything in here, playing max on the difficulty scale and still I'm totally inside their time, you know? You know what that's like? It's like everything in the world is going slow-motion but you and it's boring, right, but you can't do nothin about it. You know everything that's gonna happen before it does but you can't change it, just shoot it down when it comes. It's bad enough in here, you should see what it's like at home. You know what I'm talking about?

The Brother nods-

ACE

Just once, just once- I'd like to be the one in slow motion and have everything else zipping past.

The Brother gives her a look and steps behind the machine she's playing. He places his hands low on the back of it and gives her a short nod-

ACE

What are you doing?

ACE - BROTHER - ACE'S HANDS - VARIOUS SHOTS

the machine noises begin to speed up and get louder. Ace starts playing faster, beginning to smile. We cut from Ace to the Brother to Ace's hands moving on the controls, picking up speed-

ACE

Heyyy, alright, Mister! No way you beat me, though. I'll wear you down. I'll wear you down.

cont.

The tempo increases, faster and faster till we hear the sound of her ship getting ZAPPED and the machine going haywire. Ace pulls her hands away, amazed, then steps back from the machine. The Brother pulls his hands off and the machine stops. Ace is sweating. She smiles-

ACE

That was fantastic.

32 A EXT. STREET - MIDTOWN - LATE DAY

The Brother stands staring into the mouth of a subway entrance-

B SUBWAY ENTRANCE - BRO'S POV

looking ominous-

C BROTHER

holds a subway token into the air to examine it, then looks back at the entrance, sighs, and exits frame-

33 A INT. SUBWAY STATION - PASSAGEWAY

we TRACK with the Brother as he follows signs to the ^{A train} ~~2 and 3~~ uptown trains. He stops to examine a strange drawing done in white on a black panel that looks like an Australian aborigine did it-

33B DRAWING - BRO'S POV

we look it over-

33C BROTHER

moving away, then slowing again to try to read the graffiti on the walls-

33C CU BROTHER

frowning with effort as he tries to read-

GRAFFITTI - BRO'S POV

we PAN along it left to right as if trying to read-

33C BROTHER

can't figure it out. He gives up and exits frame-

33D INT. SUBWAY STATION - SUPPORT BEAM

the support beam takes up half the frame. We hear LOUD SPEAKER ANNOUNCEMENTS of the 42nd St. Lex. Ave. station. The Brother's head appears in CU next to the pole, right by where somebody has scratched "PRAY". He leans his head against the support wearily, but there is a loud SCREAM and he jerks it away. The scream stops immediately. He touches the support warily with his hand and the SCREAM starts again-

33E ECU BROTHER'S EYES

an Italian close-up as he sees-

TRACKS - BRO'S POV

we ZOOM at the tracks below as the SCREAM continues-

33P BROTHER

snatching his hand away from the support and the SCREAM STOPS. we hear a TRAIN COMING-

34A INT. TRAIN

fairly crowded, mixed with black and white passengers. The Brother sits next to a young man, the MAGICIAN, he looks at him in a friendly way-

MAGICIAN

You want to see a card trick?

CU BROTHER

totally deadpan. He doesn't even know what a card is-

INT. TRAIN

the MAGICIAN pulls out a deck of cards-

MAGICIAN

Really it's a story. Move over a bit.

CARDS - MAGICIAN'S HANDS, FACE - BROTHER - VARIOUS SHOTS

the magician goes into his card rap as he lays the deck down one by one on the seat between them. He finishes and looks to the Brother-

CU BROTHER

absolutely no reaction-

MAGICIAN

undaunted. We hear the TRAIN SLOWING into the next station-

MAGICIAN

Okay. I got another trick- wanna see me make all the white people disappear?

At that moment the train stops and half the people including the magician get to their feet. We hear the TRAIN ANNOUNCER on the intercom-

ANNOUNCER

Ninety-sixth Street, Ninety-sixth Street!

CU BROTHER

looking around as people file past him-

ANNOUNCER

Hundred and twenty-fifth Street next-

SUBWAY DOOR - MAGICIAN - BRO'S POV

we look down to the end of the car past the remaining passengers, all of them black. The magician hangs by the door-

MAGICIAN

What'd I tell you?

He steps out and the door closes behind him. We RACK BACK to the Brother in the foreground-

35 EXT. HARLEM STREET

a pair of young white men from out of town, PHIL and ED, are wandering down the street out of it, both carefully reading a sheaf of mimeographed instructions-

PHIL

No- no- we're not late- look, it says here- 'Professor Maxwell-- seminar participants only-- wine and cheese-- '

ED

I'm starving.

PHIL

--four o'clock.' There we are. We've just got to find-

He looks up and is shocked at what he sees-

PHIL

Ed? Do you recognize any of this?

Ed looks up-

ED

You mean the architecture?

PHIL

No- uhm- the neighborhood, actually. I don't seem to remember seeing quite so many- uhm-

ED

Maybe it's the back way in. I remember there was a gate and you could see the library-

PHIL

I don't see the library, Ed.

ED

It was behind a wall-

PHIL

I think we're in Harlem, Ed.

ED

That's not where we want to be.

cont.

PHIL

No, it's not. You haven't- you haven't been paying attention, have you- after we got out of the subway- ?

ED

I couldn't tell you like where the subway entrance is or how to find it. Is that what you mean?

PHIL

We're lost. We're lost in Harlem.

ED

(looks at watch) I don't think we're gonna make that reception.

36 INT. ODELL'S BAR

the Brother is sitting alone when Phil and Ed come in and sit by him. They are very nervous. They signal to Odell who is talking to Fly at the far end of the bar. Odell comes and stands over them-

PHIL

Coupla beers, please? You have Bud?

Odell walks away silently. The men look over to the Brother, who looks back at them blankly-

PHIL

Hi.

ED

How's it going?

No response-

ED

We're in for the self-actualization conference? At the University?

He nudges Phil-

PHIL

You know where the subway is?

The Brother nods-

cont.

ED

Good. He knows.

A silence.

PHIL

We're from Indiana.

ED

That's right. next to Illinois?
Where Chicago is?

PHIL

He knows that, Ed-

ED

Lot's of folks back here don't have
a very clear picture of the Midwest.

PHIL

Can you like- point in the direction
of the subway?

The Brother points his thumb to the ground-

PHIL

He's right. That's where it is.

A silence.

ED

So. Where are you from?

