

HIGH SCHOOL HIGH

Written
by

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&

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1 EXT. WELLINGTON SCHOOL - DAY

1

The top of the line in educational institutions. Ivy covered brick walls rise majestically above finely manicured lawns and flower gardens.

2 INT. WELLINGTON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

2

The place is immaculate. Polished wood adorns the walls. STUDENTS carrying books file by wearing school uniforms -- white shirts, ties, slacks, jackets.

RICHARD C. CLARK makes his way down the hall. Wearing a rumpled corduroy sport coat and tie, he looks out of place among the crisply dressed STUDENTS. He GREETs some of the kids as they pass.

*

CLARK

Hello, Mr. Parker. Mr. Jenson. Good afternoon, Mr. Zeisner.

The Students completely ignore him. Not one of them returns the greeting. One GUY shakes his head as Clark passes by, WHISPERS to a BUDDY.

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STUDENT

Daddy's boy.

*

*

Clark doesn't hear. He passes through a door marked: OFFICE.

*

3 INT. FACULTY OFFICES - DAY

3

Clark pulls out the contents of his mailbox. A bunch of inter-office memos, a couple of phone messages, and a single thin envelope. Excitedly, he tears open the seal, begins reading the letter.

INSERT - LETTER

The stationary shows a picture of a ferocious dog in a letter man's sweater with the logo: MARION BARRY HIGH, HOME OF THE PITBULLS. The first sentence reads, "We are pleased to tell you..."

RESUME - CLARK

finishes the letter, clenches his fist victoriously.

CLARK

Yes!

A SECRETARY approaches, a worried expression on her face.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

SECRETARY

Mr. Clark, your father's waiting for
you.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2) 3

Clark frowns nervously.

4 OMITTED 4

5 INT. FACULTY DINING ROOM - DAY 5

Magnificently polished tables and chairs, cloth napkins, expensive stemware. About thirty well-dressed FACULTY MEMBERS (men and women) sit waiting, glasses of champagne bubbling before them. At the head table sits THADDEUS CLARK, humorless headmaster of the school. He checks his watch.

THADDEUS

I'm sure he'll be here. It's not like Richard to be late. Well...at least not this late.

6 INT. WELLINGTON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY 6

Clark rushes along, swigging Maalox, leaving a chalky ring around his lips. He dodges foot traffic while trying to tuck in his shirt and knot his tie. A STUDENT approaches carrying a PIECE OF PAPER WITH TAPE on it. *

STUDENT WITH PAPER

How ya doin', Mr. Clark?

He claps Clark on the back, obviously attaching the PAPER to Clark's coat. Clark doesn't notice, he's just overwhelmed someone actually spoke to him. *

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

CLARK

I'm fine. Thank you, Mr. Kuchler.

Clark continues down the hall, the sign on his back flapping as he runs.

7 INT. FACULTY DINING ROOM - DAY

7

A lot of half-empty champagne glasses. The Faculty's restless. Thaddeus rises, ADDRESSES the gathering.

THADDEUS

Now remember, when he gets here, I want to make the announcement. He won't be expecting it at all.

The Faculty exchange glances, shake their heads in dismay. One Faculty Member leans in to another.

FACULTY MEMBER

(aside)

I think it caught a lot of us by surprise.

Just then, the door flies open and Clark enters. He stops dead in his tracks as all eyes turn toward him. The Faculty stands and halfheartedly APPLAUDS. Clark looks around dumbfounded, what the hell is this.

THADDEUS

Well, don't just stand there, son. Come join us.

Clark crosses to his father, who slings an arm around his shoulder, leans in close.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

(aside)

For a moment I didn't think you were going to make it.

CLARK

Father, I really need to talk to you...

Thaddeus steers Clark toward a chair.

THADDEUS

Plenty of time for that, son. Here, sit down. I have something to tell you.

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(CONTINUED)

CLARK

I just need a second of your time...

THADDEUS

Sit down, Richard. Have a smoke.

Clark sits, somewhat unsettled by all the faces staring at him. Thaddeus shoves a filled pipe into Clark's mouth.

CLARK

Father, you know I don't like to...

THADDEUS

Now, now... Everyone here smokes a pipe.

He motions around. Sure enough, every male Faculty member has a pipe in his mouth.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

I do it. Your grandfather did it. Even the Indians smoked on this land before they traded it away for some chickens and a pound of jewelry...

CLARK

But, Father, I hate...

Thaddeus flicks on his lighter, holds the flame over the pipe.

THADDEUS

Suck.

Clark dutifully puffs on the stem. The Faculty stands, glasses raised in toast.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

Son, it gives me great pleasure to announce that we are promoting you to ASSISTANT VICE CHAIRMAN of the HISTORY DEPARTMENT!

