

FLETCH lives

1 EXT. POSH GREEK SEAFOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT 1

It's past midnight. A neon sign: "Kakakis Cafe". A "Closed" sign on the door, but a light still burns inside.

2 INT. RESTAURANT - TIGHT ON A TANK OF FIGHTING LOBSTERS 2

PAN off to a vast sea of empty tables and chairs. Five MEN sit at the only occupied table. Three are the owners, the three Kakakis brothers; the others are a plain-clothes policeman, O'REILLY, and an accountant, who sits with open books and a calculator.

ACCOUNTANT

We took in one hundred thirteen thousand from basketball.

PHIL

List it as codfish.

ACCOUNTANT

A hundred twenty thousand from the Gonzalez fight. That includes sixty from our chain in the valley, twenty from Long Beach. Hundred twenty total.

TONY

Put that under halibut.

ACCOUNTANT

One eighty thousand from the track.

PHIL

Scrod.

ACCOUNTANT

We already got over two million in scrod this month!

TONY

What's the guy from the IRS gonna say?

PHIL

He's not gonna say anything. He's the biggest expense under scrod.

As the conversation continues, the CAMERA DOLLYS across the tile floor to reveal a very large SCRUBWOMAN wearing a dirty white dress, sensible Wedgies and her hair in a bun. She's humming "The Song of the Volga Boatmen". The scrubwoman reaches into the bucket with a sponge.

3 INSERT BUCKET 3

Dirty water, but in the rinse rack, under a dry sponge, a steno pad on which abundant notes are scrawled, and an attached pencil.

4 THE SCRUBWOMAN'S POV 4

O'REILLY
How're you listing my stake?

PHIL
Breakage.

O'REILLY
Seventy five thousand dollars worth
of breakage?

PHIL
(breaking a plate in
front of the cop)
We're Greeks. We dance. We throw
plates. We're clumsy.

5 INSERT STENO PAD 5

The scrubwoman writes:

150 G = Police Bribe

PAN UP to REVEAL SCRUBWOMAN'S FACE.

It is FLETCH. A convincing disguise, right down to a beauty mark on the right cheek.

6 WIDER 6

He begins to crawl out on his hands and knees, still humming.

7 INT. THE HALLWAY TO THE PHONE AND RESTROOMS 7

UNCLE KAKAKIS, who with his limited vision and unlimited libido is immediately attracted to the zaftig scrublady. His appointment as security guard was clearly an act of charity. He catches up with the scrublady and puts his hand on Fletch's left buttock.

UNCLE KAKAKIS
What's your name, little lady?

Fletch flashes a half-hearted smile.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

UNCLE KAKAKIS

(continuing)
You're cute...

He grabs Fletch's leg.

UNCLE KAKAKIS

I like a woman with big thighs.

Suddenly Uncle Kakakis freezes and his eyes go wide.

UNCLE KAKAKIS

(continuing)
What's that?

FLETCH

A polish sausage. I stole it from
the kitchen. Please don't tell.

UNCLE KAKAKIS

(looking him in the eye)
Well... we need to talk about this.

FLETCH

Could I just freshen up? Splash
some water on my face?

UNCLE KAKAKIS

Whatever makes you feel sexy.

8 INT. LADIES' ROOM

8

Fletch looks around, sees an open window above the sink. He
turns on the water to cover the noise of climbing out. He
hikes up his skirt, revealing his boxer shorts and hairy
legs, and making it easier to climb out the window.

9 EXT. ALLEY - CLOSE ON FLETCH

9

as he looks out the window.

10 HIS POV

10

He's about ten feet in the air, but fortunately there's a
black sedan parked under the window.

11 THE HOOD

11

as he drops onto it and goes into a crouch to soften his
drop. He looks into the sedan.

9-40 INT. FLETCH'S NEWSPAPER - FRANK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

19-40

Fletch stands in front of Frank's desk. His wig is off but he still wears the dress and has rouge on his cheeks.

FRANK

(laying down the copy)
It's great, as usual, Fletch. We'll have it in the next edition.

FLETCH

Good. See you in two weeks.

FRANK

Uh... Fletch...

FLETCH

"Uh... Fletch?" Frank, I see a double cross in your eyes. You promised me a vacation and I'm taking it.

FRANK

(out the door)
After the sewer story.

41 INT. CITY ROOM

41

The few remaining STAFF people watch as Fletch, still wearing only one shoe, hounds Frank across the room.

FLETCH

What are you talking about? I spent eight nights scrubbing floors, then I rush back to type the story in time, I got dishwasher hands, sore knees, some guy tried to feel me up, three guys tried to kill me, and my girdle is killing me. Frank, you promised me a vacation.

FRANK

And you'll get a vacation - right after you research and write the sewer system expose.

FLETCH

Frank, you owe me a vacation.

FRANK

And you'll have it in July.

FLETCH

That's two months away.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

FRANK

That's why you're a great reporter.
You know facts.

(pausing at the exit)
By the way, Fletch, the new
computer disallowed your
undocumented expenses. The money
you owe is being taken out of this
week's check.

FLETCH

Frank, you can't...

FRANK

There's nothing I can do about it.
It's all done automatically...

Frank leaves.

Fletch looks pitiful indeed as he stands next to the water cooler in his washerwoman attire. The only worker near him is an ANCIENT COPY BOY, emptying a file. Fletch puts one hand on his own aching back.

FLETCH

(to the copy boy)
On top of everything else, I'm
getting my period.

42 EXT. FLETCH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAWN

42

He drops his weary carcass into the building.

43 INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF FLETCH'S APARTMENT

43

Stuffed in his doorway is a bill from the landlady stamped "OVERDUE" and a "Fumigation Alert". He wads them in disgust.

44 INT. APARTMENT

44

Fletch enters and looks.

45 FLETCH'S POV

45

Gilette is sitting on Fletch's couch, reading a magazine and drinking a glass of juice, his briefcase at his feet.

FLETCH

No wonder I got a fumigation alert.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

BETTY

Some of us prefer to dine in
sophisticated settings.

FLETCH

Oh. This one is classy. Mort's
has a sign: "No shoes, no shirts,
no service."

Fletch sits down at his cubicle desk. The phone rings.
Fletch doesn't answer. Frank is passing Fletch, who is deep
in thought. The phone keeps ringing.

FRANK

Fletch, answer your phone.

Fletch takes another moment before answering.

FLETCH

(into phone)
Extension 322.

49 INT. LOUISIANA LEGAL OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT FLETCH'S OFFICE 4

A beautiful woman in her 30's is calling Fletch.

AMANDA RAY

Mr. Irwin Fletcher?

FLETCH

Call me Fletch.

AMANDA RAY

I represented your Aunt Belle
Fletcher.

FLETCH

(a small smile)
Good old Aunt Belle. How is she?

AMANDA RAY

She's deceased, Mr. Fletch.

FLETCH

(shrugs)
Oh... guess she could be better.

FRANK

(interrupting)
What about this expense... \$58 for
leg waxing. That's bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

MACHINE

Hi, Fletch. This is Madeleine. I know we were supposed to get together tomorrow night. But my horoscope says Scorpios should avoid physical contact for the rest of the month. Maybe my astrologist was just telling me this because he wants to keep me to himself. But he wouldn't do a thing like that, would he? I mean, they're like doctors...

Fletch spins ahead.

NEW VOICE

It's Lou at Paine Webber. I didn't think your stock could go lower, but...

Fletch spins ahead and stops at an unfamiliar voice. During the following he lies on his sofa, exhausted.

MESSAGE

This is Amanda Ray Ross. It's Thursday, five p.m. I can be reached at my office at (504) 456-7823.

(Fletch is falling asleep)

I'm an attorney in Thibodaux, Louisiana. I'm also the executor of the will for your Aunt Belle Fletcher. I would like to offer my condolences and inform you that you are the major beneficiary of her estate.

All this has fallen on sleeping ears. Fletch is lying on his bed, snoring.

DISSOLVE TO:

48 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

4:

Fletch walks in. He passes the "office" of Betty Dilworth, the attractive society editor. Fletch does not stop for this. He knows the answer to his question.

FLETCH

Hi, Betty. How about a burger at Mort's?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

He looks toward his kitchen window, and through it to the fire escape. The window is open.

FLETCH

(continuing)

How did you get in here?

GILLET

The window was open. I knocked. I could swear I heard you say, "Come in."

FLETCH

You sure know how to cover your ass... although those pants are a big mistake.

GILLET

I'm not leaving until you pay me four thousand three hundred and eighty-one dollars in back alimony.

FLETCH

What? I was married to you?

Gillet shakes his head in disgust.

FLETCH

You're right. I've been foolishly squandering my salary on food and heat. Besides, I hear she's sleeping with a wimpy, balding lawyer who's rolling in dough.

GILLET

(Pointing to a court order in his open briefcase)

You have one week to comply with Judge Proctor's orders - payment in full. Otherwise, you go to jail.

FLETCH

(examining the briefcase)

Nice briefcase. Isn't this what they give you when you stay five nights and only use one towel at a Motel Six? Must look great in the back seat of your Yugo.

(he picks something up)

Look. Here's a note from the Oakwood Potency Clinic. "Sorry to inform you that our machine cannot process sperm counts as low as yours."

(CONTINUED)

FLETCH
(lifting his pant leg)
But Frank, feel how smooth they
are!

AMANDA RAY
You were hard to find, Mr.
Fletch...

FLETCH
I was touring with the Stones.

AMANDA RAY
Didn't you get my message? I am the
executor of your aunt's will... and
as such, I can inform you that you
are the major beneficiary of your
aunt's estate. Belle Isle. I'm sure
you're familiar with it.

FRANK
We're not unreasonable about
legitimate expenses. When you do
that sewer story, I'll even advance
you the wet suit and hip boots.

AMANDA RAY
Now this consists of eighty acres
of old plantation property...

FLETCH
Plantation... She left it to me?
Could I get back to you in a few
minutes? What's your number?

49A FLETCH'S CUBICLE

49

He writes the number, hangs up, and turns back to Frank, a
big smile on his face.

FRANK
Can we at least return some of
these things? What about the
lingerie?

FLETCH
I ate it.

FRANK
Fletch, for just one minute, be
serious.

(CONTINUED)

49A CONTINUED:

FLETCH

I quit.

FRANK

What?

FLETCH

I quit.

FRANK

(doesn't believe him)
On the sewer story, I want...

FLETCH

(hand on his shoulder)
Frank, I'm gonna miss you... Well,
maybe not.

FRANK

(tapping his fingers)
Fletch, you're always threatening
to leave, but...

FLETCH

(also tapping his
fingers)
Treat this as good news. You can
write my Jane Doe column.
(a gleam in Frank's eye)
It could use your unmistakable
touch.

FRANK

(interested)
Really?

FLETCH

One stupid idea stated badly.

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What about loyalty, journalistic
integrity and the quest for truth?

FLETCH

You're right. I can't abandon the
principles that have nurtured me
lo these many years... Wrap 'em up
with the rest of the shit on my
desk and ship 'em to my mansion in
Louisiana.

He picks up a Laker's cap, a nerf ball and a basket and
walks out the door.

FRANK

(to Sports and Betty)
Holy shit. He really did quit.

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hikes up his skirt, revealing his boxer shorts and hairy
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9 EXT. ALLEY - CLOSE ON FLETCH

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as he looks out the window.

10 HIS POV

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He's about ten feet in the air, but fortunately there's a
black sedan parked under the window.

11 THE HOOD

11

as he drops onto it and goes into a crouch to soften his
drop. He looks into the sedan.

12 THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD 12

The Kakakis brothers, preparing to drive off, have seen him and recognize him as both the maid and a man. His steno pad is in his hand.

13 THE GEAR SHIFT 13

slammed into reverse as the car hurtles backwards.

14 FLETCH 14

is rolled off the car and lies dazed at the end of the alley.

15 INT. SEDAN 15

PHIL

He's either an honest cop or a nosy reporter.

TONY

If it's a cop, kill him. If it's a reporter, cripple him.

DRIVER

How can I tell?

TONY

(shrugs)
Just kill him.

16 EXT. ALLEY 16

They slam the stickshift into gear and speed toward the stunned Fletch.

He rolls out of the way at the last minute, and the sedan slams into the wall at the end of the alley. The men are trapped inside the crumpled car.

17 FLETCH 17

picks himself up and, hobbling on one Wedgie, disappears around the corner.

18 CLOSE ON A TYPEWRITTEN HEADLINE: 18

"SOMETHING'S FISHY - A JANE DOE EXPOSE"

WIDE TO REVEAL

9-40 INT. FLETCH'S NEWSPAPER - FRANK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

19-40

Fletch stands in front of Frank's desk. His wig is off but he still wears the dress and has rouge on his cheeks.

FRANK

(laying down the copy)
It's great, as usual, Fletch. We'll have it in the next edition.

FLETCH

Good. See you in two weeks.

FRANK

Uh... Fletch...

FLETCH

"Uh... Fletch?" Frank, I see a double cross in your eyes. You promised me a vacation and I'm taking it.

FRANK

(out the door)
After the sewer story.

41 INT. CITY ROOM

41

The few remaining STAFF people watch as Fletch, still wearing only one shoe, hounds Frank across the room.

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FRANK

And you'll get a vacation - right after you research and write the sewer system expose.

FLETCH

Frank, you owe me a vacation.

FRANK

And you'll have it in July.

FLETCH

That's two months away.

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FRANK

That's why you're a great reporter.
You know facts.

(pausing at the exit)
By the way, Fletch, the new
computer disallowed your
undocumented expenses. The money
you owe is being taken out of this
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FRANK

There's nothing I can do about it.
It's all done automatically...

Frank leaves.

Fletch looks pitiful indeed as he stands next to the water cooler in his washerwoman attire. The only worker near him is an ANCIENT COPY BOY, emptying a file. Fletch puts one hand on his own aching back.

FLETCH

(to the copy boy)
On top of everything else, I'm
getting my period.

42 EXT. FLETCH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAWN

42

He drops his weary carcass into the building.

43 INT. HALLWAY IN FRONT OF FLETCH'S APARTMENT

43

Stuffed in his doorway is a bill from the landlady stamped "OVERDUE" and a "Fumigation Alert". He wads them in disgust.

44 INT. APARTMENT

44

Fletch enters and looks.

45 FLETCH'S POV

45

Gilette is sitting on Fletch's couch, reading a magazine and drinking a glass of juice, his briefcase at his feet.

FLETCH

No wonder I got a fumigation alert.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

He looks toward his kitchen window, and through it to the fire escape. The window is open.

FLETCH

(continuing)

How did you get in here?

GILLET

The window was open. I knocked. I could swear I heard you say, "Come in."

FLETCH

You sure know how to cover your ass... although those pants are a big mistake.

GILLET

I'm not leaving until you pay me four thousand three hundred and eighty-one dollars in back alimony.

FLETCH

What? I was married to you?

Gillet shakes his head in disgust.

FLETCH

You're right. I've been foolishly squandering my salary on food and heat. Besides, I hear she's sleeping with a wimpy, balding lawyer who's rolling in dough.

GILLET

(Pointing to a court order in his open briefcase)

You have one week to comply with Judge Proctor's orders - payment in full. Otherwise, you go to jail.

FLETCH

(examining the briefcase)

Nice briefcase. Isn't this what they give you when you stay five nights and only use one towel at a Motel Six? Must look great in the back seat of your Yugo.

(he picks something up)

Look. Here's a note from the Oakwood Potency Clinic. "Sorry to inform you that our machine cannot process sperm counts as low as yours."

(CONTINUED)

GILLET
(finishing his juice)
Let me have my briefcase, please.

FLETCH
(looking further)
"Boys in Bondage". Look... they've
added a scratch 'n' sniff page!
(He holds up a floppy
disk in its protective
envelope.)
What's this?

GILLET
Fletch, put that down!

FLETCH
(reading a note book)
How efficient. I'll bet you've got
all your records in one notebook...
oops.

He drops the notebook and steps on it. Then he drops
everything in the briefcase.

FLETCH
Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

As Gillet ad libs complaints, Fletch puts the contents of
the briefcase in the sink and scrubs them with a wire brush.

FLETCH
(continuing)
Let me wash this off for you. Oh,
no, I dropped it; I'll get it
clean. There you go - clean as a
whistle.

He snaps Gillet's briefcase closed and opens the door for
him, handing him the disk.

FLETCH
(continuing)

47 INT. - FLETCH

turns on his answering machine. It plays on and on as he
removes the rouge and his scrubwoman disguise.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

MACHINE

Hi, Fletch. This is Madeleine. I know we were supposed to get together tomorrow night. But my horoscope says Scorpios should avoid physical contact for the rest of the month. Maybe my astrologist was just telling me this because he wants to keep me to himself. But he wouldn't do a thing like that, would he? I mean, they're like doctors...

Fletch spins ahead.

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Fletch walks in. He passes the "office" of Betty Dilworth, the attractive society editor. Fletch does not stop for this. He knows the answer to his question.

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sophisticated settings.

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Oh. This one is classy. Mort's
has a sign: "No shoes, no shirts,
no service."

Fletch sits down at his cubicle desk. The phone rings.
Fletch doesn't answer. Frank is passing Fletch, who is deep
in thought. The phone keeps ringing.

FRANK

Fletch, answer your phone.

Fletch takes another moment before answering.

FLETCH

(into phone)
Extension 322.

49 INT. LOUISIANA LEGAL OFFICE - DAY - INTERCUT FLETCH'S OFFICE 4

A beautiful woman in her 30's is calling Fletch.

AMANDA RAY

Mr. Irwin Fletcher?

FLETCH

Call me Fletch.

AMANDA RAY

I represented your Aunt Belle
Fletcher.

FLETCH

(a small smile)
Good old Aunt Belle. How is she?

AMANDA RAY

She's deceased, Mr. Fletch.

FLETCH

(shrugs)
Oh... guess she could be better.

FRANK

(interrupting)
What about this expense... \$58 for
leg waxing. That's bullshit.

(CONTINUED)

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(lifting his pant leg)
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I was touring with the Stones.

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Now this consists of eighty acres
of old plantation property...

FLETCH
Plantation... She left it to me?
Could I get back to you in a few
minutes? What's your number?

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He writes the number, hangs up, and turns back to Frank, a
big smile on his face.

FRANK
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these things? What about the
lingerie?

FLETCH
I ate it.

FRANK
Fletch, for just one minute, be
serious.

(CONTINUED)

49A CONTINUED:

FLETCH

I quit.

FRANK

What?

FLETCH

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FRANK

(doesn't believe him)
On the sewer story, I want...

FLETCH

(hand on his shoulder)
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maybe not.

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(tapping his fingers)
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to leave, but...

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write my Jane Doe column.
(a gleam in Frank's eye)
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integrity and the quest for truth?

FLETCH

You're right. I can't abandon the
principles that have nurtured me
lo these many years... Wrap 'em up
with the rest of the shit on my
desk and ship 'em to my mansion in
Louisiana.

He picks up a Laker's cap, a nerf ball and a basket and
walks out the door.

FRANK

(to Sports and Betty)
Holy shit. He really did quit.

50 INT. AIRPLANE - FULL SHOT - DAY

50

The plane is in flight, Fletch next to the window. Sitting next to him is a nervous, talkative Southern woman -- CINDY MAY SAMPLE. She has a bandage on her nose and is reading an airline magazine.

CINDY MAY

...and my husband said I was crazy to go 2000 miles to have my nose done. That's an interesting watch you're wearing. Is it a prize of some sort?

FLETCH

(trying not to be conversational)

No.

CINDY MAY

It certainly looks like one. It's got golfers on it, hasn't it?

50 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
That's the NBA insignia.

CINDY
National Broadcasting?

FLETCH
(hoping the truth will
quiet her)
It's a Lakers' Championship watch.
It has sentimental value for me...
(he looks at her)
I stole it on my birthday.

The plane drops.

CINDY MAY
Oh, Lord, what was that?

Fletch looks out the window.

FLETCH
We just clipped a Piper Cub, but
the pilot's okay. I can see his
parachute.

She laughs in a giant burst.

CINDY MAY
I love a man with a sense of humor.
What did you say your name was?

FLETCH
Nostradamus.

CINDY MAY
I'm Cindy May Sample...
Nostradamus... I love the fighting
Irish.
(the plane bumps again)
Lord have mercy. I hate to fly. I
wish I was getting off in Thibodaux
like you. It's two more stops to
Selma. All those ups and downs and
ups and downs.

FLETCH
(eyes closed)
Try holding your breath.

Fletch defensively puts on his earphones while she blabs
away. He closes his eyes.

51 DREAM SEQUENCE - FULL SHOT - PLANTATION - DAY

51

In wrought iron, we see the name "BELLE ISLE" as the CAMERA MOVES TOWARDS the porticoed estate that lies at the end of the road bordered by huge moss-hung oaks.

DISSOLVE TO:

52 MED. SHOT - PORCH - FLETCH

52

Fletch in a white planter's suit sits in his rocker on the porch. A wistful blonde (the blonde from the office, Betty) in a crenoline dress brings him his mint julep. She looks up with delight.

FLETCH

That you, Betty Lee?

BETTY

Look, Colonel...the folks have come to serenade you this evening. They love you so much.

We see the assembling field workers approach the house. They move reverently.

53 NEW ANGLE - FLETCH

53

He smiles. He turns to someone who looks like Frank from the newspaper.

FLETCH

Uncle Bemus... you know my favorite tune.

FRANK

I sure do, Colonel.

The choral harmony begins with a slight hum as the voices harmonize their version of "Old White Joe".

54 FLETCH'S POV

54

Of course, in Fletch's dream, all the slaves are white, but dressed in period ante-bellum clothes. Gillet, the alimony lawyer, is grovelling at Fletch's feet. Fletch rubs his head in a condescending way. Mr. and Mrs. Underhill (from the first movie) are picking cotton (in their tennis whites) at the corner of the house. Underhill is bitching at his wife until Fletch puts his finger to his lips to quiet them.

55 MED. SHOT - FLETCH AND BETTY

55

Betty leans to Fletch.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

BETTY

Would you mind if I sat in your
lap, Colonel?

He takes a deep, wanton breath and helps her down.

FLETCH

Naw, Betty Lee. Set yourself down.

BETTY

The field hands would like to dance
for you.

Fletch stands up suddenly, sending Betty Lee into a
pratfall.

FLETCH

Dance for me? I'll dance for them!

He steps off the porch and begins singing "Zip A Dee Doo
Dah". He moves up an oak alley lined with slave sheds.
White slaves come out and join the singing, dancing throng.
A bluebird and an animated dog join Fletch and the others.
The bluebird leaves a dump on his shoulder.

RIPPLE DISSOLVE

56 INT. PLANE - MED. SHOT - FLETCH

56

He wakes as the plane hits the runway.

CINDY MAY

You made it, Mr. Notre Dame.

57 EXT. THIBODAUX AIRPORT - THE TARMAC - DAY

57

Waiting for Fletch is the lovely, stylish Amanda Ray Ross.
Fletch, carrying a briefcase, is pleasantly surprised as he
meets her by a cyclone fence where the passengers disembark
from his 727.

AMANDA RAY

Mr. Fletcher...

FLETCH

Yes.

AMANDA RAY

I'm Amanda Ray Ross.

Fletch is pleasantly surprised and slightly dumbfounded.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

AMANDA RAY

(continuing)
I spoke to you on the phone.

FLETCH

(surprised to be met)
Yes. That was you? Well, thanks for meeting me.

AMANDA RAY

Do you have luggage?

FLETCH

Just one piece.
(holds up claim ticket)

CUT TO:

58 EXT. AIRPORT - TIGHT ON A HAND

58

ripping the claim ticket from the trunk in the rear of Amanda Ray's car.

CAMERA WIDEN as car drives away.

Strapped to the trunk are skis, a tennis racket, and a stereo.

AMANDA RAY

Your first trip South?

FLETCH

Yup. Except for that time with Sherman.

AMANDA RAY

(smiles)
Planning to stay long?

FLETCH

Just until there's no more injustice in the world.

59 EXT. AMANDA RAY'S BMW CONVERTIBLE - RUN BY - DAY

59

They drive on a freeway over the bayou.

60 INT. CAR - FULL SHOT

60

Fletch checking the scenery.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
Are we heading to Belle Isle?

AMANDA RAY
You must be dying to see it, Mr.
Fletcher.

FLETCH
Call me Fletch.

AMANDA RAY
Did you know that Belle Isle is one
of the homes in this area with
major historical significance? It
is a designated landmark.

FLETCH
That's an extra added bonus.

61 POV - MOVING PAST GLORIOUS ANTEBELLUM MANSIONS

61

AMANDA RAY (V.O.)
I'm on the board of the
"Pontchartrain Society". We helped
to preserve and restore some of
these lovely mansions.

FLETCH
That's nice, too.

62 INT. CAR

62

Amanda Ray turns the car off the main road. Fletch peers
through the windshield. He begins singing "Zip A Dee Doo
Dah".

AMANDA RAY
Now, your house is not quite as
grand as some of the others in the
neighborhood.

FLETCH
Doesn't matter. It's the thought
that counts. Eighty acres, eh?

63 HIS POV

63

The oaks from his dream are right, but the foliage is thick
and untrimmed. Suddenly up ahead Fletch sees a mansion that
has truly fallen apart. The gardens are overgrown.

64 INT. CAR

64

AMANDA RAY
Your aunt tried to keep things in
their natural state.

FLETCH
Ever brush her hair?

65 FULL SHOT - CAR - DAY

65

The car pulls to the front of the old house and stops.
Fletch gets out and looks around. She joins him.

AMANDA RAY
I hope you're not disappointed.

FLETCH
Oh no. Not at all. With a little
paint, some Miracle Gro and some
dynamite you could turn this into a
nice parking lot.

AMANDA RAY
Surely you can see some
possibilities here.

FLETCH

He walks up the steps and a board collapses.

66 NEW ANGLE - HOUSE

66

As Fletch picks himself up, a black MAN appears from the
corner of the house. He seems to belong to another century.

CALCULUS
I was aimin' to fix that today. How
do you do? I be Calculus Entterby.
You be Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher?

FLETCH
I be Fletch... Geometry Fletch. She
be... Miss Trigonometry Ross.

CALCULUS
Pleased. I'm sure. Your aunt told
me you'd be taking over the place.
I'm extending my condolences.

FLETCH
Right. You work here?

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

CALCULUS
(unloading Fletch's
trunk)

Your aunt and I, we had an arrangement that goes way back and I was hoping we could make an extenuation of it. You see our families go back for hundreds of years. Your great-grandparents owned my great-grandparents... That's how it started.

FLETCH
(not buying this)
You ever hear of the Emancipation Proclamation?

CALCULUS
(scratching his head)
I heard something about it, but I don't recall exactly. It didn't get too much publicity around these parts.

FLETCH
I'll bet.

67 INT. BELLE ISLE

67

Leaving the trunk outside, they enter and survey the place. Fletch leans on something which collapses under him.

AMANDA
Is there any electricity... or gas...?

CALCULUS
Everything works.

FLETCH
No cable TV, I guess.

CALCULUS
If I'd known you was coming, I'd have straightened up a bit and stocked a refrigerator.

FLETCH
You mean there's no food?

CALCULUS
No refrigerator.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

AMANDA RAY

Want a lift into town?

FLETCH

What... and leave my estate
unattended?

AMANDA RAY

It's not yours until you sign some
documents. I can make you some
dinner to ease the culture shock.

FLETCH

That sounds great.

CALCULUS

Should I be doing anything?

FLETCH

(thinks this over)

Not really. While I'm gone into
town, I want you to make sure the
cotton gets picked, help Miss
Scarlet into her corset, and don't
let the Union Army through the
gate.

CALCULUS

(pleased as punch)

Yes... suh!

68 EXT. THIBODAUX - AMANDA RAY'S OFFICE/TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

68

A restored nineteenth century townhouse in downtown
Thibodaux. CAMERA MOVES IN.

69 INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

69

The CAMERA PANS the downstairs office area. Voices HEARD
from upstairs.

AMANDA RAY (O.S.)

More wine?

FLETCH (O.S.)

You're not trying to take advantage
of me, are you?

AMANDA RAY (O.S.)

Not yet.

70 INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - DINING AREA

70

AMANDA RAY
(handing him some
documents)
You need to sign these papers.

FLETCH
Mind if I read them?

AMANDA RAY
Be my guest. Had you talked to your
aunt recently?

Fletch looks over the documents.

FLETCH
It depends on your view of history.
It's been sixteen years.

AMANDA RAY
So this was a total surprise?

FLETCH
I'll say. Do I sign all four
copies?

AMANDA RAY
Please. I was just wondering
because she changed her will three
weeks before she died.

FLETCH
(signing)
Lucky for me. Why'd she do that?

AMANDA RAY
I don't know... She was old. Seemed
to be under a lot of strain. I'll
bet she had fond memories of you as
a child.

FLETCH

He signs the last document.

AMANDA RAY
Congratulations.

FLETCH
Zip A Dee Doo Dah.

She takes the copies and hands him back his copy.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

AMANDA RAY

I just think you should know... you could make yourself some good money out of this. A local realtor has contacted me with an unusually high offer. Two hundred and twenty five thousand.

Fletch stops in mid sip.

FLETCH

Dollars?

She nods.

FLETCH

Let me ask you this: If they're that anxious, don't you think if I wait around they might go up?

AMANDA RAY

They might.

FLETCH

And I just got here, didn't I?

Amanda Ray nods.

AMANDA RAY

No sale?

Fletch thinks.

AMANDA RAY

While you're thinking about it, what would you do with the land, Fletch?

FLETCH

Well, I don't know. Raise chitlins... with the chitlin market as high as it is. They're mean little animals but their coats are worth a fortune.

(They exchange a smile.)

Two hundred and twenty-five thousand... What do you think I should do?

AMANDA RAY

If I were you, I'd proceed slowly and carefully.

FLETCH

That's my specialty.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: 2

AMANDA

Want some dessert?

FLETCH

What did you have in mind?

AMANDA

How about something sweet and Southern?

DISSOLVE TO:

70A INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT - LATER 70A

An empty POV as the camera moves slowly toward the stairs.

70B INT. AMANDA'S BEDROOM 70B

Fletch sleeps soundly and happily alongside the equally contented Amanda. CAMERA CLOSES IN on Amanda's face. A pair of rubber gloves enters the frame. A chloroform-soaked rag covers Amanda's mouth as her eyes widen.

70C CLOSEUP - FLETCH 70C

His nose twitches but he sleeps soundly.

70D CLOSEUP - AMANDA'S ARM 70D

A hypodermic needle is plunged into her arm.

70E CLOSEUP - AMANDA'S FACE 70E

Her eyes close.

DISSOLVE TO:

71 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 71

The bed is in disarray. Amanda Ray lies naked on the bed, half covered by the sheet. We hear the SHOWER and Fletch whistling "Dixie".

72 INT. BATHROOM / BEDROOM 72

He has finished his shower, and moves back to the bedroom door.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

(looks at the clock).

- I can't believe we slept this late.

(then at his watch)

What time zone are we in, anyway?

He looks over at her and she hasn't moved. Amanda Ray's hand falls heavily from the sheets. He goes to her. She isn't breathing.

FLETCH

(continuing)

Mandy?... It was good...

(now realizing)

... but not that good.

A73 EXT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY

A73

Establish police activity.

73 INT. TOWNHOUSE - FULL SHOT - DAY

73

A chaos of police have invaded the place. The body is being removed from the flat. Fletch sits in the living room, tired and distressed. SHERIFF HENDRICK approaches.

SHERIFF

(friendly)

Morning, Mr. Fletcher. I'm Billy Jo Hendrick.

FLETCH

Howdy.

SHERIFF

What's your relationship to Amanda Ray?

FLETCH

Amanda Ray is - was - my attorney. She was working on my briefs.

SHERIFF

You come into town and you all just hit it off?

FLETCH

So to speak.

SHERIFF

The sparks just flew, that's what you're going to say?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

SHERIFF (cont'd)

I wonder why things like this don't happen to me.

FLETCH

Wonder why....

SHERIFF

Were you using a little drugs you brought from California, by any chance?

FLETCH

Just some Beaujolais.

SHERIFF

(thinking)
Beaujolais?

FLETCH

It's a pretty popular drug made from grapes.

The sheriff is no longer friendly.

SHERIFF

You feel like making a statement?

FLETCH

(statesmanlike)
Yeah... Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.

SHERIFF

(weary)
I guess you just want to make it hard on everybody. Well, we'll see how you feel after some time in the tank. You all come.

FLETCH

(looking over his shoulder)
All of us?

SHERIFF

Just you.

FLETCH

What's the charge?

SHERIFF

Pissing me off.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

. Is that a felony or a misdemeanor?

Sheriff Hendricks jerks him to his feet.

74 INT. JAIL - FULL SHOT - DAY

74

A DEPUTY SHERIFF shoves Fletch rudely down a dank corridor. He is followed by the sheriff, who watches calmly as his deputy slams Fletch into the bars.

DEPUTY

C'mon, boss. Can't I rough him up a little bit before I take the cuffs off?

SHERIFF

Ain't you heard of section 911.6 of the penal code?

DEPUTY

Nope.

SHERIFF

(shrugging as he exits)
Then go ahead and do it.

One more slam as the cuffs are removed.

DEPUTY

You're a little cleaner than most of the ones we get here. You smell nice. I 'spect you'll be popular.

FLETCH

You realize you have to read me my rights - or at least find someone who can read to do it for you.

The Deputy pushes him in the cell. The door SLAMS and ECHOES through the jail.

75 INT. CELL - FULL SHOT

75

Fletch resigns himself to the situation and turns to look around the cell. A sink. A toilet. Two bunks. The rest of the cells are empty.

76 HIS POV

76

He sees a large MAN standing by the sink. No shirt. A towel around his neck. The Man seems oblivious to Fletch, his huge back rippling with muscles.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
Not much ventilation.
(pause)
How's the chow?

The Man turns in the darkness as Fletch sits on the lower bunk. He stares at Fletch for a long moment. Then the man presses closer, his crimson lips in a wicked smile.

FLETCH
You shouldn't use so much... eye
shadow... it makes you look...
cheap.

MAN
You're sitting on my bunk.

FLETCH
Oh... Sorry.

MAN
Shut up.

The Man throws Fletch across the floor into a corner.

MAN
(approaching him)
Take off your pants.

FLETCH
(rising, hand on belt
buckle)
Gee... I, uh... don't even know
your name...

MAN
(growling)
Bend over.

FLETCH
Ben... Nice to meet you. You
wouldn't have a middle name, would
you? Everybody around here seems
to...

No answer. Fletch extends a hand.

FLETCH
What are you in for?

MAN
Fucking a dead man.

Fletch does a tap dance to show his vital signs are still
vital.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: - 2

FLETCH

- There's no crime in that. That's
- your right as an American. I'm
trying to quit, myself.

Suddenly the door CLANGS open and Ben recoils. Fletch takes
a breath.

77 INT. JAIL - ANGLE - HAM JOHNSON

77

A man in his forties dressed in a rumpled linen suit comes
down the stairs with a jailer. The man (HAM JOHNSON) comes
to the cell door. Fletch sits in a corner while Ham speaks
to the creep we have called BEN DOVER. The Sheriff opens the
cell door for Ben.

SHERIFF

Get out of here and stay off the
booze. Three strikes and you're
in

FLETCH

(as Ben is leaving the
cell block)

Ben... If I don't hear from you on
Valentine's Day, I'll be very
disappointed.

SHERIFF

(ignoring this)
Mr. Johnson... I'm surprised to see
you here. The judge usually assigns
these small potatoes to Buddy Bill.

HAM

Well, he's on vacation and this is
the price I pay for the close
proximity of my office.

FLETCH

Excuse me, sir?

Ham turns.

FLETCH

(continuing)

You don't you have a card, do
you... or a price list?

HAM

(extending a business
card)

Hamilton Johnson.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
(reading the card)
- Mr. Johnson, do you take other cases, or just specialize in transvestite necrophiliacs?

Ham turns and approaches Fletch.

78 EXT - COURTHOUSE - DAY

78

Fletch and Ham Johnson walk down the granite stairs of the courthouse. Ham carries a copy of the local paper.

HAM
Not enough evidence to hold you, just a petty form of intimidation, puttin' you in a cell with that Neanderthal.

FLETCH
We were getting close to duelling banjos in there.

HAM
It's so embarrassing that this sort of thing still goes on in the New South. Of course, twenty years ago a Yankee like you could have been lying in a ditch... I'm assuming that you had nothing whatsoever to do with the death of Amanda Ray.

FLETCH
I sure hope not.

HAM
I was so shocked to hear about this. She was such a dear friend... So tragic when it happens to someone so young and healthy. Was she feeling alright last night?

They reach his new jeep.

FLETCH
She felt great to me.

HAM
Did she say anything that could make you suspect somebody was after her?

FLETCH
Nope.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

HAM

Get in. I'll run you down to Belle Isle.

FLETCH

Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

HAM

Call me Ham.

79 EXT./INT. JEEP - COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

79

They drive towards Belle Isle.

HAM

My, my, don't you enjoy smelling this soft Southern air?

A beat.

HAM

(continuing)
That's my place over there.

He points off.

80 EXT. ROAD - AS CAR COMES TO STOP - HAM AND FLETCH

80

80A EXT. HAM JOHNSON'S ESTATE - POV

80A

It's a small but beautifully maintained plantation home. The front has an expansive lawn.

80B HAM AND FLETCH

80B

HAM

Mama had the charity to leave me this house and a few pecan trees. If you like pecans, Mr. Fletcher, you're more than welcome to come over and pick up as many as you can. The squirrels just eat em now. Have a regular smorgasbord. Mama was so fond of

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

80B CONTINUED:

HAM (cont'd)
pecans, she used to fight the
squirrels for them.

81 EXT. HAM'S CAR - APPROACHING BELLE ISLE - DAY

81

It is late afternoon as Ham's car pulls up the road. Ham looks the house over.

HAM
My place is right over that ridge--
what my dear mother used to call
"close enough for a stroll but too
far to spit."

FLETCH
Strong imagery...

HAM
Belle Isle surely has fallen on
hard times.

FLETCH
Well, it's home.

HAM
You do you have plans to restore
it, I hope.

FLETCH
Sooner or later - right now, I just
want some peace and quiet.

HAM
I'm sure you'll grow very fond of
Belle Isle in time. Might I give
you some personal advice?

FLETCH
Is it free?

HAM
Oh, absolutely. To the Sheriff and
his crowd you're an outsider...
guilty in spite of law.

FLETCH
Should I get out of town before
sundown?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

HAM

(laughs)
No, it's not that bad, but they can make it mighty uncomfortable for you. If I was looking for peace and quiet... Well, it'll take time. Just be patient.

FLETCH

(getting out of jeep)
Ham, thank you.

They shake hands.

HAM

My pleasure.

The car pulls away. Fletch crosses to the tarp-covered Cadillac. He pulls aside the tarp and sits behind the wheel, looking for a key. Suddenly, Calculus appears behind him.

CALCULUS

Well, welcome back...

FLETCH

Does this car run?

CALCULUS

Miss Belle stopped driving it when the brakes went out. But I run a few errands. It works fine, but if you want to stop, you got to think ahead.

82 INT. HOUSE

82

They walk in the musty hallway and up the staircase.

CALCULUS

Tried to get things straightened up for you.

FLETCH

That's nice.

83 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

83

Fletch walks through a cobweb high in the corner of the doorway. The room has a bed and a tiny bath. This is the one room Aunt Belle kept in good shape. There are a few pieces of furniture: a rocker and a table. Fresh linen on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

CALCULUS
Your Aunt Belle, she just lived in
this one room. Didn't take up much
space.

FLETCH
(busy with cobweb)
You didn't see a spider, did you,
Cal?

CALCULUS
Spiders is good. They fights off
cockroaches.

84 EXT. - PORCH - DUSK

84

Fletch and Calculus have pulled up rocking chairs. Fletch
plays the harmonica. Some food cartons by their chairs, they
rock, gazing out across the empty field as the sun sets. A
HOOT is heard.

CALCULUS
Mr. Owl...

FLETCH
This is what I came here for.

CALCULUS
You came here for owls?

FLETCH
Naw. Nature.

CALCULUS
Yes suh. Nature.

FLETCH
Calculus, do me a favor. Don't call
me sir, call me Fletch.

CALCULUS
Sure enough, and you can call me
Cal.

A whap, as Fletch smashes at his right arm.

FLETCH
Damn, what was that?

CAL
Them mosquitoes are on the prowl.

FLETCH
I thought it was a bat. I think it
spoke.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

He slaps again.

CAL

They do grow big in this swamp.
They can kill a possum.

FLETCH

How come they're not biting you?

CAL

I rub down with some ten weight
motor oil. That does the trick.
Keep it in my shack.

(He points off.)

If the bugs get real mean, you use
kerosene and mustard seed.

FLETCH

Bet you have to cut down on your
smoking.

Pause.

CAL

Peaceful.

Pause.

FLETCH

Very peaceful...

CAL

(nods)

Peaceful, it is.

Fletch sighs and looks to his left:

85 POV

85

Fifty yards away, an anemic cross burns on the ground. In the shimmering light, they see the robed figures of the KKK trying to keep the cross illuminated with matches and Zippo lighters.

86 ANGLE - FLETCH AND CALCULUS

86

Calculus rises from his chair, eases off the porch. His face is taut.

FLETCH

Friends of yours?

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

CAL
(surprisingly calm)
Nothing to me.
(exits from scene)

87 EXT. KKK RALLY - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

87

The KKK Rally is in full flow. There are thirteen KLANSMEN in their robes. The leader is a small fat man. He carries a bullhorn.

KKK LEADER
(on bullhorn)
Let this be a warning to you.
(he is reading from a
note card)
The loyal sons of the white race
will not allow any kind of alien
infection to invade our beloved
land. We don't want your kind
around here! Go back where you
came from, you son of the devil!
(he turns to another
Klansman)
Is he a Jew?

KLANSMAN
I don't rightly know.

KKK LEADER
(chanting)
Scum... scum... scum... go back to
where you from!

It is a puny chant by the Klansmen. The scraggly troupe is now joined by a fourteenth Klansman in a crude bed sheet. He chants with them. The KKK leader takes sudden notice.

FLETCH
Sorry I'm late.

The KKK Leader scowls.

KKK LEADER
Who goes there?

FLETCH
Henry Himmler.

KKK LEADER
What Klaven Klaims you?

FLETCH
Kalifornia Klaven -- Whiteville.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

KKK LEADER
California?

FLETCH
I was just passing through town...
looking for something to do for the
evening. The Rotary wasn't
meeting... then I heard about this.

KKK LEADER
Welcome, Henry. I'm the Grand
Kleagle.

A strange secret handshake ensues.

FLETCH
What's the occasion here?

KKK LEADER
Undesirable carpetbagger... I
think.

Suddenly, a shotgun BLAST rips through the trees.

88 EXT. WOODS - MED. SHOT - CALCULUS

88

He hides in the wood, reloads and FIRES another shot in the
air.

CAL
Here I come.

89 FULL SHOT - KLAN GROUP

89

The first BURST gets their attention and the SECOND SHOT
stampedes the herd. They hike their skirts and are off
through the brambles.

90 MED. SHOT - FLETCH

90

He picks up the abandoned bullhorn and uses it to add more
effects.

FLETCH
Zulu -- Zulu -- Zulu.

He ad libs native African blither. Another BLAST and Fletch

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

follows after them at a leisurely pace.

91 FULL SHOT - TRUCKS - NIGHT

91

The Klan boys have retreated to their vehicles. The trucks are parked off the highway and the Klansmen are taking off their sheets and piling in.

KLANSMAN

(to KKK Leader)

You didn't say there was gonna be any gunplay.

KKK LEADER

(taking off his sheet)

You're scared of your shadow.

KLANSMAN

I saw you running too.

He is off in his pickup. Fletch returns the bullhorn to a disconsolate and depressed KKK Leader.

FLETCH

You dropped this.

The KKK Leader studies him.

KKK LEADER

They got some mean nigras down in those swamps... still speak some African dialect.

FLETCH

(taking off his sheet)

And they're hard to see in the dark.

KKK LEADER

You can't say... could have been one... could have been a thousand. Hell, it just ain't like the good old days... I couldn't get but thirteen to show up tonight. And five of them was green auxiliaries... stand-ins, you might say.

FLETCH

We call them Klookies.

KKK LEADER

Klookies? That's good. Of course, this was just a contract job.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

Contract job?

KKK LEADER

Things have got so bad... we rent out. Last year we opened a supermarket and were part of the half-time ceremonies at a tractor pull. But the low point was when we got ten bucks for singing "He's a Jolly Good Fellow" at some guy's birthday.

FLETCH

What's wrong with that?

KKK LEADER

The guy was black.

FLETCH

(with the utmost
sympathy)

Times are rough...

92 EXT. HOUSE

92

Fletch coming back to his abode.

93 HIS POV

93

Calculus' shack at the edge of the cleared property.

94 INT. ROOM

94

Fletch is unpacking his trunk (full of disguises). He wearily gets ready for his first night at Belle Isle. He tries the bed. It suffices. (NOTE: Allow for VOICE OVER during the preceding.) Suddenly Fletch sees something at the window.

95 HIS POV - WINDOW

95

A large racoon stares in at him.

FLETCH

How you doin'? You want me out too?

The racoon, bored, jumps away.

96 EXT. BELLE ISLE - MORNING

96

The birds are CHIRPING. The sky is clear. A sedan with "Thibodaux Realty" decals drives to the front of the house and stops. An attractive YOUNG WOMAN gets out and goes to the door. She wears a "Thibodaux Realty" jacket.

97 INT. ROOM - FLETCH

97

still sprawled on his bed as he fell, he hears KNOCKING and looks around at the strange surroundings.

98 EXT. - PORCH

98

The woman is about to give up when Fletch comes to the door.

FLETCH

'Morning.

BECKY ANN

Mr. Fletcher?

FLETCH

As far as you know.

BECKY ANN

I hope I haven't come at a bad time.

Fletch comes outside.

FLETCH

I don't see how that could be possible.

She extends a hand.

BECKY ANN

I'm Becky Ann Culpepper...
Thibodaux Realty.

FLETCH

I'd invite you in for some coffee
and Eggs Benedict but we're all out
of Benedict.

BECKY

Thanks. I've already eaten.

Her cheerfulness matches the glare of the new sun.

FLETCH

That makes one of us. What can I do
to you... uh... for you...

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

BECKY

Well, Mr. Fletcher... You may have heard that there's some party interested in acquiring your property. A substantial offer.

FLETCH

How substantial is the offer?

BECKY

Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

FLETCH

(cagey, surveying the property)

I don't know. I had big plans for this place. A little mini-mall with a tanning parlor, a yoghurt bar...

Fletch leans casually on the porch railing. The railing breaks. Fletch crashes into shrubs.

BECKY

(helping him up)

Are you alright, Mr. Fletcher?

FLETCH

I'm fine. I meant to do that. Helps keep me in shape... Call me Fletch.

BECKY

Well, Fletch, all I know is that two hundred and fifty thousand dollars is a very generous price for land in this area.

FLETCH

(throwaway)

Who's your client?

BECKY

I'm not at liberty to say.

FLETCH

(mimic)

I'm not at liberty to sell.

BECKY

(a dubious shake of the head)

This is a tremendous opportunity...

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

Tell you what. I'll consult with my people, and they'll contact their people, who'll get in touch with your people.

BECKY

Who are your people?

FLETCH

Who are yours?

BECKY

As I told you, that has to be confidential.

Fletch crosses with Becky to her car.

FLETCH

Very well. I'll just have my people contact each other then. Have to keep them busy.

He closes the car door.

BECKY

(giving him her card)
Alright, keep me in mind.

FLETCH

Oh, I will, I will... Let's do it again sometime. How about in ten minutes?

She laughs. He watches as she leaves.

99 EXT. AMANDA'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

99

Fletch arrives in the old Cadillac. A plastic sign - BUGBUSTERS - is applied to the side. The car refuses to stop as the brakes SQUEAL as it finally bumps the curb behind a plain van. Fletch climbs out of the Cadillac dressed in a jumpsuit. He peels the BUGBUSTERS decal off and puts it on the van.

100 WIDE SHOT

100

Fletch waits to see if anyone has noticed this activity. He puts in his phony teeth.

101 DOORWAY - TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

101

Fletch is at the door which is posted with a police warning. Pulling out his Mastercharge card, he works the door open.

102 INT. TOWNHOUSE

102

Eerily, the place is just as he left it. He flicks a flashlight on and heads for the main living area where there are files.

(NOTE: Allow for VOICE OVER here.)

103 FLETCH

103

He opens the cabinet and looks for his file. He passes a file labeled "BLUEBIRD". He whistles a few bars of Zip A Dee Doo Dah and sticks in his thumb. No plum is pulled out. The file is empty. Now his eyes light up as he finds the object of his search:

104 INSERT - FILE

104

"FLETCHER, BELLE ISLE, Last Will and Testament March 2, 1989." He pulls it out: the beneficiary is IRWIN FLETCHER. Behind it is another Will dated October 27, 1988, and marked "Void".

105 CLOSE ON FLETCH

105

as he looks for the beneficiary.

106 INSERT - WILL

106

"Beneficiary: the Farnsworth Ministry, Inc."

107 NEW ANGLE

107

He decides to look for something else as he goes to her desk and the bookshelves. Suddenly...

108 DOORWAY

108

Standing in the doorway with his pistol drawn is the DEPUTY SHERIFF (the one who man-handled Fletch at the jail). His flashlight is blinding.

DEPUTY

What the hell are you doing? This is a restricted area. Didn't you see the sign?

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

Signs? I see nothing but signs.

(points to the windows)

Stressed out dormants on the windows.

(pushing on the walls)

Walls deplaning to an alarming degree. This place is obviously infested with reticulitermes flavipes.

DEPUTY

(concerned)

What's that?

FLETCH

Deadly African microscopic termites. They can eat a hundred times their own weight in five minutes. And from the looks of things...

(stomping the floor)

... this place is ready to collapse!

DEPUTY

Who are you?

FLETCH

Brummel. Beau Brummel. Beau Bob Brummel... Bugbusters. My truck's on the street.

He looks out the window.

109 HIS POV

109

The van under the streetlight.

DEPUTY

Well, Mr. Brummel, I don't know nothing about no Bugbusters.

110 FLETCH

110

scrambling with his light towards the door.

FLETCH

Professor Flamming was right. They've been busy here.

The Deputy is hooked.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

(continuing)

You know, you can only catch them at night.

(reaching into a corner
and apparently grabbing
one)

Ah hah! I got one.

He holds the index finger and thumb of his right hand tight together and attempts to display a "termite."

FLETCH

(continuing)

See it? These little buggers are the piranhas of the insect world. The only thing they like better than wood is human flesh.

DEPUTY

Really?

FLETCH

You bet.

The deputy leans over to look carefully.

DEPUTY

If you can't see it, how do you know you've got one?

FLETCH

They make this horrible high-pitched noise. Sort of a tiny little scream.

Fletch holds the bug next to the deputy's ear.

FLETCH

Oh my God! I dropped it in your ear!

The Deputy drops his flashlight as he brings his hands to his ears with SCREAMS of imagined pain.

FLETCH

(continuing)

We can't let it nest in there! They can multiply by masturbation!

The Deputy drops to his knees to try to shake it out by hitting his head with his hand.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

(with urgency)

Good. Very smart! Now put your ear
as close as you can to the floor.
It's the only way!

Fletch looks on the floor next to the distraught Deputy. He
pretends to pick up another "insect."

FLETCH

Oh my God - here's the Queen! No
one's ever gotten one before. I've
got to take this to Professor
Flammering.

(As he exits:)

With a little luck, you could be
the last to die a horrible death
from this dreaded bug.

Fletch calmly walks to the door.

111 EXT. AMANDA'S TOWNHOUSE

111

Fletch strolls to the van and removes the "Bugbusters"
decals. From inside the house we can HEAR the deputy
screaming.

112 EXT. BELLE ISLE - NIGHT

112

Fletch (the teeth are out) has returned in the Cadillac. He
sees a strange shadow move on the side of Belle Isle and
stealthily approaches. The shadow disappears... He follows
in the direction he thinks it has taken, slowly moving
around the perimeter of the house. He bluffs the SOUND of a
howling dog. Then he hears another SOUND somewhere in the
woods, and follows it towards Calculus' shack... Could
Calculus be the shadowy figure he has seen?

113 EXT. SHACK - NIGHT

113

As Fletch approaches he hears the noise of a TV coming from
inside. He knocks.

CALCULUS

Who's there?

FLETCH

Avon calling.

The SOUND GOES OFF and the door cracks open to reveal
Calculus' wide eyes.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

CAL

It's you.

FLETCH

I'd like to talk to you for a minute.

114 INT. SHACK

114

This is a two-room affair. Cal's sleeping quarters are in the rear. No apparent bathroom. In the front room, a small frog, a 17" color TV and a water bed, with pillows propped up to turn it into a sofa. Next to it, a phone.

CALCULUS

Come on in here.

Calculus adjusts the rabbit ears on his TV to get faint reception. Fletch sits on the "sofa" with some difficulty.

CALCULUS

Sorry about that - but I won it in a raffle, I had a choice of that waterbed or one of them full-body herbal wrappers at some place called Lizbet Ardoon.

FLETCH

There must be an art to sitting on one of these.

(not managing)

A lost art. You get the Lakers?

CAL

I'm lucky to get "Wheel of Fortune".

(still adjusting the TV)

So whatcha thinking?

FLETCH

I'm getting the feeling that people don't want me around here.

CAL

Could be.

FLETCH

You know any reason why anyone would want to buy this land?

CAL

Insect research. And I bet they don't pay much for that.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

I have an offer for 250,000 dollars.

CAL

(whistles)

Take the money and run.

FLETCH

What do you know about the Farnsworth Ministry?

CAL

Jimmy Lee Farnsworth? Down here everybody knows about him. He's on TV all the time.

He flips his remote control.

CAL

(continuing)

Your Aunt Belle used to watch it when she was laid up. Lot of people smiling and crying and jumping around asking for money. And people send money... lots of it. Send it right to the Reverend Jimmy Lee Farnsworth... and what he does with it is anybody's guess.

115 FULL SHOT - TV

115

JIMMY LEE FARNSWORTH is on the air, with his gold Rolex and sapphire pinky ring. He wears a blue suit over his pudging fifty-year-old frame.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

There's good news tonight, there are miracles in the air. I know there are a lot of you out there tonight with questions in your heart. But the only question that's worth asking and worth answering is have you been saved.

116 BACK TO THE SHACK

116

CAL

It's a lot like that Tonight show, but more commercials.

FLETCH

Hard to believe.

(CONTINUED)

116 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

- To those of you who are wandering
- in the wilderness of sin and
frustration we're here to help you,
to give you the key to peace and
contentment. The costs of staying
on air are enormous... and
Bibleland is only halfway there.

FLETCH

Oh yeah, Bibleland.

CAL

(with a wink)
Bible -- land.

117 EXT. THE FARNSWORTH MINISTRY TV CENTER - THE NEXT DAY

117

Fletch approaches, past a group of clean-cut young men and
women dressed in lavender blazers. Fletch is dressed in a
polyester suit with a baby blue tie. Audience members are
leaving the auditorium, others arriving.

USHER

Immediate seating for the 5 o'clock
service.

Ushers have clipboards and are filling out cards.

USHER

(to Fletch)
Welcome, sinner.

FLETCH

Praise the Lord.

USHER

Bless you.

FLETCH

Bless him. Bless us. Bless you.

USHER

Name, please.

FLETCH

Fletcher. Irwin Sue Fletcher.

118 INT. CLOSE SHOT - ANNOUNCER

118

A thin, trimmed moustache twitches. The eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... boys and girls... it's time for the 4,323rd edition of the Farnsworth Television Ministry.

119 INT. THE AUDIENCE - APPLAUDING

119

Fletch finds his seat.

120 STAGE

120

The regular cast marches out with a wave to the cameras and audience.

ANNOUNCER

With Mimsy Carlyle.

A forty-year-old woman spins out in a long billowing skirt.

ANNOUNCER

(continuing)
Mr. Coco.

A spider monkey in an aquamarine tuxedo with his trainer.

ANNOUNCER

(continuing)
Damon Feather.

A handsome black man does a quick tap step.

ANNOUNCER

(continuing)
The Bradley Family Singers.

Four men in baby blue blazers.

ANNOUNCER

(continuing)
And Dick Medly and the Band. I'm Al Crank... and now -
(drumroll)
-- the host of our show... the Ministry's founder and your friend... Mr. Good News himself... the Reverend Jimmy Lee Farnsworth.

The BAND EXPLODES with a riff from "Onward Christian Soldiers" and the audience APPLAUDS. ANGLE - STAGE

(CONTINUED)

120. CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE

We're going to begin this show as
we always do. C'mon out, Walter Bob
Buggem!

A standing ovation for WALTER BOB.

121 WALTER BOB.

121

Pulls out a white handkerchief which he holds strangely in
his right hand. His eyes close in an almost trance-like
state.

122 ANGLE ON FLETCH

122

who looks to others in the congregation for behavioral
guidance.

123 WALTER BOB

123

still speechless.

124 THE CONGREGATION

124

stands again, applauding, moved.

125 FLETCH

125

stands. Starts to applaud. Too late. Walter Bob speaks.

WALTER BOB

I can say no more.

Walter Bob turns to leave.

126 THE CONGREGATION

126

Near tears.

FLETCH

Yes! God bless! Yes!

The congregation stares at Fletch. This was inappropriate.

127 JIMMY LEE

127

returns to the stage.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE

We have so many more friends in our family of worship to hear from
(pointing to the stage)
but they can't begin to entertain and enlighten you, until you light up our phone lines.

(CAMERA PANS to a bank of phones)

These lovely phone ladies are waiting for your call. No gift is too small... If you can't afford a hundred, give eighty or ninety. If you call tonight, we'll be sending you a copy of my prayer for peace suitable for framing.

JIMMY LEE

(who wears a small earphone)

I know there's someone out there tonight who needs to step forward... Is there a Lyda Perl Shindley? Lyda Perl are you with us?

Lyda Perl shoots up from her seat screaming.

LYDA PERL

Me, me??

JIMMY LEE

Come on down!

Lyda Perl arrives on stage.

JIMMY LEE

Lyda Perl, I know you've suffered a great tragedy when you lost Joe Bob in the Merry Go Round accident at the State Fair.

LYDA PERL

I did.

JIMMY LEE

Even though Joe Bob left you well protected, these riches haven't brought you happiness.

LYDA PERL

No, they haven't. I've sinned.

JIMMY LEE

We've all sinned. Bless you, child.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED: 2

LYDA PERL

But I've really sinned. (Whispers
in his ear).

JIMMY LEE

Say it aloud. Cleanse yourself.

128 LYDA PERL

128

looking uncomfortable.

LYDA PERL

I'm so ashamed. I slept with my
best friend's husband.

JIMMY LEE

Bless you child.

CONGREGATION

(responding to a flashing
red "Amen" light)

Amen.

LYDA PERL

And I also slept with my Uncle
James.

JIMMY LEE

Bless you child, you are forgiven.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

JIMMY LEE

Ladies and gentlemen, doesn't this
take courage to come up on
nationwide TV to confess to human
frailty. Al, would you...

LYDA PERL

I shoplifted this blouse from
Sheerie's Petite Shoppe...

JIMMY LEE

God forgives you.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

LYDA PERL

And I...

Jimmy Lee grabs Lyda Perl's head in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE

Demons out!

Lyda Perl swoons. Two attendants rush the stage to carry Lyda Perl off.

129 IN THE AUDIENCE - FLETCH AND A CHURCH ELDER

129

CHURCH ELDER

She'll receive the V.I.P treatment backstage--and a personal audience with Jimmy Lee.

Fletch becomes more interested.

130 BACK TO STAGE

130

JIMMY LEE

Surely there is someone else.
Surely Lyda Perl is not alone.

The CAMERA MOVES IN on Jimmy Lee's left ear, which has something like a small hearing aid.

JIMMY LEE

(continuing)
Surely there is someone whose life is full of confusion... I sense grief. I sense deep grief and loneliness. I sense a recent bereavement. Someone who has lost an uncle or an aunt.

(eyes closed)
Is there a Mr. Fletcher here? A Mr. Irwin S. Fletcher?

131 CLOSE ON FLETCH

131

He hadn't expected it. He looks confused for a moment and then stands, approaching the podium as the congregation applauds.

132 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - L.A. - FRANK AND OTHER STAFF

132

eating sandwiches and looking at multiple TVs. Frank's bite is stopped. He turns up the SOUND as Fletch walks across the stage.

133 INT. CALCULUS' SHACK - NIGHT

133

Calculus watches carefully. He is not laughing. This is no Stepin Fetchit reaction.

134 INT. STUDIO - FLETCH

134

Fletch's "conversion" is in progress.

JIMMY LEE
Your Aunt Belle passed away
recently, didn't she?

Fletch lowers his head and nods.

JIMMY LEE
You're still broken up about it,
aren't you?

Fletch nods.

JIMMY LEE
We know how important it is to move
through that grief. Are you
grieving in your heart?

FLETCH
I am grieving.

JIMMY LEE
And even her generous gift to you
of the ancestral home, the
beautiful Belle Isle, does not
lighten your grief!

FLETCH
It does not.

JIMMY LEE
Admit that you are a sinner, Irwin.

FLETCH
I am.

JIMMY LEE
God bless you.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

FLETCH
I parked in handicapped spaces.

JIMMY LEE
God bless you.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

FLETCH
On a handicapped person.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE
God bless you.

CONGREGATION
Amen.

JIMMY LEE
Irwin, the Lord will ease your
grief with the bright light of
grace.

Jimmy Lee grabs Fletch's head in his hands.

JIMMY LEE
Demons out!

Fletch swoons. Two attendants carry him off.

135 INT. MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

135

Fletch is led down an impressive series of corridors to the
Blue Room.

FLETCH
I want to talk to Jimmy Lee.

USHER
The Reverend will be with you in a
moment in the Meditation Den.

He passes a corridor that has its own entrance off this
corridor. Signs read: "Ministry Enterprises", "General
Accounting", "Expansion Planning".

136-7 INT. BLUE ROOM

136-7

A blue room with plastic flowers. On one wall, a
three-dimensional model of Bibleland. Lyda Perl is getting
the VIP treatment. Fletch is led in and handed a card by a
blue-haired dowager (BETTY).

BETTY
Fill this out, honey. Last name
first.

LYDA PERL
Hi... wasn't that thrilling? I
never felt like that in my life,
except the last time.

Jimmy Lee is beaming as he enters to say a word to those
saved. He looks at Lyda Perl.

(CONTINUED)

36-7 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE

Welcome home, Lyda Perl... Have you made your grief offering?

BETTY

(miffed)

We were just getting to that.

The woman swoons and he comes to Fletch. He pulls a pamphlet from his pocket.

JIMMY LEE

(continuing)

Nice to see you Mr. Fletcher.

FLETCH

(ignoring him)

Is this Limbo? I thought it would be more blue.

JIMMY LEE

(hands him the pamphlet)

My book of revelations, and a guide to the best RV parks in the state.

FLETCH

I don't know how to thank you.
Praise the Lord.

JIMMY LEE

Each in his own fashion, son.
Hallelujah.

FLETCH

Hallelujah. Praise Him.

JIMMY LEE

Amen.

FLETCH

Bless you.

Jimmy Lee's attention returns.

JIMMY LEE

Any gift would be helpful in carrying the message.

FLETCH

I'm sorry. All my money is in my other suit.

JIMMY LEE

But you do have land.

(CONTINUED)

136-7 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

(innocently)

Would that be of help to you?

138 EXT. GROUND - NIGHT (MATTE SHOT)

138

Jimmy Lee giving Fletch the grand tour in his golf cart which bears the license CHARLOT 1. A Christmas motif gift shop is loaded with merchandise featuring Jimmy Lee's picture. We pass a Mississippi River Boat with "Captain" Jimmy Lee's picture smiling down.

JIMMY LEE

When we're finished - when we've been able to expand - Bibleland will be a kind of Heaven on Earth. There's the hotel... we call it the Heavenly Hilton and Convention Center. Beyond it, the "Farnsworth Bible College". Over there is the "Jog for Jesus Trampoline Center".

FLETCH

Is that like "Prayerobics"?

Jimmy Lee smiles.

JIMMY LEE

Yes indeed. The Lord wants our bodies as healthy as our souls.

FLETCH

Who can blame him?

Jimmy Lee laughs heartily. Ahead, a side of the Farnsworth Auditorium with a sign proclaiming the number of days to the next "Healing Night".

JIMMY LEE

You got the idea. I like you.

FLETCH

I like you too, Jimmy Lee. And I do want to help Bibleland. Of course, I'm so spoiled by this glamorous Southern mansion life...

JIMMY LEE

You know, Irwin, I really think it was part of God's plan that Belle Isle would complete Phase Two of Bible Land...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE (cont'd)

- You don't know how much your land
 - would mean to our ministry - and,
 - of course, to God. He gives us the
- guidance.

FLETCH

Bless Him.

139-41 INT. HAMILTON JOHNSON'S OFFICE

139-41

It's spacious but cluttered. In a spacious alcove adjoining, Ham has a taxidermy studio filled with stuffed animals and others waiting for treatment. Lots of files. A bit ruffled, just like Ham who puffs on a well worn pipe.

HAM

Like my mother used to say, there's a tick for every dog.

FLETCH

(politely)

And what did your mother mean by that?

HAM

Why in God's name do you let the Farnsworth ministry burrow into your fur. Why give your property away when you've got a big cash offer on it?

FLETCH

(deeply religious)

I felt, after a lifetime of hedonism, that it was time to rededicate my life.

Ham looks skeptical.

FLETCH

(continuing)

Naw... I just wanted to see what would happen if I went along with them.

HAM

(smiling)

Well, it happened. The sheriff called me this morning, and all the charges are being dropped.

FLETCH

Is that so...

(CONTINUED)

19-41 CONTINUED:

HAM

The ministry has a lot of influence around here. Did the Reverend Farnsworth tell you anything about Bibleland II?

FLETCH

Sure. He wants to expand his theme park.

HAM

You've heard that your aunt was under considerable emotional strain in the weeks before she died.

Fletch nods.

HAM

So was my mother. When she was at death's door, they took advantage of her, these holy rollers. They preyed on her faith and her fear when she had lost her ability to make rational decisions... Persuaded her to give away our land for their evangelical amusement park. My guess is that your speedy conversion and promised gift played no small part in those charges against you being dropped.

FLETCH

Whatever... I'm glad I'm off the hook, but does anyone have a theory about Amanda Ray's death?

HAM

Well, the autopsy report came out today. It said she died of a heart attack. Natural causes.

Fletch raises an eyebrow. Ham chuckles and relights his pipe.

HAM

Either she had some congenital defect or you're one hell of a lover...

Ham gives him a chuckle. Fletch chuckles back.

142 EXT. RIVER NEAR CALCULUS' SHACK - DAY

142

They float on the still, black water in a small boat. Both hold fishing rods.

CAL

I never took you for no murderer.

FLETCH

That's a relief.

CAL

The odds favor every murderer leaving the scene of the crime. You went and called the cops.

FLETCH

That would have been a pillar in my defense.

CAL

So who the odds-on favorite now?

FLETCH

Nobody. They're saying she dropped dead in her sleep.

Calculus snorts.

FLETCH

And the odds on that?

CAL

Same as catching a bass this afternoon.

FLETCH

What's that?

CAL

'Bout two hundred fifty-eight thousand to one.

Fletch nods.

143 FULL SHOT - TOWN - NIGHT

143

Fletch and Calculus sit in the Cadillac parked on the street.

FLETCH

You can back out of this if you want.

CAL

I'm in.

144 INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - FULL SHOT

144

A lone late-shift employee watches TV in the empty corridor. (We do not see the screen.) The ATTENDANT is the man from the jail cell called BEN DOVER. Cal runs in behaving like a chicken with its head cut off.

CAL

Have the po-lice come yet?

BEN

What?

CAL

The po-lice. They was gonna bring a doctor to make a death certificate.

BEN

(looking back at the TV)
Well, boy, if you've got a stiff, you're in the right place. Where is it?

CAL

In my Cadillac.

BEN

Put him on that gurney and get him in the back with the other stiff, before he starts to get gamey. Don't bother me, I'm watching "The Terminator".

Cal has exited during Ben's last speech. Ben returns to the TV then looks back over his shoulder as Cal reenters with Fletch on the gurney, completely under a sheet.

Throughout this exchange Ben is looking at the TV.

BEN

Talk about stiff, that guy wastes everybody. Where you going? You got to tag his toe.

(Cal reaches for Fletch's foot, removing the sneaker)

Got a name?

CAL

(writing)

Allard Fleck.

Cal is close to Fletch's head.

CAL

When's the po-lice here?

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

BEN

When they come is when they come.

(looks)

Tag him and get him out back.

Cal slips the tag on Fletch's toe. Fletch, tickled, is about to laugh out loud. Cal wheels Fletch towards a rear door.

BEN

Hold it!

Cal freezes. Ben approaches the gurney. As he frisks the corpse for valuables, he sticks his hand under the sheet and into Fletch's pant pocket.

BEN

Let's see what Mr. Fleck has.

Fletch tenses.

145 ON BEN AND CALCULUS

145

as Ben removes Fletch's watch.

BEN

Tonight's my lucky night. Now get moving.

Calculus exits with the gurney.

146 INT. BACK ROOM

146

The walls are lined with corpse cabinets. To the left, a big bulletin board which shows the disposition of the bodies. Fletch jumps out from under his sheet and goes over to it.

147 BULLETIN BOARD AND FLETCH

147

Fletch looks down the list until he gets to R: ROSS. Fletch gives an o.k. sign to Calculus who watches the closed circuit of Ben at his desk.

148 CLOSE ON SLIDING CADAVER DRAWER - R-Z

148

as Fletch opens it. IT'S EMPTY. Fletch shoots a puzzled look to Calculus. Closing it he returns to the bulletin board. And to an attached hanging clipboard with various papers on it.

149 "A. ROSS" ENTRY

149

FINE PRINT: CREMATED 4/18.

150 FRONT DESK

150

Cal pushing the gurney with Fletch, who under the sheet is coughing violently, then clearing his throat.

CALCULUS

Mercy me! My mistake! The man's still alive. Which way is the hospital?

BEN

(under his breath, as Cal leaves)
Dumb nigger.

151 INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

151

Calculus driving fast.

CALCULUS

So what's up?

FLETCH

No Amanda.

CALCULUS

Maybe she was misfiled.

FLETCH

Nope. Cremated. I wouldn't be surprised if the paperwork got burned up with the body.

CALCULUS

Do tell.

152 EXT. BELLE ISLE - NIGHT

152

Through the Cadillac's windshield, the mansion comes into view. The south side is in full flames.

153 INT. CAR - AS IT APPROACHES

153

Fletch is shocked. Cal shakes his head.

CUT TO:

154 INT. BELLE ISLE

154

The flames have not yet reached the staircase as Calculus bounces Fletch's trunk down the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

154 CONTINUED:

CAL

Guess you're moving in with me now.

FLETCH

(following Calculus and
carrying his Lakers'
basketball)

Thanks, Cal. Just for that, you
won't have to bother dusting the
stairway tomorrow.

155 INT. ALCOVE OFF HAM JOHNSON'S OFFICE - DAY

155

Fletch has been talking with Ham, who is busy stuffing a fat
squirrel.

HAM

I was meeting with the Ponchartrain
Society Board - final planning for
our big charity ball Friday. By
the time I got home the fire
department was hosing down the
embers.

FLETCH

They moved fast. Didn't take more
than a week.

HAM

(smiles)
Well you haven't lost your sense of
humor, just your house. Too bad you
didn't sell when you had the
chance.

FLETCH

No... The prospect of rebuilding is
an exciting one...

Fletch never ceases to amaze Ham.

HAM

Well, the good news is that Aunt
Belle carried quite a nice
insurance policy on that house, and
I was her broker. I'll expedite
the claim.

Fletch picks up a horned toad out of a terrarium.

FLETCH

Thanks, I appreciate that. Gee, you
did a great job on this one.

(CONTINUED)

155 CONTINUED:

The toad is alive, and spits its tongue into Fletch's face.
Fletch yells and drops it.

DISSOLVE TO:

156 INT. CALCULUS'S SHACK - DAY

156

The trunk is filling up space. There is a mattress or cot on the floor. Calculus is nowhere to be seen. Fletch sits on the water bed doing his best to dial the phone. He holds a soft drink and some food in one hand, the phone in the other.

157 INT. NEWS OFFICE - DAY - FRANK/ INTERCUT WITH SHACK

157

Frank picks up the phone.

FRANK

Fletch. Where the hell are you?
I've been trying for three days.
The phone company said the line had
been disconnected.

FLETCH

Frank, I need your help.

FRANK

Don't tell me. The humidity is
unbearable. You're coming back...

FLETCH

(aside)
Honeybunch, I said no mint in my
julep.
(back to the phone)
What was that Frank?

FRANK

Are you calling with a story? Are
your reportorial juices flowing?

FLETCH

Frank, I need a favor.

158 FRANK - TO A STAFF MAN

158

FRANK

(hand over receiver)
He's digging for a scoop. Farming
my ass.

159 FLETCH / INTERCUT FRANK

159

FLETCH
Get me everything in the files on
Jimmy Lee Farnsworth.

FRANK
Gotcha... When you're done. We
want the exclusive photos, if you
can get 'em, blueprints of the
motel, matchbooks, Polaroids,...

Fletch hangs up on Frank. A knock on the door.

160 EXT. SHACK - DAY

160

Ham is standing there, briefcase in hand. Fletch extends
his hand in welcome. His appearance betrays his troubles
on the waterbed. Ham holds a check for 30,000 dollars.

HAM
Fletch. I bear good tidings.

FLETCH
That's good news, right?

HAM
30,000 dollars worth of good news.

Fletch examines the check.

HAM
My mother used to say: "Money isn't
everything. But it's way ahead of
whatever's in second place."

FLETCH
Who was your mother, Henny
Youngman?

HAM
(opens his briefcase)
I just need you to sign a receipt
and a release.

FLETCH
(signing)
For 30 grand, I'd sign your
underpants.

161 EXT. THIBODAUX ST. - SELMA'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

161

Selma, the waitress, is delivering Fletch a huge plate filled with whole crawfish, an entire whiskered catfish and a deep-fried soft shell crab.

SELMA

Here's your diet plate.

FLETCH

Does everything come with the head still on it?

SELMA

You bet, honey.

FLETCH

I'm glad I didn't order a hamburger.

Fletch doesn't begin to know where to attach the platter. He muses.

FLETCH

Why do you think The Farnsworth Ministry is hot for my land?

CALCULUS

Are you religious?

FLETCH

I believe in a God that doesn't need heavy financing.

Fletch picks a tray of cornbread up from the nearby counter. He takes a knife and cuts a triangle.

FLETCH

Here's Bibleland,
(another cut)
Ham's mother's property - willed to
the Ministry.

CALCULUS

(slices another piece)
And here you are in the middle.

FLETCH

(nodding)
Jimmy Lee called it "Phase two"...

enters the restaurant with friends. True Good Ol' Boys. He recognizes Calculus.

(CONTINUED)

CALCULUS

Good evening, Mr. Barbour.

TOM BARBOUR

Hi, Calculus.

CALCULUS

(introducing Fletch)

Mr. Fletcher here is the new owner of Belle Isle - or what's left of it.

TOM

Oh yeah, I heard about that fire. Terribly sorry. Guess you'll be moving on, huh?

FLETCH

Why does everybody ask me when I'm going to leave?

TOM BARBOUR

(smiling)

Oh dear me... It's just a simple Southern way of showing interest. Don't take it as inhospitable, y'hear?

(as he goes to his own table)

Enjoy your diet plate.

Calculus picks up a knife and makes another section of the cornbread.

CALCULUS

This was Mr. Barbour's property. I hear he got a real good price for it.

FLETCH

Who bought it?

CALCULUS

Some company named Everest, I think.

FLETCH

Local?

CALCULUS

Don't know.

SELMA

You want to eat this cornbread, or do you want to play with it?

(CONTINUED)

Tom Barbour comes over again.

TOM

(to Fletch)

Me and the boys'd like to show you
some real Southern hospitality by
inviting you on a coon hunt.

FLETCH

(looking at Calculus and
back to Tom)

I beg your pardon?

164 EXT. BACK GROUNDS OF BELLE ISLE - NIGHT

164

Seven men with weapons and dogs are in readiness. A mason
jar is being passed around. The coon hunt is about to
begin. Tom gives Fletch a rifle and moves on.

TOM

A coon hunt is just like an English
fox hunt, except we take out all
the bullshit - the fancy clothes,
the music, the pretty women - and
we reduce the experience to its
essence.

FLETCH

A bunch of sweaty, drunken men
chasing a frightened animal.

Tom and the others ad lib agreement and enthusiasm.

FLETCH

Now what am I supposed to do?

TOM

Drink, yell, follow the dogs, and
when that old racoon's up a tree,
let out a big rebel yell.

They all demonstrate a YELL.

FLETCH

Then we have the traditional coon
luau... tearing the meat from the
bone around the fire.

TOM

Naw, we turn him loose.

FLETCH

So what's the point?

(CONTINUED)

TOM

It's just a way to have some fun...
running around the woods all night.

FLETCH

What's the chances of this becoming
an Olympic sport?

TOM

Well, if they hold the Olympics in
Baton Rouge...

A large MAN walks over with a mason jar full of yellow
liquid.

TOM BARBOUR

We always do this. A little ritual
before the hunt.

FLETCH

Don't you think drug testing has
gone too far?

TOM

Test?
(he laughs)
Have a jolt.

He offers the jar.

FLETCH

Kickapoo joy juice?

TOM

A little stronger than that.

CALCULUS

(waving)
You fellows be having a good
time...

FLETCH

Aren't you coming?

CALCULUS

It ain't safe for a black man to be
chasing round these woods at
night. Unless he be handcuffed to
a white man. See you back at my
domicide.

Fletch drinks. After a long pause, he lets forth a banshee
scream. The men turn their guns toward him in surprise.

165 NEW ANGLE - MEN

165

The dogs are BAYING with excitement. The men share another quick drink and the dogs are released. They dash towards the woods with the hollering men in hot pursuit.

166 FULL SHOT - DOGS

166

Looking for a scent, they dive through the brush.

167 FLETCH

167

He is getting into the running, stumbling ethos of the event.

168 CLOSE SHOT - RACCOON

168

The raccoon seems oblivious to the coming furor. He darts under Ham's fence.

169 FULL SHOT - GROUP

169

The men jogging on behind the dogs.

170 A CLEARING IN THE WOODS

170

Flashlights gleam as the hunt gets more spread out.

171 TOM

171

He urges Fletch forward.

FLETCH

Where the hell are we?

TOM BARBOUR

Actually, this is my property. I ain't been on it since I sold the sucker. Now which way do you think them dogs went - towards your property (he points) or Ham Johnson's mother's old land.

They hear the dogs to the east.

FLETCH

Shouldn't we catch up with the boys?

TOM BARBOUR

Damn right. There's a couple of them I don't think I should leave alone with the dogs.

This territory is sparse with vegetation. The ground is parched. There is a pond but it lacks any sign of life.

172 FLETCH

172

He is wearing out. The dogs SOUND more distant.

173 WOODS

173

Someone back in the woods is watching Fletch, a man in black seated on a motorcycle.

174 POND - FLETCH AND TOM

174

They pause to catch their breath.

TOM

Wait up. Damn, where'd they go?

FLETCH

Around the pond...

TOM

Jesus. What happened to my flower garden? Everything's dead here. Even the old kudzu's dead.

FLETCH

The what?

TOM

Kudzu.

FLETCH

Gesundheit.

Distant dog barking followed by a hunter's yell.

A GOOD OLD BOY (V.O.)

Yo, Barbour? Rags has got a copperhead in his mouth!

TOM BARBOUR

Hey! We're in luck. Want to rip the neck off a snake?

FLETCH

No thanks. I've been trying to cut down.

TOM BARBOUR

Well, I ain't missing the fun.

FLETCH

(watching him go)
Ah, the simple pleasures...

175 INSERT:

175

Fletch's feet have sunk ankle-deep into the bog.

176 CLOSE ON FLETCH 176
 He sees something on the ground that attracts his attention.

177 HIS POV 177
 Solid ground, Tire or truck treads approaching the bog.

178 FLETCH 178
 picks up the pace, following the tracks.
 They head back towards the woods. Fletch is far ahead. He turns startled by a shotgun blast in his exact direction.

179 MED. SHOT - TOM 179
 He hears a shot and runs back.
 TOM
 Who sees a coon?

180 FLETCH 180
 He is running through the woods away from a shadowy pursuer wearing motorcycle gloves. He steps behind a tree and sees the man coming with his gun at the ready. Just as he passes, Fletch holds back a branch and smacks his assailant with a tree limb. The gun falls but the man is hardly affected. The man grabs Fletch around the neck.

181 FLETCH 181
 spinning free. Something on the man's arm drops off.

182 SILHOUETTE OF ASSAILANT 182
 He gathers his gun and, hearing the approaching dogs and hunters, he flees.

183 CLOSE ON A BUSH 183
 as Fletch picks up the object. His Laker championship watch. He looks up.

184 HIS POV 184
 A pack of howling dogs coming straight at him.

185 REVERSE

185

Fletch scampers up the tree with the dogs yapping at his heels.

186 CLOSEUP FLETCH

186

He looks off left in surprise.

187 HIS POV

187

The racoon next to him in the tree.

188 FLETCH

188

smiling nervously.

189 MED. SHOT - MEN

189

They are chasing the dogs.

TOM

We got one!

The SOUND of the dogs has changed to a more excited sound.

TOM

They treed him, boys!

190 FULL SHOT - DOGS

190

They leap around the base of the tree as the men arrive.

TOM

Let's get him down.

As they start to bring down the tree, we see Fletch hanging from the branches, his watchband dangling from one hand. The men are amused as Fletch drops among the YELPING dogs.

191 INT. CAL'S SHACK - NIGHT - LATER

191

Cal sits on the water couch watching TV. His shoes are off. He hears voices outside and turns it off. Opens door.

192 FLETCH

192

says "thank you" to Tom and closes the door.

CAL

Jimmy Lee was on a roll tonight.
Ten salvations. Big bucks. Did
you catch the coon?

Fletch moves towards Cal's shotgun on the wall.

FLETCH

I was shot at. Somebody sure wants
to scare me off, and they don't
mind killing me to underline the
threat.

CAL

(rising)
You were shot at?

FLETCH

Yup. Now who would do that?

Fletch stares at the gun on the wall. Cal reaches the
shotgun ahead of Fletch.

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED:

CAL
Damn shame. I'll go outside and
see if there's anything worth
scaring off.

Cal pulls the rifle down and goes outside.

Fletch feels the top of the TV. His hand stays there. It
must be cold. Something else attracts his attention:

193 HIS POV

193

Cal's boots have a grayish mud.

194 FLETCH'S OWN BOOTS

194

The same mud.

A gunshot is HEARD O.S. Fletch goes out to the porch.

195 EXT. PORCH

195

Cal stands there with the gun.

FLETCH
Who was that?

CAL
I thought I saw something. Just
firing in the air to scare
whatever it was.

DISSOLVE TO:

196 INT. BELLE ISLE - DAY

196

Cal is sleeping in the next room. Fletch asleep on a
mattress in the main room slowly wakes. A foul odor gets
his attention. He rises, sniffs the air, and checks his
armpits. The odor attracts and repels him, then he
realizes that it's emanating from his high tops.

197 HIS POV - THE SNEAKERS

197

He picks them up. The floorboards are slightly bleached
where the sneakers stood. He checks Cal's boots: the same
floor stains.

198 INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY/ INTERCUT SHACK

198

FRANK

Fletch, you're onto a good story
for sure.

FLETCH

Frank, stop salivating. I'm
sending my Laker high tops to you
for a lab analysis.

Frank turns to Sports and covers the mouthpiece.

FRANK

He's behaving very strangely. He
must be in trouble.

(an inspiration)

Someone must be holding a gun on
him!

(into phone)

Fletch, If you need rescue, just
say, "Aren't the Alps beautiful
this time of year?"

FLETCH

(looking at the phone in
disbelief)

Frank, just give me your research.
What about Mr. Farnsworth?

FRANK

I got everything you need. Jimmy
Lee Farnsworth. Former used car
salesman in Biloxi. In '77 he
pleaded no contest to a charge of
check-kiting. In '81 discovered by
businessmen, who helped him found
the Farnsworth Television Ministry.
Our sources indicate that he may be
a target of federal investigation.

FLETCH

Anything else?

FRANK

Two marriages, one daughter, goes
by wife's maiden name--Becky
Culpepper.

199 EXT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE - DAY

199

Becky has parked her car and is heading to open the office.
Fletch approaches.

BECKY

Hi, Fletch... What's new?

(CONTINUED)

199 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

Oh, nothing much. I've just been laying in the embers of my house trying to calm my nerves after being shot at...

BECKY

What? You were...

FLETCH

(interrupting)

I thought: What a good day to sell my property and move back to LA. Then it hit me. The way my luck's been running, I'll bet that offer was withdrawn. So I decided I'd gayly skip down here and see if I'm right. Am I?

BECKY

You are.

FLETCH

(opening the door for her)

Just a lucky guess.

200 INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE

200

As they enter:

FLETCH

Now can you tell me who it was?

BECKY

And have you go behind my back... and sell directly so I lose my commission? No, thank you.

In her office there are high school trophies for baton twirling. During the following, Fletch picks up a baton hanging on the wall and examines it.

FLETCH

Was it the Farnsworth Ministry?

BECKY

(puzzled)

Why do you say that?

FLETCH

I had a vision.

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

BECKY

You have visions often?

FLETCH

Only when my life is threatened.

BECKY

Fletch, who is shooting at you?

FLETCH

Maybe the Reverend Farnsworth.

BECKY

Look, Jimmy Lee Farnsworth may be a lot of things - but he's not a murderer.

FLETCH

He is your father.

BECKY

(surprised but not
unflappable)

Fletch, that's right. I am his daughter. And I'm also telling the truth.

FLETCH

(serious)

Becky, someone wants my land bad enough to kill for it. If this mysterious buyer is a front for Jimmy Lee... you may be an accessory to murder.

He smiles and tosses her the baton. She catches it artfully. She is not smiling.

201 INT. MINISTRY STUDIO - NIGHT

201

Another TV episode is beginning.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen... it's time for the Farnsworth Television Ministry.

202 BACKSTAGE

202

4 GUEST HEALERS are warming up. One is draped in both crystals and crucifixes. Another has something that looks like a Tibetan prayer flag over his shoulders. He is practicing head slaps with a third.

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED:

Watching them, reluctant to join in, is a healer in a pompadour and dark glasses. His name on the show will be CLAUDE HENRY SMOOT. Behind the prosthetics, this is FLETCH.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

With Mimsy Carlyle. Mr. Coco.
Damon Feather. The Bradley Family
Singers, with Ted Medley and the
Band. And tonight it's Healers'
Night... with our special
guests--people with the healing
gift.

Fletch waits for his moment and drifts away.

203 HALLWAY IN MINISTRY HEADQUARTERS

203

Fletch heads past the V.I.P. Blue Room. He approaches an area he saw in a previous visit. Monitors are everywhere, showing the show in progress.

204-5 INT. AUDITORIUM - JIMMY LEE AND AUDIENCE

204-5

Jimmy Lee marches out to the lights and MUSIC and APPLAUSE.

JIMMY LEE

How are we feeling tonight?

A light flashes with the word "SAVED".

AUDIENCE

Saved!

206 INT. LONG CORRIDOR

206

At the end is a door with a glass wire-mesh window. Behind it is a technician with a headset, seated in front of several monitors. The adjoining room has another glass wire-mesh window and is marked "Expansion Planning Center".

207 INT. TECHNICIAN'S ROOM

207

On the monitor, Jimmy Lee is pitching. Outside the wire-mess window, Fletch watches. The technician's back is to Fletch.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

I know there's someone out here
tonight who needs to step forward.

208 ON ANOTHER MONITOR

208

A list of Farnsworth Ministry contributors (small amounts).
Flashing asterisks indicates those in attendance.

TECHNICIAN
(quietly in headset
mike)
Gordon Joe James.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)
Gordon Joe James. Who are you?

TV camera picks up Gordon Joe in the audience as he stands.

209 THE SECOND SCREEN

209

shows a complete "bio" of Gordon Joe James.

TECHNICIAN
Gordon Joe lost a limb to a pit
bull.

210 INT. CORRIDOR - FLETCH

210

During the following, Fletch looks at the sign limiting
entry to the nearby Expansion Planning Center.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)
Gordon Joe, if you're out there,
would you raise your right hand?

TECHNICIAN
Left hand.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)
Excuse me, left hand.
(sees him)
Gordon Joe, come on up here.

211 INT. EXPANSION PLANNING CENTER

211

Fletch enters the empty room and puts his dark glasses in
his pocket. He sees a very high-tech enterprise more
appropriate to high finance than high charity. Here too are
computers and monitor screens. The largest of these is
showing the Farnsworth Ministry Broadcast. On the walls are
some business graphs plotting the rapid escalation of
church assets.

(CONTINUED)

211 CONTINUED:

Finally there is another model of Bibleland; this one includes all the adjoining properties.

212 CLOSE ON THE MODEL

212

There are box-like covers over areas marked "Belle Isle", "Johnson Acquisition" and "T. Barbour Land". Each cover lists a computer access code as a cross reference. Belle Isle has BI.DOC, Barbour has TB.DOC.

213 CLOSE ON BELLE ISLE COVER

213

Fletch lifts it to see a detailed model of a shopping center and an industrial factory.

214 MEANWHILE ON MONITOR

214

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

Thank you, Gordon Joe. Our ushers will assist you to the blueroom and I'll be able to thank you personally for your blessed generosity.

215 FLETCH

215

sensing the possible corridor activity, opens the door a few inches.

216 HIS POV

216

Bruce, the stage manager, is checking for the missing Claude Henry. His back is turned away from Fletch:

217 THE TECHNICIAN'S DOOR OPENS

217

and Fletch makes a quick move into the room. On the monitor, a musical number with Mimsy Carlyle. The technician is on a break.

FLETCH

(reading his name tag)

Bobby Ralph?

The technician is startled.

(CONTINUED)

217 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
(continuing; introducing himself)
Claude Henry. Your house is on fire.

TECHNICIAN
What?!

FLETCH
They told me to tell you your house is on fire.

TECHNICIAN
(rushing out)
God bless you.

FLETCH
Bless you too.

The technician exits down the corridor, passing Bruce who also exits into the main hallway. Fletch slides into the technician's chair and dons the headset.

218 INSERT KEYBOARD

218

Fletch punches up TB.DOC.

219 INSERT MONITOR

219

as Fletch scans documents on the Barbour property showing frequent, angry letters between the Ministry and "Everest Development". All these documents seem to clarify that the church is not a front for Everest (Everest is always c/o Thibodaux Realty). During this we hear:

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)
Who will be next to be saved? Who will get the call?

220 ON THE SECOND MONITOR:

220

The technician has left a "fact sheet" on a past contributor:

T'Boo Ted Marshall. Age 52.
Thirty-Year Hemorrhoid Sufferer

FLETCH
(into headset)
T'Boo Ted Marshall.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)
T'Boo Ted Marshall. Are you here?

221 FLETCH

221

uses keyboard to punch up BI.DOC. It reveals correspondence relating to his aunt's will. Nothing special.

T'BOO (V.O.)

Yes indeed Reverend, but what can God do for my problem?

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

Your problem... Yes...Yes....

Jimmy Lee fingers his earlobe thinking the ear phone has gone dead.

222 FLETCH AND MONITOR

222

Fletch is vamping while he studies the Belle Isle file.

FLETCH

T'Boo Ted is a compulsive gambler.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

T'Boo Ted, the first thing you should do is expose your problem.

223 INSERT SECOND MONITOR

223

It still holds the legend: A 30-Year Hemhorroid Sufferer.

T'BOO (V.O.)

(quietly, with anxiety)
Excuse me?

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

If you don't expose your problem - at least to your family - it grows and grows and becomes an even bigger problem.

T'BOO (V.O.)

That's true.

FLETCH

T'Boo Ted has been a compulsive gambler for thirty years.

224 FLETCH AND MONITOR:

224

Fletch is speeding through documents on Ham's mother's bequest.

225 ON BOTH MONITORS:

225

T'Boo Ted's interview, and the legend: A 30-Year Hemhorroid Sufferer.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

Since you've had this condition for thirty years, I want you to expose your problem to us right here. I want you to do it. The Lord wants you to do it.

T'BOO (V.O.)

You really think so?

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

I know so. You will feel relief instantly. T'Boo, do it right now.

Fletch surveys a final file. It includes accounting on state property tax forms. Nothing out of order.

T'BOO (V.O.)

Well, if you say so.

T'Boo reaches for his belt and begins to drop his pants. The congregation gasps. Jimmy Lee begins to tremble.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

(flustered; to the band leader)

Hit it, Ted.

The band starts.

JIMMY LEE (V.O.)

(still flustered)

Bless us... Uh... Uh... Let's have more of our divinely inspired entertainment. Animals are God's creatures too... Here's Mr. Coco!

Mr. Coco does a back flip. Jimmy Lee laughs and leads the applause, as the band continues.

Fletch puts down the headset and leaves.

225A INT. AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE

225A

Fletch is wearing his dark glasses and moving quickly towards an exit door when he sees something in the wings opposite.

25A A HIS POV

225A A

Calculus is engaged in quiet conversation with the TRAINER of Mr. Coco, the monkey in the aquamarine tuxedo. None of them notices Fletch. Suddenly:

A VOICE (O.S.)

Claude? Where have you been?

226 REVERSE ON FLETCH AND BRUCE, THE STAGE MANAGER

226

Bruce is in a frenzy.

BRUCE

(continuing)

Where are you going?

FLETCH

The, uh... Spirit seems to have left me. I'm not sure I can heal people.

BRUCE

We all lose faith at one time or another. You can do it.

227 FLETCH

227

Squirms. This was not part of his plan. Bruce takes his arm and forces him on stage.

228 FULL SHOT - STAGE

228

The Band finishes.

ANNOUNCER

And now: our first guest healer.
Claude Henry Smoot.

Fletch marches out looking over his shoulder into the wings. Jimmy Lee greets him.

JIMMY LEE

Claude, tell us when you first knew you had the gift. What was the moment that made the difference?

FLETCH

(trapped)

It was God's will. I was struck by lightning. I fell off a ladder, and it gave me acute migraines and blurred vision.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

FLETCH (cont'd)
That was my lucky day because ever
since, I've had a healing power.

JIMMY LEE
(applauding)
You hear that? Our TV lights are
torturing this man's eyes and he
thinks only of you.

The audience applauds and Fletch tries a second unsuccessful
exit.

JIMMY LEE
(grabbing him)
Claude Henry, before you heal
another would you like me to
attempt to cure your own
affliction?

Jimmy Lee reaches for Fletch's dark glasses but Fletch backs
off.

FLETCH
No, no. Those of us blessed with
perfect faith have no need of
perfect sight. No need of wisdom.
No need of anything except the
creature comforts - and lots of
them.

JIMMY LEE
He sees more than he doth know...

The congregation APPLAUDS.

JIMMY LEE
And now Claude Henry has that gift
himself. Claude Henry has the
gift.
(applause)
Can you use it, Claude Henry? Could
you use the gift now?

FLETCH
I guess I could.

More applause; Fletch is trapped.

FLETCH
(closing his eyes)
Is anyone here tonight... anyone...
anyone named Joe Bob?

Fletch opens his eyes.

229 HIS POV

229

28 men are standing.

FLETCH
(eyes closed again)
I need a Joe Bob under thirty.

He opens his eyes. Six men remain.

FLETCH
(eyes closed)
Is there a Joe Bob with a headache?

Eyes open. Two Joe Bobs left.

FLETCH
Is there a Joe Bob who has had a
headache for less than thirty
minutes?

We're down to one.

FLETCH
C'mon up, Joe Bob!

Joe Bob runs to the stage. He is thrilled to meet Smoot.
Jimmy Lee watches in approval.

FLETCH
Joe Bob... how long have you had
this headache?

JOE BOB
About 5-10 minutes.

FLETCH
(into it)
Joe Bob... knowing that I'm merely
the conduit for the power on
high... that healing power that
can rid you of this affliction.
Do you believe?

JOE BOB
I believe.

FLETCH
He believes!

He slaps Joe Bob's forehead with his palm. There is no one
there to grab Joe Bob as he falls backwards to the floor.

FLETCH
(continuing)
Out you headache demons... out of
this good and faithful servant.

(CONTINUED)

229 CONTINUED:

Joe Bob shakes back to reality.

JOE BOB
(holding his back)
It's gone. My headache is gone!

JIMMY LEE
Praise be!

FLETCH
Well then, come on over here!

JOE BOB
(not wanting more)
No, no thanks.

The audience gives Smoot a standing ovation.

230 EXT. BECKY'S OFFICE - NIGHT - RAIN

230

Aunt Belle's Cadillac convertible is parked in front. The torn top is up and is keeping out about 20% of the rain. Fletch, an umbrella in hand, is under an awning as Becky pulls up in her sensible K-Car with "Thibodaux Realty" decals.

She uses some wooden "For Sale" signs to protect her hair from the rain as she approaches Fletch and opens the door with her key. During the above:

BECKY
Still alive, eh Fletch?

FLETCH
Yep. And smarter than the last time you saw me.

BECKY
How so?

231 INT. OFFICE

231

They enter. She puts the signs away.

FLETCH
I found out a couple things about your father last night. His operation is a bit sleazy. Also: he is not your mysterious buyer. That's Everest Development - isn't it?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

231 CONTINUED:

FLETCH (cont'd)

(Becky doesn't deny it)
There's some kind of range war
between your father and Everest
over my property. Now who and where
is Everest?

BECKY

Well....

FLETCH

C'mon, we're not talking about some
solemn oath you took before the
Board of Realtors.

BECKY

I've only dealt with them twice.
They called me. I never call them.
Always the same man.

FLETCH

Who is he?

BECKY

I have no idea. I tried, but
they're so well hidden. Behind
other corporations and limited
partnerships. It's like trying to
peel an onion.

FLETCH

How do I get to the morgue?

BECKY

Feeling under the weather?
(She smiles at her joke.
He kisses her.)
Two blocks south, three blocks
east. Wait. I want to help you.

Fletch shakes his head "No thanks" and exits.

232 EXT. STREET - RAIN - NIGHT

232

Fletch gets into the Cadillac. Becky watches from the
doorway.

233 INT. CADILLAC

233

He checks the glove compartment for a large brown paper bag.
He puts the key in the ignition. The car won't start. He
looks in frustration to Becky.

234 CLOSE - BECKY 234
dangling her car keys.

235 CLOSE - FLETCH 235

FLETCH
Okay. Plan B. Can I borrow your car?

236 CLOSE - BECKY 236

BECKY
Only with me in it.

237 EXT/ INT. BECKY'S CAR PARKED OUTSIDE MORGUE - NIGHT - RAIN 237

Fletch, seated next to Becky, opens his paper bag. He pulls out a blonde wig, eyeglasses, and a false moustache.

BECKY
(laughing)
Fletch, what are you doing?

FLETCH
The guy who works in there stole my watch. Four days ago he dropped it while he was trying to kill me. I'd just as soon he not recognize me.

BECKY
(excited)
So what'll we do, follow him?

FLETCH
Like to keep an eye on him. Maybe he'll lead us to Mr. Big.

Becky is chagrined. Fletch smiles and pats her.

BECKY
So how long are we going to be here?

FLETCH
Bored?

BECKY
Oh no. This is exciting. And you know, Fletch, I really like you.

FLETCH
I really like you, too.

(CONTINUED)

237 CONTINUED:

Fletch considers her attitude promising and leans forward and kisses her. They are very close. The next move is uncertain. Finally:

BECKY

Fletch?

FLETCH

Yeah?

BECKY

I have to pee.

Fletch pulls back slightly.

BECKY

(continuing)

Whenever I used to play hide and seek, the same thing happened. I always got caught. Do you think they have a ladies' room in the morgue?

FLETCH

I doubt it's ever used.

BECKY

(looks off)

Oh! Is that our man?

238 THEIR POV - MORGUE DOORWAY - RAIN

238

The Attendant at the desk (unclear through the old glass door) rises up and puts on a parka with a hood and comes out the door. Fletch cannot recognize the face that he knows as BEN DOVER (and, of course, he never saw the face of the Morgue Attendant).

239 EXT. BECKY'S CAR - RAIN

239

They start their car as Ben climbs on his motorcycle. They follow him.

240 INT. BECKY'S CAR - FOLLOWING IN THE RAIN

240

FLETCH

(peering over the back)

Hey! Not so close - get some distance between you.

BECKY

I've never done this before.

(CONTINUED)

240 CONTINUED:

Fletch sees the Biker pull up at a sleazy roadside bar.

FLETCH
Slow down. Pull in behind those
bushes on this side of the road.

241 EXT. ROAD - NIGHT - RAIN

241

Becky does as instructed. Then they see Ben enter the bar. Fletch takes a pair of scissors from the brown bag and removes the emblem from the largest of three "Thibodaux Realty" jackets which lie on the back seat. The jacket is about a size too small for him.

FLETCH
Still have to pee? I gather the
rain isn't helping a lot.
(she nods)
There's always the bushes.

BECKY
I'll be okay.

FLETCH
Becky, if I'm not back in ten
minutes, drive to the nearest
phone and call your dad. I'll
either need his security boys or
last rites.

He makes a time check, finds a clip-on bow tie in the pocket, and begins to put on the wig.

242-3 INT. BAR - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

242-3

A Biker hell. Not one of them is less than 6'6". These are "Natchez Nazis". Their emblem is a swastika against a background of the Confederate flag. A few wear Storm Trooper helmets. The bar falls ominously silent at Fletch enters, wearing the wig, moustache and bow tie. Ben Dover is nowhere to be seen, as Fletch walks to the bar.

FLETCH
Hi. You got a soda... a Diet Pepsi,
maybe? Or a Tab?

The Bartender turns from feeding the piranhas and squirts something in a glass. A biker (JOE JACK) sidles up to Fletch.

JOE JACK
Hey, pussy --

(CONTINUED)

242-3 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
Name's Ed... Ed Harley.

JOE JACK
Ed, you sure you're in the right place?

FLETCH
I think so.

JOE JACK
He thinks so.
(they laugh)
That's a cute little bow tie you got on, Ed.

He unclips it so that the bows stick straight out.

FLETCH
Kind of a family trademark. My father always wore a bow tie so I wear one too. It doesn't fall in the soup.

JOE JACK
Ed, what are you doing here?

FLETCH
I'll give you a hint. Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

JOE JACK
We're the Nazis from Natchez.

FLETCH
Ed Harley from Milwaukee, Wisconsin? You don't get it. Shame on you.

JOE JACK
Ed... you're the one that doesn't get it.

He fingers a leaded cue stick and just before he hits Ed:

FLETCH
Ed Harley... Harley Davidson Motorcycles.
(as Joe Jack stops)
We're doing a little marketing work and I'm dropping by to get some feedback from our customers.

(CONTINUED)

42-3 CONTINUED: 2

JOE JACK

Harley Davidson?! No shit.

(to crowd)

Hear that? Ed here is from Harley
Davidson. Have a real drink,
buddy.

He dumps Fletch's glass and pours him a shot of bourbon.
The crowd is back to its raucous behavior. The MUSIC starts
and the dancers begin again.

244 EXT. ROAD - BECKY'S CAR - NIGHT

244

The rain has stopped. She opens her car door and sticks
her hand out to double check. Then she looks at her
watch.

245 EXT. BIKER BAR

245

As Becky peers in the window.

246 HER POV

246

Fletch is uncomfortably dancing with the bikers.

247 EXT. BECKY

247

She moves to a pay phone to place a call. Suddenly she is
grabbed from behind. It is BEN DOVER.

BEN

Who you calling, babe?

BECKY

My momma.

BEN

You scared?

BECKY

No. I wanted her to come down
here...

BEN

Is she coming?

BECKY

Not now.

(CONTINUED)

247 CONTINUED:

BEN

Why don't we go around back and do
it in the dirt?

A gun is suddenly under her jaw.

BECKY

Would you buy me a Jack Daniels
first?

He lowers the pistol.

BEN

Sure.

248-9 INT./ EXT. BAR

248-9

The dancing has stopped. Everyone, including Fletch, turns to look at Becky and Ben standing in the doorway. Fletch probably recognizes Ben as the man Ham released from jail but Ben accepts Fletch's disguise... for the moment...

FLETCH

(to Ben)
Is she a rider, too?

BEN

She will be. I'm initiating her
tonight.

FLETCH

Ed Harley. Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
Harley... Harley-Davidson? If you
need any decals or T-shirts I can
get them for you.

BEN

(slightly suspicious)
I can't wait.

FLETCH

What model do you ride?

BEN

(pointing out the open
door)
It's a fifty-seven Pan.

Fletch moves into the light outside followed by Becky and

(CONTINUED)

148-9 CONTINUED:

the others.

FLETCH

(continuing)
Oh... It's a beauty. I like what
you've done with the banders.

BEN

The pipes?

FLETCH

At the factory we call them
banders.

BEN

I've modified this bitch a lot.
Chopped, chromed and toasted her.

FLETCH

Would you mind if I... rode her?
I'd love it.

BEN

(a moment of doubt)
Hell, we'll all ride. You all
saddle up with us.

Fletch looks longingly at Becky.

FLETCH

You mind if...

BECKY

Darlene.

FLETCH

You mind if Darlene rides with me?

BEN

Feeling a little horny, Ed?

FLETCH

(putting Becky on the
rear saddle)
My life isn't all hubs and gears.

BEN

You can have the woman, but don't
screw up my bike.

FLETCH

Shouldn't we be wearing helmets?
It's a state law, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

248-9 CONTINUED: 2

BEN

We got helmets.

He drops a Nazi WW II helmet on Fletch's head and another on Becky's. Fletch has trouble cranking up.

BEN

You look real familiar, Ed.

FLETCH

Were you at the Bikerama in Las Vegas?

Ben shakes his head as Becky whispers to Fletch.

BECKY

Turn the ignition on.

FLETCH

(loudly - to cover)
You sure have modified her.

BEN

(as Fletch's engine
fires)
Take it easy.

Natchez Nazis fly into the night led by Ben and Fletch. Fletch is barely controlling the bike. Becky clinging to Fletch, the bikes stop at an intersection.

250 EXT. CAR - AT INTERSECTION

250

A family in a station wagon is terrified by the sight. They lock the doors and roll up the windows. Fletch sees his opportunity.

FLETCH

(to Ben)
She might need some cam spinning.

BEN

Really?

FLETCH

Look at the shindlers.

Ben gets a good look at Fletch in the street light. His moustache is coming unglued. It hangs over his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

250 CONTINUED:

BEN
(as he thinks he
recognizes Fletch)
Hey, your moustache is looking
funny.

FLETCH
(peeling it loose)
How do you like that? It peeled
right off!

Fletch's bike leaps forward, turning down a side street.

251 NEW ANGLE - FLETCH AND BECKY

251

They are flying through the narrow lane.

FLETCH
(shouting)
It should be a piece of cake from
here.

252 FULL SHOT - GANG - NIGHT

252

They are in hot pursuit. Ben is livid.

253 NEW ANGLE - BIKE - NIGHT

253

They run alongside a long freight train. They are parallel
to boxcars with open doors.

254 MOVING SHOT - FLETCH AND BECK - SHOUTING

254

FLETCH
You shouldn't have done this.

BECKY
I had to go to the bathroom.

FLETCH
You still haven't.

BECKY
Nope.

FLETCH
Could you sit back another two
inches?

Unable to pass the train, they make a left turn on a road
perpendicular to the track, barely missing a cattle loading
ramp.

255 HER POV - THE GANG

255

Making the same turn and gaining on them.

256 BECKY AND FLETCH

256

BECKY

Fletch, what are we going to do?

FLETCH

Something that will seem extremely
stupid at first.

He slams on the brakes. The wet pavement causes the braking
bike to spin 180 degrees, facing the oncoming bikers.

257 THE BIKERS

257

spinning, sliding and careening all over the wet road.

258 FLETCH

258

guns his bike and proceeds straight at the train, which
still has a long line of open box cars.

259 BEN

259

leads the bikers in pursuit.

260 BECKY

260

Sees an impossible moving wall in front of them. She
SCREAMS.

261 FLETCH

261

Perhaps inspired by his Nazi helmet runs the bike up the
cattle loading ramp and straight through the open boxcar
landing softly on the other side.

262 INT. BOXCAR

262

Three WINOS stare in disbelief.

263 EXT. BEN'S GROUP

263

The other bikers chicken out but Ben sees the ramp and
another open boxcar and is determined to get Fletch.

264 EXT. RAMP

264

It's up - up and -- through the door and:

265 EXT. BOXCAR - OTHER SIDE

265

A deafening crash as Ben's front bike wheel comes crashing through the wooden siding of the boxcar.

266-7 INT. REAL ESTATE OFFICE/ INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - EARLY MORNING THE NEXT DAY

266-7

Fletch is on the phone, no longer in disguise. Becky watches with curiosity as Fletch talks to Frank. NOTE: While we will photograph Frank's end of the conversation, it is possible that we could only use Fletch's side of it.

FLETCH

C'mon, Frank, what about my tennis shoes?

FRANK

That's toxic waste on the soles. What have you been doing, Fletch?

FLETCH

Jogging in the Love Canal. What do you mean, "toxic waste"?

FRANK

It's some special stuff. There are only eleven places in the country that make this shit.

FLETCH

Where are these factories?

FRANK

I got a list. Hackensack, New Jersey. Paterson, New Jersey. Pilot, New Jersey.

FLETCH

Just give me the ones that aren't in New Jersey.

FRANK

There's only one. Yazoo, Mississippi.

FLETCH

Bingo.

He hangs up on Frank who obviously wants to talk more. He pockets the invitation.

BECKY

(excited)
Did you get some good clues?

(CONTINUED)

266-7 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
: Yeah. Colonel Mustard did it. How
: far is the airport?

268 EXT. BLY BIOCHEM IN YAZOO, MISSISSIPPI - DAY

268

A large industrial chemical plant in the countryside. The
smokestacks spew.

269-81 INT. MAIN PLANT.

269-81

This is an enormous complex of chemical manufacturing.
There is a sign listing all the Bly products. Some are
everyday household products. Others are agricultural
fertilizers and pesticides and their by-products. Included
in the list Fletch notices "Bluebird Fertilizer".

Fletch enters with a flourish. A guard tries to stop him.

GUARD
This is a secure area.

FLETCH
(moving past; Southern
accent)
I'm very happy for you. Most people
live in terrible neighborhoods.

He stops at a man in a tie and jacket (the MANAGER).

FLETCH
(continuing)
Are you the head honcho?

MANAGER
That's right, sir. Hedly Dan Duke.
What seems to be your problem?

FLETCH
The problem is that I agreed to
take a shitload of that Bluebird
crap off your hands and it ain't
come yet.

MANAGER
I'm very sorry, sir. And you
are...?

(CONTINUED)

69-81 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

: I are pissed! Some damn fool
: (whipping out what looks
suspiciously like a car
rental receipt)
said it was on back order and that
I'd have to wait.

He pushes it two inches from the man's face.

FLETCH

(continuing)
Who signed this? Whose signature is
this?

MANAGER

(confused)
I can't tell.

FLETCH

Typical of a large corporation.
Lack of communication. That's why I
like to keep Everest small.

MANAGER

You're from Everest?

FLETCH

Damn right.
(extending his hand)
Elmer Gantry. Elmer Fudd Gantry.

MANAGER

I'm not sure there's anything I
can...

FLETCH

Maybe you should pull my file
instead of standing there pulling
your pud.

MANAGER

(icily)
Whatever you say, sir.
(to an assistant)
Bring me the Everest file.

ASSISTANT

Yes, sir.

Fletch looks at the workers in protective suits at the far
end of the factory. They load enormous cans of "Bluebird"
encased in concrete.

(CONTINUED)

19-81 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

That the stuff I'm supposed to get?

MANAGER

Yes, sir.

FLETCH

Why are they wearing those funny suits?

MANAGER

Well... they're protective. As you know, that's a very corrosive by-product they're handling.

FLETCH

Yeah. I guess without those suits those boys would have so many holes in 'em they'd whistle when they walked.

Both laugh. The assistant returns with a file.

MANAGER

(looking at file)

Seems like you got your facts wrong, Mr. Gantry. Your company was supposed to get 1,500 gallons. Destination: someplace called Belle Isle in Louisiana. Signed for by an officer of your company and due the twenty-third. We're right and you're wrong.

FLETCH

(rips off the document)

Let me see that. It takes a big man to admit when he's wrong.

(stuffing it into his pocket)

I am not a big man... One more question.

MANAGER

Yes, sir.

FLETCH

Where's a guy go to drain his lizard?

The Manager points him to the restroom.

282 EXT. HAM JOHNSON'S MANSION - NIGHT 282

Cars arrive and dispense their costumed guests. The theme seems to be the Old South as ladies in hoop skirts and gentlemen in swallow-tailed coats are received at the door.

283 FLETCH'S CADILLAC 283

coasts to an uncontrolled stop. Fletch exits dressed as Robert E. Lee complete with ceremonial sword and red sash and holster.

284 INT. HAM JOHNSON'S HOUSE - NIGHT 284

The Pontchartrain ball is in full swing. Food, live music, open bar. Ham, like Fletch, is dressed as Robert E. Lee.

The PARTY GUESTS (which include 6 more Robert E. Lees) mill about as Ham raps on a glass to get their attention.

HAM

Ladies and gentlemen... my friends.
With all the fun we're having, I
hope we don't forget what our real
purpose here tonight is -- to
preserve the legacy nature has
given us.

(applause)

We are mere custodians of this
planet.

285 INT. FRONT HALL - FULL SHOT - NIGHT 285

Fletch at the door.

FLETCH

Bob Lee.

His name is checked from the list and as they enter, there are still more Lees and some Jacksons as well as a panoply of planters and Rhett Butlers.

286 HAM 286

kisses a lady's hand. He looks up. He is startled to see Fletch. His smile fades. He quickly disappears into a back room.

287 FLETCH 287

turns into Cal holding a tray of mint juleps.

(CONTINUED)

287 CONTINUED:

CALCULUS

Fletch? What are you doing here?

FLETCH

What are you doing here?

CALCULUS

It's a gig, man.

FLETCH

Where's Ham Johnson?

Cal sees Ham approaching and with a nod over Fletch's left shoulder indicates this to Fletch and speaks to "cover" the situation.

CAL

May I humbly slake your thirst,
General Lee?

FLETCH

Yes, indeed. I'll have some
jambalaya, crawfish pie and a
Creole gumbo.

(turns to see Ham)

'Cause tonight I'm gonna meet my
cheramico.

HAM

Mr. Fletcher, I'm surprised to see
you here. Welcome, welcome.

FLETCH

It's my pleasure, suh... I believe
we have some business to discuss.

HAM

May I suggest someplace quieter?

FLETCH

(to Cal over his
shoulder, moving to the
stairs)

Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on
the bayou.

288 INT. HAM'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

288

As Fletch and Ham enter. Fletch looks around. It is the kind of bedroom you'd expect a rich old lady to die in. There's a glass framed 8x10 of the lady herself and right next to it is a ceramic jar with a lid. Ham's influence is there in the form of some cute, furry animals, stuffed and mounted.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED:

HAM

My mama's room. I left it just the way it was when she died.

FLETCH

(pointing to the urn)
Her ashes?

HAM

(nods)

She used to say "We come from the earth, and we return to the earth and in between we garden."

Fletch pulls a pink receipt from Bly Biochem out of his pocket and shows it to Ham.

FLETCH

A little gardening... a little polluting.

HAM

(looks at the paper)
They spelled my name wrong.

Ham pulls his Robert E. Lee pistol out of its holster.

FLETCH

Aren't you overreacting to a spelling error?

(looking at his Robert
E. Lee pistol)

Mine's rubber. How about yours?

Ham shakes his head with a smile.

FLETCH

Does that really work?

Ham cocks the gun.

FLETCH

I see your point. It wouldn't do for all your conservationist guests to hear about the toxic load heading for my land at Belle Isle.

HAM

My land at Belle Isle, Fletch.

FLETCH

Another good point. I guess when I signed your check for 30 grand I was signing my death warrant.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: 2

HAM

: That and the papers that went with
: it. After you die, who's gonna
prove that you didn't sell the land
to Everest?

FLETCH

Johnson, you may have this town in
your back pocket, but a lot of
people downstairs will be
interested in the hows and whys of
the death of Amanda Ray.

Fletch calmly sits in Ham's mother's rocker. Ham twitches
at the sight.

FLETCH

Amanda knew about Bluebird. She
started a file on you - and you
found out about it.

HAM

That was my lucky night, the night
I found the Bluebird file. The
night you porked her, I figured it
was like an alligator shoot on a
freeway, if you'll excuse the
metaphor.

FLETCH

Actually it's not a metaphor, it's
a simile, to be precise.

HAM

(glaring)

Whatever. I poisoned Amanda
figuring you would sell and get out
if you were faced with a murder
charge.

FLETCH

I don't scare easy. I'm too dumb.

HAM

So it would seem. Now get out of
my mama's chair, before I put the
first bullet up your nose.

FLETCH

You kidding? Shoot me and there'll
be a hundred witnesses.

He gestures downstairs to the party. The SOUND of the
orchestra is louder than before.

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: 3

HAM

Dear me, Fletch. Why would I do my own dirty work? Those hundred do-gooders down there dressed in rebel crap will be my alibi. Now get out of my mama's chair!

Fletch doesn't move. He looks at his Laker watch.

FLETCH

I've synchronized my beloved Laker watch with Miss Culpepper's Timex. If I don't join her at the Ministry in ten minutes, the whole ugly story goes out on the Farnsworth Network. To be sure it's only cable... but.

HAM

You're bluffing, Fletch.

FLETCH

No, I'm not.

HAM

You think you're not, but you are.

Ham opens the door to another room. Ben Dover enters, his neck in a cast, and his arm around Becky - a gun with a silencer to her head. Becky lets out a startled cry when she sees Fletch.

FLETCH

Swell. Did he hurt you?

BECKY

No.

BEN

(happy at last)
That comes later.

Becky SCREAMS for help.

The BAND downstairs plays a very loud dance number.

HAM

(shaking head)
Sorry, Becky. The band won't take a break for some time, and Mr.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: 4

HAM (cont'd)

Fletcher's convenient appearance has allowed us to move up our plans for your demise to coincide with his. I'm going downstairs to be the gracious host.

(gesturing to Ben as he holsters his gun.

Do what you have to do.

Fletch picks up Ham's mother's picture.

HAM

Put my mama down.

Fletch "accidentally" drops the picture. Ham screams.

FLETCH

Oops. Clumsy me.

Fletch steps on Ham's mother's face, breaking what's left of the glass. He then steps back.

FLETCH

Oh my God. I stepped on her moustache.

HAM

Get away from her. Get away!

Ham kneels. He begins to shake uncontrollably as he picks up the broken picture.

HAM

Mama... It's all right.

FLETCH

Gee, you should be more careful with where you put breakables, Ham.

HAM

Careful? I've never been anything but careful of everything Mama had. When she got sick I was so careful, 'cause I knew the doctors didn't give a hoot. Then that Jimmy Lee's goddamn Ministry... they took

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

288 CONTINUED: 5

HAM (cont'd)
everything from her.

(putting Mama's picture
back and picking up the
urn)

But we're gonna show 'em, Mama.
We're gonna have more money than
we could ever get for this old
place. And, when everything's sold
and we're far far away from this
Godforsaken chemical swamp, we're
gonna sit back and watch 'em all
get barbequed.

Ham puts the urn down and moves toward the door and Ben.

FLETCH
(moving toward the urn)
That should help Bibleland's
business when all their customers
glow in the dark.

HAM
I hope they all fry in Hell.

FLETCH
(looking in the urn)
Isn't this something? Hey, your mom
really is in here. I would have
thought you would have stuffed and
mounted her.

He picks up the urn and throws it up like a basket ball in
Ben's direction. Ben DUCKS, dropping his guard on Becky.
Ham falls into Ben, trying to catch the urn before it
breaks. CRASH! Fletch grabs Becky out the door. Ham
screams. Ben is under him. Ben sneezes and Ham's Mama's
ashes are hopelessly scattered.

289 DOWNSTAIRS

289

Ham comes running down the stairs looking for Fletch. He is
followed at a distance by Ben.

290 HIS POV

290

Someone dressed as Robert E. Lee hurrying to the kitchen.

291 HAM

291

grabs him. The man turns. It's not Fletch.

- 292 EXT. MANSION - NIGHT 292
Fletch and Becky run for their lives.
- 293 EXT. BIBLELAND 293
Fletch and Becky run in the park looking desperately for safety.
- 294 MED. SHOT - HAM 294
He is in hot pursuit along with Ben Dover.
- 295 STAGE DOOR 295
Fletch and Becky open a door that's closed to the public, looking for safety.
- 296 INT. "CONAN" TYPE SHOW - NIGHT 296
Fletch and Becky run in and look for a hiding place. A show is in progress. Sampson is about to push down some foam temple columns. Biblical narration is lip-synched by the performers.
- 297 FLETCH AND BECKY 297
run up the platform toward a Moses-like prophet at the top of the set.
- 298 THEIR POV: 298
Ham and Ben are moving toward the stage, down the aisle of the audience.
- 298A THE AUDIENCE 298A
Some are content to see Robert E. Lee in the Old Testament.
- 299 FLETCH AND BECKY 299
trapped at the top of the platform. They have only one way out. He grabs her hand and they jump...
- 300 INTO A STUNT MAN'S FOAM BAG 300
placed under a hole in the stage.

301 BELOW STAGE 301

They scramble up some stairs which lead to another attraction.

302 FULL SHOT - BECKY AND FLETCH 302

run up some stairs and emerge into a ride called "The Inferno." It is like any horror ride except that the tableaux represent different faces of fundamentalist hell. Demons SHRIEK. Flames EXPLODE. Becky and Fletch, running, pursued by Ham and Ben.

302A CLOSE ON WALL 302A

One Demon is made of solid steel. His pitchfork is also steel. This is because as each cart goes by, an explosive "charge" goes off. The pitchfork would be at the level of anyone standing in a cart. The tourists, of course, are anchored to their seats, but:

302B BEN 302B

leaps onto an empty seat to get ahead and grab Fletch.

302C HIS POV 302C

THE PITCHFORK coming at him.

302D BEN 302D

ducks, but in the limited space his rear end is at the level of the pitchfork.

302E AN EXPLOSION 302E

The cart moves on, but as the smoke clears we see Ben Dover helplessly dangling from the Demon's pitchfork, BELLOWING.

303 EXT. ANOTHER ATTRACTION: NOAH'S FLOOD 303

A tour bus goes down a hill under an artificial rain shower. The driver-guide of the tram speaks into a mike.

GUIDE

In the 600th year of Noah's life...
all the fountains of the great deep
burst open.

As Fletch and Becky come hurtling down the spillway followed by Ham, the flood gates open, sending a flash flood after them.

304 ON THE TRAM

304

Tourists are confused. Is this part of the show?

305 THE FLOOD

305

barely misses Ham. Fletch and the girl are already out of sight ahead.

306 EXT. SMALL LAGOON - NIGHT

306

A small group of tourists watch a 5/8 scale biblical boat toss in a "storm" (sound effects only). There is a hydraulic mountain near the shore where a 5/8 scale ANIMATRONIC JESUS is kneeling in prayer. In the background Fletch approaches pursued by Ham. MUSIC A LA CECIL B. DEMILLE!

The animatronic Jesus rises and begins to walk on the water.

307 ANGLE - FLETCH

307

seeing that there is a plexiglass platform slightly under the water overtakes the animatronic figure. He pulls Becky with him.

308-10 ANGLE - HAM

308-10

in pursuit, as the animatronic figure pivots suddenly, knocking Ham into the water on its pre-programmed route back to the rock. In the background some spectators laugh and applaud as Ham climbs out of the lake.

311 INT. TELEVISION MINISTRY AUDITORIUM

311

Crowded studio as usual, Jimmy Lee on stage.

JIMMY LEE

We want those phones ringing
tonight... with record pledges!
Our creditors say we can't do it
but I know with the help of the
Lord we can.

312 INT. AUDITORIUM HALLWAY

312

Fletch and Becky dash past a SECURITY GUARD who looks up to see Ham (still, of course, dressed as Robert E. Lee). He is soaking wet. A monitor carries Jimmy Lee. The band PLAYS in b.g. as people SING.

(CONTINUED)

SECURITY

(to Ham)

What the hell is going on?

Ham FIRES and kills the Security man in one shot.

313-14 INT. AUDITORIUM

313-14

Fletch comes from the rear with Becky as Jimmy Lee speaks to the audience.

JIMMY LEE

My partners in Christ, this is your final opportunity to join our pyramid of prayer. For only \$12 - which is exactly what it cost to crucify our Lord - you can begin the exciting journey up the pyramid; and when you reach the top, you will be the target of twenty thousand prayers.

314A APPLAUSE

314A

JIMMY LEE

Those who have already started this journey need to keep your love offerings flowing. A woman in Fargo, North Dakota broke the chain and began a five-day fit of sneezing that ended in her death.

Fletch approaches from behind Jimmy Lee.

FLETCH

Amen. And gesundheit.

315 FULL SHOT - STUDIO STAGE

315

Jimmy Lee sees Fletch and Becky. Fletch is out of place in his Robert E. Lee costume, but for this crowd, nothing seems that strange.

JIMMY LEE

(surprised)

Becky, Mr. Fletcher, what a lovely surprise. Why are you dressed like that?

FLETCH

Just came from a bar mitzvah.

(CONTINUED)

315 CONTINUED:

JIMMY LEE

And to what do we owe the pleasure
of this visit?

FLETCH

Actually, we've come to be saved.

Jimmy Lee turns back to face the audience as Fletch and
Becky spot Ham coming down the aisle towards the stage.

JIMMY LEE

Do you hear that, my friends?
Hallelujah! The Lord has brought
these two young people here
tonight...

FLETCH

(interrupting)

Not so much the Lord as Ham
Johnson.

JIMMY LEE

(turning towards Fletch)

Ham Johnson? Well, the Lord works
in strange and wondrous ways. If He
has chosen as His messenger...

BECKY

(interrupting and
pointing to Johnson)

Dad, please, it's an emergency. Get
someone to call for help.

315A ON STAGE

315A

FLETCH

And here comes Mr. Hamilton
Johnston. He must have come from
the same bar mitzvah... Ham, you've
either worked up a sweat or you've
had a baptism. C'mon down, Ham!
Show that lovely face of yours on
national TV. Let them see that
greedy little glint in your eye.
Let 'em hear that bullshit chuckle.

Ham is getting closer. No reaction to any of this as Fletch
stalls for time.

(CONTINUED)

315 CONTINUED:

FLETCH
(turning to Jimmy Lee)
So, where is your security,
reverend, your legions of zealots?

Jimmy Lee shrugs.

Ham pulls out his gun and moves toward the stage. The people near them in the audience begin to cower and cry out. The phone ladies look helpless.

HAM
Who's gonna save you now, Fletch?

JIMMY LEE
(moving in front of
Fletch)
Johnson, you'll have to shoot
through me.

HAM
It'll be my pleasure, you clown.

316 NEW ANGLE - CALCULUS

316

Calculus steps from behind the stage with his own gun drawn and an ID card dangling from his jacket.

CALCULUS

Freeze! F.B.I.! Drop that gun! I said drop it! Harry?

The monkey trainer reveals his gun and FBI card, in a good FBI stance.

317 CLOSE SHOT - FLETCH

317

He is shocked.

318 THE AUDIENCE

318

frozen in fear.

319 ONSTAGE

319

As Ham FIRES, Fletch dives for Jimmy Lee and knocks him to the stage. Calculus FIRES. Ham is hit. Becky runs to Fletch and her father.

320 MED. SHOT - CALCULUS

320

He walks to Ham's motionless body and then holsters his gun.

321 EXT. BUILDING - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

321

An ambulance has come to cart off Ham Johnson. Becky is explaining what she knows to her father. Calculus and Fletch meet on the step. Fletch talks with Cal, Mr. Coco and his trainer a step behind.

Calculus now speaks in a far more educated tone.

CALCULUS

Thanks for your help.

FLETCH

The obvious question is: what did you know, when did you know it, and how long were you planning to let me twist in the wind?

CAL

Up to a point, the Agency was barking up the same tree you were.

(CONTINUED)

321 CONTINUED:

FLETCH

Jimmy Lee's finances...

CAL

It was easy for Harry and Vincent to infiltrate the ministry.

FLETCH

Who's Vincent?

CAL

(points to the monkey)
That's Mr. Coco's real name. We've been on this over a year... Your sweet Aunt Belle unwittingly gave me my cover... As we used to say at the Sorbonne, "L'argent n'a pas d'odeur... mais les déchets industriels, ca pue."

FLETCH

My sentiments exactly.

CAL

So what will you do now?

FLETCH

You know I left LA and came here to get away from the continual threat of catastrophe, fire, flood and earthquake. You know something? I miss it all.

CAL

Some people aren't cut out to live anywhere but LA.

Fletch shakes Cal's hand and walks off with Becky.

BECKY

(as she disappears in the darkness with Fletch)

Fletch, let me ask you something.
Does anybody in Los Angeles buy and sell real estate?

Fletch smiles and puts his arm around her.

FLETCH

Oh... once in a while.

DISSOLVE TO:

322 INT. FLETCH'S NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

322

Close on an envelope: Superior Fire & Casualty. Inside is a check for \$100,000, marked "Coverage in full - Belle Isle property damage." This is the real insurance check.

323 WIDER ON FLETCH AND BECKY

323

He is in a much posher office area. He whistles and smiles and places the check in his pocket. Frank approaches. A "WELCOME HOME" banner and the remnants of an office party in the b.g.

BECKY

Wow! There really was insurance money. Ham wasn't lying.

FLETCH

Double your pleasure. I get to keep his "advance", too.

FRANK

Everything okay, Fletch? Betty was a little pissed off about giving up her office... and accounting gave me some flack about the new car... but trust me... everything's gonna be just what you want.

FLETCH

Frank, I like your attitude.
(to Becky)
Excuse me a sec.

324 NEW ANGLE - FLETCH

324

He moves to a lawyer by the watercooler.

FLETCH

I told you never to come to my workplace.

GILLET

Times change, my dear Fletch. Rumor has it that you have inherited a sizeable piece of property.

FLETCH

Who told you?

(CONTINUED)

324 CONTINUED:

GILLET

I have my sources too. Now these sources also suggest that you might have been considering skipping town and retiring on this vast estate... thus skipping out on your financial responsibilities.

FLETCH

Would I do that?

Becky drifts closer.

GILLET

Pay your bills! How much is the property worth?

FLETCH

I was offered two hundred fifty thousand.

Becky nods ("It's true.") Gillet smiles again.

GILLET

There you go.

FLETCH

Hey... don't think about it. No way.

Gillet pulls some documents from his briefcase.

GILLET

We could probably get half of it anyway, so in return for the other half... we would forego any other claims. Think of it. You would never see me again.

FLETCH

This is disgusting. It's extortion... no way.

(pauses)

Tell me? Are you plugging Wendy?

GILLET

That's irrelevant.

FLETCH

(caving in)
Where do I sign?

Gillet with an evil grin on his face points to the last page.

(CONTINUED)

324 CONTINUED: 2

FLETCH

(looking up, pen in hand)
I'll never see you again?

GILLET

Never.

FLETCH

(handing over the deed)
You realize this is my family land.
Does it please you to rip out my
ancestral roots? I was born and
raised in a briar patch.

GILLET

Now Wendy can live a life of
leisure... Clean air, clean
water...

(kisses the contract)

This is the way we were destined to
live.

Gillet exits whistling "Dixie". Fletch takes Becky on a tour
of his souvenirs and posters.

FLETCH (V.O.)

Bly Biochemical estimated the
half-life of the toxic waste at
Belle Isle was about 400 years -
which, if I know justice in this
world, will be about how long my
ex-wife will live.