37 BAR ROOM CLOCK

the hands hitting eight-

BAR

Phil and Ed have a lot of empties lined up in front of them.
They are both a bit loaded and maudlin but a lot less nervous
about being in the bar-

PHIL

I mean- I didn't want to be like
Ernie Banks- I wanted to be Ernie
Banks.

cont.

ED

Mister Cub.

PHIL

And it never really dawned on me that he was black, you know?

ED

Wrist hitter.

PHIL

I was, you know, seven years old. And he was just- Ernie Banks. He was my hero.

ED

All in the wrists.

PHIL

There weren't any black people in my town. At least I don't think there were.

ED

Mister Cub.

A reverent moent of silence. Phil looks at his watch-

PHIL

Is it eight o'clock? Jeez, will you look at that? This is really something, huh? Wander in here off the streets- I mean if people could just sit down and talk like this more often-

Ed lays moeny on the bar-

ED

Communication. That's what it's all about.

Odell comes by to pick up the bills-

ODELL

Three blocks south, one block east. Subway entrance. You want the A train downtown.

cont.

ED

Oh- right- thanks-

Phil offers his hand to the Brother, to shake. The Brother tries the strange gesture, just taking the other man's hand and squeezing it like a grip-builder-

PHIL

Quite a grip you got there.

Ed extends his palm-

ED

Gimme five, Brother.

The Brother doesn't understand. He turns his hand sideways and squeezes Ed's hand. Phil waves to the rest of the bar as they exit-

PHIL

Thanks a million, folks.

They are gone. Odell comes down to pick up the empties-

ODELL

You a popular man, today, Brother.
There was two others in today looking for you.

SMOKEY

Men in black.

The Brother snaps to attention. He touches the skin on his arm-

SMOKEY

Naw, man, white skin, black clothes.

The Brother gets up from the bar and starts away, scared-

SMOKEY

And they was even stranger than these two.

38 EXT. RANDY SUE'S BUILDING - NIGHT

the Brother going up the stairs-

39 INT. FRONT HALLWAY

the light has been smashed, it is very dark. The Brother steps in cautiously. He stops, listens, sensing something as we TIGHTEN the shot around him- POUNCE! He is jerked from the frame and we jerk a PAN to FOLLOW as he is tackled into a corner, punched and kicked by the two older of the boys we saw on the steps the other night. The oldest, RICKEY, stand over him holding a knife-

RICKEY

Motherfucker hand it over! C'mon,
fuck, I cut you fuckin face!
Put it out here!



cont.

The younger, Willis, stands up too-

WILLIS

He's retarded, man, he don't know what you're saying!

RICK

Fuck aint retarded, he just holdin out! C'mon, let's see it, fuck!

WILLIS

The money, Mister. Give him your money.

The Brother understands, pulls out some bills and offers them up. Rick swipes hard backhand with the knife, cutting the Brother's hand and sending the money flying-

RICK

That's for holdin out, motherfuck! Pick it up, Willis.

Willis stoops to pick up the bills. The Brother looks at his hand clinically, holding it away from himself so as not to drip blood on his clothes-

WILLIS

You got blood all over em, Ricky-

RICK

Hustle your butt or I'll cut your ass, too. Let's put it in wind, man.

Rick runs out. Willis reaches for one last bill and the Brother catches his wrist. They stare at each other for a moment, the Brother calm, Willis terrified. The Brother looks down at Willis's arm-

WILLIS'S ARM - BRO'S POV

some serious needle tracks-

BROTHER AND WILLIS

Willis pulls away, shaken-

cont.

WILLIS
Leave go of me, Mister.

The Brother holds up a bill he hasn't found. Willis snatches it and runs. WE hold on the Brother as he holds his cut hand with his other one. They glow slightly. He takes his hand away and the slash is gone-

40 EXT. APARTMENT WINDOW - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

we look in through the window at Randy Sue doing dishes in the kitchen, calling back to Mama in the next room-

MAMA
(off) There was blood on the floor
at the bottom of the stairs tonight.
I hope one of them poor boys hangs out
there didn't get hurt.

RS
They're not poor boys, Mama, they're
junkies.

We begin to TILT UP to see the top of the fire escape and the sky above, the woman's VOICES FADING-

RS
The bust that light down there
again?

MAMA
(off) Yeah, it was out.

RS
(off) Super doesn't put a lock on that
front door I'm gonna wring his neck.

41 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

the Brother lies on his back looking up at the night sky. Little Earl walks into the shot and sits down into frame by him. The Brother looks to the little boy and decides his secret is safe. He points his thumb up to the sky, then taps himself on the chest. Little Earl nods, understanding. Both of them look up into the sky-

42 INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE

Noreen is at her desk talking on the phone-

NOREEN

Sí- sí- . Si su estado de extranjero ha cambiado tiene que traer verificación como el Recibo de Registración o la forma de Entrada de Refugiado Condicional. Bueno, puedo esperar-

She waits, on hold. Sam arrives and sits by her, looking around-

SAM

Noreen, did a client come in while I was out? Black man around thirty something, kind of strange, doesn't talk-

Noreen shakes her head-

NOREEN

No show?

SAM

Third interview he's crapped out on.

NOREEN

(shrugs) More power to him if he can make it without us.

43 INT. CAR - DAY - WINDOW

we look at a water-covered windshield from the inside. A squeegee wipes it clear and there is the Brother, working the stoplight with a spritzer bottle and rag. We PAN to the passenger window as he gets his change, then PAN around to see him receding as the car drives away-

44 A EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

the Brother walks along eating an entire head of lettuce in one hand and a red bell pepper in the other. He passes a construction site wooden fence on which there is an endless row of posters for a club date featuring Malverne Davis (formerly of the Rubies). The Brother notices them, stops to look-

44B POSTER

a picture of Malverne looking straight at us. She has a very powerful look-

44C CU BROTHER

the picture taking effect-

44B POSTER

we ZOOM IN slightly to her eyes. Two People in the World by Little Anthony and the Imperials begins-

44C BROTHER

backing away in a daze, then turning to walk away, watching the posters all the while. He absently drops his food into a waste basket-

45 EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY - BROTHER

looking up at something. We TILT UP from his gaze to see flyers for Malverne wrapping up around a light pole-

46 MAGAZINE KIOSK - MAGAZINES - DAY

we PAN past sex magazines in the awning rack of a street kiosk, finally RESTING for a moment on a copy of an Ebony-type magazine that has the picture we've seen of Malverne on it with 'Malverne Davis on the Comeback Trail' underneath. The Brother appears and lifts out the top copy-

47A EXT. RECORD STORE WINDOW - DAY

we PAN across a half-dozen of Malverne's new album with the same picture on the jacket, then PAN away to the street where the Brother stands looking at them. He goes into the store and we PAN with him, losing him when we pick up the album cover again-

47B EXT. STREET - DAY

the Brother comes down the street toward us unwrapping the plastic from the album, staring at the picture. He notices the record inside, pulls it out, looks at it uncomprehendingly, then tosses it into a trash barrel with the cellophane and continues down the street staring at the jacket-

48 EXT. STREETS - BROTHER - ADVERTISING POSTERS - VARIOUS SHOTS

all of a sudden the Brother is noticing sex in the ads all around him, the message bombarding from every ad. WE cut from him looking to flashes of sections of lips, things, legs, breasts-

49 EXT. STREET (maybe Times Square) - DAY - BROTHER, SIGNBOARD

we shoot from very low up past the Brother to one of those long jeans ads they put up on the roofs in Times Square, PANNING as he walks so that we are also panning along the woman's body-

50 EXT. STREET - NIGHT - CAR MIRROR

the Brother's face appears reflected in the mirror as he pats his hair into place. We PULL BACK and PAN as he heads for a nightclub door, then TRACK IN after him to the display poster of Malverne out front. The SONG FADES OUT-

51A INT. CLUB - ENTRANCE TABLE

crumpled bills and some change scattered on the table top, CHET, the gate-keeper, is trying to explain the rules to the Brother who looks out over the tables to see Malverne singing in the distance-

CHET

That's just how it is, Brother.
Cover charge is ten dollars and
you haven't got but five and
change here.

The Brother throws his hands up, exasperated-

CHET

The boss wasn't round I might
slip you by, but he's been on my
ass all night. Some other time,
okay-

The Brother turns away and exits, leaving the money-

CHET

Hey, Brother, you forgot-

But the Brother is gone-

52A EXT. STREET - NIGHT

the Brother is approaching Randy Sue's when he hears a NOISE from a dark side street. He stops and Rickey comes running out from the dark, looking over his shoulder fearfully. He skids to a halt when he sees the Brother, they exchange a look, and then he cuts away. The Brother looks into the darkness, curious. He starts toward it-

52B Brother enters

CU WILLIS

we start on his face, eyes open and staring, dead. His head rests against the stone building. We PAN down to his receiving arm. His hand still clasps the hypo, the needle still in his vein. The Brother's hands appear to pull it away-

52C BROTHER

takes a look at the needle, puts it aside and puts his hands over Willis's chest. His hands glow briefly, then fade. He looks Willis in the eyes, then gently pushes the lids down. He sighs, sits back, picks up the needle and examines it more closely. He reaches forward and fishes in the dead boy's shirt pocket, coming out with a half dozen pills of different kinds. He sniffs them, looks at Willis, then eats them. He checks the hypo to see that there is some fluid left in it, then finds a vein and pumps. He puts the needle in his pocket-

52D EXT. STREET

the Brother steps out of the little side street he was just down, looking a bit woozy-

52E
CU BROTHER

looking around to see what's become of his perception-

EXT. HARLEM STREETS - BRO'S POV

a long UNSTEADY PAN around the neighborhood, the FOCUS kicking IN AND OUT till we come back to a CLOSE-UP of the BROTHER. He is sweating, reeling a little as he stands, he covers his eyes with his hands and the SCREEN GOES BLACK-

53 A BLACKNESS

NIGHT STREET NOISE begins to filter in distantly, then we FADE IN to see VIRGIL, a Rasta with thick dreadlocks, smiling down on us-

VIRGIL
Welcome to Babylon, Brother.

B EXT. STREET - NIGHT

the Brother is sitting on the sidewalk where we left him. Virgil stands over him. We hear a SIREN WAILING in the background. REGGAE MUSIC begins-

VIRGIL
Got that far way look in your eye.
Come out here with 'tents 'pon
realizin' the truth I think.

C CU BROTHER
confused and disoriented-

VIRGIL
(off) There's many a peril layin out
for you, Brother. Don't want to lose
your way.

VIRGIL
smiling, offering his hand to help the Brother up-

VIRGIL
Let Virgil guide you, mon. Him
inform you in the ways of the night.

54 MEN

maybe a half-dozen, hanging out around a front stoop, doing nothing in particular. One of them throws a bottle into the street and it SMASHES-

55 DERELICT

rolling an empty trash barrel down a deserted street with some secret wino purpose-

56 HOOKER

wandering over to lean in and talk to the driver of a car that has pulled up on the curb-

57 COP CAR

cruising past like a shark. We can't see in to its passengers-

58 EXT. STREET - KIDS

three kids are stripping a car down at the curb. They take no note as Virgil and the Brother appear, strolling past them-

VIRGIL

Children wither in away up here,
 Brother. Worshippin the idol
 of capital, lustin after the false
 salvation of the here and now.
 Black brother and sister perishin
 up here, mon, waiting for scrap
 from Opressor table. Opressor
 got us for housepet, do him
 tricks to get reward. Opressor
 need a slave, him find it here.
 Opressor need a harlot, him find it
 here. Opressor don't need here
 at all, him wipe it away from the
 map.

59 HOOKERS

one white, one black, stepping out toward us from the shadows. The white woman holds one of her shoes in her hand and the platform heel that goes with it in the other-

BLACK HOOKER

You fellas want to party?

We PAN to include Virgil and the Brother as they pass by. The Brother stares at the girls-

cont.

VIRGIL

Our people own the street at nighttime,
 Brother, ~~was~~ them whole. Look at what
 we own- ~~own~~

WHITE HOOKER

I'll give you a blow-job if you fix my
 shoe.

The other hooker starts to laugh hysterically-

WHITE HOOKER

C'mon, it's a bargain-

Virgil ignores the girls. The Brother turns to look at them as
 they walk away-

VIRGIL

Evryting Babylon make, evryting
 it take in, it shit out here.

BLACK HOOKER

(calling after) Hey! Mop-head!
 Bring your handsome friend back here!

➤
 60A EXT. STORE FRONT - LONG SHOT - DANCER

a single MAN dances to his own rhythm in the night-light of a
 closed store front-

VIRGIL

(track) Night time is promise, Brother.
 You make deals in the night, pay all
 you got for what you can't see. And
 every sun come up illuminate we been
 cheated again.

Virgil and the Brother step into the foreground of the shot to
 watch-

60B CU BROTHER

watching-



60C DANCER - CLOSER - VARIOUS SHOTS

working something out in his head-

VIRGIL

(track). All the people desire walkin streets at nighttime, Brother, all the people feelin. People dream, people fear, people hatred. All that eatin your heart in the day, all them feelin too dangerous to show the Opressor, come out prowling for confrontation at nighttime. We killin each other on these streets, Brother.

61A CU OIL DRUM FIRE

Virgil's face appears through the flames, smiling. Someone offscreen hands him an enormous joint-

VIRGIL

This place not your home, Brother.

61C EMPTY LOT - FIRE - PEOPLE

Virgil stands across the flames from the Brother. There are a few other night people scattered around, a few sharing the joint, a couple ^{winos} sitting drinking on a ripped-out car seat lying on the ground-

VIRGIL

Virgil don't have to inform you this. Here Brother-

61B BROTHER

staring at the splib as Virgil offers it to him-

VIRGIL

(off) Take the ship back.

61A VIRGIL

smiling kindly, offering-

VIRGIL

Just for a night. Take the ship
home to Promised Land.

61B BROTHER

he takes the joint in both hands, looks at it, then looks at Virgil. He cups both hands around it, puts it to his face like an oxygen mask and inhales deeply-

61D WINDS

sitting on the car seat, sleeping stoned. We-

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE IN ON:

62 BROTHER'S FEET - ALLEYWAY - DAY

we stare for a moment at the soles of the Brother's bare feet, sticking up as he lays on his back in an alleyway. We RACK FOCUS as he wakes and lifts his head to look down at them, his head appearing framed by the big toes-

63 CLOTHESLINE

we PAN along it past underwear, barely pausing at a pair of socks when the Brother's hand snatches them out of the frame from below-

64 EXT. SIDESTREET - DAY - FEET

we see the Brother's feet in the stolen socks coming toward us, then TILT up to see him walking on the empty sidestreet. He stops to look at some graffiti, something about it jumping out at him. He moves closer to the wall-

WALL - GRAFFITTI

we WANDER with the camera over the jumbled layers of writing till we pick up one line done in a distinctive style in red paint. We PAN left to right to 'read' it, coming to the brother's hand touching the letters at the end of the line. We TILT UP to his excited face-

WIDER SHOT

the Brother steps back and looks around for something to write with. Nothing. He picks up a piece of glass, cuts the palm of his hand with it, and using the welling blood for paint, begins to write his own message beneath the partially covered red line in graffitti-like script-

65 INT. PAWNSHOP - DAY

we PAN down a long line of electrical appliances, mostly radios, lined up on the counter of the pawnshop. We stop when we get to the cash register, where the OWNER looks sceptically across at the Brother. The Brother begins to move back toward us, turning on each machine in the line, radios blasting, blenders whirring, till each of the machines he has fixed is running. The owner, in the background now, looks amazed, then punches the till open to pay up-

66 INT. MUSEUM - FLOOR - SHOES

we see the Brother's feet in new-bought shoes next to Little Earl's in sneakers. We hear the voice of a elementary school TEACHER leading her class through an exhibit-

TEACHER

(off) Harriet Tubman made over thirty trips back South after she escaped that first time.

INT. MUSEUM - EXHIBIT

The Brother and Little Earl walk by panels of an exhibit illustrating the history of the Underground Railway before and during the Civil War. We hear the teacher leading her class on the other side of the panel-

TEACHER

(off) Every time she was in danger of being captured and sent back to the people who had owned her.

66B CLOSER - BROTHER AND EARL

the Brother stops at a picture of a black man running through a field, broken shackles around his ankles, looking back over his shoulder at pursuing bloodhounds-

66C CU BROTHER

looking, moved-

66D
66E PICTURE

we MOVE IN to the face of the man in the picture-

66B BROTHER AND EARL

the Brother points to the man in the picture, then to himself, then points his thumb to the heavens. Little Earl nods, believing-

TEACHER

(off) The men and women who had been slaves made their way with Harriet's guidance through hostile country, going from station to station on the Underground Railway till they reached New York.

66C CU BROTHER

listening to the teacher-

TEACHER

(off) New York was the Promised Land. New York was the end of the line. But sometimes bounty hunters would track them up North and try to kidnap them back into slavery-

67 INT. RANDY SUE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Uno and Dos are at the kitchen table, Uno standing, Dos sitting. They are looking toward the door from the living room-

DOS

Randy Sue Carter?

RANDY SUE

frozen in the doorway with a copy of Cosmo clutched in her hands-

RS

Who are you?

KITCHEN

the men stand immobile, staring her down-

DOS

We'd like to ask you some questions.

RS

If you're looking for Bobby I got no idea where he is.

UNO

We have reason to believe this man has been living with you.

He hands her the picture of the Brother. Randy Sue looks at it, hands it back, shrugs-

RS

He comes and goes. Right now he's gone.

DOS

Where does he work?

RS

Here and there. He fixes things. What do you want with him?

DOS

Immigration.

RS

Gimme a break, Immigration. We had a kid overdose right downstairs last night and you're pesterin people don't have some piece of paper says they're legal.

DOS

Will he be coming back here tonight?

RS

You want to know my opinion?

cont.

UNO

Just the facts, M'am.

RS

My opinion is that Immigration's just another scam you people run so you can keep everybody under your thumb.

DOS

Is he coming back here tonight?

RS

What am I, his mother? Wait for him, see if I care, just don't do it in my kitchen.

Dos stands up. Uno steps to Randy Sue and looks her in the eyes-

UNO

Have you ever looked at his feet?

RS

What're you, sick?

Uno turns to look at Dos-

CU DOS

nodding-

68 EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

we see the poster of Malverne, hear MUSIC from inside-

69 INT. NIGHTCLUB - STAGE - BROTHER

we see Malverne singing on the stage with a few players to back her up as the Brother watches enraptured from the worst table in the house. Malverne sings a song about being a young girl trying to sing her way out of her neighborhood, then trying to find it again once she does. The song ends to applause. The Brother is startled by the sudden CLAPPING, he stares curiously at the people at the next table. As the applause dies a waitress appears by his table. A drink sits untouched in front of him-

cont.

WAITRESS

You gonna sit on that all night?

The Brother looks under himself to sit what she means-

WAITRESS

Very funny. You want anything more to drink?

The Brother shakes his head no-

WAITRESS

Look, I don't care, but the boss's been on my ass-

The Brother gestures that she should bring another and she leaves. Suddenly Malverne appears by him, looking back across the floor warily. She sits at the seat across from him and speaks, hardly looking at him at first-

MALVERNE

Listen, I'monna sit here but don't get any ideas, all right? Man owns this place been after my ass since I opened here and I'm trying to keep him off it. If he comes by you're my gentleman friend from Philadelphia, okay?

He nods, staring at her a bit too much in his surprise-

MALVERNE

What's your name, honey?

He touches his lips, shakes his head no-

MALVERNE

You don't talk? Some alibi you gonna give. You can hear, can't you?

He nods. He points to her, then to his lips and makes a singing gesture, then touches his ears and smiles-

cont.

MALVERNE

You like my singing?

He nods-

MALVERNE

Voice isn't what it was when I was
with the girls but now it's got-
you know- character.

He shrugs, not understanding. MR. PRICE, the owner of the club,
slides over to the table with a smile pasted to his face-

PRICE

There you are, Precious. How's my
girl tonight?

MALVERNE

Mr. Price, this is Lewis. Lewis is
from Philadelphia.

PRICE

Pleased to meet you Lewis.

He offers his hand and Lewis touches it with his fingertips,
still not sure of the greeting procedure-

MALVERNE

Lewis don't talk.

PRICE

That so? Well that's too bad,
that's just awful. Must leave you
out of the conversation, huh Lewis?

He sits at a chair he pulls up, pointedly blocking the Brother
away from Malverne. He pulls out an old advertising flyer and
lays it on the table-

PRICE

Look here, Precious, what I found
digging through the office-



CU PICTURE

a publicity photo of Malverne and two back-up singers in a Shirelles-type pose-

PRICE

(off) Must've been taken twenty years ago.

TABLE

Malverne looking at the picture and both Price and the Brother looking at Malverne-

MALVERNE

Awww- lookit that, Lewis, me and the girls. We're just kids-

PRICE

You were flyin high, those days.
Must've felt like it would last forever.

MALVERNE

Yeah.

PRICE

I remember when you ~~was~~ playin the Apollo,
I had to stand in line to get to get
a ticket.

MALVERNE

That'll happen.

PRICE

Standing out in the rain a whole hour
just to see my favorite singer. And
now here you are, workin my club.

MALVERNE

Here I am.

PRICE

Funny how when one is shootin up, the
other is tumblin down. Must be a Law
of Nature.

MALVERNE

Yeah, it's funny.

PRICE

But there's always some point the the
one shootin up and the one tumblin
down ~~is~~ on the same level. Even if
it's just for one little second-

cont.

MALVERNE

Uh-huh.

PRICE

I was wondering, after your last set tonight-

MALVERNE

Aw, I'm sorry. Me an Lewis got plans.

Price gives Lewis a look

PRICE

Oh. Well, that's too bad, isn't it?
(rising) Nice talking with you, Lewis.

He takes the picture and exits looking at it, shaking his head-

PRICE

Flyin high, them days.

Malverne waits for him to go, then mutters-

MALVERNE

I'll never tumble down that low.

The waitress returns with another drink for the Brother. She puts it by the other untouched one and takes a bill from the pile on the table. The Brother pushes both over to Malverne, who takes one and takes a drink-

MALVERNE

Thanks honey. (another gulp) You really like my singin?

70 INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - MIRROR SHOT - NIGHT

Malverne is pulling her false eyelashes off, looking in the mirror-

MALVERNE

All the time I been wearin these things I still haven't got used to em. Like to go blind, flappin em around in bed. I'll just be a minute, honey, okay?

cont.

MALVERNE (cont.)

Y'all haven't gone to sleep on me, have you?

Silence-

MALVERNE

Make a noise if you're still with me.

There are THREE BANGS from the bedroom-

MALVERNE

(laughs) I've been out with some guys who were quiet but this really takes it. I don't do this a whole lot, you know. People think you on tour, you're always sleepin around, but it isn't true. Well, most tours it isn't. When we were young an wild and still playing bowling alleys an all that- course it all stopped when I hooked up with Rodney.

She takes her wig off. She doesn't look like the album cover anymore but she still looks great-

MALVERNE

You know I hardly think about Rodney any more, but bad as things got I sure miss the girls.

71 INT. HOTEL BEDROOM

the Brother is in bed, legs and feet well under the covers, shirt off. Malverne comes in wearing a slip-

MALVERNE

Didn't waste any time gettin comfortable, did you?

She sits by him, indicates herself without wig and eyelashes-

MALVERNE

Well, this is it. Still interested?

The Brother touches her face, kisses her-

cont.

MALVERNE

How come I like you? You could be anybody.

He smiles the first full smile we've seen from him all movie long. They kiss again. Malverne turns off the bedside lamp, light still coming from the bathroom-

MALVERNE

I know you don't talk but try to stay with ^{me} okay honey? Don't be off thinkin about that woman on the stage- it's just you an me here, all right?

They embrace-

72 EXT. SIDESTREET - FLASHLIGHT BEAM - NIGHT

we PAN with the beam over the message the Brother left in his blood on the brick wall the other morning. When we reach the end of the line we TILT UP with the flashlight beam to the faces of Uno and Dos. They speak in SOUNDS that resemble a BAT SCREECHING-

73 INT. HOTEL BEDROOM - MORNING

The Brother is dressed, sitting in a chair by the bed. He watches Malverne hurry around the room getting her clothes on-

MALVERNE

I'm flying at four so I got to be to Kennedy by three.

She puts something on-

MALVERNE

I remember when Rodney said he'd come on tour with me. Long as he never had to carry my bags, he said. Refused to let me carry my own, either. We'd wait a half hour for a porter to show up. He was like that, Rodney, real proud about the little things.

She steps into her shoes, looks at him-

cont.

MALVERNE

I don't know when I'm gonna be back
in New York. Got no bookings after
Atlanta.

She puts her leg up on the bed to adjust the shoe, then fingers a
long scratch on the side of her calf-

MALVERNE

You know, Honey, you're awful nice in
bed, but you got to do somethin bout
them toenails-

74* EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

the Brother is crossing a neighborhood basketball court when the
ball bounces away from the game and he catches it reflexively.
He looks at it for a long moment as if he's never seen such a
thing before. We hear VOICES from OFFSCREEN-

PLAYER 1

(off) Little help!

PLAYER 2

(off) Put it in the hoop, man!

The Brother looks up and we RACK FOCUS to the distant hoop-

74 B CU BROTHER

wheels turning in his head as he calculates distance-

74C HOOP - BRO'S POV

we ZOOM IN on the hoop as he takes a bead on it-

74D BROTHER - HOOP

holding the ball just behind his ear, he snaps the ball forward
like a catapult, the ball travelling on a line and CHING!
slamming into the net-

VOICE 2

Aw-right!

74E cont.

The Brother begins to move away, unfazed by his success, but stops, seeing something-

FENCE - RICKY, PUSHER

Ricky hangs by the fence discussing business with the PUSHER, a young man in slick clothes. They start away from the playground-

74F BROTHER

starting after them-

75 EXT. STREET - DAY - RICKY AND PUSHER

moving down the sidewalk across the street from us, still talking-

3 CU BROTHER

watching from across the street-

RICKY AND PUSHER - BRO'S POV

disappearing up the steps of a building and inside-

D BROTHER

we FOLLOW as he moves to the front stairway of a building across the street from it and sits to watch-

E BUILDING - BRO'S POV

we look at the building Willis went into, then TILT UP to a window on the top floor-

76 FRONT STOOP - BROTHER

sitting, watching. A pair of highly polished black shoes appear on the step behind him as their owner descends and stops-

COP

(off) So how long you been up here, pal?

cont.

The Brother glances fearfully over his shoulder and we SHIFT to a TWO-SHOT as a young white COP sits down on the steps behind him-

COP

I mean are you a native or what?

The Brother does not respond, occasionally looking back halfway to the cop but not looking in his eyes-

COP

My first day in this precinct. The
guy's been handin me all kinda
horror stories. You know, how
they're gonna cook me an eat me up
here if I don't look out. Can't
be that bad, I figure. I mean
people are people, right? You put
on a uniform it's not like you hand
in your status as a human being.
I mean we're here to protect and
serve, right? Like it says on the
L.A. cruisers on ~~Dragnet~~?

A silence-

COP

Never should have taken that show
off the air.

A silence-

COP

So what do you think?

The Brother stands, shrugs slightly, then moves away. We TRACK IN FRONT of him, seeing the fear on his face and the cop receding in the background-

COP

Well, take it easy, pal.

The Brother moves on a little more, then looks over to the building he was casing, then back to see that the cop can no longer see him-

77 CU BROTHER

he reaches in and pulls one of his eyeballs out. There is no blood, just a slight SUCTION SOUND. He keeps the eye shut, turns and places the eye slightly hidden behind a plant in somebody's ground-floor flowerbox. He looks around again, then moves away-

CU EYEBALL

standing on four little 'legs' of tissue that look like the roots of a molar. It swivels slightly, watching-

78 A INT. SOCIAL SERVICES CENTER - DAY - NOREEN

filling in a form at her desk when two black forms appear in the foreground to frame her. She looks up-

P MEN IN BLACK - NOREEN'S POV

standing over her, looking as official as they can-

DOS

Is Sam Prescott in?

We RISE UP slightly to see Sam returning to his desk behind them. He freezes, sensing trouble, and signals Noreen not to let on as he steps away-

NOREEN

gets the message-

NOREEN

Are you clients of his?

DESK AREA

the two sit by her, moving in to be intimidating. Dos produces the mug shot of the Brother-

DOS

We're looking for this man.

UNO

Ever seen him?

NOREEN

Are you gentlemen with an agency?

cont.

The two speak together-

DOS UNO
Immigration- FBI-

They look at each other-

UNO
We're working together on this one.

Noreen pulls out an enormous pile of forms-

NOREEN
I see. Okay, this is an Interagency Request for Information Form- you'll both have to complete this and give it to the applications receptionist- that's Line 7 at the central office- and we'll need some documentation- this can be birth certificate, alien naturalization papers, passport, draft registration, military identification card, military discharge papers- oh, yes, I'll need a letter from your agency heads on official stationary verifying your employment and something with a picture on it, no student ID's allowed. This is a Form 107G, which we'll have to have notarized before-

Both of them stand up to go-

UNO
We'll come back later.

DOS
When Mr. Prescott is in.

They hurry away-

NOREEN
(calling after) I'll need SSI numbers on both of you-

79 EXT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

we look across the street to see Uno and Dos exit, Dos tossing forms into a trash basket. We PAN as they start down the street and the pan brings us to a sinister-looking WATCHER in the foreground on our side of the street, a black man wearing a hat

80 INT. RANDY SUE'S HALLWAY - APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

Randy Sue peeps out from behind her partially closed door-

RS

If it was just me it would be different, you know- but I got Little Earl and the mother to think about. I gotta take care of em.

HALLWAY - BROTHER

an improvised patch over his eye. He nods sympathetically-

RS

(off) I mean those guys gave me the creeps.

INT. KITCHEN - LITTLE EARL - BROTHER - RANDY SUE

we see past Little Earl in the foreground as his mother talks with the Brother-

RS

Is there anything you need- clothes, money?

The Brother nods that he doesn't-

RS

Well- I hope you understand. Whatever it is you're messed up in, I can't take the chance. It's been nice knowing you.

The Brother nods, looks past her to Little Earl-

LITTLE EARL

points his thumb upward questioningly-

CU BROTHER

shakes his head no, sadly-

81A EXT. STREET - EVENING

the Brother is on the street where he tracked Rickey this morning. He looks around to see that he's alone, then reaches back into the flowerbox to get his eye. He pulls off the patch and pops the eye back into his head-

81B

CU BROTHER

closing both eyes and concentrating as he lays a palm over his newly-recovered one. His hand begins to glow slightly as we ZOOM IN to an EXTREME CLOSE-UP-

82 BUILDING - EYEBALL FLASHBACK

sped-up photography at first, cars whizzing by like bullets, then SLOWING and PANNING as Rickey and the pusher exit, shake hands and split in opposite directions. The PAN FOLLOWS the pusher as he drops a newspaper he's holding into a trash barrel, gets into his car and drives out of sight-

81B (Cont'd) BROTHER

taking his hand off his eye. He starts across the street-

81C TRASH BARREL - NEWSPAPER

the Brother's hand appear to pluck it out and we TILT UP as he brings it to his face to look at-

81D NEWSPAPER

in the Brother's hands. It is folded open to the racing form, with certain picks circled in red. The Brother lays his palm over them-

81D CU BROTHER'S FACE

his eyes start to flutter as he gets a vibe from the paper-

83 PSYCHIC FLASH - BOOKIE

a man peeling bills off a wad and shoving them toward the camera-

81^D CU BROTHER
(Cont'd)

snapping out of his reverie. He presses the newspaper to his chest and moves off-

84^A EXT. STREET - NIGHT - BOOKIE

who we saw in the flash, sitting on the front stoop of a building. The pusher pulls up in his car. The bookie gets up and they do business through the driver side window. We ZOOM OUT till we have included the Brother in the shot, watching from the other side of the street, sitting on the hood of a car. The pusher eases away in his car. The Brother hops off the hood, goes to the passenger side window, which has been left rolled down a bit, reaches his hand in-

84^B INT. CAR - UNDERSIDE OF DASH

the Brother's hand appears, rests under the steering column, begins to glow. The ENGINE STARTS. We ~~TILT~~ UP to the Brother, who pulls every handle and button on the car till he finally lucks onto the gearshift-

85 INT. CAR - NIGHT

the Brother tailing the pusher's car through the city-

86 INT. CAR - INT. TUNNEL

the Brother tracking the pusher through the Lincoln Tunnel to Jersey-

87^A EXT. DOCK - MORNING

we on the docks on the Jersey side of the river, very early morning. The pusher's car is parked alongside the more expensive car of the CONNECTION, a young white man. They are parked driver's window to driver's window, conferring-

BROTHER - CARS

we shoot past the Brother sitting in the foreground with his legs dangling over the edge of the dock, looking down past the pilings to where the two cars are parked. They start away, seperating-

88 ^{A+B} EXT. MANSION - MORNING - LAWN ORNAMENT

we start on a CU of a lawn ornament jockey holding a lantern who's been painted white, then PAN to the street to see the connection's car coming at us. Closer, closer, then it turns into the driveway of a huge, expensive country home. MR. VANCE, an expensively-dressed businessman in his early-thirties, is just getting into his own very expensive car when the connection hops out and gives him a package. The connection drives away past us and we PAN as he comes by to see through the windows of the Brother's car. We HOLD and as the connection's car clears the Brother sits up into the frame, looking back toward Mr. Vance-

89 EXT. WALL STREET OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

establishing shot. The Brother steps into frame, looks up, and we TILT UP with his gaze to the top of the building-

90 INT. RECEPTION AREA - OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

a pair of receptionists at desks guard the entrance to the door marked 'Howard T. Vance - President'. One is typing with a walkman headset on, out of it, the other talking to her despite the fact-

CONNIE

I say to him 'Barry, I wouldn't call what we have a relationship' and he says 'What would you call it?' and I say 'We're just seeing each other' and he says 'To me, that's a relationship' and I say 'Call it what you want, to me we're just seeing each other'- can I help you?

The Brother steps into the shot, heading for the door-

CONNIE

Sir? Sir? Do you have an appointment?

The Brother stops and looks at her-

CONNIE

If you don't have an appointment you can't go in there. Do you have something to deliver to Mr. Vance?

The Brother nods yes-

cont.

CONNIE

Well you can give it to me.

The Brother nods no-

CONNIE

Look, go down to the front desk, have them call up, well get you a floor pass and start from scratch, okay? (to other receptionist) Number one, he's short. That he can't help, but neither can I help the way I feel about it. Two, he wears shirts with those, you know, epaulet things on the shoulders. I mean if you're in the military, that's one thing-

The Brother finally gives up and walks away-

91 INT. ODELL'S BAR - DAY

the Brother, looking a bit unstrung from the long night, walks in and goes straight to the men's room without waving hello to anyone. All the regulars are there-

ODELL

Hey, Brother, what's happenin?

The Brother closes the men's room door-

SMOKEY

Know how the man feels. My bladder aint worth beans these days-

92 INT. BATHROOM

the Brother splashes water on his face. He turns and sits leaning on the sink, closing his eyes to think-

⁹¹
(Cont'd) INT. BAR

FLY

I heard Bobby's old lady put him out counta them guys been lookin for him. Wonder how he's makin it.

cont.

SMOKEY

Though the flesh be weak, the spirit
finds a way.

ODELL

(laughing) What was that?

SAM

(off) I'm open, Dell, hit me-

Odell pulls the football from below the bar and hurls it-

ODELL

Flea-flicker!

SAM

catching the ball and flinging it back-

SAM

Buttonhook at ten!

ODELL

catching and throwing-

ODELL

Bump and run!

SAM

catching and throwing-

SAM

Z-out and fly!

ODELL

catching and throwing-

ODELL

The Bomb!

BALL

spiralling through the air- SNATCH! A large hand plucks it out
of the air. We TILT UP the arm to see Uno-

INT. BAR

Uno and Dos stand in the center of the room, Uno holding the football at arm's length-

CU UNO

looking around the room to make sure he has everyone's attention. We PAN DOWN to his hand on the football. He squeezes it- BLAM! It pops with the sound of a tire blowing out-

BAR

the men are impressed by this feat of strength-

UNO AND DOS

DOS

Where is he?

At that very moment the Brother steps out from the bathroom in the background. The men in black swivel their heads to see him-

BROTHER

seeing them. His hand goes to his side in a protective gesture-

INT. BAR - FIGHT - VARIOUS SHOTS

there is and all-out battle in the bar, in which, among other things-

1. Odell comes out with a baseball bat to protect the Brother. The men in black are too quick and duck away from his swings or jump over them. The bat is finally taken by Uno and broken in half in his hands-

2. Smokey throws bottles that are always caught by Dos and carefully placed on the tables-

3. The men in black try to corner the Brother but he hops on the tables and bar top to vault away from them-

4. Fly throws chairs that are caught by Uno and put gently on the floor-

5. Sam repeatedly tries to tackle the men in black, missing each time-

cont.

6. Lots of Buster Keaton style near-misses in which the person missed is unaware of it-

7. Walter watches, sipping his drink-

8. The Brother escapes out the door while the men in black are still dealing with the regulars-

9. Sam and Odell end up trying to block exit through the door, both holding chairs. They swing at the same time, smashing their chairs together as the men in black duck under them and get out-

BAR FLOOR - SAM AND ODELL

lying gasping for wind-

SAM

You never could hit, man.

ODELL

And you never could tackle.

92A EXT. STREET - EVENING - CLOCK

one of those big digital read-outs on a bank or something. It is just quitting time on Wall Street-

93 EXT. OFFICE BUILDING

that we saw before. Employees, all white and dressed in Wall Street clothes, begin to pour out from the lobby of the building. Connie comes out, still yakking to her silent friend, and we PAN with her till she brings us to the Brother, waiting to one side. He looks across and we FOLLOW his gaze to the MAINTENANCE PEOPLE, all black, waiting with buckets and sponges to enter the building-

94 INT. LOBBY

the black doorman doesn't take note as the Brother wanders past with a couple maintenance people-

95 HALLWAY - STAIRWAY DOOR

we hear the Brother's FOOTSTEPS ECHOING up the stairwell before we see his face at the glass, looking around-

96 ANOTHER HALLWAY - FLOOR BUFFER

running his machine. The Brother steps past him and he looks after, suspiciously-

97 INT. OFFICE

Vance sits at his desk with a briefcase open before him. There are dozens of plastic bags of cocaine in it. He has opened one and is spooning out a little bit. The Brother steps partially into frame, blocking part of the shot. Vance looks up, surprised and scared-

VANCE

Who are you? How did you get in?

The Brother comes and sits by Vance, staring at him coolly-

VANCE

Who sent you? Did Gregory send you?

The Brother drops the needle he found in Willis onto the desk top. Vance eyes it as if he's never seen such a thing-

VANCE

You want some of this? Is that what? Here- take whatever you want-

The Brother reaches over and puts his finger in the opened coke. He sniffs a dab, tastes it-

VANCE

Look, whoever is paying you for this isn't paying what I could. I've got an organization here. We're diversifying, we're moving in every direction. This- (indicates coke) -this is nothing. It solves some cash flow problems, solves some problems on the books. You tell me who sent you and I'll cut you in. A piece of the action, right, that's what you want. It's stupid to go for just one score-

The Brother puts his fingers to his lips to indicate that Vance should be quiet. Vance doesn't get it-

cont.

VANCE

I knew it was a mistake getting involved with you people. You don't understand the big picture. You just can't ~~see~~

The Brother claps his hand over Vance's mouth. That gets his attention and shuts him up. The Brother, to Vance's horror, takes his eyeball out and puts it in Vance's palm, then forces Vance's hand shut around it-

CU VANCE

looking shocked. His eyes start to go out of focus as we ZOOM IN-

98 EYEBALL FLASH

of Willis dead in the side street at night, needle sticking from his arm-

97 INT. OFFICE

(Cont'd)

Vance comes out of it. The Brother takes his eyeball back, pops it back in-

VANCE

What are you?

The Brother looks directly at Vance, searching his eyes-

VANCE

Look, whoever you are, can't we talk? It's not too late-

The Brother scoops up a huge handful of coke and begins to move it toward Vance's face-

VANCE

I ~~see~~ ^{own} got real estate-

The Brother's hand moves forward, obscuring the shot-

99 EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

the Brother steps out into the night and POUNCE! the men in black are on him-

UNO

getting an armlock around the Brother's neck-

BRO'S SIDE - DOS'S HANDS

Dos pulls up the Brother's shirt, grabs a handful of flesh at the Brother's midriff and yanks- there is a VELCRO TEARING SOUND and a jack connection like for earphones on an airplane is revealed in the Brother's side. Dos rams a little monitor box into the jack-

EXT. BUILDING

the Brother twists away from Uno and begins to run-

BROTHER

running toward us-

MEN IN BLACK

instead of chasing, Uno pulls out a little remote-control box. He flicks it on-

BROTHER

collapses in mid-stride. He writhes on the ground for a moment, screaming silently in unbearable pain-

CU BOX

Uno working a dial with his fingers-

EXT. BUILDING

the Brother is 'reeled back' by the men, pulled by invisible forces, stumbling, tumbling, till he kneels at their feet-

100 EXT. WALL STREET AREA - NIGHT - LONG SHOT

deserted, after-the-bomb looking-

100 STREET

(Cont'd)

the Brother and the men in black appear, the Brother walking slightly ahead of his captors. They walk past a bit of graffiti done in red on a building-

CU BROTHER

eyeing the graffiti surrepticiously-

WALL - GRAFFITTI - BRO'S POV

it seems to glow slightly-

MEN

walking around a corner, the Brother hanging his head-

CLOSER

we HOLD as they pass through frame-

CU BROTHER

walking with eyes downcast-

101 SIDEWALK GRAFFITTI - BRO'S POV

going under us as we TRACK, glowing slightly, a direction arrow pointing off to one side at the end of the message-

CU BROTHER

hatching plans. His eyes shift back to behind him-

REMOTE-CONTROL UNIT

in Uno's hand-

CU BROTHER

making up his mind, whirling-

REMOTE-CONTROL UNIT - BRO'S FOOT

he kicks the unit flying out of Uno's hands-

MEN

the Brother bolts away from them-

SEWER GRATE

the remote-control unit clatters to the ground and slides in through the grate opening, lost forever-

102 WALL STREET AREA - VARIOUS SHOTS - CHASE

the Brother runs from the men in black, encountering more and more of the red graffiti with arrows indicating what direction he should run-

103 CORNER

The Brother comes sprinting around a corner toward us, and runs past us out of the frame. The men in black come around in hot pursuit, then put on the brakes right in front of us, seeing-

VISITORS - MEN'S POV

the brother stands behind a protective phalanx of fellow aliens, some men, some women, including the man who was buffing the floor and the man who was tailing the men outside the social services office-

VISITORS

we PAN across their faces. They don't look pleased-

MEN IN BLACK

Whoops. They cut and run-

104 WALL STREET AREA - NIGHT - VARIOUS SHOTS - CHASE

the men in black are the pursued now as they sprint away from the visitors. Finally they duck into a side street-

105 SIDE STREET

we FOLLOW the men as fast as we can down the dark side street, skidding to a halt with them as they realize it is a cul-de-sac and they've reached the back wall. They turn to face the music-

VISITORS

assembling in a line blocking off escape from the alley. The Brother joins them from behind-

MEN IN BLACK

they see the situation is hopeless. They swivel their heads to look at each other, then look straight ahead and simultaneously reach into their shirts. They pull something and FLAME OUT-

VISITORS

shielding their eyes against the blast of light and heat-

BACK WALL

two smoldering piles of ash and two vaguely shaped images tanned into the bricks is all that's left of the men in black-

PILE OF ASH

one of the visitor's feet appears to poke at it with a toe. We TILT UP to his face, then PAN as he looks back to the Brother-

BROTHER

imploing, he raise his thumb toward the sky. Going home?

VISITOR

solemnly shakes his head and points his thumb downward-

106 INT. SUBWAY STATION - CU BROTHER

seen through the window at the back of the train, staring out at us. Duke Ellington's 'Take the A Train' begins on the track. The train starts to pull away and we TILT UP to the big red 'A'. The Brother and the A recede in the distance as we hear Walter reprised on the track-

cont.

WALTER
(off) Harlem was the place, man.
When you got here you had made
it.

STREETS OF HARLEM - CREDIT SEQUENCE