*

Clark convulses into the pipe, sending flaming tobacco spewing from the bowl. It's like Mt. St. Helens. Hot ashes shower into everyone's drinks.

CLARK

Father, that's why we have to talk...

THADDEUS

Yes, yes, there's a lot to talk about. You'll need a telephone, and we'll move you out of the basement into a bigger

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

THADDEUS (cont'd)
office...with a window. Well, at least a
window in the door...

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(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

7

Clark leaps to his feet.

CLARK

Father, for once in your life will you
listen to me?

He BANGS the table for emphasis. Silverware jumps. Every
spoon goes into every glass. Clark can't believe it. The room
goes silent. Clark plunges on.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I've taken a job at...Marion Barry High.

A GASP from the Faculty. The blood drains from Thaddeus'
face.

THADDEUS

For the moment I will assume that you
have found a sense of humor and that you
are *joking*.

Clark shakes his head.

CLARK

I'm not joking.

Thaddeus sits heavily.

THADDEUS

Good God, Richard.

CLARK

Don't you see? I've been here four years
now and I'm not accomplishing anything.
The students here don't need me. They
need accountants, tax lawyers, personal
trainers, hydrocolon therapists...

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*

Thaddeus fumes.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I can make a *difference* with the kids at
Barry.

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Clark starts toward the door. Thaddeus rises to his feet,
tense.

THADDEUS

Richard, you are a *teacher*. And, I might
add, not a very good one.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (4)

7

Clark stops.

THADDEUS (CONT'D)

If you do this you will fail. YOU WILL FAIL! And mark my words, you will come crawling back here with your tail between your legs!

Clark turns back to his father.

CLARK

You're wrong, Father. I'm going to succeed at Marion Barry!

Dead silence. All eyes are on Clark.

CLARK (CONT'D)

And I have no intention of ever crawling back here with *anything* between my legs!

Turns on his heel and leaves. Now we see the sign on his back -- in big, bold letters it says "BLOW ME." Thaddeus and the Faculty are left gap-mouthed.

MUSIC UP. CREDITS OVER.

8 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

8

Clark guides his '89 Chrysler LeBaron convertible through the clean, upscale, tree-lined neighborhood.

*

A9 INT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

A9*

The Carpenters' hit "Top Of The World" playing on his radio. Clark HUMS along with the SONG.

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B9 EXT. STREET - DAY

B9*

Clark turns a corner, glides through an outdoor cafe/boutique area. Walls and streets are pristine. As he goes, the landscape changes. Bustling businesses now line the streets. Some graffiti in evidence.

C9 INT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

C9*

Clark eyes the declining landscape quizzically. Did he miss his turn? He pulls out a map. Suddenly, a blanket of acrid smoke drifts into his car, choking him. He squints through the haze.

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C9 CONTINUED:

C9

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - A ROOFER'S TRUCK

Fills the lane ahead of him, thick plumes of hot, nasty smoke pouring out of the tar trailer.

RESUME - CLARK

COUGHING and waving at the smoke, pulls around the truck, passes into the city.

9 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

9

Things start going bad fast. HOMELESS PEOPLE wander the sidewalks. Every store sells adult books and porn videos. Rough-looking hoods cross against the light. Clark thinks it's a good idea to roll up his windows.

He passes a sign that reads: "INNER CITY". Suddenly, "Top Of The World" cuts out. THEME SONG KICKS IN STRONG -- hip hop, urban, in your face.

A10 INT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

A10

Clark tries to change the station, finally turns off the radio. But, the THEME SONG POUNDS on. It pours out of every car window, from every BOOM BOX. Clark GULPS as he looks around the neighborhood.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - THE INNER CITY

Every window's barred, signs are spelled out in four languages. THUGS roam the debris strewn streets. Graffiti on everything -- even on the coffin being carried out of a church.

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A10 CONTINUED:

A10

RESUME - CLARK

pulls to the curb, looking a little shaken. He gobbles a couple of Advil, washes them down with a slug of Maalox. He looks up, a smile spreads on his face. Up ahead is a sight he's been looking forward to seeing...

10 EXT. MARION BARRY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

10

A once grand building worn down by time, vanishing funds, and vandalism sitting pathetically in the blighted inner city neighborhood. Graffiti on top of graffiti.

A beat. An EXPLOSION blows out a window on the top floor.

ANGLE - CLARK

A bit stunned, but drives determinedly toward the school. A car stops in front of him, lets kids out. Clark gets a look at the bumper sticker: "Proud Parents Of A 'D' Average." Clark pulls around the car, turns into the parking lot.

ANGLE - TWO TEENS

A burly African American kid sucking on a pacifier (TWO BAGS) and a large, dark-haired guy with wide, vacant eyes (ALONZO), leaning against a chainlink fence, sharing a 32 ounce of malt liquor. The ghetto blaster between them CRANKS out a loud hip hop TUNE. Clark pulls up, rolls his window down.

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10 CONTINUED:

10

CLARK

Hey, could I get you to turn that down a second?

They step over to Clark's car.

TWO BAGS

Who the hell are you?

CLARK

Richard Clark. I'm a new teacher here.

Two Bags snaps off the side view mirror, checks himself out, likes what he sees. Tosses the mirror in Clark's backseat. Clark lets it go, not about to say anything to a guy this size.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Uh, can you point me to the faculty parking lot?

Alonzo motions O.S.. Clark waves, moves his car forward, turning where indicated. Alonzo and Two Bags grin, high-five each other. They move away from the fence revealing a sign: "WARNING! WRONG WAY! SEVERE TIRE DAMAGE!"

ANGLE - CLARK'S CAR

runs over the exit spikes. All four tires BLOW. Clark's oblivious, doesn't hear his tires EXPLODE over the kids' loud boom box. He continues into the faculty lot on the rims. Fwoop! Fwoop! Fwoop! Heads turn. Clark smiles, waves at the curious on-lookers.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - PARKING LOT

Several cars are on fire. A pick up has a gun rack, full of guns.

KIDS are chaining their bicycles to a pole. A little further down, two TEENS are chaining their car to a pole.

Parking spaces are marked "Ambulance", "Coroner", then a couple of places saved for "National Guard", "S.W.A.T.", and "Now News". The last space is reserved for "Johnnie Cochran".

STUDENTS pass his car -- the dregs of society. Surly, pissed off, distrustful. They scowl, sneer, give Clark the finger. Clark remains unfazed, nothing or no one is going to deter him.

Kids with tattoos, pierced body parts, and every eccentric haircut imaginable -- entire messages shaved into their

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10 CONTINUED: (2)

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heads. ONE KID has curlers in his hair. Then, A GUY walks by sporting a huge hair dryer. Hair nets, stocking caps, hats of every kind. ONE GUY's head is wrapped in chicken wire. ANOTHER GUY has his hair channeled into highways -- a tiny car driving around the "freeway system".

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RESUME - CLARK

Amid the sea of cars Clark spots what appears to be an empty space. He backs into it, unwittingly knocking over candles, wreathes of flowers and the easel sporting a placard with a grainy photo of an ADULT SHOOTING VICTIM on it.

INT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

Puts "The Club" on his steering wheel. He checks his watch, smiles. Stuffs his sack lunch into his briefcase and exits the car.

EXT. CLARK'S CAR - DAY

Clark locks it up. Around him, the air is alive with the high-pitched CHIRPS of car alarms being set. He steps to the front of the car, carefully buffs out a smudge on the hood with his sleeve. He gazes serenely up at the school, SIGHS. Turns back to find his car is gone. Only thing left is the steering wheel, lying on the ground, "The Club" still attached to it.

Now Clark notices his briefcase is gone. The handle he holds is the only thing left. An incredulous look. How the hell did that happen? Looks down, sees his lunch on the ground. Before he can pick it up, a beat up old B.S.A. motorcycle ROARS by, flattens it like brown paper roadkill. Clark stares forlornly at it. He turns, heads for the school, tossing the briefcase handle in a wastebasket on the way.

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10 CONTINUED: (3)

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ANGLE - MOTORCYCLE

Continues on, pulls into a space. The rider shuts down the engine, steps off the bike. He's GRIFF McREYNOLDS -- African American with strong features, bright, street smart. He heads for school. People stare openly at him, give him wide berth as he goes.

11 EXT. BARRY HIGH - DAY

11

Clark stops to admire the statue in the quad. Atop a pedestal, it's a life-size bronze of MARION BARRY -- posed heroically, one foot poised on a rock, carrying a flag. Beyond the statue, block letters across the front of the school read: MARION BARRY HIGH. Clark smiles to himself, heads for the entrance.

As Clark exits FRAME, VANDALS converge on the statue. In a matter of seconds, the flag is yanked away and replaced by a crack pipe in one hand, a lighter in the other. As a final touch, the Vandals place a kufi on the statue's head.

12 INT. BARRY HIGH - DAY

12*

Clark enters, has to pass through endless metal detectors. Kids are unloading their pockets. Tons of weapons being confiscated. A uniformed GUARD waves a hand-held metal detector over Clark. He's clean. Guard motions him through.

Clark moves through the halls, checking things out. Obviously, no one gives a crap about this place. The interior is nothing but graffiti and total neglect. Loud HIP HOP MUSIC overlaps from several sources. KIDS are dancing everywhere. Some STUDENTS sell hot merchandise from their lockers: cameras, CD players, televisions.

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ANGLE - TROPHY CASE

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Clark stops to look at the trophies -- baseball, football, basketball. Clark's impressed. Barry High used to be a real contender. He looks at a new poster.

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INSERT - POSTER

"This Year's Starting 11!" A motley, multi-ethnic group. Everyone is pictured in their mug shots. One Guy has the word "CAPTURED" stenciled over his surly face.

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RESUME - CLARK

shakes his head, gives a little WHISTLE. He moves on, passing a large mounted photo of last year's prom Queen. She has ratty blond hair and dark circles under her eyes. Her ears,

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

nose, lip and eyebrow are pierced. There's a tattoo on her bare shoulder. She's standing with the prom King -- posed gangsta' style with guns in each hand. His crown on backwards, a price tag hanging from it.

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12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

ANGLE - SCHOOL MAPS

Posted on a bulletin board. Clark stops, tears one off.
Suddenly, an excited BUZZ RIPPLES through the hall. Clark
looks up, sees Griff McReynolds enter. People are staring at
him in awe, moving aside as he passes. He's obviously a force
to be reckoned with. Clark turns to a nearby STUDENT wearing
dark sunglasses.

CLARK

Who's that?

BLIND STUDENT

How the hell should I know?

He taps his way off down the hallway with a white cane.

ANGLE - THE PHAT DOGGS

A group of MULTI-RACIAL THUGS flying purple bandanas approach
from the other end of the hall. A path is being cleared for
them, too. Obviously in charge is PACO RODRIGUEZ -- 18,
Hispanic, well-dressed. He exudes trouble. Constantly bounces
a rubber ball. He's flanked by his burly henchmen -- Two Bags
and Alonzo. Paco stops abruptly, suddenly finding himself
face-to-face with Griff in the clearing.

CREDITS END.

Paco stops bouncing his ball, pockets it carefully.

PACO

Well, what have we got here?

TWO BAGS

It's Griff McReynolds, Paco.

PACO

(turning on him)

Shut up. I know that.

He turns back to Griff. A beat. Then, Paco extends his hand.

PACO (CONT'D)

Griff... Welcome back, bro.

Griff ignores Paco's outstretched hand.

GRIFF

Finally got what you wanted, huh?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (3)

12

PACO

(shrugs)

It's a nice little business. Keeps us in
pocket change.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (4)

12

GRIFF

I know it was you that set me up...bro.

MURMURS from the crowd.

PACO

What? I can't believe... That hurts me deeply.

(pause)

But, if it bothers you that much... Go ahead, make your move. Or did that year in juvie soften your cheese?

Griff steps forward, fists clenched, chest to chest with Paco.

PACO (CONT'D)

So, what're you gonna do about it?

Griff looks at Paco's entourage, then back at Paco.

GRIFF

Well... I could ask these guys to help me, but it seems like they're all with you...

LAUGHTER from the Crowd. Paco silences them with a look, turns back to Griff.

PACO

You're nothin' here no more. This is my turf now. You show me respect! Me, Paco de la Vega el Camino Cordova Jose Cuervo Sanchez Rodriguez!

GRIFF

Aren't you forgetting a name?

PACO

(caught off guard)

What's that?

GRIFF

Asshole.

PACO

Arrrrggghhhh!

He grabs Griff. They begin to tussle. The hall erupts in SHOUTS and NOISE. Alonzo and Two Bags pin Griff's arms. Paco's about to start wailing away.

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12 CONTINUED: (5)

12

CLARK (O.S.)

All right, you toughs! Break it up!

Everybody stops. Silence. You could hear a pin drop. Paco turns slowly.

ANGLE - CLARK

pushing his way through the crowd, pulls Griff and Paco apart.

CLARK

Now cut it out! You boys should be ashamed of yourselves! School's no place for fighting.

Paco looks over Clark's head, seemingly looking right past him.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

PACO

I'm looking for the rest of your posse that's gonna keep me from ripping you a new asshole.

CLARK

I'll pretend for the moment you meant that in a nice way. But I'm warning you, I'm about to lose my temper. Now, I want you boys to shake hands.

Paco, Two Bags, and Alonzo stare gap-mouthed. Is this guy for real? Almost to their own surprise they shake each others' hands in mock politeness. Griff's got his hand out there, moving it back and forth. Nobody'll take it. