

CREEPSHOW 2

screenplay
by
George A. Romero

from stories
by
Stephen King

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Second draft

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CREEPSHOW 2

FADE IN:

1 EXT. ELMVILLE (EST.) - MORNING

It's early morning in the wonderful, mythic Ray Bradbury country of SUMMER VACATION. Even though "Downtown" Elmvile is quite small, it contrasts against the rural farmlands that surround it. Picturesque and mellow, this is the town we all would have grown up in if we'd been given the chance to pick.

2 EXT. INTERSECTION WITH NEWSTAND - MORNING

On the corner of Main and Midway there's a newstand, the old-fashioned kind with an overhung roof. Newspapers cover the countertop and magazines dangle from every available inch of green-painted framework. As THE CAMERA PULLS IN CLOSER, THE VENDOR, a kind-looking old man, is attracted by THE SOUND OF AN APPROACHING TRUCK.

VENDOR

Here it comes, Billy. Here comes
the delivery truck.

3 EXT. THE INTERSECTION - MORNING

About twenty yards away, sitting atop vegetable crates piled in front of the greengrocer's, is BILLY. He's the type of kid we can picture more easily at a computer keyboard than at a football warmup. Behind his thick glasses we can see mischief in his eyes, but one look at Billy tells us he's not likely to get physical. (He won't stick his foot out to trip you, he'll sneak a frog into your lunch pail when you're not looking.)

Billy seems to be eleven, twelve, thirteen, it's hard to tell. He looks about two years older than he was when we last saw him. In the original CREEPSHOW, he was the kid who mail-ordered a voodoo doll and conjured it into the image of his mean bastard of a father. He stabbed a hatpin into the thing's neck about fifty times before the straw doll fell apart. His dad had to be rushed to the hospital. (All night surgery finally saved his life but he still can't talk right.)

Billy jumps off the vegetable crates and trots over toward the newstand, arriving just as a big panel truck pulls up to the curb. THE DRIVER slides open a side door and starts flinging bundled magazines out onto the sidewalk. The old vendor comes out of his shelter to check the bundles against an order form. Billy steps in close, digging through his pockets for money.

BILLY

You sure the new issue's comin' in
on this shipment?

3 CONTINUED:

VENDOR

I never seen anyone so impatient. As if yer life depended on gettin' the first copy off the presses.

BILLY

Just the first copy in Elmvile.

4 EXT. THE INTERSECTION - MORNING

PLOP! PLOP! Bundled issues of TIME, WRESTLING and PSYCHOLOGY TODAY thump onto the pave. Some sex rags follow, then finally.... A BUNDLE OF CREEPSHOW COMIC-BOOKS, two dozen copies of the new issue. This month's fix of JOLTING TALES OF HORROR. Yarns-of-yech, grave-yard-grue dished up splashily by illustrators who have taken courses in anatomy. Billy's hands snatch up the bundle.

5 EXT. THE INTERSECTION - MORNING

Billy flops the bundle onto the newstand counter and attacks the knotted strands of hemp that tie the mags together.

VENDOR

You been waitin' here all mornin', son.
You can wait another minute or two.
I'll cut it open for ya soon's I've done m'business here. Why do ya wanna read that stuff, anyway? It'll rotcha mind.

The old man moves closer to the truck where he and the driver match order forms and exchange signatures. Behind their backs Billy is straining to free the comic-books. His hands are trembling from the effort. The hemp ties are digging into his flesh, not breaking.

Suddenly, a dark shadow spills like syrup over the countertop, over the comics, over the boy who, sensing a familiar presence, looks up.

There behind the counter, where the vendor usually stands, now stands something hideous and long-dead. It has materialized out of the miasma, a mangled mummy made of maggots and mold and mucous and mud.

Billy's not afraid. No, in fact he meets the monster's gaze with a relaxed, comfortable smile of recognition. The boy seems connected in spirit to this denizen of the demonreaches.....as are we, right kiddies? Yes. This is our horror-host, our maven-of-misdeed, our macabre-mascot-of-make-believe.....THE CREEPSHOW CREEP!

CREEP

Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh.....
(or something equivalent)

6 EXT. THE INTERSECTION - MORNING

The spectre lifts a bony hand and points what's left of its rotting forefinger at the bundle of comic-books.

The twine rises. For a moment it looks alive. It magically unties itself and falls limply to the countertop. Instantly Billy snatches up the topmost copy of the magazine. The Creep drops back into the shadows as THE CAMERA MOVES IN on the cover in the boy's hands. We can read the dripping red logoface.....

CREEPSHOW - JOLTING TALES OF HORROR!

7 EFX.

The word **CREEPSHOW** suddenly **ANIMATES**, lifting off the page. The **THEME MUSIC** crescendos as the number "2" appears beneath the word, completing the film's title.

Billy's hand riffles the pages. **COMIC-BOOK GRAPHICS** assault our eyes, greatly blown-up so we can see the litho-dots. There are cringing, screaming, terrified faces. There are monsters and tombstones and word-balloons that say, "NO! IT CAN'T BE! AIYEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!" "EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK" and "AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARGH!"

These are images from the horror comics we all know and love.....well, we all know them.....some of us love them. Over these images, **CREDITS** are superimposed in bright comic-book colors of their own.

As the **CREDITS END**, we find ourselves looking at a drawing in the upper-left corner of a page. It's a drawing of the Creep. There's a word-balloon coming out of it's rotting mouth. Just as we begin reading the words in that balloon, **WE HEAR** those same **WORDS** being spoken on **THE SOUND TRACK**.

CREEP

Welcome, kiddies....heh, heh, heh, heh.....
to another edition of Creepshow.

8 EXT. THE INTERSECTION - MORNING

The comic-book lies open on the newstand countertop. Billy is leaning over it, reading with rapt eagerness. **THE VOICE** continues and **THE CAMERA PANS** off Billy to find the real, live-and-in-person Creep lurking in the shadows behind the boy's back. The thing looks directly into the lens. It grins at us while it finishes its speech. Its words gurgle around in its rotten throat but we can understand them all.

CREEP

It's amazing that you bores and ghouls
keep coming back for more. You must be
gluttons for pun - ishment. Heh, heh, heh.

8 CONTINUED:

CREEP

I thought the rotten-roundelays in our last issue would have repulsed you enough to drive you away forever. I guess you blood-suckers out there enjoy being re - pulsed, heh, feh, heh. You're loyal to the gore. True-grue, through and through. That's good. We don't want any....dead wood in our fraternity of fright fans. Dead wood, heh, heh, heh. That just happens to be the subject of our first nauseating-novella, a nasty little bone-cracker called.....

Toward the end of the Creep's speech, THE CAMERA TILTS down to the countertop where Billy has his CREEPSHOW open to the splash-page of the first story. Across the top of the large lead-panel drawing there is logo-lettering which spells out the title....

CREEP

...OLD CHIEF WOOD'NHEAD.

9 EFX

ANIMATION takes over and the title drawing fills the screen. After a moment, the letters forming "OLD CHIEF WOOD'NHEAD" disappear and only the drawing remains. It shows an old, stern-faced Indian Chief in full ceremonial garb, including war-paint and a high, feathered head-dress. He wears a long-bow and a quiver full of arrows, the bow string and the quiver strap forming an "X" across his proudly puffed out chest. Tucked into his jeweled belt is a fringed scabbard which holds an enormous hunting knife. In his upraised right hand he brandishes a tomahawk. He's an imposing....even a threatening figure.....ageless, impervious.

Impervious to the feather-duster which is tickling his chin.

10 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

The comic drawing DISSOLVES TO LIVE ACTION. The feather-duster flicks over the old Chief's face, neck and shoulders. Desert dust flies out of his deep wrinkles, out of the feathers in his elaborate head-dress. We can see now that he's made of wood. Beautifully carved and painted with life-like colors, OLD CHIEF WOOD'NHEAD is one of the last of the real cigar-store Indians.

As THE CAMERA PULLS BACK, we see that the Chief is standing on a low platform which has an iron bar that runs up behind the figure and supports a sign over its head: CHEW RED MAN TOBACCO.

10 CONTINUED:

The duster is in the hand of RAY SPRUCE, a saintly-looking old codger, the owner and proprietor of SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE ever since it first opened for business back in nineteen-nineteen. Old Chief Wood'n-head's had his place on the porch, just outside the front door, ever since then, too, and the statue is the old storekeeper's pride and joy.

Ray flips the feather-duster into one of the huge pockets on his storekeeper's apron, then he pulls a cotton rag and an aerosol can out of the other pocket. He sprays a spot on the Chief's face with a shot of liquid cleanser, then he reverently goes to work with the cotton cloth tightly wrapped around his forefinger, gently rubbing all the dust from the war-paint on Wood'nhead's right cheek. Ray has to stand on a potato crate to reach. The Chief is six-foot-eight, maybe seven-foot tall.

SPRUCE

Time fer a touch-up, my old friend.
Sun's bleachin' out yer colors again.

Setting down the cloth and the can, Ray picks up a half-pint tin of outdoor paint. With a fine-tipped brush he begins to touch-up the symbolic stripes on the Chief's face.

SPRUCE

I'll try ta keep m'hand steady, Chief,
but I ain't what I used ta be.
(He paints a bright red stroke)
There. Not too bad. Not bad at all.
We gotta keep yer war-paint fresh.
Why, a big Chief without his war-paint
is like a....like a....

MARTHA

Like a storekeeper without a town
to sell his goods to.

MARTHA SPRUCE elbows the screen door and toddles out onto the porch with a pitcher and a glass full of lemonade on a tray. There's no bitterness in her voice, she's just being realistic. Nonetheless, her remark has made her husband's evergreen smile fade away. He stops what he's doing and, wiping his sleeve over his sweating brow, he steps off his potato crate and gratefully takes the icy glass from Martha's tray.

SPRUCE

Martha, me and the Chief, here, have
been standin' on this porch together
fer sixty-six years. We're not likely
ta move now.

MARTHA

I'm not askin' you to move, Ray.
I wouldn't want to move, myself.

10 CONTINUED:

SPRUCE

Then what are y'askin', Martha?
What d'ya want me ta do?

MARTHA

I want you to quit, Ray. Just....quit.

SPRUCE

Quit? You mean close up the store?

MARTHA

Yes. While you still have a little time left
to take something out of life instead of
always puttin'-in.

The old man moves closer to his wife. His wrinkled hand reaches out to straighten a wisp of white hair that the wind has blown loose over one of her ears.

SPRUCE

This store made it possible for us ta
get married. This store sent the girls
off ta school. This store's given us
the savings we're gonna leave fer the
grandchildren....

MARTHA

This store, Ray, once sat right in the
middle of a thrivin' young town that
seemed to have a future. Look at it now.
The town of Dead River has finally lived
up to its name. It's dead, Ray.

The old man looks out into the deep orange of late day, out toward the town he grew up in.

11 EXT. DEAD RIVER - THEIR P.O.V. - LATE AFTERNOON

Dead River is one of those incongruous-looking towns that seem to have been air-lifted in from someplace else. It's randomly clustered buildings might have been dropped from supply-planes by careless pilots right in the middle of wide-open desert flatlands (New Mexico, Arizona, Utah). There's no river in sight but the place does seem perfectly suited to the other half of its name. A parched old Studebaker sits near the pumps in Curly's Fill-up across the way, and down-street we can see a few pedestrians, but three-quarters of the buildings are boarded-up and abandoned. Tumbleweeds roll past and there are sidewinder tracks in the thick dust of Main Street where the snakes have lately been able to cross without getting crushed by traffic.

MARTHA (o.s.)

The jobs have moved away. The money
has moved away.

12 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ray looks anything but defeated. There's even a slight smile on his face as he stares into the deserted swirl of sand that was once the territory's biggest city.

MARTHA

Ray, it's been four days since you had a cash-paying customer. It's been four weeks since anyone's made a payment on a credit account. You keep supporting these people and we won't be leavin' the grandchildren anything but good intentions.

SPRUCE

There's worse things to inherit than good intentions, Martha. Good intentions built this country.

MARTHA

Good intentions tore this country down! They're tearin' you down, Ray, and I can't stand seein' it happen to you. You think these people care about you? They'll take your charity 'til it dries up. Then they'll leave you and your wooden Indian, there, to dry up as well, like the other relics of Dead River that are slowly getting buried by the sand.

SPRUCE

I won't run us dry, Martha. I promise you that. But....well, we've took some healthy profits out of the labors of this town, and I feel that we oughta give some o' them profits back in this time o' need.

The two are distracted by THE SOUND OF AN APPROACHING CAR.

13 EXT. DEAD RIVER - THEIR P.O.V. - LATE AFTERNOON

That Studebaker that we noticed earlier has pulled out of Curly's gas station and is chugging toward Ray Spruce's store. There's a bit of steam curling out from under its hood. We can almost hear the sand in the old car's moving parts. The wipers are scraping some of the desert brown off the windshield and we can see four people aboard.

SPRUCE (o.s.)

Benjamin Whitemoon.

MARTHA (o.s.)

In his chauffeur driven limosine.

14 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

SPRUCE

Now, Martha. Be nice to 'im. He's got a tough enough life as it is with the silver mine shut down.

MARTHA

I'll be nice to him because it's what you want. Just don't let him take too much advantage. You're too good to these people, Ray.

By now the Studebaker has coughed to a stop just in front of the porch. Ray takes a last sip of lemonade and Martha disappears into the store with the tray. The car has caused a great cloud of desert powder to rise in the air. As it envelopes the porch, Ray pulls a railman's handkerchief from his hip pocket. He waves the big flower-patterned cloth around old Chief Wood'nhead's face in an attempt to keep the powder from settling on the fresh red color.

SPRUCE

Dust all over yer war-paint, Chief. I shoulda larned by now never ta paint on a dry day.

The ever-staring eyes of the wooden Chief seem to soften slightly as they stare through the powder cloud. (Impossible. It must be the veil of dust that's making those eyes less piercing.) The statue seems to be looking down at the Studebaker....at the old man who is climbing out of the back seat. A YOUNG INDIAN, the driver of the car, has come around to the old man's side and is holding the door open. (Whatd'ya know? This over-cooked Studebaker really is a chauffeur-driven limo of sorts.)

The old passenger is BENJAMIN WHITEMOON, a venerable elder of the Navajo nation and the local spokesman for the tribe. We are struck by the resemblance of this old man to the statue on Ray Spruce's porch. Benjamin's hair has gone white while Ray has kept old Wood'nhead's hair color a rich enamel black over the years, but other than that difference (and the difference in dress, of course....Benjamin's wearing Levis and a shabby Goodwill suit-coat) the two "Chiefs" appear to be....well....carved from the same block of wood, as the saying goes.

BENJAMIN

Ya'at'eeh, Ray Spruce.

SPRUCE

Howdy, Benjamin.

BENJAMIN

Ya'at'eeh, Chief Wood'nhead.

SPRUCE

The Chief says 'ya'at'eeh'. What can we do fer ya this evenin'?

14 CONTINUED:

BENJAMIN

May we go inside?

SPRUCE

Why sure.

TWO OTHER TRIBESMEN have gotten out of the Studebaker, without the chauffeur's assistance, and they follow the elder Benjamin up the porch steps and into the store.

Old Wood'nhead stoically watches the dust settle in the street as the red evening sun drops down behind Curly's Fill-up.

15 INT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - EVENING

No 7-11, this. The place is everything one might expect a General Store in Dead River to be. Ray Spruce sells fabrics, potatos, cure-alls, hardware, penny candies, grains, canned goods, mining supplies, scraps of small lumber.....you name it, Ray's got it. And if not, he'll order it for you out of the catalogs he keeps prominently on display....Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, L. L. Bean.

The storekeeper slaps the dust from his apron as he moves spryly to his usual spot behind the sales counter. The Indians form a cluster on the customer side of that counter, careful not to draw in un-sociably close, with Benjamin Whitemoon standing at the point.

Martha Spruce enters from the rear through a curtain of rawhide strips. The Indians who are wearing hats remove them in the woman's presence.

BENJAMIN

Good evening, Martha Spruce.

MARTHA

Good evening, Benjamin. Gentlemen.

The other Indians nod but do not presume to speak. A look passes between Martha and her husband. She's treating the visitors nicely, as she promised, and as Ray Spruce knew she would. A loving smile brightens the storekeeper's face as he captures his wife's eye.

BENJAMIN

I am ashamed to stand inside this place while my people are so much in your debt, Ray Spruce.

SPRUCE

There's no shame for an honest man, Benjamin. Times is tough fer all of us. What can I get fer ya?

15 CONTINUED:

BENJAMIN

These with me...(indicating the other
tribesmen)...are ndinibjjhigii dah.
Council members for shidine'e.
We have brought you this.

Benjamin pulls a small leather pouch from under his suit-coat. When Ray takes the thing in his hand he HEARS THE CLINK-CLINKING of what sound like coins. Instinctively the storekeeper opens the mouth of the pouch and inside he sees jewelry. Lots of it. Bracelets, rings, necklaces, combs, buckles, pins....all made of silver, carved and inlaid with turquoise and sapphire and coral. Ray's mouth falls open. He closes the bag quickly, as though afraid to look at the treasure.

SPRUCE

What in the world's this?

BENJAMIN

It is the illinii. Dajichj bah. They are
the things my people hold precious. Each
family has offered one of its most cherished
treasures. You will keep them until our debts
are paid. If we cannot pay in two autumns,
the illinii are yours forever.

SPRUCE

No no no, I can't accept thi.....

BENJAMIN

Adeehadahideesdziiiee! Aa dahwiinit!

And with that, the tribesmen turn away and start to move out of the store. Ray, the treasure pouch in hand, scrambles out from behind the counter and catches Benjamin by the shoulder.

SPRUCE

Hold it, Benjamin. Wait, wait, wait.
There's no way in hell I'm gonna take
these things away from your people.

Ray is trying to push the pouch back into Benjamin's arms. The Indian turns to face the storekeeper, staring with piercing eyes that again recall the eyes of old Chief Wood'nhead.

BENJAMIN

It is a bad thing to borrow. It is a worse
thing to beg. While you hold the illinii, we
are borrowers. We can still have pride.
If you give the treasure back to us, you
make us beggars again. Such insult could
never be forgiven. A adoat ehigii. Koljih!

15 CONTINUED:

This stops Ray. He fumbles for words but can't think of any that will argue down Benjamin's tribal pride. The council members have reached the door. They move off into the deepening dusk. Benjamin stops in the open doorway and turns his head back inside.

BENJAMIN

Good evening, Martha Spruce.

MARTHA

Oh....er...good evening. Good evening, Benjamin.

Martha's caught with her mouth agape, flabbergasted at the events that have just taken place. Benjamin turns to Ray Spruce. The other Indians are already moving down off the porch toward the Studebaker, but the elder speaks softly so there's no chance at all of them hearing.

BENJAMIN

Keep them safe, the treasures.

SPRUCE

I'll guard 'em with m'life. Times'll take an up-turn, Benjamin. I can smell prosperity in the air.

BENJAMIN

Dooleetee. I wish that it would be. Ya'at'eeh, friend.

SPRUCE

Ya'at'eeh.

The Indian is about to exit when Martha comes toddling across the floor.

MARTHA

Benjamin....I was just scolding Ray. Telling him that he shouldn't put so much trust in folks, that they never earned it and they didn't deserve it. Well, you and your people have surely proven me wrong.

Benjamin smiles slightly, nods his head, then slips out into the shadows of the porch.

16 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - EVENING

Arm in arm, Ray and Martha follow the Indian out into the evening breeze. Before he turns down the steps, Benjamin shoots off a salute to his wooden counterpart.

BENJAMIN

Ya'at'eeh, Chief Wood'nhead.

16 CONTINUED:

The Chief's carved eyes seem to have softened again as he watches the elder Navajo descend to his waiting car. The old man lowers himself into the back seat and his young brave, the chauffeur, shuts the door behind him. The other council members are already aboard. The driver jumps behind the wheel and, surprisingly, the old Studebaker starts right up. Another cloud of desert powder rises as the tribal limosine goes rattling off into the darkness of Dead River.

The old storekeeper and his wife cuddle into each other's arms as they stand next to their silent wooden friend, the way they have done so very often over the years, looking out over the porch rail at day's end.

17 EXT. DEAD RIVER - THEIR P.O.V. - EVENING

The sun itself has disappeared. A narrow red strip outlines the horizon. The rest of the sky above is deep purple and in it the stars are beginning to appear. Across the way, the lights blink out in Curly's Fill-up. The other buildings in town are already dark.

18 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - EVENING

SPRUCE

This is good country, Martha. It'll come back
ta life one day. It'll come back ta life.

Old Wood'nhead seems to stand taller in the half-light, his shadow on the front wall of the store adds mass to his already massive frame. Ray Spruce turns, Martha still under one of his arms, and uses his free hand to gently pat the Chief's wooden face where one fresh line of war paint stands out brightly beside its faded red brothers.

SPRUCE

I'll finish yer war paint tomorrow, Chief,
that's a promise.

Ray lets his hand slide gently off the statue as he and his wife move into the store.

19 INT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - EVENING

Martha drops her head onto Ray's shoulder as the two move through the open doorway. The overhead flourescents haven't been turned on and, now that night has fallen, the inside of the store is quite dark.

Ray stops suddenly in his tracks. Feeling his body tense against her, Martha looks up at her husband's face. He is staring toward the dimly lit sales counter.

There's somebody standing there, barely visible in the shadows.

19 CONTINUED:

WA-BAAMMM!!! Behind Ray's back there's a sudden startling movement. The door slams shut. Ray and Martha spin around to see an enormously fat and horribly acned nineteen-year-old punk who they recognize as **STEVE "FATSO" GRIBBENS**. His imbecilic grin shows chocolate-covered teeth. He's jawing a large-sized Tootsie Roll which he snatched off Ray Spruce's candy rack.

FATSO

Yo ho ho, It's time for our show.

Ray turns toward the counter again. Another young punk, this one fully costumed to fit the nineteen-eighty-five meaning of the word, steps through the rawhide strips that curtain the doorway leading from the rear rooms. This is **ANDY CAVENAUGH**. He's obviously spent a lot of time and money achieving his "look" which includes rainbow colored hair and lots of studded leather. A collection of large diaper-pins have been stabbed and snapped shut through gathers of flesh on the right side of his face and neck.

The mysterious figure behind the sales counter now steps out into more light. At first we might think this is a female because of the gorgeous mane of shiny, raven-black hair, pulled back tightly and pony-tailed, with the tail, long and flowing, draped around to the front side of the left shoulder. The face, however, though fine-featured, is definitely not feminine. It's the sculpted, aquiline face of a handsome young Navajo brave. This is **SAM WHITEMOON**, the leader of the pack.

WHITEMOON

Go 'head, boys. Take what you want.

"Fatso" Gribbens and Andy Cavanaugh go to work quickly, bagging-up several items off the surrounding shelves. "Fatso" goes after food, paying particular attention to the candy rack from which he gathers all the Tootsie Rolls he can find. The punk Cavanaugh ransacks the hardware shelves, no doubt looking for something to wear.

SPRUCE

Wait a minute, you can't just walk in here and...

WHITEMOON

Shut up, white-eyes. Just shut the fuck up or else I'll hafta shove something into your mouth to keep you quiet.

CAVENAUGH

Shove this in his mouth, how 'bout it!

The punk holds up a large hand-drill mounted with a lethal-looking half-inch bit. He spins the mechanism a few turns.

19 CONTINUED:

FATSO

Naw, shove this in his mouth. This.
(He thrusts his pelvis forward and pulls
on his cock.)
Yo ho ho, it's time for our show.
Hee hee hee hee heeeeeee:

SPRUCE

You're disgusting. Sam Whitemoon, you're
a disgrace to your people.

WHITEMOON

I said shut up, old man.

SPRUCE

Your uncle Benjamin was just in here.
He's one of the best men I know. Hard ta
b'lieve that the same blood flows through
your veins.

WHITEMOON

I GUESS YOU DON'T HEAR SO GOOD,
SHITFACE, I SAID SHUUUTTT UUUUPP!!!!

We suddenly see just how dangerously crazy Sam Whitemoon is. His eyes go so wide when he screams, it seems as though they might roll out of his head. His body is twitching visibly. He's been running an oversized comb through his long pony-tail the whole time he's been standing there. Now the strokes of the comb are getting more rapid, more violent. He seems to be hurting himself without noticing.

WHITEMOON

We're just here to do a little shopping,
that's all. We didn't get everything we
needed last time we were in. You asked
us to leave. Remember, old man?

SPRUCE

You were stealing things.

WHITEMOON

We're stealing things now. Why don't
you ask us to leave, prune face?

FATSO AND CAVENAUGH

Hey. Go 'head, old man. Ask us ta leave.
Yeah, ain't ya gonna ask us ta leave. Ask
us nice. Say please. Pretty please with
sugar on it.

KER-TCHING! Sam Whitemoon has stopped combing his hair long enough to ring open the cash-register drawer. He pulls out two fives, a ten and a few singles.

19 CONTINUED:

WHITEMOON
Is this all the cash you got?

SPRUCE
That's all.

WHITEMOON
Empty your pockets.

SPRUCE
Look, I don't have....

WHITEMOON
EMPTY YOUR FUCKIN' POCKETS, ASS HOLE,
OR I'M GONNA ASK MY BUDDY TO BRING
ME SOMETHIN' OFF THE HARDWARE SHELF
THAT I CAN USE TO SLICE OFF YOUR
FINGERS!

Ray suddenly realizes that he is still holding the tribal treasure which Benjamin Whitemoon entrusted him with. Trying to keep the contents from rattling, the old storekeeper shifts the pouch from one hand to the other while he digs down into the pockets of his biballs. He pulls out a set of keys, a little bit of change and some folding money.

WHITEMOON
Fatso.

"Fatso" is closest to the Spruces. He waddles over from the candy rack and grabs the money out of the old man's hand. Ray holds the treasure pouch out of "Fatso's" sight, trying not to be too obvious. The old man breathes a sigh of relief when the chocolate-covered slob moves away, his eye caught by a display of Hostess Cakes.

WHITEMOON
When we came in through the back there
I saw a purse. Go get it, lady.

Martha hesitates, looking to her husband for guidance. Suddenly the young Indian pulls something from behind the counter....a double-barreled shotgun. He levels the thing off on old Ray.

WHITEMOON
Move, lady, or I'm gonna blow off your
old man's 'acho bizeezhiis.
(That's Navajo for balls.....really.)

Ray gently pushes Martha away, wanting to get her out of the line of fire. She goes rushing off toward the back of the store.

WHITEMOON
Any cute stuff back there and I pull
this trigger.

19 CONTINUED:

Martha disappears through the rawhide strips and Sam Whitemoon strolls out from behind the counter. He has grabbed a handful of quarters from the cash drawer and he's heading for one of those four-for-a-quarter foto booths that Ray keeps in the back corner behind the fabric bolts.

WHITEMOON

This thing work?

SPRUCE

What?

WHITEMOON

This foto machine. Does it work?

Ray nods his head and Sam Whitemoon drops onto the seat inside the booth. He wiggles a quarter into the slot then, propping his shotgun against one knee, he pulls his comb from where it's been dangling in his pony-tail. Using the booth mirror, he goes to work on his hair.

WHITEMOON

Look at this. Look at this sweetheart.
Tell me this ain't a movie star. What're you,
kiddin'? They gotta make me a movie star.
Hey. As soon as they see this hair they
gonna say, Sam, get over here. Get in
front of these cameras. There's a hundred
million women out there just waitin' to
run that hair between their legs.

He hits the "start" button and there's A BUZZING SOUND. After a moment, there's a bright flash as the machine shoots picture number one. Sam keeps talking as the machine shoots the next three.

WHITEMOON

Nine years it took me to grow this hair.
I'm not just fuckin' around here. I'm goin'
to Hollywood, man, and this hair is gonna
get me paid and laid.

Martha comes out of the back room with her purse. She starts toward her husband but Sam Whitemoon calls her.

WHITEMOON

Over here, lady. Gimme.

He steps out of the booth slinging his shotgun into the crook of his arm. When Martha moves in close he snatches her purse away. Again she tries to move toward Ray.

WHITEMOON

Stand right here. Don't move.

19 CONTINUED:

The Indian ravages the contents of the purse, dumping things onto the floor, until he finds a lady's wallet. He pulls another thirty dollars out of the bill compartment. Tossing the purse and wallet aside, he pockets the cash.

Just then the Foto Booth makes ANOTHER BUZZING SOUND and a strip of four pictures plops down into a little chute on the outside wall of the machine. Sam picks up the strip and smiles as he looks at the pictures.

WHITEMOON

Look at this. Look at this. Hey, you know that movie about the guy that's got these like super powers and shit because of his hair. Then this bitch cuts his hair off and he gets weak, he gets like an ordinary guy, you know that movie? I'm better lookin' than the guy in that movie, don't you think?

He thrusts the strip of pictures out toward Martha Spruce. She doesn't know quite how to react.

WHITEMOON

Here. Take a look.

Martha hesitantly takes the picture strip from his outstretched hand. When she is off-guard, the Indian grabs her, spinning her around so she is facing toward her husband. He rams the barrel of his shotgun into her side, his arm stretched way out toward the stock. He has his thumb on the trigger.

Instinctively, Ray lunges forward but he stops short when Sam shouts.

WHITEMOON

STAY RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE, OLD
MAN, UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE
YOUR LADY COME APART INTO
TWO PIECES!

"Fatso" and Andy Cavanaugh are surprised by Sam's action. They're more than a little nervous seeing the shotgun used so aggressively.

CAVANAUGH

Hey, Sam. Let's get outa here. There's no more cash around here. We got enough shit. Let's go.

WHITEMOON

Not yet, rich boy.

19 CONTINUED:

WHITEMOON

(He speaks right into Martha's ear.)
Did you know my buddy here was rich?
Well, his old man's rich. His old man
bought my buddy here a Firebird, man.
A fuckin' Firebird that's gonna fly us
all to Hollywood, U.S.A.

Seeing Martha in such jeopardy is too much for Ray to take. He moves
another step toward Whitemoon.

WHITEMOON

One more step and BLOOOOOOOM!!!

Sam screams so loudly, and the gun jerks so violently, that for a moment
it seems as though an actual shot has been fired. Ray freezes.

CAVENAUGH

Come on, Sam. There's nothin' else fer
us ta take. There's nothin' else we need.

WHITEMOON

Maybe there's nothin' else you need, rich boy,
but there's somethin' else I need. Ain't that
right, old man. There's one more little item
that you'll have to turn over if you want
this woman to live.

SPRUCE

What is it?

WHITEMOON

That bag full of rock-candy that my uncle
brought over here today. That's it in your
hand, ain't it? Toss it over here and I'll
let the lady go.

FATSO

Hey, what's....er...what you talkin' 'bout,
Sam? What you mean, 'rock-candy'?

WHITEMOON

There's ten thousand dollars worth of silver
and stone in that bag, man. The keys to
the city of Los Angeles.

FATSO

Is that true old man? Lemme see...

"Fatso" lunges for the pouch but Ray puts it behind his back, out of
reach. The old storekeeper tries to appeal to the Indian gunman.

Sam....Sam, you can't take this. This b'longs to your people, to the tribe. These are treasures they've had for years. These things date back.....

FATSO

MARTHA

FATSO

SPRUCE

WHITEMOON

Andy's face has turned purple and green to match his crazy hair. He's shivering, holding his shopping bag full of pilfered hardware against his chest.

19 CONTINUED:

WHITEMOON
GET YOUR FUCKIN' CAR, RICH BOY,
WE'RE LEAVIN' FOR L.A. A LITTLE
SOONER THAN WE FIGURED.

Cavanaugh snaps out of his trance. He moves toward the back doorway.

WHITEMOON
Hey, Cavanaugh. You run out on me
and I'll find you.

CAVENAUGH
(Turning to face the Indian)
Hey...I ain't runnin' nowhere, Sam.
I ain't runnin' out on ya.

WHITEMOON
We're all in this together.

CAVENAUGH
Yeah. I know that, Sam. I know.

The purple punk exits. Sam glides over toward the fallen treasure. He opens the neck of the pouch and one-hands the stray pieces back inside. Then he lifts the pouch by its drawstrings, closing the opening. He ties those strings onto his belt, juggling the shotgun in the crook of his arm, as he moves to where "Fatso" is still leaning over the counter.

WHITEMOON
Let's go, fat stuff. We got some money
that needs spendin'.

"Fatso" lifts his head. He's one sorry lookin' lump of blubber. His stomach is still churning, his mouth is drooling brown.

FATSO
Holy shit. Holy Jesus. I never seen nothin'
like that b'fore.

WHITEMOON
Yeah, well now you seen it. And now....
you're gonna forget it.

FATSO
Forget it?

WHITEMOON
That's right. Forget it. We're goin' to
Hollywood, Fats.

FATSO
Hollywood? You mean all of us? Me too?

19 CONTINUED:

WHITEMOON

I wouldn't leave you behind, fat stuff. Shit, man,
I got to have my slave with me wherever I go.

FATSO

Hollywood! Yo ho ho, it's time for our show!

Sam moves gracefully toward the front of the store and fat Stevie Gribbens follows dutifully. There's a window shade pulled down over the glass panel in the door. Sam lifts one corner to look outside before swinging the door open.

20 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

Sam sticks his head out first. He looks up and down the porch. Nobody out there but old Chief Wood'nhead. Sam opens the door wider and strolls out into the cooling darkness. "Fatso" follows with his big bag full of Tootsie Rolls, Twinkies and Ho Hos.

WHITEMOON

It's ok. There's nobody around. We're outa
here, fat stuff. We're outa here.

We hear THE SOUND OF A SPEEDING CAR. From around the corner Andy Cavanaugh's bright red Firebird comes screaming through the night sending up a mushroom cloud of desert dust.

WHITEMOON

WE'RE OUTA HERE, MAN! WE'RE
OUTA HERE FOR GOOOOOOD!!!

The car screeches to a stop at the bottom of the porch steps. "Fatso" bounces down and scrambles into the back seat. Sam Whitemoon vaults easily over the porch rail. Before he climbs into the Firebird, he turns to face the wooden Indian.

WHITEMOON

No more of this bull shit, man. No more
eatin' dust for a living. There ain't no
dust in Hollywood, man. And there ain't
no fuckin' tribe of Tommin', wimpy-
assed red men, neither!

Sam raises that shotgun of his and KER-BLAAM-KER-BULLLAAAAAAM! Both barrels spit fire and lead. Part of the porch rail disintegrates and great wads of buckshot chop into old Chief Wood'nhead. Large smoking holes appear all over his stern mahogany face. He teeters back, hits the front wall of the store, then wobbles forward on his heavy base. He stays standing. His wooden eyes have their piercing ferocity back again. He seems to be staring angrily down at his loathe-some blood brother.

20 CONTINUED:

Sam Whitemoon lets out a piercing battle cry that sounds right out of a John Ford wagon-train movie, then he dives into the Firebird and the souped up dream-machine goes screaming away from the little store that once belonged to Ray Spruce and his wife.

21 INT. THE FIREBIRD - NIGHT

Sam's eyes are wild. He's gasping in great excited breaths through his teeth. His passions, made hot by the violence, are boiling over.

WHITEMOON

We leave tonight.

CAVENAUGH

What...whatever you say, Sam.

WHITEMOON

We all go home. We round up whatever shit we wanna take. Rich boy, you pick me up at eleven. Then we'll go get fat stuff. How 'bout it, fat stuff?

FATSO

Yo ho ho.

22 EXT. RAY SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - NIGHT

All is quiet but for THE SOUND OF CRICKETS.

On the top of the shattered porch rail we see a dripping puddle of red enamel paint where Ray's half-pint was spilled by the buckshot. A hand reaches slowly into frame, a hand that's made of mahogany wood. The hand is straining. It's been still for so long that it's almost forgotten how to animate itself. When the fingers move there's AN ODD CREAKING SOUND that reminds us of the groan of a tall ship.

The rigid fingers dip into the puddle of red enamel.

Old Chief Wood'nhead brings those dripping fingers up to his face and makes two new war-paint stripes on his cheek....just below the one already bright red stripe that his old friend Ray had brushed on earlier.

23 INT. "FATSO" GRIBBENS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

PLOP! A suitcase, stuffed and overflowing, hits the floor beside the refrigerator. "Fatso" is all packed and ready to go. He's changed into his traveling threads, a loud Hawaiian shirt and a Greek fisherman's hat that sits on top of his huge round head looking like a knot on a balloon. He opens the fridge and looks inside.

23 CONTINUED:

What's that? He hears something. A SOUND. He lifts his head out of the refrigerator and he looks over his shoulder.

Nothing there. The cheap Murphy's Mart curtains are billowing at the little window over the sink, but there's no other movement.

"Fatso's" kitchen is a pig sty. Every square inch is covered with dirty dishes and old bits of food. Girly magazines are scattered everywhere along with dirty socks and stained jockey shorts with size 58 waists. It's hard to imagine anybody having an appetite for food in such a scurvy environment, but "Fatso" Gribbens' appetite is a constant in his life. He pulls a box of Chicken MacNuggets out of the fridge along with a big sixteen-ounce can of Iron City Beer.

There's that SOUND again. He looks around. He goes to the window this time and peeks out. Nobody there.

24 INT. "FATSO" GRIBBENS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

He moves into the living room which is just as un-appetizing as the kitchen. He walks to the center of the room where an old black-and-white console TV (which he bought over at Jordy Verril's junkyard) sits in its place of reverence. Juggling the Chicken MacNuggets and the can of sloshing beer he manages to click on the set.

By the time he kicks away some of the rubble that blocks the path to his one wing-back chair, the SOUND and PICTURE have faded in on the old el-tubo. There's a movie playing, RIO GRANDE. The volume is up loud. The sound of Indians on the warpath fills the little apartment. Victor McLaglen, Ben Johnson, Ward Bond and the Duke are spittin' lead at an army of Apaches and those red men are biting the dust left and right.

"Fatso" pops a whole MacNugget in his big mouth and he splashes some Iron City down after the thing.

FATSO

Yo ho ho, it's time for our show.

Yo ho HOOOOOOOLY SHIIITTTT!!!

An arrow has come through the back of the chair and clean through "Fatso's" shoulder. It's lodged there now with bits of flesh dangling from its dripping red tip.

"Fatso's" eyes go crossed. Pieces of chicken spill out of his mouth.

Another arrow comes through the center of his chest and a third comes through his forehead with great force.

The third one is the one that kills him.

25 INT. THE CAVENAUGH HOUSE - NIGHT

RIO GRANDE is playing loudly here as well. A huge five-foot Mitsubishi is on in the den. We can see cigarette smoke rising over the chair-backs where Mr. and Mrs. Cavanaugh are sitting.

Andy sneaks past the open den doorway carrying a duffel bag and a rumpled black jacket. He hasn't changed his clothes. He's still the same punk purple and green.

26 INT. THE CAVENAUGH HOUSE - NIGHT

Andy hustles down the hallway and across the vast, empty living room that the Cavanaugh's only use for entertaining. On the other side of the house he moves quickly through a library and a billiard room, into another small hallway.

27 INT. THE CAVENAUGH HOUSE - NIGHT

Andy starts toward the door that leads to the garage. He can still hear the television. The Apaches are screeching the same sort of war cries that Sam Whitemoon hooted out in front of Spruce's store. There's a lot of loud gunfire, too, and there's something else.....

....A SOUND that doesn't seem to be coming from the television at all. Something metal is being pounded and pounded and pounded relentlessly.

The hallway is quite dark. Andy is terrified. He moves closer to the garage and he leans his ear toward the door. Yep. The SOUND is comin' from behind that door alright. CUT TO:

28 INT. THE CAVENAUGH GARAGE - NIGHT

Inside the garage, Andy's hot-shit Firebird is parked in the shadows. Suddenly.....swinging out of the darkness....a tomahawk!

CRASH! CRUNCH! TINKLE! CLANG! CRANG! CLATTERRANG!

Andy's car is being demolished, folks.....massacred (heh, heh, heh).

29 INT. THE CAVENAUGH HOUSE - NIGHT

Andy slowly reaches a trembling hand out toward the doorknob. The latch clicks and he pushes the door into the dark space beyond. The door CREAKS on it's old hinges and suddenly that horrible pounding stops. Andy freezes again.

He waits, listening. There's only silence now. He pushes the door open a little wider so that he can see into the garage.

30 INT. THE CAVENAUGH GARAGE - NIGHT

Andy can see one corner of the Firebird. My God! It's metal surface has been slashed and sliced and slivered as though it wasn't metal at all but some kind of soft cardboard.

Andy's mouth falls open. He can't believe his eyes. Suddenly the door is snatched out of his grasp. Andy looks up. The last thing he sees is a shadow on the wall.....the silhouette of a tall figure in a feathered head-dress.....swinging a tomahawk.

The shadow of the tomahawk slams down onto the shadow of Andy Cavanaugh's screaming profile, connecting at the top of the skull.

Blood splatters the wall and Andy's scream is cut off abruptly.

From the distant television room, the Apache war cries can still be heard penetrating the night.

31 INT. SAM WHITEMOON'S SHACK - NIGHT

I'll be damned! Sam is watching RIO GRANDE also. Well, he's not really watching. He's combing out his pony tail in front of a wall mirror while the T.V. blares in the background.

WHITEMOON

Tell me that this is not a movie star.
Look at this. How can he miss? How can
the kid miss? A hundred million women....

KERRR-AAAAAAAAAAAAASH!!!! Suddenly Sam's sixteen-inch Panasonic comes wailing past his shoulder and slams into the wall next to his mirror. The casing shatters. Knobs, transistors and resistors fly all over the place. A lamp is knocked over and the room goes black. The RIO GRANDE sound track is cut off in mid war-cry.

Old Chief Wood'nhead appears in the mirror, advancing stiffly out of the darkness, a splintered, blood-spattered Golem, an avenger with one final task to accomplish. His mahogany joints groan as he lurches toward Sam Whitemoon.

WHITEMOON

NO....NOOOOOOOOOO! IT CAN'T BE!
YOU'RE....YOU'RE NOT ALIVE! YOU....
YOU CAN'T BE ALIVE. YOU CAN'T
BEEEEEEEEEEEEEE.....

Sam runs into the bathroom and slams the door behind him.

32 INT. SAM WHITEMOON'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sam rattles a throw-bolt into place locking the door. He backs away with his heart pounding. He's in a state of it'hooyee. That's Navajo for shit-faced panic.

It's a tiny room that he's in. To his right there's a small window up above a commode. He moves over, stands up on the seat and tries to open the painted-shut frame.

He glances back over his shoulder at the door. Any second now he expects the demon to come bursting through the flimsy boards.

He looks back at the window. Pushing, straining, he can't get it to budge. He knocks out a pane of glass with his elbow.

He looks over his shoulder again. Still no action at the door.

He punches out another window pane and he elbows the wooden framework out into the night.

He's about to pull himself up when suddenly....KERRRRRAAAASH!!!!!! A giant hand reaches right through the wall to his left. The hand grabs onto his pony-tail and pulls. Sam screams and kicks and throws his body wildly around the little space but that hand, that horrible, avenging hand is so incredibly strong that it's able to pull it's terrified victim right through the hole that it punched in the wall.

33 INT. SAM WHITEMOON'S SHACK - NIGHT

On the living room side of the wall, old Chief Wood'nhead draws his two-foot-long knife from its fringed scabbard. He raises the blade high in his right hand while his left, groaning loudly, pulls on Sam's long black mane.

The top of Sam's head comes through the hole in the wall, then his eyes, nose, screaming mouth follow. The Chief gives a final tug and the hole gets suddenly larger as Sam Whitemoon's shoulders punch through.

Sam's mind seems to snap just before his neck does.

His body is wedged in the wall. His eyes stare upward toward the ceiling but it's not clear whether he actually sees the big knife descend from above.

34 EXT. NAVAJO RESERVATION - DAWN

Roosters crow as the sun rises over the adobe structures.

35 INT. BENJAMIN WHITEMOON'S BEDROOM - DAWN

The first rays of sun bathe the old man's wrinkled face and gently wake him from sleep. He brings a hand, trembling with age, up to his temple, and he massages the eternal aching that he.....

What's this? There's blood on his hand. He startles, sitting up. When he moves, he hears a familiar CLINK-CLINKING SOUND. He looks down at the bed.

There, sitting in a bloody pool on his hand-woven blanket, is the leather treasure pouch he gave to Ray Spruce.

The old Indian picks the thing up. Bewildered, he stands and wanders out of the room.

36 EXT. SPRUCE'S GENERAL STORE - DAWN

The tribal Studebaker bucks around a corner and stops, kicking up a cloud of dust and steam, right in front of Ray Spruce's broken porch railing. Benjamin Whitemoon, not waiting for his chauffeur, opens the passenger door himself and stumbles out into the sunlight.

His mouth falls open slightly at what he sees but his wise old eyes stay calm as always.

BENJAMIN
Adigash. Adigash.

Standing on the porch, in his usual place, is old Chief Wood'nhead, facing the morning sun, petrified again, a lifeless wooden statue. Part of his tomahawk is splintered away, showing bright wood under the dark stain. His body is similarly gouged and splintered. Instead of his normally ferocious gaze, there is a grim grin on his face.

In his free hand, a scalp dangles....long, glossy, black hair, tied with a hank of rawhide....Sam Whitemoon's hair.

The picture freezes and DISSOLVES TO:

37 EFX

A drawing of the grinning Chief, the closing panel of the story on another page in Billy's CREEPSHOW comic-book.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and we find that we've returned to:

38 EXT. THE ELMVILLE INTERSECTION WITH NEWSTAND - MORNING

The comic-book is on the counter with Billy leaning over it reading.

38 CONTINUED:

Alongside the drawing of Old Chief Wood'nhead, there's another drawing of the CREEPSHOW Creep with a word balloon coming out of its drooling mouth. Once again we hear the balloon-words spoken aloud by the real Creep.

CREEP (o.s.)

Well, that was quite a price for young Sam Whitemoon....toupe. Heh, heh, heh.

Billy giggles in response to the pun. As THE SHOT WIDENS, Billy picks the book up off the countertop continuing to read. Behind him we can see the Creep, right where we last left him, back in the shadows of the little news shed.

CREEP

Like most villains in this kind of terror-tome, Sam had to get his.... Commanche-uppance....groan.

Suddenly the old newspaper vendor steps into the shed. Billy plunks down his dollar's worth of coins and starts off with his comic-book. The vendor pulls the magically untied hemp away from the loose stack of CREEPSHOWS. He shakes his head as though he'll never understand young boys.

The Creep is still inside the shed but the old man doesn't see it.... maybe he can't see it. The thing chortles in the shadows while the vendor goes about his business.

39 EXT. ELMVILLE MAIN STREET - MORNING

Billy marches along with purpose. He tucks his CREEPSHOW under his arm while he digs in his pockets again. He pulls out some more money and counts it carefully as he walks on.

FOUR HOODS are hanging-out on a corner in time-honored hood fashion. We can tell from their shit-eating grins, and from the way they're elbowing each other, that they intend to have some sport with Billy. These are real greasers, Amboy Dukes types, several years older than Billy and a lot meaner. One guy, the leader, RHINO, is wearin' chains and slam-dance bracelets. He's got a pair of western riding spurs on his dusty black engineer boots.

Those spurs jingle-jangle-jingle as Rhino and his boys follow Billy down the street.

40 EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

From the shadows of an alleyway, the Creep looks on, peering at the hoods with its cold eyes. It knows Billy can take care of himself but its staying close just in case.

41 EXT. ELMVILLE POST OFFICE - MORNING

Billy climbs the Post Office steps and hurries inside. Rhino and his boys gather 'round a mailbox near the curb cool-bobbing their heads.

42 INT. POST OFFICE - MORNING

The Postman, MR. HAIG, is the same sort of country gent as the newspaper vendor, old enough to retire but too young at heart to think of it.

HAIG

Yep. It come in on the night train.
Here it is.

The Postman plops a brown-wrapped package onto the countertop. It's another mail-order goodie from The CREEPSHOW Company.

HAIG (cont.)

That's C.O.D., nine dollars and ninety-nine cents. Mighty expensive for a toy ordered from a funny-paper.

BILLY

Creepshow's no funny-paper! And this is no toy!

HAIG

Well, what is it?

BILLY

It's a Venus Flytrap bulb.

HAIG

A Venus what bulb?

BILLY

Venus Flytrap. It eats meat. This here bulb will grow into a plant that eats bugs, flies....even hamburgers.

Billy opens and closes his hands like jaws and he makes a realistic gurgling, choking sound to demonstrate.

BILLY

GRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHGGGG!

HAIG

All that stuff's a gyp. You'll learn ta put yer money ta better use. Those bulbs are prob'ly just petunia bulbs. And they're prob'ly too old ta be any good. They'll rot in the ground and you'll be out ninety-nine.

42 CONTINUED:

BILLY

I don't think so, Mr. Haig.

Billy smiles. He knows his own truth.....and so do we, right, kiddies?

HAIG

You don't get nothin' good sendin' away
ta places like that. All they do is gyp little
kids who're too dumb ta know any better.

Billy, still smiling, ignores the insult. He opens his comic-book to read while the Postman goes off to get the penny change for the ten dollars in coin that Billy gave in payment.

The Creep glides in beside the boy. The thing is staring into THE CAMERA again, speaking to those of us who haven't run wretching from the theater yet.

CREEP

Still here, kiddies? Well, if Old Chief
Wood'nhead didn't drive you away, you
might enjoy this next splintering tale
whittled from the same worm-wood,
a gruesome little revenge story, short,
sweet and....heh, heh, heh....striking!
I call this one....PINFALL.

THE CAMERA has been MOVING IN on Billy's open comic-book. By the time the Creep finishes his speech we are TIGHT ON THE SPLASH-PANEL for the second story.

43 EFX

We MOVE IN TIGHTER to an ECU. The lettering which spells PINFALL disappears and we're left with just the splash-panel drawing, which then MATCH-DISSOLVES into a FROZEN LIVE-ACTION FRAME showing:

44 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

A CLOSE-UP of bowling pins. A ball has hit just to the right of center. We HEAR the familiar thunder of a pinstrike, then THE FRAME UN-FREEZES and the action completes itself. All ten of the pins go down.

The ball was bowled by REGGIE RAMBEAUX, captain of THE REGI-MEN, one of the twenty teams in Everytown's bowling league. Reggie is clearly pleased with himself, and not just because he bowled a strike. He's always pleased with himself. He likes himself a lot and that, in part, makes us not like him at all.

44 CONTINUED:

The other four REGI-MEN are hanging around the semi-circle of molded fiberglass seats behind the ball-return. They're all wearing bowling shirts with the team name emblazoned on the backs. If not for those shirts, this fivesome would look nothing like the typical blue-collar, beer-drinking Everytown bowling team we might have pictured in our minds. These guys look like junior executives from the Silicone Valley, late-thirties, early-forties, neat razor-cuts blown dry, each with a Magnum moustache.

The REGI-MEN aren't making the usual animal sounds, either. The ones bowlers make when a teammate scores a strike. They're applauding politely and bouncing on the balls of their feet, resembling one of those Moonie-like clans on FAMILY FEUD more than they do a bowling team.

REGI-MEN

Good shot, Reggie. Perfectly curved ball. Right in the pocket. Impressive. Impressive. Outstanding. Super.

In their midst, sitting at the scoring table, is a Don Knotts look-alike wearing a sweat-shirt, provided by the Big Ten Lanes, with OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPER written across its chest.

SCOREKEEPER

One extra ball.

REGI-MEN

Outstanding. Super. Go ahead, Reggie. Score another strike.

Reggie wipes his hands on a towel. His marbled blue ball comes RUMBLUMBLUMBLING around on the ball-return chute and he catches it before it stops. His fingers sink into the custom-drilled holes and he saunters back toward the line to take his bonus shot.

The pins have been reset. Reggie faces-off. He lifts his blue up to a spot just below his Adam's-apple and he stares out over top of the ball lining up his shot. We can see him concentrating. He takes three quick cleansing breaths.

Just as he is about to make his move, he is interrupted by the LOUD SOUND of a ball hitting the boards of an adjoining alley directly to his left. Reggie steps away from the line supremely annoyed.

45 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

A little old man, bowling alone, has just thrown his ball and the act has pitched his frail body off balance. He's teetering at the line, flailing his arms, trying to stay on his feet. This is J. FREDERICK MACDUGAL, a Scotsman who looks about a hundred-and-fifty-years old.

45 CONTINUED:

Reggie Rambeaux glares at the little man while his mates assault the nervous scorekeeper with complaints.

REGI-MEN

It's that old geezer again..He's always causing a disturbance. The Lanes shouldn't allow single bowlers on team nights. Look at that. He made Reggie break his concentration.

Old MacDugal's Brunswick black is about halfway down the alley now, movin' reeeeeeeal slow. (There's not very much power left in the little man's arm.) It finally reaches the pins. Miraculously, it knocks down the one, the three, the five, the six and the ten. There's virtually no pin-action so the others aren't even wobbled.

The old guy makes two fists. He lifts his arms up high then whips them down in a classic "darn it" gesture. When he waddles toward the ball-return, his eyes connect with Reggie's.

REGGIE

Mr. Muggs, I presume.

(Machine-stitched over the breast pocket of the old codger's shirt is a large "J. FRED".)

MACDUGAL

Name's MacDugal.

REGGIE

Sorry. I must have you confused with some other chump....er, chimp.

MACDUGAL

Whassat?

The old guy reaches into the pocket behind the stitched letters and turns up the gain on his hearing aid. It's an old-fashioned model with big wires that run up to an ugly earpiece.

REGGIE

(exaggeratedly loud) DON'T YOU KNOW
THIS IS TEAM NIGHT?

MACDUGAL

Team night. Oh, yes. It's always busier here on team night.

REGGIE

Why don't you pick some other night to try your luck?

45 CONTINUED:

MACDUGAL

Oh, I'm here every night. I never miss.
I love bowling. Always have.

REGGIE

You call that bowling?

The old man's hearing aid brings home the slur loud and clear. His face droops. He's visibly hurt.

REGGIE

Take your sloppy game somewhere else.
You're breaking my concentration. We're
playing for the annual trophy here.
Every pin counts.

MACDUGAL

I've paid the same tarriff as you have, young
man, for the use of this facil.....

REGGIE

I'm surprised they let you in here at all. You're
nothing but a nuisance to the serious bowlers.

MACDUGAL

There's nobody more serious about this game
than I, sir. I find your remarks ungentle-
manly and unsportsmanlike. All my life I've
wanted to play on a team like yours, but if
you represent the calibre of today's....(cough)
bowling.....etiquette....(cough)

Old MacDugal is suddenly overcome by a series of body-wracking coughs. His frail hands grope for a pill bottle in the side pocket of his shirt. He barely manages to pop the bottle's lid and throw a couple of life-saving tablets down his throat.

We may not have noticed until now that the lane on the other side of MacDugal's lane (two lanes away from Reggie) is being used by another team, **THE BAD NEWS BOORS**. Now these guys DO look like the bowlers we might have pictured in our minds. All five of them have pear-shaped torsos and orang-utan arms. They look like Jack Davis drawings. They all have terminal beardshadow. They're swilling Utica Club beer and smoking hand-shaped Parodies that look (and smell, no doubt) like poodle turds.

The captain of the B.N.B.s is a Donkey Kong look-alike named **CHOOCH MANDOLINO**. He's been listening to the interchange between Reggie and poor old MacDugal. Now he comes loping over behind the old man, his eyes un-blinking beneath a Neanderthal brow. He crushes an empty beer can in one hand as he speaks.

CHOOCH

Lay off the old guy, mac, or I'll shove that pretty blue marble o' yours up where the sun don't shine. Hah! That'd loosen up his tight ass permanent-like, whatd'ya say, Louie?

LOUIE is another one of THE BOORS. He's short and stubby with a scrunched-up face. He looks like "Tough" Tony Gallento, and just as "Tough" Tony did in ON THE WATERFRONT, Louie follows his boss-man, Chooch, everywhere, always staying a few inches behind the big guy's left elbow, which is at about his own eye level, and always punctuating what Chooch has to say with one word....

LOUIE

Definitely!

REGGIE

Congratulations, sir. You have aptly demonstrated the meaning of your team's name!

CHOOCH

Oh, yeah? Well you've demonstrated your ass-hole-ness, ass hole!

LOUIE

Definitely!

CHOOCH

And in about a minute I'm gonna come over there an' make you EAT that fancy ball o' yours, an' I bet it don't taste near as good as it looks, how 'bout it, Louie?

LOUIE

Definitely!

MACDUGAL

Please, gentlemen....I didn't mean to cause trouble. I'll....I'll pack up and leave.

The old man has not completely recovered from his siezure but the capsules he swallowed seem to be doing their job. He moves to collect his things. Chooch steps over and slaps an orang-utan arm around the little man's shoulder.

CHOOCH

You ain't goin' nowhere but bowlin', my friend. Like you said, you paid fer the alley jus' like the rest of us. Tell ya what, you bowl wid us tonight. We'll make you a honorary member o' the Bad News Boors!

MACDUGAL

What? Are you....are you serious?

CHOOCH

Hey! Lookit here, we even got a extra shirt for ya.

Louie pulls a shirt from a duffelbag and THE BAD NEWSERS surround old MacDugal. They wisk him over onto their lane and in a matter of seconds he's wearing the team colors (six sizes too big). An open can of Utica Club is frothing over in his trembling hand and he's grinning like a twelve-year-old who's just made first-string Little League.

Reggie's really hot now. His high pitched voice cuts through the other noise that's filling the Big Ten Lanes.

REGGIE

If you people don't care about your score tonight, please try to understand the concept that I CARE ABOUT MINE!

THE BOORS stop shouting. Standing in a tight circle around MacDugal, they turn their heads in unison toward Reggie and stare at him in silence for a moment. (If this was a Jack Davis drawing, he'd probably ink in some beer fumes, body odor and cigar smoke, all forming a cloud overhead.)

REGGIE

My teammates and I would like to win the championship, not that you or anyone else in this league offers any real competition.

CHOOCH

Maybe some of us don't give a shit about a lousy little statue from a Podunk bowling league. Maybe we think it's more important to have a good time with some good buddies. Drink a few beers; have a couple laffs.

REGGIE

Why is it that lazy, illiterate, slovenly, good-for-nothing imbeciles are always so righteously proud of their station in life?

Reggie tosses this over his shoulder at the other REGI-MEN who nod agreement and chorus more FAMILY FEUD type encouragements.

REGI-MEN

How true, how true. Don't waste your time on these slobs, Reggie. Don't waste your breath. Don't let them sucker you into something you'll regret. They're beneath you. They're Cretins. Animals.

45 CONTINUED:

Chooch has to use all his inner-muscle to keep himself from charging. He could demolish the little snot with the marbleized blue ball. Instead, he tongues his Parodi over to one corner of his mouth and grins widely.

CHOOCH

Lessgo, guys. Lessbowl some frames.
Whatd'ya say? Less let these ass holes
live fer now. Come on, J. Fred. Hey,
you need another beer? How you doin'?

MACDUGAL

Oh, I'm fine. I'm fine. I shouldn't be
drinkin' beer at all but it tastes so
good. Soooooo good.

J. Fred slugs from his dripping can and THE BOORS pull in close around him almost smothering him with enthusiastic welcome. They're bellowing again and hooting like jungle birds.

46 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

Reggie turns back to face his own alley. He jerks his shoulders around and circles his head on his neck trying to work out the tension created by the incident.

REGI-MEN

Shake it off, Reggie. Don't let it get you.
Let's go. One more ball. Put it in the pocket.
We need another outstanding shot here.

Reggie brings his ball up to his Adam's apple again but when he glowers over the top of that shiny blue sphere we can tell that he hasn't been able to "shake it off" at all. He's still hot under the team-shirt-collar.

He makes his move. Sliding up to the line, he fires. The REGI-MEN send up another round of dispassionate cheers as the ball approaches the pins.

KA-BOOOOOOM! The big blue marble takes out the one, the three, the five, the six and the ten, leaving the other pins standing. A booming voice calls from two lanes away.

CHOOCH

Hey, mac. You call that bowling?

Reggie turns red. His face puckers up into prune-wrinkles. For a moment we can't tell if he's enraged or if he's trying to force out a constipated stool. He turns slowly to his left. We can almost see smoke coming from all the openings in his head as he stares at THE BOORS.

They pay him no attention at all. They're back to business-as-usual, hooting, giving each other the high-fives, swilling beer and crushing cans.

SCOREKEEPER

That's a final of two-twenty-two. You're still in first place, but the Bad News Boors haven't bowled yet.

REGGIE

Them? Surely they don't pose any threat.

SCOREKEEPER

At the end of last week they were thirty-four pins behind your total. That puts them in second place....and within reach.

The nervous little man scurries off leaving the REGI-MEN standing, open-mouthed, around a copy of their scorecard.

Two lanes away, the scorekeeper sets up shop at the table behind the BAD NEWS BOORS. The howling over there gets louder and wilder in anticipation. Fresh beers are snapped open, cigars are re-lit. (In the middle of it all is J. Fred, now in a state of near euphoria.)

The REGI-MEN look to their captain, little clouds of worry passing over all their faces. Reggie has regained his cool. He packs up his ball and gathers his other things.

REGGIE

There's nothing to worry about, fellas. One look at those slobs should convince you of that. They're careless, un-motivated, out of shape. This is a game of precision. You've got to study the variables, the angles, the curves, the weight of the ball, the slickness of the alley. Don't worry. Nobody can beat us. Nobody can beat the Regi-Men's regimen. Study and practice. Study and practice. Study and practice...

KERRAAAAAASH! A big black sixteen pounder slams a perfect strike. The ball was thrown by Chooch, who turns toward Reggie and shrugs.

CHOOCH

Lucky shot.

LOUIE

Definitely!

The REGI-MEN continued packing but Reggie Rambeaux keeps a wary eye on the action two lanes away.

47 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

Chooch slaps an enormous hand on MacDugal's back, almost knocking him over.

CHOOCH

Lessgo, J. Fred. You toss the next couple balls, how 'bout it?

The other BOORS loudly approve and they all shove the little guy up to the front. He takes one last slug of Utica Club and teeters over to the towel hanging on the ball-return. He passes his wet beer can to Chooch as he wipes his hands dry.

MACDUGAL

I don't know how to thank you young men. This is the most exciting evening I've had in the last twenty years. I've always dreamed of playing on a team.

CHOOCH

You love bowlin', huh?

MACDUGAL

I've bowled at least twenty frames a day every day of my life since I was old enough to pick up a ball.

CHOOCH

Hey! That's a lot o' bowlin'!

LOUIE

Definitely!

CHOOCH

Hows come I don't see ya around here more?

MACDUGAL

I've always just watched the teams from the gallery. Too shy to ever come down onto the floor myself. But in the last weeks, I've had to come down in order to do my twenty frames a day. Termites at my own lanes, you see.

MACDUGAL

Yer own lanes? Where's yer own lanes at?

MACDUGAL

Why, in my house. Just off the billiard room, between the pool and the gym.

47 CONTINUED:

By now, MacDugal has gotten his ball and is standing at the head of the alley. He makes his move and shoots. It's another slow ball. As it rumbles down the alley, Chooch turns to the other BOORS.

CHOOCH

Between the pool....and the gym? In his house? He's gotta be shittin'.

LOUIE

Definitely!

The Brunswick black makes it all the way to the pins, surprisingly, and it's pretty much on target. One pin goes down....two more....five more....

....but the seven and the ten are left standing at the extreme left and extreme right of the back row. It's bowling's equivalent of snake-eyes.

BOORS

Hey! Awrite! Way ta flatten 'em!
Way ta go, J. Fred! Good ball!
Good ball! Yeah! Whooooeeeeeeeh!

The BOORS circle in one at a time to slap J. Fred on the back. He wobbles with each slap like one of those inflatable clowns with a weighted bottom. There's an odd look in his eyes as he gazes down the alley at the near-impossible split. Chooch sloshes the beer can back into MacDugal's hand. The old guy absently takes a quick slug then he passes the can back without ever taking his eyes off the pins.

MACDUGAL

Twenty frames a day for seventy years.
And I've never once been able to make
a seven-ten split. Never once.

CHOOCH

Jeez. That's, er....that's tough luck.

LOUIE

Definitely!

MACDUGAL

It haunts me. It keeps coming up.
More and more often. Here it is
again. Seven-ten split.

The old man's ball has rumbled up onto the return chute. Like a zombie MacDugal lurches over to gather it up. He moves back to the head of the alley and faces off. His eyes are wide but life has gone out of them. He lifts his Brunswick black into position, then he freezes..... He freezes for a long time.

47 CONTINUED:

CHOOCH

Hey. Hey, J. Fred. You ok?

The old guy just stands there, a statue.

CHOOCH

Maybe, er....maybe this is yer day,
who knows? Whatd'ya say, Louie?

LOUIE

Definitely!

CHOOCH

Yeah. Maybe this is yer day ta make it.
Yer day ta make the seven-ten.
Don't let it get ya....

Suddenly, J. Fred moves. His ball hand comes down and back in the usual bowling motion, but much too quickly, too violently. He staggers forward four, five, six stuttering steps on legs that are like boards, then he freezes again, his ball suspended in air at the end of his stiff right arm which is reaching way back behind his body. He looks like an action figure atop a bowling trophy.

SCOREKEEPER

Foul! He's over the line!

Chooch looks down and sees that J. Fred's left foot is indeed several inches over the green strip that marks the in-bounds limit.

Suddenly that foot moves. The other foot moves. The ball hand comes down hard, as though to shoot the ball, but the fingers don't let go. The ball flies forward and MacDugal's body follows it, his hand still attached. He stumbles, on fluttering feet, halfway down the alley, then he spins in a little circle, the heavy black Brunswick leading him around. His arms go rigid again, his legs do the same, and with one final grotesque lurch, he seems to fling the ball toward the pins. The heavy weight pulls him over this time but still his fingers hang on. He slides over the slick boards, reaches the end of the alley and, for the first time in his life, he makes a seven-ten spare.

His ball knocks over the ten pin, his head knocks over the seven.

CHOOCH

Holy shit! That's what you call
makin' it the hard way.

LOUIE

Definitely!

47 CONTINUED:

The pin-sweep comes down from overhead. It jams against J. Fred's stiff body. A safety mechanism kicks in and the unit starts to spasm the way an elevator door does when something gets stuck in its bumper. An alarm sends A HIDEOUS NOISE through the Big Ten Lanes.

BARRRAAAAAAACK! BARRRAAAAAAACK! BARRRAAAAAAACK!

Two alleys away, Reggie and the REGI-MEN look on.

Chooch and his BOORS stare dumbly. Again the big captain says....

CHOOCH

Holy shit!

A MAINTENANCE MAN appears behind the bucking sweep. He hits a hidden button. The mechanism stops BARRRAAAAAAACKING and moves up into the ceiling of the pin chamber.

The man bends over J. Fred's motionless body. After a moment he looks up, shaking his head from side to side indicating "He's dead."

48 EFX

The front page of a newspaper comes spinning up from infinity. The headline settles, upright, in front of our eyes:

NUMBER TEN DIES AT BIG TEN

Over this we HEAR THE VOICE of A NEWSCASTER.

VOICE

J. Frederick MacDugal, reported to be the world's tenth wealthiest man, is dead today at the age of eighty-two.

49 EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - DAY

In the courtyard of one of those office complexes along a high-speed parkway, we see the REGI-MEN standing amid the lawn-sculptures. Each in a suit and tie, each with a combination-lock attache from The Sharper Image, they are huddled, staring in disbelief at Reggie's copy of the Daily Blab. The newscaster's VOICE CONTINUES.

VOICE

An eccentric, who lived alone all his life, MacDugal was bowling at the Big Ten Lanes near his home when he was stricken by a massive cardiac seizure thought to have been brought on by irritation over his low score...

REGGIE

I don't believe it! J. Fred Muggs turns out to be J. Fred MacBucks! Why didn't he tell me who he was? I certainly would have gone easier on him if I'd known he was rich.

REGI-MEN

(reading the paper) Impressive. Very impressive.

50 EXT. STEEL MILL - DAY

In the yard outside an operating steel mill, Chooch and the other BAD NEWS BOORS are huddled over the same issue of the paper. They're all in hardhats, biballs and Woolrich jackets. The VOICE CONTINUES.

VOICE

MacDugal is survived by no immediate family so the disposition of his estate, estimated at upwards of three billion dollars, is likely to be the subject of much curiosity over the days to come.

CHOOCH

I guess he wasn't shittin' about the pool and the gym.

LOUIE

Definitely!

51 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

CLOSE UP: C. HAMILTON WILBURFORCE, attorney for the deceased.

WILBURFORCE

I have been appointed....along with certain members of the management of the, er.... Big Ten Lanes (ahem)....to act as trustee over an escrow account totaling five.... five million dollars.

Wilburforce fits his name perfectly. He's a snooty old-schooler in a three-piece navy-blue suit. His hair is slicked down and he wears pince-nez, low on his nose, just above an eyebrow-pencil moustache.

We PULL BACK to discover that he is standing in front of the refreshment counter in the lobby. A hot-dog rotisserie turns behind his left shoulder, a Lemon Blenn cooler bubbles on his right. He is clearly alien to the surroundings.

51 CONTINUED:

The scorekeeper we saw earlier and **TWO OTHER OFFICIALS** wearing Big Ten Lanes windbreakers are standing beside Wilburforce. They are facing an attentive **CROWD OF TEAM NIGHT BOWLERS**.

WILBURFORCE

Such sum is to be paid over to whichever team in the Big Ten League should accumulate the highest score for the season.

A rumble goes up from the stunned crowd. It grows into a roar as bowlers slowly register what they've just heard. One **BIG FATSO**, who looks and sounds like Ralph Cramden, shouts over the noise.

FATSO

Hold it, hold it. You mean ta say that the team wid the best score at the end o' dis season gets five million bazoomas?

WILBURFORCE

If one bazooma equals one dollar then yes, that is precisely what I mean to say.

FATSO

A cool five mill? No strings attached?

WILBURFORCE

A....'cool five mill'....and then some, sir. Mr. MacDugal, to the dismay of some of us who executor his estate, has instructed that the taxes be paid for the winners over and above the principal amount.

Pandemonium breaks loose. Bowlers start to leap up and down, hollering and slapping each other around like football players who have just won the Super Bowl.

Reggie Rambeaux and the **REGI-MEN**, uncomfortable amid the growing chaos, stay seated in their molded fiberglass chairs. When Reggie speaks, it's almost to himself.

REGGIE

We're in first place. We're going to win. A million dollars a-piece.....after taxes.

REGI-MEN

Impressive. Outstanding. Super.

REGGIE

Holy shit!

51 CONTINUED:

WHAP! Reggie is hit from behind by a powerful force. He almost falls forward out of his seat. He's been slapped on the back by one of Chooch Mandolino's giant hands. The big BOOR has fought his way through the crowd (with the ever-present Louie just behind his left elbow).

CHOOCH

Hey, ass hole. Now we got somethin'
ta play for. How 'bout it, Louie?

LOUIE

Definitely!

Worry breaks over Reggie and the REGI-MEN like a winter ocean wave.

52 EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - DAY

UP-TEMPO MUSIC hits as the REGI-MEN, some in Nike sweat-suits, others in Addidas, do butterfly-kicks and push-ups among the sculptures.

REGGIE

(leading) Hup, two, three, four.
Hup, two, three, four. Regi-men,
Regi-men, every day the Regi-men.

53 INT. BIG TEN LANES - LATE EVENING

Reggie's team is practicing. Everyone else has gone home. A JANITOR is waiting impatiently to lock the place up for the night.

REGGIE

(to janitor) Just a few more frames.
I promise. Just a few more.

The REGI-MEN are bowling on two alleys. Reggie passes among them pouring massive assortments of vitamin pills into their hands. The players wash the pills down with Gatorade.

REGGIE

Practice makes perfect. Practice and study
and exercise. Concentrate. The angles, the
curves, the slickness. Keep it all in mind
and nobody can beat us. Nobody can beat
the Regi-Men's regimen!

54 EXT. THE ROAD OUTSIDE THE LANES - EVENING

The REGI-MEN are jogging along the back road that leads to the Big Ten Lanes. They're in sweat-suits, carrying their duffles and their ball-bags. Single-file, they look a small military unit. Reggie shouts ribald limerics to help keep his teammates in step.

54 CONTINUED:

REGGIE

There was an old guy named Dave,
 who kept a dead whore in a cave.
 He'd often admit,
 'I'm a bit of a shit,
 but think of the money I save.'

Suddenly, roaring up the road from behind the trotting troop, comes a rattling and rusty Dodge van, circa 1968. The horn starts to bleet wildly and SHOUTING VOICES can be heard as the big hunk of rolling rust rumbles by. Through the road dust, and through the thick cloud of cigar smoke inside the Dodge, we can make out the unmistakable Cookie-Monster shapes of THE BAD NEWS BOORS, each with a Utica Club can sloshing foam.

BOORS

HEY, IT'S THE REGI-MEN! GET A HORSE!
 LOOKIT THEM SWEET OUTFITS THEY GOT!
 EAT OUR DUST! WE GOT IT BY THE ASS!
 WE'RE NUMBER ONE! DEFINITELY!

The van zooms on ahead and the joggers are engulfed by a cloud of pollution which includes a couple of hand-crushed empties and a flurry of cigar ash.

REGGIE

Don't let them upset you, men.
 Filthy, polluted minds make for
 filthy polluted bodies. And filthy
 polluted bodies....
CAN'T BOWL WORTH SHIT!!!!

55 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

KE-RRRAAAAAASH!!!! A marbleized red slams into a full set of pins knocking all ten of them flying. A clean strike.

REGI-MEN

Impressive. Super. Outstanding.

The scorekeeper registers the points as captain Reggie congratulates the man who bowled the red. There's A FAIR SIZED CROWD watching the action from the gallery behind the scoring table.

As Reggie collects his big blue from the ball-return, he spots, out of the corner of his eye, A TELEVISION CREW pushing through to the front of the crowd with a portable camera and a hand-held quartz lamp which seems to burst the building open with light. A REPORTER speaks softly but urgently into a microphone.

55 CONTINUED:

REPORTER

And here we have the current front-runners,
a team called the Regi-Men.

As the reporter babbles on, Reggie blinks his eyes several times. A stupefied look comes over him for a moment. The sunburst of quartz is burning itself onto his retinas. He looks away from the light. His eyes bounce over the faces in the gallery. Faces distorted with money lust.

REPORTER

The big question here? Will the Regi-Men
be able to hang on to their lead to come
away with the greatest bowling trophy of
all time.....five million in cash!

The commotion is upsetting Reggie, doing something to his equilibrium, ruffling his precision feathers. He turns away from the crowd and, trying to forget they're back there, he brings his big blue up to his Adam's apple and stares down the long alley toward the waiting pins.

REGI-MEN

Let's go, Reggie. Let's see another winner
here. Let's see another super ball. Right in
the pocket. Show them how it's done, Reg.
Another strike would be very impressive.
Outstanding. Let's go.

Reggie's concentration is broken. When he makes his move and shoots we know immediately that the big blue is off target. It sputters into the gutter on the right side of the lane and rolls through to the backboard never contacting a pin.

For a long moment, Reggie stands at the head of the alley, staring at the ten pins in disbelief. He doesn't seem to notice the furor as the crowd behind him reacts.

The news reporter is babbling into his mike but we can't hear him over the crowd. (We may notice money changing hands in the gallery as the side-bet activity suddenly increases.) The quartz lamp gets jostled and great, blinding beams of atomic-looking light bounce onto the back of Reggie's bristling neck. He's still staring down the alley at those standing pins.

SCOREKEEPER

That's a final today for the Regi-Men
of two-oh-nine. That drops their lead
to twenty-four.

REGI-MEN

We're not worried. Right, Reggie? Fluke ball.
Happens to the best of us. Two-oh-nine.
Great score. Impressive. Super.

55 CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Reggie Rambeaux spins on his heels. His head is tucked down, too tightly, into his hunched-up shoulders. His cheeks are puffed out into the kind of snarl one might expect from a Bengal tiger that's snagged its cock on a thorn bush. Reggie looks psychotic. If he had a machine-gun, he'd turn the crowd into confetti.

REGGIE
WE'RE PROTESTING! WE'RE PROTESTING THIS
SCORE! I CAN'T CONCENTRATE! I CAN'T
CONCENTRATE WITH ALL THIS....ALL THIS....
MADNESS! THIS IS MADNESS! THIS GAME
REQUIRES....ABSOLUTE....ABSOLUTE....

The sharp SOUND of a pinfall cuts in over Reggie's shouting. His eyes start to blink again when he notices that several of the folks in the gallery are leaving his lane. Their attention has been drawn to another lane, where the BAD NEWS BOORS are tearin' up the alleyboards.

56 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

Chooch and his boys are whooping and slappin' the high-fives just as they might on any team night. They're poppin' beer tops and re-lighting each other's Parodies. Five million or no, the BOORS are havin' a good time. They're loose. And they're lookin' mighty good.

KE-RRRAAAAAASH!!!! Louie bowls a strike.

Reggie Rambeaux stares at the scene.

The news crew is hustling over there now to shoot pictures of the BOORS in action. KE-RRRRRAAAAAAATTTTLE!!!! Another strike. The BOORS are on a roll.

Reggie's mouth droops open. He is watching his team's lead being cut down ten pins at a time.

Chooch fires his sixteen pounder. KERRAAAAACK! WHACK! A bullet! The third strike in a row!

Reggie's eyes go squinty. He's thinking, "something has to be done about this", and his thoughts are written all over his face.

57 INT. A TAVERN - NIGHT

The BOORS are drinking shots and beers at TONY'S TEMPORARY WORK STOPPAGE, a blue-collar bar "IN THE HILLS ABOVE THE MILLS" (that's what it says on a sign above the huge gingerbreaded mirror behind the bottle counter.)

57 CONTINUED:

There's a big crowd gathered around the BOORS who have apparently become the new favorites to win the five mill. The bowlers are already spending the money in their minds.

BOOR #3

I'm gonna buy me some season football tickets. Five o' dem, so we can all go.

BOOR #4

But there's no football teams around here.

BOOR #3

I know. I'm gonna buy season tickets for the Miami Dolphins.

A rowdy, back-slapping cheer goes up from all in the bar. The regular patrons are living out their own fantasies through the "celebrity bowlers".

BOOR #5

I can't decide if I should get me a hundred-dollar hooker for ten thousand nights....(a big howl interrupts him and he has to shout over it)....OR A TWENTY-FIVE DOLLAR FLOOZY FOR FORTY THOUSAND NIGHTS!

The crowd really goes bananas now. Another round of shots-and-beers is circulated and a polka starts to play on the old Wurlitzer.

BOOR #5

I wouldn't wanna kick-off before I got the full deal. How many years is forty thousand nights?

CHOOCH

Hey, it's a bunch, buddy. It's a whole bunch. Right, Louie?

LOUIE

Definitely!

58 EXT. THE TAVERN - NIGHT

Outside one of the windows, two of the REGI-MEN are hunched down in the shadows watching the action inside the tavern. A third teammate eases in beside them.

R.M. #3

What's it look like?

R.M. #1

They're still at it.

R.M. #2

Showing no signs of breaking up.

R.M. #3

Outstanding.

Number three splits off again, leaving the first two at their post.

He slaloms through the K-Cars and Datsuns in the tavern's parking lot until he comes to the rusty Dodge van which we recognize as belonging to the BAD NEWS BOORS. There are two sets of feet sticking out from under the front end. We can HEAR THE SOUNDS of tools against iron. Number three bends down and we take a look, with him, under the van.

We see R.M. #4 holding a Durabeam on the front axle just behind the right front wheel. Reggie Rambeaux is working on the illuminated rust-patch with a brand new, Big-Mama auto wrench.

R.M. #3

They're still drinkin'.

R.M. #4

Super.

REGGIE

I've almost got it.

SHOCK CUT TO:

59 EXT. THE TAVERN - NIGHT

....the door of the tavern flying open. The BOORS come flashdancing out of the place as neon blinks off all around them. Other sloshed patrons are tagging along, most of them singing The Beer-Barrel Polka. (They're not singing words, they're just using "DA" for each syllable.)

CROWD

DA DA, DA DA DA, DA DA DA DA DA,
DA DA DA DA DA DAA-DAAAAAAAAAAAA....

The fans peel off, each staggering toward his own rattletrap ride, while the heros of the evening, the five BOORS, all pile aboard their rusty Dodge Econoline. The cabin quickly fills up with one of those Jack Davis clouds full of combined pollutants. The engine starts and we can HEAR THE SOUND of beer tops popping as the BOORS each open up one for the road. When the van pulls out, the big slobs are still doing the polka and the whole cabin is rocking in tempo on its failing springs.

60 EXT. A HILLTOP ROAD - NIGHT

The clunker Dodge is accelerating down a dark, deserted hillside road. The curves are treacherous and....you guessed it....there's no guardrail.

60 CONTINUED:

There's A CLUNKING SOUND, hardly noticeable over the usual clunking. Suddenly, the right front wheel separates from its axle. It rolls along in place. For a moment it seems as though nothing is wrong.

We HEAR The Beer-Barrel Polka coming from inside the cabin. We HEAR it right up until the end. Even after the loose wheel finally veers off and wobbles onto the burm. Even after the rusty old van fails to respond to a left turn. Even after the big Dodge sails over a cliff into the dark of night....we still HEAR The Beer-Barrel Polka.

BOORS
DA DA DAA-DAAAAAAAAA.....

KA-BLOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOEEY!!! An enormous explosion occurs halfway down the cliffside and an orange and black cloud that looks like napalm appears. The cloud seems to roll, like a runaway beachball, down, down, down toward the valley where other orange clouds are belching out of steel mill furnaces.

61 EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

The REGI-MEN are watching from Reggie's Buick (with all its lights out) parked at an overview spot high on the hilltop. The flames, reflected in the windshield, look like the fires of Hell. They seem to be consuming Reggie, who is staring out from the other side of the glass. A switch thrown somewhere inside his brain has left him in Norman Bates Land.

REGGIE
We didn't kill them. We simply....loosened a few bolts, that's all. Cut through some metal that was already rusted out. The wheel could have fallen off anywhere. We didn't know it would fall off on the hillside road.

REGI-MEN
Right. That's right, Reggie. Absolutely right. Luck of the draw. That's what it was. Luck of the draw that killed them.

62 EFX

We get a last look at the fireball that once was the BOORS' Econoline. It spreads when it hits the valley floor, like one of those super-slow-motion drops of water you see on NOVA. From out of the center of the flame, a newspaper headline whirls up toward us, filling the screen:

MILLION BUCK BOWLERS KILLED IN FREAK CRASH!

We HEAR the LOUD SOUND OF A PINFALL and we CUT TO:

63 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

MONTAGE: starting with a CLOSE-UP of a pin-scattering strike.

It's team night and bowlers are doing their thing. There's a wild, celebrative atmosphere. The gallery is more crowded than ever and side-bet activity has reached frenzied proportions. Nobody's mourning the poor old BOORS. There are no black arm-bands anywhere. Wait a minute..... there ARE some black arm-bands. Five of them worn by, of all people.... the REGI-MEN!

64 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

Reggie and his teammates are pushing through the crowd heading for their reserved lane when they are intercepted by the T.V. news crew.

REPORTER

....and because of the tragic accident, the Regi-Men are back in the number one slot. Maybe I can get a comment here from the captain of the team, Reggie Rambeaux.

The man's microphone stops Reggie in his tracks. His teammates pile up behind him. Reggie looks directly into the TV camera. (He's got a prepared speech.)

REGGIE

They had us beaten. They were the better bowlers. It's tragic. If we win, we've agreed that we're going to buy them specially designed headstones to commemorate them properly. But that's not the story here tonight. You want the real story? Look around you. Tell your cameraman to take pictures of this....this....orgy! My God, doesn't anyone mourn the human loss here? Anyone but us?
(He exhibits his black arm-band and, behind him, the other REGI-MEN do the same.)

65 INT. BIG TEN LANES - EVENING

WIDE ANGLE: Teams are bowling all the lanes. Fans are gathered around their favorites. The refreshment stand is doing land-office business. The place sounds like Coney Island with reverb.

66 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

All that noise stops suddenly as we CUT TO A HIGH ANGLE SHOT of the place after everyone's gone.

66 CONTINUED:

Well....almost everyone's gone. The REGI-MEN are still on their alley, still bowling. THE SOUND of the balls on the boards, THE SOUND of the pinfalls in the empty, echoing hall is oddly frightening.

We see another figure walking down through the empty gallery. It's the scorekeeper, wearing a raincoat and hat, leaving for the night.

SCOREKEEPER

Just push the top button on the alarm system when you leave. Use the fire-exit door. It'll latch shut behind you.

REGGIE

You have nothing to worry about. We can be trusted.

SCOREKEEPER

You guys are so far out in front. Nobody can catch you. Yet you're still practicing as though you were in the Olympics.

REGGIE

We've got something to prove. We don't want to inherit this championship. We want to WIN IT! We want to bowl a perfect game! A PERFECT GAME!

Reggie's a little gonzo again. His eyes have that fanatical glaze. His teammates, behind him, seem kind of whipped. We may notice that they aren't piping-up with their usual tepid expletives.

SCOREKEEPER

You guys are somethin' else. Well, see ya next week.

He walks away. Again we see A WIDE, OVERHEAD SHOT of the place. There's litter everywhere, beer cans, popcorn boxes, hot dog cardboards, paper cups and empty cigar wrappers.

The REGI-MEN step up to the line, one by one, to toss tired-looking marbled balls down their practice alley.

REGGIE

Practice makes perfect, men. Let's go. Let's pick up the pace. Pick up the pace. We're the Regi-Men, the Regi-Men, the Regi-Men....

67 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

It's later. We can HEAR the hum of an industrial-size vacuum cleaner and the clack and clatter of push brooms.

67 CONTINUED:

A THREE-MAN CLEAN-UP CREW is pushing and scooping and vacuuming up the rubble. As we PAN over toward the bowling alleys, we see that one lane is still in use. The REGI-MEN, looking even more sluggish now, are out on the alleyboards doing calisthenics.

REGGIE

There was an old guy named Dave,
who kept a dead whore in a cave....

68 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

Later still. The clean-up crew is leaving through the fire-exit. The door slams shut with the finality of a cell door on death row. KER-TCHUNG!

Silence. The place is empty now. The REGI-MEN are no longer out on the boards.

From somewhere in the bowels of the building comes a series of echoing THUNKS and CLUNKS, THE SOUNDS of metal doors closing.

69 INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The REGI-MEN are in the locker room, panting, sweating, really drag-assin' as they pack up for the night. Reggie's not in the room.

R.M. #1

Two in the morning. This is a bit much,
don't you think so?

R.M. #2

Absolutely. We are way out in front.
What's this about a perfect game?

R.M. #3

Beats me. Reggie's got this thing about
earning the title.

R.M. #4

We earned the title back there on High-
Top Road. Who needs all this gung-ho....

KER-TCHUNG! The SOUND of a large master switch being thrown somewhere in the building. All the lights in the locker room suddenly blink out.

REGI-MEN

Hey! What the hell? HEY, REGGIE,
WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'? WE'RE NOT
READY YET! HEY!

70 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

At the little Pro-Shop in the lobby of the building, Reggie is lovingly polishing his ball when suddenly he hears the distant shouts of his teammates. He looks up and....

KER-TCHUNG! The lights in the Pro-Shop go out. KER-TCHUNG! The refreshment stand overheads are next....KER-TCHUNG!....One row of ceiling flourescents....KER-TCHUNG!....Another....KER-TCHUNG!

Reggie moves away from the Pro-Shop leaving his things.

71 INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

CLATTER! CLATTER! CLATTER! Desinex cans, deodorants, Vitalis bottles and hair sprays tumble from a counter near the sinks when one man stubs his toe in the dark and falls forward into the stuff.

R.M. #1

God damn it!

Something grabs the man's throat. It's a hand. That is, it's shaped like a hand. It's dark and crusty and....my God, it's strong! It's choking the man. His eyes are bugging, his tongue is spilling out over his lower lip.

REGI-MEN

REGGIE! WHERE ARE YOU? WHAT
ARE YOU DOING? IT'S PITCH BLACK
IN HERE! WE CAN'T SEE A THING!

The other three haven't noticed the fact that their teammate has had his lights put out permanently. They're groping around through the darkness grouped together like frightened children.

They reach the swinging doors and REGI-MAN #2 pushes.

Standing outside, in dim light from the dying flourescents, is a large, pear-shaped dead man. He's been burned to a crisp. The crust is flaking off in spots, revealing bone. He seems to be decomposing even as we watch. It's surprising how limber he is given his condition. He grabs R.M. #2 and drags him out of the locker room before the guy even has a chance to scream.

His teammates scream, however. Boy, do they scream. Loud, high-pitched shrieks of absolute terror.

72 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

Out along the edge of the empty gallery, Reggie can hear those wild shrieks. His soul freezes.

KER-TCHUNG! Another bank of lights goes out overhead.

73 INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The two guys at the doors have gone right to mach-6 panic. They are trying to run but they're bumping into one another. One of them finally disengages and goes scrambling out into the dimming lobby. The other lets the door swing closed while he backs into the locker room.

He feels his way back through the shadows, clattering over benches, slamming into open locker doors. His hands slap along a concrete wall. SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! THUNK! He's found the breaker box. He throws the door open, feels around the switches, hits the master. KER-TCHUNG!

The lights come on. The man turns to run. He's near the sinks. He slips in something wet. His feet shoot out from under him and he falls. He lands on the bloody corpse of his teammate, the first to die.

He scratches and scrambles and crawls out of there on all fours. Little screams are starting to work their way up from somewhere down around his diaphragm. He reaches a corner of the room where there are several arcade-size video games blinking and beeping out maddening electronic melodies. When he pulls himself up on the edge of one of those machines he finds that he's less than a foot away from another walking corpse. This one looks like it's been blow-dried by the main jets of a Titan-three rocket.

The thing grabs REGI-MAN #3 by the shoulders and flings him, head first into the giant video screen at the head of the machine (which happens to be, poetically enough, a Big-League-Bowlathon machine). We catch a glimpse of video-graphic ten-pins. The REGI-MAN'S head seems to bowl a clean strike. Then the screen implodes, electric sparks fly everywhere. Smoke starts to leak out of the man's pores, out from under his team shirt, out his pant legs, as he fries in the yellow-red current.

74 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

R.M. #4 is running past the refreshment stand when he is grabbed from behind by a fourth well-done corpse. The thing takes the scruff of his neck in one hand, the seat of his pants in the other, and swings him back the way a bouncer would before flinging a drunk out the door. The REGI-MAN screams as the crispy-critter pitches him, face first, into the hot-dog rotisserie. His screams cut off sharply when the rotisserie prongs bite into him. A bright orange light comes on inside the unit and we can see the man's face being melted by the microwaves just before we CUT AWAY TO:

75 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

....Reggie's terrified face. He is staring into the rotisserie from the other side of the unit, staring at the melting face of his teammate. He looks up and sees the crispy-critter across the counter. Somehow he keeps himself from screaming. He spins and runs instead.

He's grabbed from behind with lightning suddenness. He twists his body around to see his attacker. He sees a face that's been burned to a crisp. It looks more like an overcooked roast. There are black sockets running dark colored fluids where its eyes and nose should be.

CHOOCH

LOUIE

Reggie realizes who his attackers are. He squeals like a roped pig. He struggles for a moment....but a moment is all he gets. The big Chooch-thing uses its charred but powerful hand to push Reggie's head down onto the iron framework of.....the ball-drill.

Three holes, about size nine.....right into Reggie Rambeaux's skull.

76 INT. BIG TEN LANES - NIGHT

What we see is a parody of team-night, with the BAD NEWS BOORS, each charred to a flaking, decaying crisp, drinking bloody beers, giving each other the high-fives (losing a few over-cooked fingers each time).

There's a sixth corpse as well, smoking a Parodi and swilling a Utica Club. This one's long dead and decomposing but it's not crusted over from burns. This is the corpse of J. Fred MacDugal, out for a high old time bowling with the boys.

The pins are the arms and legs of the REGI-MEN. The ball, of course, is Reggie Rambeaux's head!

As that head bowls a strike, the picture FREEZES, then DISSOLVES TO:

77 EFX

A DRAWING of the head among the flying pins, the closing panel of the story as it appears in CREEPSHOW COMICS. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and we begin to HEAR the CACKLING of the CREEPSHOW Creep punching in over the music score.

CREEP

Remember, kiddies, bad luck always comes to the greedy.

78 INT. ELMVILLE POST OFFICE - MORNING

As we PULL BACK FURTHER, we see that the comic-book is lying on the Post Office countertop beside Billy's brown-wrapped package which just arrived from the CREEPSHOW Company. The live-and-in-person Creep is still lurking behind the boy.

CREEP

Oh, well. Reggie Rambeaux always was a pinhead. Heh, heh, heh, heh....

Billy, having finished reading PINFALL, scoops up his stuff (including a single penny in change) and moves away from the counter.

79 EXT. POST OFFICE - MORNING

Billy hurries down the front steps of the building and turns onto Porter Street. Rhino and his greaser pals (remember them?), still elbowing each other and bouncing like Slinky toys, follow him.

80 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - MORNING

Billy turns off Portman onto a quiet residential street. The greasers are right behind him now. When Billy realizes they're there, it's too late. Rhino lunges and grabs Billy's rolled-up CREEPSHOW from behind, snatching it out from under his arm. Billy spins around.

BILLY

HEY! GIMME THAT BACK!

He tucks his parcel under his left arm the way a ball-carrier would tuck away a football and he grabs at the comic with his free hand. Rhino tosses the mag to the next guy who, in turn, tosses it to the next. The greasers spread out, surrounding Billy, circling clockwise while tossing the CREEPSHOW counter-clock. Billy makes several attempts to intercept but misses each time. The hoods start to whoop and screech. One of them, we're not sure which, sounds like that jungle bird that's on the sound track of every Johnny Weismuller flick.

80 CONTINUED:

Billy makes one final desperate grab. He almost snatches the flying magazine out of the air, but Rhino's hand strikes like a rattlesnake. Whap! Rhino has the comic book. He holds it high, out of reach, back behind his head. The lunging Billy stops short, his face mere inches from Rhino's acne-damaged grin. That grin suddenly fades. Rhino's mouth turns down, down, down, and his brow follows, until his face has shaped the ugliest meanest scowl ever scowled.

The other greasers follow suit, as though they were playing "Do-as-I-do". Their grins disappear and they draw in closer to their victim. Billy realizes now that he's in trouble....deep trouble.

The cowboy spurs on Rhino's boots jingle-jangle as he plants himself more solidly in front of Billy. He lowers the CREEPSHOW from its out-of-reach height. He seems to be handing it back.

RHINO

You want yer comic? Here....

At the last minute, he tears the thing in two, right down the center seam, popping the staples so that all the pages are loose.

RHINO

Ohhhh....lookit what I did. Jeeeeeeez,
I'm sorry.

All the other greasers join in a-capella.

HOODS

Ohhhh, jeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeezzzz!

Seeing his new issue of CREEPSHOW desecrated, Billy gets pissed. We can see the change in his eyes as they zero in on Rhino's pock-marked face. Those eyes speak vengefulness.

RHINO

Oh-oh, he's gettin' mad!

HOODS

Better look out! He's gettin' mad! Better
look out! He might cry on ya! He might
tell his mom on ya!

They all pretend they're dying of fright. Rhino tosses the torn comic-book into the gutter. The pages separate, fluttering in the wind. Billy dives and grabs the loose sheets before they're blown away. The pages come up crumpled in his hands, and out of sequence, but he has recovered the whole book. Rhino seizes the opportunity to snatch Billy's brown-wrapped parcel.

BILLY

NO! GIMME THAT BACK! GIMME IT!

80 CONTINUED:

RHINO

Cool it. I'll give it back. I just wanna see what it is.

Billy leaps toward Rhino but the other hoods grab him from behind, holding him helpless, the crumpled comic-book pages balled up in his straining fists.

Rhino rips open the parcel. He pulls out a strange looking plant bulb. It's the Audrey II all over again, folks, deep green with a lethal-looking purplish belly that resembles a spider's venom sack.

RHINO

Whatcha gonna do wid dis? Plant it an' grow more pansies like yerself?

HOODS

(in chorus again) Yeah. More pansies. Maybe he tinks dat's where little baby brudders come from. The pansy patch. One pansy's enough around here. You don't need no little brudders. Hey! Maybe he's gonna grow somethin' he can smoke. Naw. He's too pansy fer dat.

Billy's been squirming the whole time. One mighty thrust finally frees him from the arms of his captors. He plants himself in front of Rhino and looks up bravely.

BILLY

Gimme it, Rhino. Gimme it, or else!

The hoods behind Billy step in close but they don't grab him this time. It's one-on-one between Billy and Rhino now. Billy's "or else" looms, a challenge that must be answered.

RHINO

Or else what, shithead?

BILLY

You'll find out, pimpleface!

Rhino's mouth falls open. He's rarely challenged by anybody, and never by a snotty kid from junior-high. There's only one thing Rhino can do and his reaction is automatic. He drops the Venus Flytrap bulb to the pave and lifts his leg....

STRUNCH!!! The dusty black heel of Rhino's engineer boot stomps squarely on the bulb, crushing it flat. The cowboy spur jingle-jangles as some of that purplish, venom-like stuff squirts out from under the heel. Rhino's grin widens (we notice that several of his teeth are missing). A triumphant laugh gurgles around in his throat.

80 CONTINUED:

Billy's reaction is automatic as well. He kicks the leader-of-the-pack square in the balls. It's the last thing this major-league J.D. expects from a dipshit little kid. He crumbles to his knees. Billy takes off. The greasers are momentarily stunned into silence. Finally, Rhino manages to hiss a few words through his clenched teeth.

RHINO

Catch him! I want his ass!

81 EXT. ELMVILLE STREETS - MORNING

MONTAGE: In the next moment, the hoods are shouting and chasing Billy who is running madly through the back streets. If we get the idea he's running for his life, we're probably not far wrong.

Those rumpled flowerettes of comic-book pages are clutched in his hands. As he runs, one page falls, floating to the ground...then another... and another.

82 EXT. NARROW BRICK ALLEY - MORNING

Billy turns into a narrow brick alley. He knocks a couple of steel garbage cans over behind him, in classic movie-chase style, hoping to delay his pursuers an extra critical second or two. The lids clatter as they roll over the cobbles. Garbage squishes out from torn-open bags. Another page from the comic lands near the spill just as the tromping, clomping, jingle-jangling feet of the greasers run through the frame.

Right behind those feet, a long, dark shadow falls across the stones. It's the shadow of the CREEPSHOW Creep. The thing has been tagging along behind Billy, gathering up the dropped comic pages.

CREEP

We'll catch up with Billy a little later on.
Now it's time for our third morbid master-
piece. This is a splashy little ditty about
being stranded, without a paddle, on a sea....
of blood....heh, heh, heh. This bubbly bon-bon
is titled....THE RAFT.

Toward the end of the Creep's speech, THE CAMERA TILTS DOWN to the cobblestones where the splash-page for the next story lies amid spilled garbage. We ZOOM IN and....

83 EFX

....ANIMATION takes over. The splash-page fills the screen. After a moment, the printed title, THE RAFT, disappears so that only a drawing remains.

83 CONTINUED:

The drawing shows a bright yellow Camaro zooming down a country road. The trees are colored bright yellow as well. It's autumn somewhere in the northeast.

There are word balloons coming from the car. We can read them but we don't need to because VOICES FADE IN on the sound track saying the words.

LAVERNE

It's almost Halloween, Randy. Cascade Beach has been closed since Labor Day.

RANDY

The raft is still out there, though. I just saw it last week.

The word balloons disappear and the comic-book drawing DISSOLVES into a matching live-action scene.

84 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON

The yellow Camaro blows past us down the road and a small twister of autumn leaves spirals around in its wake. The sun is shining brightly. It's a gorgeous, red-orange day. The VOICES continue.

RANDY

We were on a geology field trip.

DEKE

Just 'cause it was there last week don't mean it's there now.

85 INT. THE CAMARO - AFTERNOON

Inside the car, we see four young people, Sophs and Juniors from nearby Horlicks U. (one of 'em is wearing a Horlicks tee-shirt, one of the girls, and it's my-tee tight fitting.)

We soon match the voices we've been hearing with the people on screen. The girl in the tee-shirt is LAVERNE, a knockout straight from the pages of Playboy's "The Girls of Horlicks" spread. Beneath the tee-shirt there's a bathing suit, but the way LaVerne is sitting, with her legs tucked up into her chest, she could be naked under there for all we can see.

She's in the front seat beside DEKE, the driver and proud owner of the canary Camaro. Deke's thick neck tells us he's Varsity Football. His perpetually wrinkled forehead and his downturned eyebrow imitation of Matt Dillon tell us he's kind of an ass hole.

85 CONTINUED:

In the back seat, there's RACHEL, softer-looking and quieter than LaVerne. She's also prettier than her friend, though she doesn't think so. (Neither do the guys think so.) Rachel doesn't advertise. She wears no makeup and her hair is wind-dried, not "done". She's comfortable in an old pair of jeans and a floppy sweat-shirt.

Beside Rachel sits RANDY, a Pre-Med student. One look at this guy and we know he's better at book-learnin' than at butt-bustin'. We also know from one look that he's horny as hell. Only he's not as hot for Rachel, his date, as he is for sex-kitten LaVerne, who's curled up on the front seat beside Deke. (Football players get all the luck with the ladies.)

LaVerne passes a joint back over the seat after she has taken a long, languorous pull and left some of her lip-gloss on its tip. Randy takes the thing, very aware of his hand contact with the girl, very aware of the lip-gloss. We can tell he's fantasizing as he stares longingly into the back of Laverne's hair.

His hand lingers on hers a bit too long. She turns, catching him in mid-fantasy. He pulls away, taking the joint with him. As he tokes, he glances, somewhat guiltily, at his own date. Rachel is absorbed by the passing autumn scenery. She hasn't noticed any of the above.

Randy speaks through his tightly shut mouth, trying to keep a smoke cloud in his lungs.

RANDY

It'll be there. The raft'll be there.
A little bit of....

He can't hold it. He blows out. More relaxed, he gazes out the car window at the blurring October orange.

RANDY

A little bit of summer that somebody
forgot to clean up and put away. The
guys who own the beach never take
the raft in until the lake's almost
ready to freeze.

Randy offers the joint to Rachel, who looks at it and shakes her head no. He reaches forward hoping for another "contact" with Laverne but Deke's big hand intercepts the pass. He grabs the joint and takes a long pull which almost sets the hot tip aflame.

DEKE

Well it better be there, Pancho.
This is a long fifty miles.

LAVERNE

I don't believe we're going swimming
when they're forecasting snow for
tomorrow.

85 CONTINUED:

DEKE

Hey. Tomorrow's tomorrow. Today is....
now, now, now.

Deke passes the "J" to LaVerne then, he lets his hand drop. He palms one of her breasts the way he might palm a football before throwing a spiral. LaVerne tokes, paying him no mind.

LAVERNE

Snow. What a bummer.

86 EXT. CASCADE BEACH - AFTERNOON

The Camaro roars out of a narrow wooded lane and fishtails on the sandy surface of a tiny parking lot. It pulls up to a pole fence which separates the parking lot from a small, crescent-shaped, white-sand beach which faces on a lovely wooded lake.

The Camaro has hardly stopped before Deke is out from behind the wheel and pulling off his shirt. As the others climb out of the car, Deke slaps the hood hard with his open right hand. (BOOOOOOM!)

DEKE

Hah! It's there! Just like you
said, Pancho!

Out there on the lake, there is a small square of bright white wood out in the middle of all that deep blue autumn water. The raft. There's A SOUND drifting in on the breeze, a soft, bouyant CLUNK-CLUNK sound made by the barrels that keep the raft afloat.

RACHEL

God. It's beautiful. It's so quiet.

RANDY

Only a few summer homes on the lake.
Everyone's gone by mid September.

Deke has tied a small plastic kitchen bag to the side of his bikini bathing suit. (Deke is more than satisfied with his rock-hard bod, always happy for a chance to show it off.) He tosses his shirt into the car and kicks off his Nikes.

LAVERNE

We're actually gonna do it, huh?
We're gonna swim out to the raft?

Deke flaps his lips with a BRRRRRRRRRR sound and he starts to wave his arms around in an exaggerated "gotta-keep-warm" gesture. This turns into butterfly-kicks and jumping-jacks. Pre-game warmups.

86 CONTINUED:

Randy kicks off his own sneaks (J.C. Penneys) and starts to wriggle out of his Levis. Rachel walks down toward the water and Laverne follows her. Randy is watching LaVerne's wiggling ass from behind Deke's back when suddenly the big muscle-bundle shouts and claps his hands, as though breaking huddle.

DEKE

Last one in's a rotten egg.

Deke takes off for the water. Randy hurries, kicking off his jeans and charging after his buddy. Just as he runs past the girls he whips his shirt off and pulls his arm forward through the air in a "come-on" gesture urging the girls to follow his lead.

87 EXT. CASCADE BEACH - AFTERNOON

SPU-LAAAAAAAAAAAAASH! Deke hits the water and bellows.

DEKE

COLD! MOTHER OF JESUS!

As Randy runs the last few yards across the sand, he hollers...

RANDY

THAT WATER'S FORTY-FIVE DEGREES....
FIFTY TOPS....YOUR HEART CAN STOP....
I'M PRE-MED....I KNOW ABOUT THESE
THINGS....SHEEEEEEEIIIIIIIT!

His schooling tells him that what he shouted was the truth, but his horny young body hardly hesitates. Wanting to impress the girls, wanting to impress Laverne, he leaps into the lake.

For a moment his heart does stop, or it seems to. His breath clogs in his throat and he has to force a gasp of air into his lungs. His skin goes numb and he thrashes in the water. He's in trouble. We see it but, mercifully, the others don't.

The girls have reached the waterline. They're both holding their tight fists and forearms against their chests, as though they were already in a freezing environment.

Randy recovers enough to act the macho-man again.

RANDY

Come on. It's not so bad once you're in.
(Then to himself, his lips half underwater)
That's bull shit, Randy. Bull shit.
You're just playin' Deke's game 'cause
you hope to get laid out here. Too
goddam cold to get laid....balls are
gonna turn into ice cubes....JeeeZUSSSS!

87 CONTINUED:

From out on the lake, Deke shouts, never breaking his easy swim stroke.

DEKE

Lessgo, Pancho. Less went.

RANDY

Oooohhh, Cisco.

DEKE

Oooooooooooooohhhhh, Pancho.

Randy puts his head in the water and swims off after his Varsity pal. Every once in a while, on breath-breaks, they both shout out the kind of high-pitched wild whoops that team guys belt out in a cold shower room.

88. EXT. CASCADE BEACH - AFTERNOON

The girls are still at the waterline. LaVerne dips a toe and pulls it back out with a screech.

LAVERNE

This is crazy. Totally crazy.

Rachel takes in a deep breath, exhales, takes in another. She closes her eyes and charges into the water, still wearing her sweat-shirt and jeans. She runs a few steps, 'til she's up to her knees, then she leans forward and dives.

The cold catches her as it did Randy. She surfaces with a stunned expression on her face, panting and thrashing in the already deep water. LaVerne summons her courage and she runs in after Rachel. The freezing cold stops her when she's waist-deep.

LAVERNE

Oh my God! OH MY GOOOOOODDDDD!!!!

Rachel is breathing more normally now. She looks around at the sunlit sky. Brushing wet hair away from her eyes, she smiles, enraptured, exhilarated. She starts to swim after the boys.

LaVerne has no choice. She ducks down. With a scream, she stands back up again, but her clinging wet tee-shirt feels colder in the October breeze than it does in the water. She ducks again, up to her shoulders, then she submerges her head. She comes up shivering and cursing under her breath. Out of desperation she starts to swim.

89 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - OUT IN DEEP WATER - AFTERNOON

Deke, hooting more often now as he sprints, is almost at the raft.

Randy is about halfway there when he spots something....

89 CONTINUED:

Beyond the raft, out toward the middle of the lake, there's a black patch on the water. Randy keeps pulling hard for the raft, but something about that black patch has captured his attention. It looks like an oil slick but it's oddly circular, and small, surely no more than five feet in diameter.

DEKE (o.s.)
WHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHH!

90 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

Deke is climbing the ladder on the side of the raft, shaking off water the way a dog does.

DEKE
How ya doin', Pancho?

RANDY
Okay.

Randy pulls harder, ducking his head down again, forgetting about the oil slick. Behind him, still not at the halfway point, the girls are paddling and splashing and screaming.

The barrels under the raft are really CLUNKING now as Deke's weight makes the raft bob and tilt, bob and tilt.

DEKE
BRRRRRRR! You think it's bad now,
Pancho, wait 'til you get OUT!

Randy reaches the side of the raft. He grabs onto the rough wood of the ladder and pulls himself up. The cold air bites him hard.

RANDY
Ohhhhhh, SHIT!

DEKE
Pancho, you asshole. Cold enough for ya?
You sober yet?

RANDY
I'm sober! I'm SO-BRRRRRRRRRR!

Randy starts to jump around on the planked surface of the raft, clapping his arms across his chest and stomach. Deke laughs and starts doing jumping-jacks again. Randy segues into calisthenics as well....any kind of motion to keep warm....and calisthenics will look better (to the girls) than shivering arm-flaps.

DEKE
(shouting) YOU LADIES OKAY?

90 CONTINUED:

From out on the water comes a squeaky reply.

LAVERNE
Go ta hell, Macho City!

While this is going on, Randy faces out toward the center of the lake.

When he had first seen the oil slick it was about forty yards from the raft. Now it's only half that distance....and moving closer every second, floating on the water, round and regular, like the top of a steel drum, but the limber way it's riding the swells makes it clear that the object is not solid.

A sudden fear siezes Randy. He controls it, but when he turns back toward the shore, toward the girls, he can't help but call out....

RANDY
Swim, girls. Swim. Come on.

Rachel has almost reached the ladder but LaVerne is still paddling about thirty yards out. Randy looks over his shoulder again.

The black patch is even closer now. Fifteen yards....ten....

The CLUNK, CLUNK of the barrels seems suddenly louder, pounding urgently, making tension build.

The raft is rising and falling from the boys' movement. Rachel has a hard time grabbing onto the ladder. Randy bends over to grab her wrist. The action makes the raft bob more violently and the girl slides away in the water.

Randy lunges again. He catches her wrist this time but she's so wet that his hand slips off. She looks up, wondering why the sudden urgency.

Randy reaches out a third time, getting a solid grip on both her wrists. Adrenalized, he yanks her up onto the deck. THUD! Her knee bangs hard against the wood and a little tear appears in her wet jeans.

RACHEL
Ow! Hey! What...."

But Randy pays no attention. He's looking across the water at LaVerne. She is still twenty yards out, doing something that looks like a dog-paddle performed by a dog with bad instincts.

RANDY
Swim, LaVerne! Swim faster!

The round black thing is nuzzling the offside of the raft now. It's covered the distance in the water just as fast as a swimmer could have done.....faster.

90 CONTINUED:

Randy glances over his shoulder again. The thing looks like oil, but he's sure it isn't oil....it's too dark, too thick, too....even.

RACHEL

Randy, that hurt! What are you doing?
Being funn....

RANDY

LaVerne, SWIIM!

Randy's fear is growing. LaVerne doesn't notice. She keeps on doing the lazy-dog-paddle. She's ten yards out now.

DEKE

Hey, Randy, what is it with you?

The black thing is folding itself around the raft's square corner. For a moment it looks like a Pac-Man with its mouth open to eat an electronic cookie, then it slips all the way around the corner and begins to slide along the raft, one of its edges now straight.

RANDY

Help me get her up. Come on.

Randy's urgency is infectious. Deke follows orders. He leans out over the landside edge of the raft just as his buddy is doing. LaVerne is still six or seven feet out.

The thing is getting closer along the side.

LaVerne is three feet out, almost within reach of the boy's hands.

Randy's foot slips on the edge of the wood and he nearly falls into the water. His frantic moves to save himself cause the raft to bob quite violently. The CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK of the barrels gets even louder than it was before.

The thing is getting very close to the front corner now.

The boys grab onto LaVerne's wrists.

The thing rounds the corner, forming another Pac-Man.

The boys lift and LaVerne comes out of the water with a little irritated shriek prompted by the jerking motion on her arms and by the coldness that swallows her instantly.

In the next second, the black thing glides by the ladder, its sides dimpling as it slips past the uprights.

91 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

LaVerne is out of breath. Her nipples are clearly visible through her wet Horlicks tee-shirt, cold hard points. Maybe she doesn't have a bathing suit on under there after all. Oh yes, she's got a bikini bottom. We can see it, red, when she lifts the hem of her tee-shirt to wring it out.

LAVERNE

Randy, have you gone crazy?

RANDY

That thing. I don't know what it is.

The others look at the black blob. It has reached the left hand corner of the raft and is drifting off to one side, reassuming its round shape.

DEKE

Oil slick, I guess.

RANDY

It's not an oil slick. D'you ever see a perfectly round oil slick?

DEKE

I never seen a oil slick at all.

LAVERNE

God, I'm cold!

Deke moves toward LaVerne, pulling that plastic kitchen bag from where it's tied to his swim suit.

DEKE

I don't even believe in oil slicks.
I'm from Missouri.

The big mach puts his muscular arms around LaVerne from behind, pressing his body into her back ostensibly to warm her up. She accepts the gesture with a few pouting whimpers.

DEKE

I only believe in what I can smell,
taste and touch....here baby...
(he rips the top of the plastic
bag and carefully takes out a
pill bottle)
This'll make us all feel better.

RANDY

It looked like it was going after the girls.

DEKE

Come on, Pancho. I thought you said
you got sober.

91 CONTINUED:

RANDY

It looked like it was going after the girls.

LaVerne has popped open the pill bottle's child-proof cap and extracted two of the six fat joints that are inside. She also pulls out a Bic lighter, canary yellow, like Deke's car.

RANDY

No one knows we're here. No one at all.

Randy is looking toward the shore, toward the deserted beach. The canary Camaro is the only sign of life anywhere on the horizon. There's only THE SOUND of CROWS, squabbling in the distance.

DEKE

Have you ever seen a oil slick, Pancho?

The big oaf is fondling one of LaVerne's breasts again, openly, the way he did in the car. LaVerne is just letting it happen while she works on lighting the joints. The action makes her tee-shirt pull more tightly on the other breast and the wet, sensuous motion distracts Randy away from his fears.

Rachel notices, this time, how captivated Randy is by the sight of LaVerne. It doesn't bother her that much. She's been on a lot of dates with guys that paid more attention to others than to her. She pulls her sweat-shirt off and starts to struggle out of her wet jeans, revealing a one-piece russet colored bathing suit underneath. Her undressing is not a competitive act, she's simply going to dry her clothes in the sun.

DEKE

How 'bout it, Pancho. Ever see a oil slick?

RANDY

I saw one on the Cape four years ago.
We all pulled birds out of the surf
and tried to clean them off.

DEKE

Ecological, Pancho. Mucho ecological,
I theeeeeeenk.

Deke's hands come off LaVerne long enough for him to take one of the lit joints and the pill bottle. He pulls hard on the smoke as he bends down to set the bottle in one of the inch-wide cracks between the wooden boards of the raft. The bottle is too thick to fall through.

Rachel, having laid her clothes flat on the deck, pads over to Laverne taking the second joint from her hand. She pulls on it as she moves close to Randy. She's not unattractive. In fact she's cute. Her body, while not as bountiful as Laverne's, is trim and well proportioned. Her short blond hair makes her look like Sandy Duncan.

91 CONTINUED:

Randy notices her now, for the first time all afternoon. She stands beside him, holding a cloud from the "J" in her lungs. She is staring out at the mysterious black patch.

The thing is about eight feet away from the raft, just floating, "dead-in-the-water", as the sailors say....or in this case might it be more appropriate to say "alive-in-the-water"?

RANDY

That oil slick I saw was just this big, sticky mess all over the water. In streaks and big smutches. It looked like....an accident. This thing doesn't look like an accident. It looks like.... it's on purpose.

RACHEL

What is it, Randy? What is it?

RANDY

I don't know.

DEKE

Hey, I can't get worried, man. No matter how hard I try, I just CAIN'T GIT WORRIED....know what I mean, Pancho?

Deke slides his hands all over LaVerne's wet front now. This time she gives a half-hearted whine that means "don't do that".

Rachel moves away from Randy and kneels on the corner of the raft, the corner closest to the black patch.

RACHEL

It has colors.

She is staring right into the center of the blob.

92 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

The thing is closer now, three feet or less....and moving in. Randy sees the colors....swirling in rich, inward-turning spirals.

Rachel is enraptured. In her eyes, a round blankness, queerly like the round blankness of the thing in the water.

Only the thing isn't blank now. Those colors....beautiful, swirling colors.

Rachel is mesmerized. It's more than the dope. The thing has her!

92 CONTINUED:

Randy sees the colors, too. His eyes are glazing. The CLUNK-CLUNK-CLUNKING of the barrels under the raft seems to be echoing through his brain. The motion of the deck on the water is putting him to sleep.

LaVerne laughs a floozy laugh. Randy shakes off his daze. Alert again, he sees that....

The thing is at the raft's edge. Rachel is reaching her hand down to it.

RANDY
GET AWAY FROM THERE, RACHEL!
DON'T!

93 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

Things happen fast, with the rapidity of fireworks going off. The raft tilts in the water. Rachel's forefinger, the forefinger of the hand that's holding the joint, gracefully pointed down, breaks the water's surface and submerges just up to the top of its fingernail.

GOOOOOP! A black, viscous substance runs up her arm like up-side-down mud. Under it, her skin starts to dissolve.

Rachel screams. At the same moment, she begins to tilt outward. She waves her other hand blindly at Randy. He grabs for it. Their fingers brush. Their eyes meet for an instant, then....

Rachel splashes clumsily into the water. The black thing flows over the spot where she landed.

LAVERNE
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT HAPPENED?
DID SHE FALL IN? WHAT HAPPENED
TO HER?

Deke charges over to the edge. He and Randy stare into the water for a few long seconds.

Rachel suddenly surfaces, her left arm waving. Her right side is covered with a grotesque black membrane that hangs in flaps and folds from something red and knitted with tendons, something that looks like a roll of roast beef....that's what's left of her right arm. She screams wildly, beating the water into a froth.

RACHEL
Help it hurts please help it hurts
IT HURTS IT HURRRRRRRRR.....

Randy makes a move to jump into the water but Deke grabs him with a wrestler's lock. Randy struggles but can't break out of Deke's tree-sized arms.

93 CONTINUED:

DEKE

She's dead. Christ, can't you see that?

She's dead, Pancho....she's....

Rachel's face is floating just below the surface now. She sho-nuff is dead, kiddies. Mercifully, we can't see the rest of her body clearly. There's blood swirling around down there, but not very much of it. Suddenly a thick blackness pours over the girl's head. It sinks into her like acid. Her jugular vein gives way and there's a dark pumping underwater. The thing sends out a pseudopod after the escaping blood.

RANDY

It's bigger. The thing has gotten bigger....oh my God!

The blob is bigger now, no question about it, bigger by the size of Rachel. There's still a sense of her form, not in the water but in the black thing, not turning but being turned, turned and bent and stretched like taffy, becoming less recognizeable each second.

A flash of white....bone.

94 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - AFTERNOON

Randy breaks out of Deke's hold. He rushes to the lakeside of the raft and leans over the edge, wrenching.

DEKE

It....ate her. Did you see that?
It fuckin' ate her up! What is it?
What the fuck is it?

RANDY

I....I dunno....I....

DEKE

Come on. You're the brain-ball. You take all the science courses!

RANDY

There's nothin' like that in any science book I ever read.

The thing glides away from the raft and it settles again about ten feet away. It just floats out there....waiting. It's regained its round shape. Earlier it had a five-foot diameter, now it seems at least eight or ten feet across.

LAVERNE

It IS bigger! Oh God! It's bigger because it ate Rachel!

94 CONTINUED:

LaVerne begins to scream. Deke grabs her. (Deke is really wound tight, on the edge. He's afraid, is what he is.)

DEKE

Stop screaming or I'll break yer jaw!

She stops, not all at once, but winding down the way a record does when the power goes out. Deke lets go of her and turns toward Randy.

DEKE

Can we swim past it, you think?

LAVERNE

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

She shrieks this so loudly that those distant crows stop cawing for the moment. The raft bobbles when Deke spins to level his coconut-size fist at the girl's eyes.

DEKE

Stop it or I'm gonna smoke you, LaVerne,
now I'm not kiddin!
Whatd'ya think, Pancho? Can we swim it?

RANDY

You saw how fast it took Rachel.

DEKE

Maybe....maybe it was hungry then.
Maybe....maybe now it's full.

RANDY

Why don't you try it, Deke?

DEKE

Oh, ho ho....Ohhhh, Pancho.

RANDY

Ohhhh, Ceeeeeeeeesco.

DEKE

Okay. Okay, so we wait. We wait for....
for it to go away. It came. It'll go away.

RANDY

It came when we came. I saw it come.
Like it smelled us.
Maybe....if it's full, like you say, It'll go.
But if it still wants chow....
(he shrugs).

95 EXT. CASCADE BEACH - AT THE RAFT - TWILIGHT

Time has passed. The Camaro sits temptingly on the beach. Overhead the sky has turned purplish and the first stars are appearing.

The three students are standing on the raft, facing the blob which lies ten feet to starboard. They are shivering, their teeth chattering. LaVerne pulls Rachel's sweat-shirt on over her still wet tee-shirt.

LAVERNE

Maybe it'll leave us alone. Maybe it'll just....you know....leave us alone.

RANDY

It's moving!

It moves slowly at first, then with oily, frightening speed it halves the distance to the raft.

Deke reflexively moves back. The raft tips with his weight and the motion startles LaVerne who shrieks loudly again.

Randy looks down at the black patch. The colors have started again....fantastic reds and yellows and blues spiraling across the ebony surface.

Randy steps closer to the edge, closer to the colors. His eyes are glazing over....he's going to fall....fall over the edge of the raft....fall into the colors....he can feel himself tilting out....

LaVerne screams.

With his last ounce of strength Randy brings his fist up. It slams hard into his nose. Blood comes and the pain snaps him out of his eerie rapture. He spins away.

RANDY

Don't look at it. Don't look right at it.
The colors make you loopy.

DEKE

Hey! Hey, it's tryin' ta get under the raft! What's this shit, Pancho?

Randy looks, carefully, in short shooting glances. The thing is nuzzling the side of the raft. It's the shape of half a pizza. For a moment it seems to pile up there, thickening, then it squeezes under. There's a NOISE, like a roll of canvas being pulled through a narrow window, then there's only the now terrible SOUND of the barrels below the boards.... CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK.

LAVERNE

Did it go under? Did it go under the raft? Is it under us?

95 CONTINUED:

DEKE

Yes. I'm gonna swim for it. Right now.

The muscle man takes two steps toward the landed side of the raft, huffing, puffing, getting ready to hit the icy water.

LAVERNE

NO! DON'T LEAVE US HERE! DON'T....

DEKE

I'm fast. I can make it. Gotta go while it's under....hey....hey, Pancho?

Randy looks at his buddy. He sees the cords stand out in his neck. Then Deke screams with amazing force.

DEKE

MY FOOT! MY FOOT! MY FOOT! MY FOOT!

96 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - TWILIGHT

Deke's right foot has taken on an odd, sunken look. It's being pulled down between two of the boards that make up the surface of the raft. The dark shine of the black thing appears behind Deke's heel and around his toes.

RANDY

PULL, DEKE! GODDAMMIT, PULL!

LAVERNE

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

LaVerne attacks Randy from behind, sinking her spade-shaped fingernails into his shoulders. For a moment, Randy can't shake free.

Deke is screaming incoherently now, great baritone bellows that splinter up toward wild soprano and echo back from the shore.

Randy butts and elbows his way out of LaVerne's frenzied grasp. He lunges toward Deke and grabs onto his arm. He pulls, but it's like trying to pull a tree out of the ground.

Amazingly, Deke's foot has now disappeared between the boards. Blood runs across the white wood. Black stuff, like heated plastic, pulses up and down in the crack, like a great black heart beating.

Deke leans hard against Randy, arms groping stupidly. He stops screaming suddenly. His body is moving, twitching, flailing, but his face looks dead. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed he looks like a marionette run amok.

96 CONTINUED:

Blood gushes from his shin now. The black stuff is surging in the crack, sucking, eating. Randy pulls with all his might. Deke just lurches around, dead meat, no help.

RANDY
PULL, DEKE! COME ON, DEKE, PULL!
GOD! IT'S SO STRONG! IT'S SO STRONG!!!

Suddenly, there's a loud, cracking SOUND. The boards give way, folding down into the water. Deke's right leg disappears as (THUD) he sits on the hole. His left leg bends grotesquely out in an odd direction.

The raft lurches and Randy is thrown off balance. He lets go of Deke, stumbling over that twisted left leg. He steps on a crack near the pulsing black stuff. He jumps back, losing his balance again. He kicks the small plastic pill bottle, the one with the extra joints and the Bic lighter, and it goes bouncing off into the water.

KE-RRRRRRRAAAAAAACK!!! More of the boards cave under and Deke is sucked in deeper. His ass disappears and his free left leg shoots up as though he's doing a can-can kick.

Just as Randy stabilizes himself, LaVerne grabs him, latching on the way the blob has latched onto Deke.

Suddenly, Deke turns his head. He looks right at Randy and life comes back into his face. His expression makes it seem as though a good idea has just occurred to him....then that expression turns into one of agonizing, hellish pain. A last high-pitched scream comes out and.... KE-RRRRRRRAAAAAAACK!!!!!! He's pulled completely through.

The hole in the deck is much smaller than Deke's muscular chest. Deke is crushed. The black thing below is strong enough to yank him through as though he's a Kleenex being pulled through the small opening of an econo-pack. Wait, what's that? At the edge of the hole, stuck between two of the boards that are still intact....Deke's fingers. The fingers of his left hand, sticking straight up. The knuckles are wedged there.

More sucking, eating SOUNDS from underneath, then the SOUND of crunching bone as Deke's knuckles squeeze between the boards. The fingers move, seeming to wave goodbye, as they are pulled through. Deke's football ring (All-Conference, 1982) slides up the third finger as the hand disappears completely.

The ring sits there, starlight rimming the gold. It was a little too big to fit through the crack and, of course, it wouldn't squeeze the way Deke did.

97 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - NIGHT

Randy and LaVerne just stare, wide-eyed and incredulous.

97 CONTINUED:

It's quite dark now, night has fallen. Moonlight keeps the white wood white. The hole made by Deke is black against that whiteness....and all the surrounding water looks black as well.

The hollow CLUNK, CLUNK of the barrels is suddenly interrupted by a strange SOUND that we've heard before....like a roll of canvas being pulled through a slit-open window.

Randy looks down. He makes sure his feet are squarely on boards, not on cracks. It's black down in those cracks....wait....suddenly it's even blacker down there, much blacker. The thing is directly under Randy.

With a shriek, LaVerne backs away. She can't go far (the raft is only about ten by fifteen), but she gets out of the immediate danger zone. That canvasy SOUND stops as the deep black settles right there below Randy's feet.

The black stuff seems to be coming up....up through the cracks. Randy can see its thickness now. He stands on his tiptoes, not realizing he's doing it. He's trying to levitate.

The black shininess humps up almost to the edges of the top-boards.... then it goes back down. That canvasy slithering resumes and soon Randy can see the thing out on the water again.

It's three shades blacker than the waters of Cascade Lake, its outline unmistakable. It's grown to about fifteen feet in diameter, as large as the raft itself, and it's spread back out into a perfect circle.

Oh no! It's started making colors again, swirling, hypnotic reds, yellows and blues.

Randy pulls his eyes away instantly. He rushes over to LaVerne, who by now has gone catatonic. He begins to slap her, lightly, like a trainer trying to revive a fighter. LaVerne doesn't want to come around. It's nicer where she is.

Randy leans forward, moving his mouth toward the girl's neck the way a vampire might. He catches her earlobe between his teeth and bites sharply. Blood squirts. LaVerne's eyes pop open, alert. She screams and automatically strikes out at Randy, but he catches her arms.

RANDY

It's alright. It's alright. That's an old paramedics' trick. Now listen, we've got to....

But he's interrupted by that SOUND....rasping canvas. He looks over his shoulder.

Only the back side of the thing is showing. The rest of it is already under the raft. It's moving with horrible, silent speed.

97 CONTINUED:

Randy jerks LaVerne up into his arms, his muscles screaming protest. She beats at him, trying to pull away. He fights to keep his balance, to keep his feet on boards, to keep them off cracks.

RANDY
QUIT IT! QUIT IT! IT'S UNDER US AGAIN!
QUIT IT OR I'LL DROP YOU. I SWEAR I
WILL. I'LL DROP YOU!

Her arms stop flailing and lock around his neck in a deadly drowner's grip.

RANDY
LAVERNE....LAVERNE, YOU'RE CHOKING
ME...STOP IT....

The raft is tipping right and left. Randy has to fight that as well as the inbalance of LaVerne's weight in his arms. He looks down at his feet. One of them steps on a crack, but just for a micro-second. That black, black blackness can be seen between the boards. The hollow CLUNKING from below takes on a duller, muffled SOUND as the thing surrounds the barrels with its now massive form.

RANDY
I CAN'T BREEEEEEEEEEEEEEETH!!!!

(LaVerne loosens her grip slightly.)

Now, listen....I'm gonna put you
down....it's alright if you....

LAVERNE
NO! DON'T PUT ME DOWN! IT'LL GET ME!

RANDY
It can't get you if you stand on the boards.
It can't.

LAVERNE
IT WILL! IT'LL GET ME! I KNOW IT
WILL, I KNOW....

RANDY
LAVERNE, I CAN'T HOLD YOU ALL NIGHT.
I'M NOT DEKE. NOW GET DOWN OR I'LL
DROP YOU. GET DOWN ON THE BOARDS.

LAVERNE
I WON'T!

RANDY
I'M GONNA DROP YOU, LAVERNE.
I CAN'T HOLD ON.

97 CONTINUED:

He lets her slip slightly through his arms. She tightens her drowner's grip. His feet are staggering, stepping on cracks, stepping off just before blackness bubbles up to grab his flesh.

LaVerne slips further down. She lowers one foot reflexively, setting it in the center of a board. Randy lets go of her gradually. She brings down her other foot. Finally, she is standing there, her arms still clinging to Randy, but her weight on her own feet.

LAVERNE

Where is it?

RANDY

Right there. Right under us.

LAVERNE

Randy, please....

RANDY

Shhhhhhhh. Be still.

It's quiet for a time. The tossing of the raft gets gentler, gentler....

Suddenly, a big, heaving motion. That canvas SOUND comes again and the black thing glides out on the lakeside of the raft.

It draws about ten yards off, then stops as it did before.

98 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - NIGHT

It's later and the moon is high, reflecting off Deke's yellow Camaro. There are the SOUNDS of night critters coming from shore.

The thing is still floating out there, waiting.

Laverne is lying down on the side of the raft furthest from the blob. Randy is standing watch, being careful not to stare at the thing so that its mesmerizing colors can't capture him.

Randy's wobbling on his feet. He's exhausted. He moves over and nudges LaVerne. She hasn't been sleeping, she's just been lying there, her hands clenched into tight fists against her chest, like a frightened baby's hands.

RANDY

I'm tired. I'm going to sit down and you're going to watch for a while.

LAVERNE

No. I can't.

98 CONTINUED:

RANDY

You've got to, LaVerne. Now I'm sick of hearing that shit. You're going to watch for a while. Then I'll watch again. We'll take turns.

She finally stands up. She stares out across the water. Randy sits down. He grabs her feet with his hands and plants them squarely in the centers of two boards.

RANDY

Keep your feet on the boards. Don't stare at the thing. Remember to keep looking away. Watch the shore for lights....for anything that might....

LAVERNE

It ate Deke.

RANDY

Yes.

LAVERNE

I'm cold.

RANDY

Me too.

LAVERNE

What are we going to do, Randy.

RANDY

Wait.

99 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - NIGHT

It's later still. The moon is lowering toward the horizon now. Suddenly, a shrill, lonely cry rises, echoing across the water.

Laverne shrieks, startled, spinning toward the SOUND, making the raft bob. (She is sitting again and Randy's on guard.)

RANDY

It's only a loon.

Quiet for a time, but for the soft lapping SOUNDS of the water against the sides of the raft. The thing is still about ten yards out. Randy shoots it a glance every few seconds.

LAVERNE

I'm freezing, Randy. I'm numb all over.

99 CONTINUED:

RANDY

I can't do anything about it.

LAVERNE

Hold me. You've got to. We'll hold each other. We can both sit down and watch the thing together.

Randy debates for a moment. The cold sinking into his own flesh is now bone deep, and that decides him.

RANDY

Okay.

He moves over to LaVerne and he sits. Their arms wrap around each other. The SOUNDS of the night critters drift over the water.

100 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - DAWN

The very beginnings of dawn. The Camaro looks like a strange kind of tombstone. It and the white crescent of sand are the only things visible on the otherwise dark shoreline. There's an ever so faint band of red in the sky causing some of the low stars to fade away.

Randy holds the deeply-sleeping LaVerne tightly against his chest. He is staring out over the top of her shoulder, staring.....in rapture.

The colors are swirling, reds, yellows and blues, swirling in inward-turning spirals.

Randy's face relaxes, then his shoulders, then his arms. He looks down at Laverne. He starts to run his hand through her hair. He lowers her gently onto the deck of the raft.

He's touching her with both hands now, running his fingers down her neck and onto her sweat-shirt.....Rachel's sweat-shirt. His hands lift the edge of the gray cotton and he pushes up the tee-shirt below, exposing LaVerne's stomach, then her breasts. He looks at her for a moment..... then he dives into her.

She wakes up. She is pinned under Randy's weight. His face is buried in her chest, his hands are exploring wildly.

Her hair spills over the edge of the raft.....into the water.

101 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - DAWN

The thing moves with oily speed and tangles itself in LaVerne's hair like a webbing of thick black glue.

101 CONTINUED:

LAVERNE

Randy.....RANDY.....RANDEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!

Slowly, Randy recovers, coming out of his euphoria. The thing is climbing higher in LaVerne's hair now, searching for a good grip.

LAVERNE

OH MY GOD, NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

Randy shakes off the last of his stupor. He gets up on his knees and starts to pull at LaVerne. She's heavy, heavy with....it. It comes out of the water in a twisting, gruesome membrane that roils with flaring colors. It flows up, obliterating LaVerne's face and blocking out her final shriek.

Randy jumps back. LaVerne's feet kick, drumming on the deck for a moment, then they stop. The thing is making those horrible sucking, eating SOUNDS. It's climbing up, using LaVerne as a ladder, climbing up onto the raft.

Randy screams. He looks at LaVerne's body disappearing into the thick, black shininess. He spins his head, looks over his shoulder.

There's the shore. The Camaro, its yellow warming in the dawn light. How far is it? A hundred yards? A hundred and fifty?

The thing is slurping, gurgling. LaVerne's body is bleeding and running other fluids as her flesh dissolves. Her bones are snapping. The thing is slithering over the top of the raft now, using the cracks as grip holds. It's bigger than it used to be, and therefore hungrier. Much hungrier.

Randy screams again, not hearing himself. He faces off toward the shore and leaps into the water.

The thing pulls back slightly, its second victim gone. It slowly starts dragging Laverne down into the water, down into itself, sucking, eating, sending out tendrils to catch spouting blood.

102 EXT. CASCADE LAKE - DEEP WATER - DAWN

Randy is swimming wildly, doing the crawl, pulling, pulling, pulling for his life.

103 EXT, CASCADE LAKE - AT THE RAFT - DAWN

LaVerne's beautifully shaped legs slip over the edge into the mass of black. The thing folds itself over what's left of the girl. Her form can be seen vaguely inside the mass.

DEEP WATER (102)

Randy is huffing and puffing now. His arms feel like lead paddles, his legs like concrete pilings. He's pulling himself through the water on pure instinct. His exhaustion is overwhelming....but so is his fear.

AT THE RAFT (103)

Inside the blob's shiny mass, LaVerne's once foxy shape is being twisted, distorted and stretched like taffy. With an odd sort of spasmic lurch, the blob seems to swallow. A nodule bobs up in its center, looking like an Adam's apple, then the thing relaxes.

It glides away from the edge of the raft and it spreads out again into a perfect circle. It's bigger than ever, eighteen, maybe twenty feet across. It's bigger than the raft.

DEEP WATER (102)

Randy pulls madly. His feet kick at the frothing water. He's maybe fifty yards out from the beach.

AT THE RAFT (103)

The round, black patch suddenly shoots across the water. It moves frighteningly fast....certainly faster than a swimmer....at about the speed of a slow motor boat. It keeps its shape. It looks like a saucer jetting through space.

DEEP WATER (102)

Randy senses that the thing is chasing him, that it's finished with LaVerne and now it's after him for dessert. He intensifies his efforts, kicking, stroking. He's gasping, swallowing water, choking.

The blob, streaking, smooth as a seal, just under the surface of the water, is closing the distance quickly.

104 EXT. CASCADE BEACH - DAWN

Randy is twenty yards out....ten, but the thing is getting very close now. It seems as though it will surely catch him.

Randy puts on a last-ditch burst of speed, splashing, kicking. He can feel the bottom. He starts to scramble on all fours, clawing at the sand beneath the water, flopping like a spawning salmon.

The thing is only a few yards away....now feet....now inches.

Randy somehow manages to literally fling his body up onto dry sand. He rolls onto his back, then his stomach, then his back again, trying to get further away from the lake water.

104 CONTINUED:

The thing comes up against the sand and compresses, forming an enormous black semi-circle at the edge of the beach.

Randy's body is wracked with spasms. We can almost see his heart pounding inside his chest. He tries to gulp in the clean morning air, he tries to eat it.

The thing seems to nuzzle in closer against the sand. Those colored lights start their show, swirling more dazzlingly than ever.

RANDY

NO! NO! I WON'T LOOK! YOU CAN'T
MAKE ME LOOK! YOU CAN'T....

He scrambles to his knees. He turns his back on the monster. He's facing up toward the pole-fence, up toward safety, up toward the canary colored Camaro.

RANDY

YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LOOK AT YOU!
WHATEVER YOU ARE.....I BEAT YOU!
I BEAT YOU AND I'M GONNA.....

105 EXT. CASCADE BEACH - DAWN

A thick black shininess comes boiling up through the too-white sand. It grabs Randy's feet, his calves, his knees as he kneels there, stunned. His flesh starts to dissolve.

It takes him a second or two, but eventually he starts to scream.

We just begin to HEAR THE MORNING CROWS as Randy's agonized image FREEZES.

106 EFX

The FREEZE-FRAME MATCH-DISSOLVES into a comic-book drawing of the scene. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see the rest of the page. An adjoining panel shows a drawing of the CREEPSHOW Creep, a word-balloon coming from its mouth. Just as in earlier scenes, THE VOICE of the real Creep says the balloon-words aloud.

CREEP

Well, swimmers, that was....er....slick.
Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh.....

The shot has continued to widen. We can now see that the page containing the drawings is lying on a section of street pavement.

107 EXT. ELMVILLE STREET - MORNING

The Creep's bony hand reaches into frame and picks up the loose comic-book page. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK FURTHER and we see several other pages scattered nearby, dropped by Billy in his flight from Rhino and the local greasers. The Creep dutifully gathers all the pages as he continues his speech.

CREEP

Cascade Lake used to be a granite quarry, you know. Oh, there are lots of stories I could tell you, kiddies, about that place.... but we shouldn't stay out in the water with our.....stomachs full.....heh, heh, heh. Let's head back to town.

108 EXT. ELMVILLE STREET - MORNING

WHAM! Billy bumps into the side of a raw-wood fence, dropping more comic pages, as he rounds a corner on another street near the back end of town. The fence separates the residential area of Elmvile from a hillside row of vacant lots, greatly overgrown with summer greens.

It's only seconds before Rhino, spurs jinglin' on his engineer boots, comes snorting around that same corner, a raging bull. Behind him come the other hoods, hootin' and hollerin' like Amazon head-hunters. (One of them is still putting out a shriek that sounds like the bird in Jungle Jim.)

Dirty black boots tromp fallen pages of Billy's CREEPSHOW into the soft earth beneath the weed-grass. As the trouble-makers charge off after their prey, a shadow glides over the ground, over those scrunched, muddy pages. It's the shadow of the Creep.

Decomposed, bony fingers salvage the loose sheets. The Creep now has wrinkled balls of comic color in its hands, as Billy did earlier. They look like varsity pom-poms.

CREEP

Billy knows his way around these hills. They won't catch him in a hurry. I think we've got time for one more creepy-concoction. I looked in my.....cat - alogue, under 'Tales to Cause Cat - alepsy', and in that cat - e - gory....heh, heh, heh, heh.... I found this nasty little bit of kitty-litter....

THE CAMERA HAS TILTED DOWN to the ground again and there, in the spectre's shadow, we now see another page from CREEPSHOW. It's the splash-page for the next story.

CREEP

I call it.....CAT FROM HELL!

109 EFX

ANIMATION MOVES THE CAMERA IN TIGHT on the lead drawing which shows an enormous Victorian mansion, all dark wood and weathered gray stone. The angle emphasizes a circular driveway which runs in and out of a roofed portico. Somewhat incongruous in that portico, in place of the expected Bentley or Rolls, a New York taxicab is parked. It's twilight. A cold, white sun is just sinking below the bare winter trees. The lettering which spells out CAT FROM HELL disappears, and the drawing MATCH-DISSOLVES into live action.

110 EXT. DROGAN'S MANSION - EVENING

Stepping out of the cab is HALSTON. He looks around with steely eyes, suspicious, alert. THE CABBIE leans out his window.

CABBIE

Dat's eighty-fouh dollahs, plus da tolls
comes ta eighty-seven.

Halston is reaching for his wallet when the dry, cracking VOICE of a very old man calls from OFF-SCREEN.

VOICE

Here, Mr. Halston. Here.

Halston looks toward the front door of the house. It's open, and sitting there in a wheelchair, barely visible in the dark cavity, is DROGAN. He's holding something out toward Halston, waving it. An envelope.

DROGAN

You are Mr. Halston, aren't you?

HALSTON

Yeah. That's me.

DROGAN

(irritated) Well here, then. Here.

He flaps the envelope violently, as if annoyed that it's still in his hand. Halston approaches slowly, cautiously. When he gets close, he can see (and so can we) that Drogan is as old as his voice sounds. Old and decrepit, ready to die. And there's something else. He looks terrified.

Halston takes the envelope, opens the flap, sees a thick wad of bills.

DROGAN

Two hundred. For the cabbie. To make
certain he'll wait.

Before Halston can speak, Drogan spins his wheelchair around (it's the electric, motorized kind, it whines when it moves) and goes rolling off to be swallowed by the cold darkness inside the mansion.

110 CONTINUED:

Halston strolls back to the taxicab and hands the envelope to the driver.

HALSTON

Wait here.

CABBIE

(fingering the money) I ain't goin'
nowhere, pal. Take yer time.

111 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (WITH TAXICAB) - EVENING

Halston approaches the front door. Behind him, the cabbie shuts off his engine and, with that, the place gets very, very quiet. We are watching the action from the far end of the main hallway, from a low angle. THE CAMERA LENS is only inches off the floor.

The house is musty and dark. The furniture is all from the twenties and thirties, there are tapestries that are twice their weight with dust, the drapes look as though they've never been down for cleaning. The floors are dull and scratched, the orientals frayed, and the various metals are oxidized so badly that silver, gold, brass all look black now.

Halston closes the front door behind him and moves toward us down the hallway. When he turns into a large sitting room, THE CAMERA glides out from its position to keep him in view. It's as though THE CAMERA is alive, a small animal, low to the floor, watching the stranger.

112 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - EVENING

In the sitting room, old man Drogan has stationed his wheelchair near the fireplace. There is a cord of wood, normally found stacked outdoors, stacked along the mantle wall. Drogan struggles, from his chair, with a log from the stack, tossing it onto the fire. Then he pokes around with an enormous tool that resembles the Devil's trident.

DROGAN

I want you to make a hit. I understand
that is what you do.

Halston drifts in closer. He's in his mid-thirties, unremarkable to look at, but he moves with an easy, deadly grace, like a human shark.

HALSTON

How'd you get my name?

DROGAN

I talked with a man named Saul Loggia.
He says you....know him.

Halston nods recognition but he stays alert, suspicious. (After all, this old guy is pretty wierd.)

112 CONTINUED:

HALSTON

Who do you want hit?

Drogan presses a button and his wheelchair buzzes forward making a SOUND like a fly caught in a bottle. The Devil's trident is still in his clenched fist, pointed straight up, like an oversized fork in the hand of a hungry troll. Drogan looks insane.

DROGAN

Your victim is....right behind you.

Halston spins around, falling to one knee. His hand shoots inside his specially tailored sports coat. He pulls out a long-barrelled .44 magnum and aims it at.....

.....A CAT. It's face is an even split, half black, half white. It's eyes are huge in the gloom of the sitting room and caught in each circular black pupil is a prism of firelight, like a sullen coal of hate.

Halston and the cat stare at each other for a moment, each tensed for action. Then Halston puts his gun away and stands up.

HALSTON

I oughta kill you for that. I don't like jokes.

DROGAN

I don't make jokes. Sit down. Here.

The old man has produced another envelope and he's extending it toward Halston. The hit-man composes himself. He looks back down at the spot where the cat stood a moment ago.....the animal is gone.

DROGAN

Halston. Sit down and look in the envelope.

Halston takes the envelope from the old man's hand. There's money inside, old wrinkled bills like the ones he gave the cabbie, only these are all fifties and hundreds.

DROGAN

Six thousand dollars. There will be another six when you bring me proof that the cat has.....ended it's time on earth.

HALSTON

I don't believe this. You hired me to knock off a cat?

DROGAN

Sit down, Mr. Halston. Please.

112 CONTINUED:

Halston shrugs his shoulders, pockets the envelope, and sits at the far end of a dusty old sofa. Droган motors around to face him.

DROGAN

The cat has killed three people in this household. That leaves only me. I am old, I am sick.....but I prefer to die in my own time.

There's a sudden, screeching yowl, and the cat appears above Halston's shoulder, having leaped up from behind the couch. (The effect makes us all jump.) Old Droган tightens his hand around the giant fireplace poker, lifting it in the air as though ready to strike.

But the cat lazily crawls onto Halston's shoulder, down his arm and into his lap, where it settles down and begins to purr. Halston looks at Droган questioningly.

DROGAN

He's very friendly.....at first. I need not explain anything, Mr. Halston, but I will. I feel the need to justify myself so you won't think me mad.

Halston nods. His hand moves to the cat's head and he begins to stroke gently along the dividing line between the black and white markings. The cat seems to doze. Occasionally a pine knot explodes on the hearth. Outside the cold wind, with winter in its throat, whines around the big old house.

DROGAN

This is quite a mansion, don't you think, Mr. Halston? Quite a mansion. Over the years I filled this place with....everything. Everything you could want. Everything you could ever want.

113 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - EVENING

A FLASHBACK appears inside a colorful comic-book border. (In one corner of the screen, we can still see a CLOSE-UP of Droган's present-day face, outside the border, telling the story.)

DROGAN

There used to be four of us here. Myself, my sister, Amanda, her lifelong friend, Carolyn Broadmoor, of the Westchester Broadmoors....she was badly afflicted with emphysema.... and Richard Gage, a hired man, with the family for forty years. He drove, cooked the meals, did the chores.

113 CONTINUED:

Inside the border, we see a dinner table, formal though somewhat tattered. THE CAMERA features individuals as Droган mentions them.

Droган's sister, Amanda, is right out of Tennessee Williams. She wears lots of lacy layers and lots of jewelry. Her hair is puffed up in a prom-night "do". She's dressed as a "junior-miss" even though she's a good seventy years old.

Her friend, Carolyn Broadmoor, is much dowdier, dressed all in dark blues and gloomy browns, she droops over the table, picking at her food, constantly gasping for breath, coughing into Kleenexes and tossing them, used, into a shopping bag she has hanging from her chair-back.

Richard Gage is not only sloppily dressed, for a servant, but he's unpleasant in every way, rude, audacious, careless about serving. Plates drop noisily, wine spills when poured.

Droган, himself, sits at the head of the table. There's no joy, there's no conversation. The scene is dreadful.

DROGAN (o.s.)

We lived together for two years.
We weren't very happy. We weren't
happy at all. We were a dull collection
of rich old people whose only pleasure
was to see who would outlive who.

114 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

CLOSE-UP on old man Droган, his face twitching.

DROGAN

Then....the cat came!

115 EXT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

(There's a colored border around these scenes, but present-day-Droган isn't up in the corner this time, though his VOICE continues, narrating.) Richard Gage is out in the circular driveway hosing down a big, black limousine. He looks up, startled, when the cat jumps up onto the hood of the car. It's back is arched, it looks mean.

DROGAN (o.s.)

It was Gage who saw it first.

Gage squirts water at the animal. It jumps off the car but turns, feet planted in the weed-covered lawn, and looks at the man defiantly. Gage throws a stick at it. He picks up stones from the driveway and throws them as well. The cat is hit, squarely, several times. It doesn't run. It doesn't even flinch. It just stands there, staring.

115 CONTINUED:

DROGAN (o.s.)
For days, weeks, he tried to drive it
away.....but it wouldn't go.

116 EXT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Another flashback-border. Inside it we see the house at night. Crickets chirp loudly as the delivery door to the back pantry squeeks open and Gage's hand reaches out into the moonlight setting a bowl full of Little Friskies on the stoop.

DROGAN (o.s.)
I instructed Gage to put out poisoned food.

Gage watches from the pantry window. The cat strolls out of the nearby bushes, steps over to the Friskies, turns up its nose and walks away.

DROGAN (o.s.)
The cat ignored it. It was little more
than skin and bones. It was starving.
Yet for ten days and nights, it walked
away from the poisoned bowl.

WIDE SHOT (still in a border): The mansion under a sickle moon. In the foreground, the cat howls like a soul in hell.

117 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

The cat's eyes are closed as it purrs contentedly in Halston's lap. The hit-man strokes the animal's head with his strong, skilled fingers. There's a slight smile on his face as he listens to the parched old millionaire.

DROGAN
At that point, my sister, Amanda, noticed
the animal. She's the one who took it in.

118 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - DAY

(Borders again.) CLOSE on a bowl of fresh milk being poured.

AMANDA
Look at the poor thing. It's starving.

We're in the huge kitchen of the house. The cat is attacking the milk, lapping up every drop. Amanda spoons out some tuna fish while Carolyn Broadmoor looks on, her Kleenex and dispos-a-bag in hand.

CAROLYN
Is oo hungwy, darwing? (cough)
Is oo (cough) hungwy?

118 CONTINUED:

DROGAN

Cats aggravate emphysema, Caroline.
Get rid of the filthy thing.

AMANDA

Cats aggravate my brother, Carolyn.
Don't pay any attention.

Drogan has motored into the kitchen. He's got that lethal-looking poker, the Devil's trident, in his fist. His chair is rolling straight for the bowl of milk, straight for the cat.

DROGAN

I WANT IT OUT OF HERE, AMANDA!
EITHER OUT OF HERE OR DEAD!
WHICH IS IT TO BEEEEEE?

Drogan's chair is quite close to the cat now. The old man raises the poker high in the air. The cat looks up, baring its teeth and hissing like a cornered demon.

Amanda throws herself in front of the up-raised poker with all the dramatic flair of a silent-movie heroine.

AMANDA

DON'T YOU DARE STRIKE THIS CAT!
THIS CAT IS MINE! IT'S MY LITTLE PET!

She snatches the cat up into her arms and backs across the room.

AMANDA

YOU HATE CATS! YOU ALWAYS HAVE!

DROGAN

NO, SISTER. YOU'RE WRONG. I DON'T
HATE CATS. CATS HATE MEEEEEEEEE!
DON'T YOU SEE? WE'RE IN DANGER!
ALL OF US! IN DANGER! AS LONG
AS THAT ANIMAL IS IN THIS HOUSE!

119 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

CLOSE-UP on Drogan's face, still twitching, and now starting to sweat.

DROGAN

I TRIED TO WARN THEM. YOU'LL FIND
OUT, I SAID. YOU'LL FIND OUT! YOU'LL.....
FIND.....OU....

The old man gasps for air. He fumbles in a pocket and comes up with a pill bottle. He dumps a couple of tablets out and eats them dry.

119 CONTINUED:

The cat, on Halston's lap, opens its eyes when it hears the old man's distress. It watches, contentedly, as Drogan fights for breath.

HALSTON

You alright?

DROGAN

Yes. I'll be fine....I'll be fine....
Good old Tri-Dormal-G.

(He holds the bottle up, rattling the pills inside.)

You know who I am, don't you? That is, you know where my money comes from?

HALSTON

Drogan Pharmaceuticals.

DROGAN

Yes. One of the biggest drug companies in America, Mr. Halston, and the cornerstone of our financial success has been this....

(Again he rattles the pills.)

Tri-Dormal-phenobarbin, compound G. It's a combination pain-killer, tranquilizer, and mild hallucinogen. It's remarkably....helpful to those of us who are fighting the debilitating effects of aging.

HALSTON

It's also remarkably expensive. It's also remarkably habit forming. I read all about it, Drogan. That stuff's one step up from street junk. You musta known just who to pay off to squeek by the F.D.A.

DROGAN

Yes, and you've done well yourself, Mr. Halston.....'squeeking by' the authorities. Saul Loggia knows of at least two dozen ...er....'jobs'....that you've done for various members of the professional community....

HALSTON

Okay, so we each know who it is we're dealin' with. So finish tellin' me about the cat.

DROGAN

The cat.....ah, yes. The cat.

119 CONTINUED:

Drogan stares at the animal, his face painted with hate. The cat closes its eyes and re-positions its head under Halston's stroking fingers.

DROGAN

The cat killed them. All of them. I warned them, but they wouldn't listen. They found out! They found out!

120 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

(These sequences play inside sinister-looking borders.) Amanda Drogan, in a nightgown worthy of Vivien Leigh, is mincing along the rail of an upstairs balcony. She is carrying an economy-size box of Kitty Treats.

AMANDA

Awwww, de pooo widdle kiddy wants its midnight snackie-poo....then it wantsoo go out and do potty....

The cat, its claws clicking on the hardwood floor, keeps pace with Amanda, almost tripping her several times as it prances between her mincing feet. They are approaching the wide stairway that curves down to the foyer. A grandfather-clock is striking twelve.

DROGAN (o.s.)

My sister met her death at midnight. She was going downstairs....to the kitchen.....we heard her scream.

At the top of the stairs, the cat rubs against Amanda's frail, unsteady legs. The old woman topples forward. The Kitty Treats spray out into the air as she does a spectacular tumble, head-over-heels, to the bottom. Her old bones shatter when she hits, head first, on the foyer's Italian marble floor. Her ears run blood and a dark red puddle forms. The Kitty Treats soak some of it up.

From the head of the stairs, the cat looks down. Carolyn Broadmoor comes waddling along the balcony, coughing, leaving a trail of Kleenexes.

CAROLYN

AMANDA? WHAT HAPPENED, AMANDA?

DROGAN (o.s.)

Death by accident, the coroner said. But I knew.

Carolyn looks down and sees Amanda's broken body. Carolyn's cough worsens.....and worsens.....and worsens.

The cat looks up and watches her with an expression that's almost a grin.

121 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

HALSTON

Why didn't you get rid of the cat then?
With Amanda gone?

DROGAN

Oh, I tried, Mr. Halston. I tried.

122 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Drogan is motoring, full steam, down an upstairs hallway. He's in a night-shirt and he's got a sleeping-cap on his head. He's waving that trident-shaped poker wildly in the air. He really looks deranged.

He's chasing Carolyn Broadmoor, who is fleeing toward her room with a bowl of milk slopping over in her trembling hands.

DROGAN

I'LL KILL IT! I'LL KILL IT! JUST LET
ME IN THERE AND I'LL KILL IT!

DROGAN (o.s.)

Carolyn Broadmoor locked the cat in
her room.

Carolyn, coughing consumptively, barely manages to open the door to her bedroom. She retreats inside, slamming the door shut just as old Drogan gets there. He crashes his chair into the dark oak jamb and starts to pound with his trident, WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

DROGAN

I'LL KILL IT! I'LL KIIIIIIHLLLLLLL.....

Inside the room, Carolyn sets down the bowl of milk, her coughs sending monstrous tremors up and down her body, then she locks and bolts and chains the door shut. The pounding of the trident and Drogan's angry shouts come from the other side. Carolyn flings her back against the door in a silent-movie pose (the heroine locking out the villainous landlord) borrowed from the late Amanda's repertoire.

The cat calmly walks over for a drink. It fishes a Kleenex out of the bowl. It seems irritated that so much milk has been spilled.

DROGAN (o.s.)

She was hysterical, obsessed. She thought
Amanda's soul had entered the cat. Now it
was her job to love the cat the way she
had loved Amanda.

123 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

Drogan hits a button and his chair, with its buzzing trapped-fly SOUND, moves a few feet closer to the couch where Halston sits. The cat on Halston's lap looks up.

The old man is sweating profusely now. His trembling has increased markedly and his eyes look wild.

DROGAN

My mother told me once.....that cats
like to get babies and old people when
they're asleep.....and steal their breath.

124 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

The face of the cat fills the screen. It's staring, with those lambent, black-and-green eyes, at....

....the wrinkle-grooved face of Carolyn Broadmoor. She's asleep on her spinster's bed, breath rasping in and out of her damaged lungs.

The cat creeps closer. It lies down, settling its weight on the poor old woman's neck, covering her mouth, her nose, with its fur.

She starts to gasp. Her eyes open. The cat digs its claws in, pushing harder against the woman's face. She reaches up with trembling hands. She tries to push the animal away, but she can't. She tries to scream but her screams are muffled, lost in the fur. The cat's claws dig in harder. Carolyn Broadmoor starts to struggle.....

From out in the house, the grandfather clock strikes twelve.

DROGAN (o.s.)

Carolyn died at midnight as well.
Suffocated in her bed. The coroner
said natural causes in her case.
But again.....I knew.

125 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

DROGAN

It took Richard Gage almost twenty-four
hours to find the cat and trap it.

126 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Richard Gage, his normally disheveled clothes looking sloppier, more dust-covered than ever, leaves the house carrying a wicker basket.

126 CONTINUED:

DROGAN (o.s.)

Without concern for the hour, I sent
Gage out. I sent him to Milford, to the
veterinarian there.....to have the beast
put away once and for all.

We see Drogan on the phone. He's talking urgently, but his VOICE is
being played under the track of present-day-Drogan narrating.

DROGAN (o.s.)

I called ahead, waking the veterinarian.
I told him Gage was coming....told him
what I wanted done....offered him money....
'But, Mr. Drogan', he said.....'It's midnight!'

Drogan pulls the phone away from his ear. His eyes go wide. Somewhere
nearby, the grandfather clock starts to chime.....BONG! BONG! BONG!

127 INT. DROGAN'S LIMOUSINE - (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

Borders continue. Gage is driving fast. The SOUND of the clock overlaps.
BONG! BONG! BONG! The wicker basket is on the front seat. The cat's
black-and-white head suddenly pokes out.

Gage looks. Too late! The cat leaps! BONG! BONG!

The cat's talons rake into one of Gage's eyes, puncturing it, deflating it,
blinding it. Gage screams. The cat's other paw hooks over the bridge of
his nose, digging in, bringing blood. Lots of blood.

Through the windshield, we see the car veer off the road. We HEAR the
squeal of tires over the cat's yowling.....BONG! BONG!

The cat is spread-eagled over Gage's face like some huge furry black
spider, ears laid back, green eyes glaring like spotlights from hell. Its
back legs jitter and dig into the soft flesh of the old man's neck. Both
Gage's hands come up now....up off the steering wheel.

Through the windshield, we see a bridge abutment looming.

The cat jumps down. Gage sees.....BONG!.....a flash of white concrete in
the windshield just before impact.

BONG!

128 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - (PRESENT-DAY) - EVENING

Drogan stares across at the hit-man. The original terror that Halston
saw on his face at the front door has returned.

128 CONTINUED:

DROGAN

A week later.....on the day Dick Gage was buried....the cat came back.

HALSTON .

It survived a high-speed car crash?
Hard to believe.

DROGAN

Nine lives, you know, Mr. Halston.....
nine....evil....demonic.....lives.

HALSTON

Nobody actually witnessed the deaths you described. How can you be sure the cat had anything to do with them?

DROGAN

I'm sure. It killed them. It killed them all.
And I'm next.

The old man maneuvers his buzzing wheelchair even closer to the couch where Halston is sitting. His voice drops to a near whisper and his trembling is audible on his breath.

DROGAN

I'm afraid of it, Halston. I've lived with it for the last four months. It skulks around in the shadows....watching me. It's waiting.... it's torturing me by waiting.

The cat looks calmly up into old Droган's eyes. It seems to be grinning again, the nasty grin of an evil imp.

DROGAN

It's a hellcat, you see. A sort of....demon.
It's been sent to punish me.

Droган is quivering all over now, and a phlegm-filled cough is boiling up inside his throat. He shivers more pills out of his ever-present bottle and gobbles them dry as he did the ones before.

HALSTON

Earlier you said....'I don't hate cats, cats hate me'. Now you say this cat's here to punish you. What's it all about, Droган?

Slowly, the old man lifts his pill bottle. He shakes it and the pills inside rattle like a diamondback's tail. The cat hisses, angrily, as though it hates the SOUND, as though it hates the pills themselves.

128 CONTINUED:

DROGAN

Tri-Dormal-G, Mr. Halston. That's what it's about. Tri-Dormal-G.

HALSTON

I don't get it.

DROGAN

It's a synthetic. It was developed in the mid-fifties in our New Jersey labs....before the laws were passed that protect laboratory animals. Our testing of Tri-Dormal-G was confined almost solely to cats, because of the unique quality of the feline nervous system.

HALSTON

How many did you wipe out?

DROGAN

Over four years of testing....five thousand cats.....uh.....expired.

The cat turns deliberately and looks up into the hit-man's face. It looks him right in the eye, and Halston is visibly disturbed by it. It's as though the cat is studying him to gauge his reaction to Drogan's confession.

HALSTON

(to the cat) Five thousand o' your buddies get wasted. So they send you back to settle the score with Drogan, here, is that the deal, pussy cat?

DROGAN

Don't make light of it, Halston. I warn you.

HALSTON

I never make light of any matter involving twelve thousand dollars, Drogan.

DROGAN

Does that mean you'll take the job?

HALSTON

I'll do it now, if you want me to. I'll snap it's neck. It won't even know....

All the while, Halston's long, muscular fingers have been massaging the cat's head and shoulders. Now, as he speaks, those fingers tighten slowly into a killing grip.

128 CONTINUED:

The cat howls, a devilish sound that seems as though it should have come from a much larger, much stronger animal. It twists its body violently and claws its way out from beneath Halston's fingers. It scrambles up his chest, up and over his head, leaving bloody marks on his cheek.

HALSTON
SON OF A BITCH!

He reacts, trying to grab the cat, but the animal is much too fast. It leaps off the back of the couch and darts out of the sitting room, a blur against the antique oriental.

DROGAN
It's not going to be that easy, Mr. Halston.

The hit-man pulls out a handkerchief and dabs at his bloody scratches.

HALSTON
Don't worry, Drogan. I'll kill your cat for you.

DROGAN
Good. Kill it! Bury it! Bring me the tail so I can throw it in the fire and watch it burn!

Drogan spins his chair around and motors, full speed, toward the foyer. Halston is taken by surprise. He stands at the couch.

DROGAN
I'm going in to the city. That's why I made certain the taxi would wait.

Halston's mouth drops open as he watches the mad old millionaire's twitching, sweating, buzzing flight across the room.

DROGAN
There's food. There's liquor. There's.... everything....everything you could want. Ha ha ha....everything you could ever want.

129 EXT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

CLOSE on the trunk of the taxicab as the driver's hands set Drogan's wheelchair, folded compactly, inside.

The driver slams the trunk and hurries forward to his seat. Drogan can be seen in the rear, popping a few more Tri-Dormal-G's.

Halston watches from the front door as the taxi pulls off, down the circular driveway and away from the house.

130 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

Halston turns into the huge foyer, swinging the front door closed behind him, shutting out the night SOUNDS. He looks across the dusty expanse, quite dark now, with only an occasional lamp lit. He starts to walk, his soft soles squeeking on the Italian marble.

HALSTON

Okay, cat. It's only you and me now.
Jesus Christ! I don't believe this. Crazy
old fucker. Heh heh, crazy old RICH
FUCKER.....HOW 'BOUT IT, CAT?

His voice echoes through the cavernous place and comes back to him out of the far dark corners. He stops, thinking he hears something else.

After a moment of silence, with Halston looking this way and that, he moves off again, heading for the over-sized dining room.

131 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

The dining room is full of dark shadows, some of them moving with the sway of the curtains at the moonlit bay window beyond the dinner table.

Halston feels around the wall just inside the dining room archway. He finds a light switch. He clicks it on and dim, very dim light comes from the three (of about thirty-three) flame-shaped bulbs that are not burned out in the overhead chandelier. There's a marble-topped wet-bar across the room, and Halston swaggers over to it. He opens the bar doors, finding glasses and a few dusty, almost empty bottles of cheap rot-gut liquor.

HALSTON

Everything you could ever want. Hah!
Look at this shit. Why is it that rich guys
always buy the cheap shit. Hey, cat. I'm
gonna be rich some day. And I'm gonna
buy nothin' but the best. All the time.

He pours himself a glassful of whiskey and moves off toward the pantry.

132 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

The pantry leads to the huge kitchen we saw in the flashbacks earlier. Halston crosses to a bank of refrigerator doors which are built right into a wall. He swings one open, then another. Inside is a sparse collection of items, a few eggs, a container of milk, one or two un-appetizing remnants wrapped in clear Saran.

HALSTON

Everything you could ever want. Shit.

132 CONTINUED:

Halston reaches into an ice-storage bucket in the freezer and grabs a handful of cubes. He is just dropping those cubes into his whiskey when the cat streaks past his head, howling inhumanly. Its claws slice his cheek open just beside the scratches made earlier on the couch.

Halston cries out in pain and anger. He spins, spilling most of his whiskey, his ice cubes flying across the room. He can just see the cat's black and white tail jetting around the corner into the pantry.

HALSTON
HEY, YOU LITTLE MOTHERFUCKER!
NOBODY HITS ME TWICE! NO-FUCKIN'-
BODY HITS ME TWICE!

Pulling his magnum from its holster under that tailored-to-conceal sports coat, Halston charges to the pantry door, rage red in his eyes.

He sees the cat turn a corner into the dining room. He raises his gun and starts to squeeze the trigger.....then he gets control of himself.

HALSTON
Can't get hot. Can't let yourself get hot.
Ever. You make mistakes when you get hot.
What am I talkin', make mistakes? Like this
was a real knock-off I was doin' here. Jesus.
A cat. Twelve long ones to take out a cat.

Snickering, he walks back over to the fridge. He grabs more ice, dumps it in his almost empty drink and heads back toward the dining room.

133 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

He still has his gun out when he reaches the bar. With the same hand that holds the weapon, he grabs the whiskey bottle, un-corked from before, and pours a generous amount over the ice in his glass.

HALSTON
Come on, cat. Let's get this over with.

As he lifts the glass to drink, he notices a stain on the sleeve of his jacket, a blood stain. He looks and sees another, higher, near the elbow.

HALSTON
Aw, what is this? What is this shit?
Oh, no. No! This is a five hundred
dollar jacket here.

He loves that tailored jacket and hates to see it stained. He reaches up and feels the hot wetness on his cheek. The cuts are bleeding badly, running rivulets down his neck. His shirt collar is soaked and there's a spreading red blot on the jacket's lapel.

133 CONTINUED:

Setting down his gun and his drink, Halston gingerly takes off the coat, careful not to get any more blood on it. (We can see his fancy leather shoulder-holster now.) When he notices the large red blot on the lapel, some of the rage we saw earlier boils up into his face again. He tosses the jacket over a chair-back, picks up gun and drink, takes a long pull of whiskey, sets the glass back down and chugs off toward the foyer.

HALSTON

You'll be sorry you messed with me, you little shit. I got a reason to kill you now.

134 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

In the foyer, Halston looks at his choices. There are several rooms that break off the central hall, one of them is the sitting room where he and old man Drogan had their evening chat. Beyond that is another room with a large entrance arch and sliding doors. The doors are not quite shut. There's an opening between them of about ten inches.....enough for the cat to slip through. Halston heads for those doors.

135 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

The room is pitch black inside. Halston slides the doors open a little wider and squeezes himself into the darkness. He feels around the wall to his left, finds a switch and clicks it. No lights come on.

HALSTON

Drogan, you cheap bastard.

YEEEEEEEEOOOWL! The cat screeches. It runs right past Halston's feet. It stays in the room. Halston's eyes squint. In the narrow strip of light coming through the doors from the foyer, he spots a large snooker table in the middle of the room. The cat leaps up on it and disappears on the other side.

Halston slams the sliding doors shut. Now the room is truly black.

HALSTON

Gotcha. You're trapped, shitface.

He sticks his hands out in front of him like a blind person. He is blind in this blackness. He heads toward that billiard table, toward the big light with the Tiffany shade that hangs over the billiard table.

KER-CLUNK! He trips over something. It startles him, but he keeps his balance and he keeps moving toward his goal.

Finally, he gets there. His hands stretch out toward the overhead light, his fingers feeling around for a switch. He finds one.....CLICK!

135 CONTINUED:

SCREEEEEEEEEEEE! There's the cat, sitting on the lightshade. Patches of yellow and red and green project from the leaded glass when the light comes on, making its face look hideous.

Halston almost jumps out of his Florsheims. He dances back several steps and brings up his magnum. The cat just sits there, hissing nastily, but not moving.

Gradually, a slight smile breaks across Halston's face. Moving slowly, so as not to startle the animal, he holsters his weapon.

HALSTON

Come on kitty. Let's be friends again.
How 'bout it? Whatd'ya say? We'll go
in by the fire where we were before....
you'll sit on my lap again.....and I'll
snap your neck. Whatd'ya say?

He's moving toward the cat now, slowly lifting his hands toward it. The cat's eyes seem to glow from within as it stares piercingly at the man, whose hands are getting closer, closer.....WHAP! The cat leaps!

Halston grabs for it but misses clean. The tiffany shade swings, projecting little patches of color all over the room now in dizzying elipses.

The cat scrambles over a big leather armchair. Halston hits that same chair a second too late. The chair spills over onto the floor taking a stand-up ashtray with it.

The cat runs across a book shelf. Halston is right behind, spilling books, tossing them to the floor, his clutching hands missing the animal by mere inches.

The cat skitters across the back of a green leather sofa. Halston dives, misses again, loses his grip and tumbles over the sofa back, falling to the floor with a tremendous thud.

He can't help himself. He starts to laugh. He pulls himself up and looks around the room. From high on another book shelf, the cat looks down. Seeing the smug expression on the animal's face, Halston laughs harder.

HALSTON

You're beatin' me, pal. You're beatin'
me good. I'm tryin' too hard.

CUT TO:

136 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

KLACK! A cue ball knocking a red into a pocket. Halston is shooting snooker. He's good at it. He walks around the table for another shot, glancing up toward the high book shelves as he moves.

136 CONTINUED:

The cat strolls among the leather-bound volumes, never taking its eyes off the hit-man below.

HALSTON

I got nothin' against you, you know.
No. In fact, I kind of like you. You're
a lot like me. A hit-man. Heh heh heh.

Halston takes another shot. Makes it. He walks around to another bumper following the cue ball. The cat still strolls among the classics above.

HALSTON

Hey. Did you really bump off those three
old turds? Hey. If you did, more power to ya.
It sounded to me like they deserved to go.
You, you don't deserve to go. You're alright.
Hell, I'd take you home with me if I wasn't
worried you'd run away and come back here.

He leans over the table, one leg up, reaching for a tough angle. He shoots, slow and easy. He watches the balls roll.

HALSTON

Nope. I can't take you home with me.
I gotta kill ya. No choice.

The target ball falls into a pocket and Halston looks up from the table. The cat isn't on the book shelf.

SCREEEEEEEE-AAAAAA! Halston's one leg is still up on the table when the cat leaps at his crotch, claws out, digging. The pain is gigantic, terrible. Halston screams. He staggers away from the table and the cat hangs on, a spitting coiled spring of fury, clawing at the man's balls. Halston topples to the floor. He still has the billiard cue in his hand. He tries to beat the cat off, tries to shove it away, but it hangs on, clawing, chewing, yowling inhumanly, the voice of a woman in pain or in the throes of sexual climax.

Halston rolls over again, trying to get his hand on his pistol. His feet accidentally kick the sliding doors. They open slightly. The cat lets go of the man's crotch and jets through the opening, escaping into the foyer. Halston rolls up onto his knees. He slides the doors open wider and crawls out onto the Italian marble, the pain between his legs still excruciating. He draws his gun.

He catches a glimpse of the cat's tail disappearing into another room across the way. He struggles to articulate words, his lips pulled back tightly over teeth clenched in agony.

HALSTON

You're done for, you fuck. The rest of your
nine lives are goin' in one lump sum.

137 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

CLOSE on a black and white Admiral T.V. from the forties. The Johnny Carson show is on.

On the floor, in the glow from the T.V., sits a bowl of milk.

Halston, slugging from another glass of whiskey, is sitting in a high-backed chair with his .44 cocked and ready in his hand.

HALSTON

I can out-wait you, you little shit.
Sooner or later you'll come out....
and I'll nail ya. You don't have a
prayer. I have never blown a hit
once I took it on, kitty-cat. This
is gonna be the end of you.

He sees it and freezes. On the floor, stealthing through the shadows, moving toward the bowl of milk.....the cat.

Halston aims the magnum. The barrel pans with the silently slinking target, the gun-sights lined up on the animal's front shoulders.

The cat reaches the bowl, bends its head down to sniff at the milk. Halston smiles and squeezes his trigger. BARRROOOOOOOM!

The big cannon spits lead. The cat just looks up, those wierd eyes boring through the darkness, boring through Halston, touching his soul with icy fear. His mouth falls open.

HALSTON

That's impossible! Fuckin' impossible!
I had a dead bead on you.....

The cat bolts. Halston fires again. BARRROOOOOOOOOM! A big chunk of mahogany furniture flies where the powerhouse bullet hits. Another shot....BARRRRRROOOOOOOOOOOM!.....the T.V. explodes.

The cat runs right toward Halston. He fires again. BARRRRROOOOOOOM! Another miss? The cat leaps. It scratches up and over the hit-man, just as it did earlier in the sitting room.

Halston turns in his chair, screaming, bleeding profusely from his right eye. The cat is on its way out of the room. Halston fires shots wildly. BARRRRROOOOOOOM! BARRRRROOOOOOOM! BARRRRROOOOOOOM!

A Ming vase shatters into a million pieces. A huge chunk flies out of the baseboard near the door. The cat escapes.

Halston leaps out of his chair and charges after the animal.

138 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - NIGHT

Halston lunges out into the foyer looking mean and angry as a wounded grizzly. He glances up and down the giant hall. He sees no movement.

Suddenly, from just over his shoulder, very nearby, a startling SOUND.

BONG! Halston spins and opens fire. He plants three or four shells in Droган's grandfather clock before he even realizes what he's done. Glass shatters, wood chips fly and the clock face breaks apart, springs and gear-works popping out.

Halston sees that the hands are both upright, pointing at the twelve, and on the little picture-disc just above the hands, a man-in-the-moon is holding a fringed banner across a starry sky. On that banner, in gold-leaf script, is the word MIDNIGHT.

SQUEEEEE-KA-TLUNG! The wounded clock is still trying to ring, still trying to chime the witching hour, but its broken parts only squeek and boing and click.

Perched on top of the clock is the cat. Halston sees it. He lifts his gun and pulls the trigger.....Oh oh.....no more ammo.

Halston screams with frustration, and at that moment the cat leaps at his mouth with malign, murderous intent, its ears flat back, its eyes filled with lunatic hate....and glee.

It rams into Halston's mouth, a fury projectile. He gags on it. His stomach recoils and he starts to vomit. He begins to choke.

A terrible thick gurgling sound comes from the man's throat, which is swelling and rippling as the cat forces itself down, inexorably down into his windpipe.

Halston falls to the floor, his hands grabbing for the cat. Horror rushes through his darkening mind when all he can feel is.....its tail. The rest is inside him, clawing and biting. His fists tighten around that tail and he tries to pull, but the cat is in much too deep.

Blood comes in a fountain. His body twitches. His eyes sheen over and his tight fists relax. He lies on the Italian marble, dead. Protruding from his open mouth is two inches of bushy tail, half black, half white.

It disappears.

139 INT. DROGAN'S MANSION - MORNING.

The front door opens and old man Droган motors in over the specially ramped threshold. In the background we can see a taxicab parked in the portico, it's driver apparently paid to wait.

139 CONTINUED:

Drogan flings the front door shut behind him and immediately he sees the corpse, lying flat on its back, at the far end of the giant hall. He pushes a button and his chair speeds over the smooth Italian marble, buzzing like a fly.

The old man knows whose corpse it is, of course, and he knows who..... or rather what....did the killing. But he motors in very close, madness and morbid curiosity pulling him. The front wheels of his chair stop mere inches from the late Mr. Halston's shoulder. Drogan looks down into the hit-man's petrified face, locked forever in a silent scream.

DROGAN

NO! NOOOOOOOOOO!

SQUEEEEE-KA-TLUNG! The grandfather clock is trying to chime again. It clicks and clatters. There are straining motor noises. A spring boings as it pops out through a crack near the upright hands. The clock's face is frozen like Halston's face.....it still reads.....MIDNIGHT!

DROGAN

BUT....IT'S NOT....IT'S NOT MIDNIGHT.
IT'S NOT MIDNIGHT, I TELL YOU! THIS
IS WRONG! THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE!

On the floor, Halston's shirt is rippling just above his brass belt buckle, rippling and bulging. Splotches of blood begin to bloom there like sinister roses. Drogan watches, terror clutching at the inside of his throat. He gropes for his Tri-Dormal-G, but he fumbles the bottle when he pops the lid open. It falls and pills scatter every which way over the marble floor.

Halston's shirt tears open where it's been softened by the blood. Buttons pop off and join the pills on the floor. A ragged hole is being clawed through the shirt, through the flesh beneath, just above Halston's navel.

Drogan begins to gag on the fluids in his esophagus. His face puffs out and reddens four shades. His eyes bulge. His hands flutter up to his throat, weak, trembling fingers clawing.

Poking out of the ragged hole in the hit-man's stomach, is the gore-streaked black and white face of the cat, its eyes huge and glaring.

DROGAN

THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE! THERE'S.....
BEEN....AAAAAARRRGGH!

The old man topples out of his chair, dead before he hits the marble.

The cat forces its body all the way out of the stomach hole. It stretches in obscene languor. Then it leaps upward. It lands on top of the clock. It's a bloody mess. It begins to lick itself clean. SQUEEEEE-KA-TLUNG goes the clock as THE PICTURE FREEZES.

140 EFX

MATCH-DISSOLVE TO: a drawing of the cat atop the clock, the closing panel of the story on another loose page from Billy's comic-book.

The skeletal hand of our graveside host collects the page.

CREEP

Well, kiddies, that was....the cat's meow.
Heh, heh, heh....

141 EXT. OVERGROWN LOT IN ELMVILLE - MORNING

The Creep is strolling through thick, overhanging greens.

CREEP

It's a pity old Drogan wasted all that money
on cabs. Oh, well, he learned, the hard way,
that when it's time to go....it's time to go.
Which reminds me that it's time for this
boogie-man to boogie. I'll be slayin' ya,
bores and ghouls. 'Til next issue.....try to
stay scared, heh, heh, heh.....
Oh. I almost forgot about Billy. I have
to return his comic-book.

Suddenly, magically, the rumpled pages in the Creep's bony hands re-assemble themselves into a fresh, undamaged copy of CREEPSHOW.

CREEP

Heh, heh, heh.....Oh, I think I hear Billy
coming this way....with his friends.

The Creep pushes aside some of the hanging green and peeks through.

142 EXT. OVERGROWN LOT IN ELMVILLE - MORNING

There's Billy, still running for his life. Rhino and the boys are hot on his ass and gaining.

Billy races past a sign which reads "TOWN PROPERTY - KEEP OUT!!!!"
He darts into the thick, almost jungly undergrowth that surrounds the sign. There's a path but it's spotty and ill defined. Billy is small enough to either dart through the thick tangles of bushes or duck and run under them.

Rhino and the greasers follow Billy into the thicket. They get whipped in the face with branches as they blunder through the tangle of green. They are all swearing and shouting, in unison, about how they're gonna tear Billy's ass into a million bite-sized pieces.

143 EXT. OVERGROWN LOT IN ELMVILLE - MORNING

Billy reaches the edge of a clearing and a look of pleasure, relief and safety comes into his face. He actually begins to grin.....a disquieting grin that we've seen before. The hoods arrive at the same spot. Rhino is bleeding from a good many scratches, and pissed like a real rhino.

RHINO

Kid, I'm gonna put you in traction.
Get ready for some serious pain.

Rhino leads his troops into the clearing which, we now see, is dotted with a great many big plants that don't seem indigenous to Elmvile, Pa. The greasers notice the big plants just about the same time we do. The great alien things loom up all around them, green with purplish bellies that look like venom sacks.

BILLY

They're Venus Flytraps....giant Venus
Flytraps. They eat meat.

Billy opens and closes his hands like jaws, making the same realistic gurgling, choking sound that he made for the Postman earlier today.

BILLY

GRAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHGGGGGGGGG!!!!

Suddenly, the plants start making similar SOUNDS. One by one they open their jaws and grab the hoods, who begin to scream (and bleed).

Rhino panics. He runs for the edge of the clearing.....where the biggest Flytrap of all suddenly opens its jaws. We couldn't see it before because it was largely camouflaged by the other summer greenery. Rhino can't stop. He runs smack into the thing. The jaws close on his screams.

Billy smiles happily as he watches the plants breakfast on the greasers.

BILLY

GRAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHGGGGGGGGG!!!!

144 EXT. OVERGROWN LOT IN ELMVILLE - MORNING

At the other edge of the clearing, the Creep is giggling. His decomposed hands open the CREEPSHOW comic to a page with an ad on it. It's an ad for Venus Flytraps. It shows a doctor (who looks suspiciously like E. G. Marshall as Pratt) pointing a very scholarly pointer at a giant green plant with a purplish belly. The balloon coming out of the doctor's head says: "They're the biggest ones I've ever seen!"

The Creep looks up into THE CAMERA and starts to cackle. The MAIN-TITLE MUSIC begins with ominous-sounding chord.

145 EXT. OVERGROWN LOT IN ELMVILLE - MORNING

The giant Flytrap seems to be chewing on Rhino now. One engineer boot, the one that tromped on Billy's bulb earlier, sticks out of the plant for a minute, its silver spur jingle-jangling.....then it's sucked in.

The Flytrap belches, the PICTURE FREEZES and MATCH-DISSOLVES to:

146 EFX

A comic-book drawing of the scene. CREDITS ROLL as more drawings flash before our eyes, images that we recognize from the stories we've just seen.

As CREDITS END, we can hear the echoing LAUGHTER of the Creep.

CREEP

Heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh, heh.....
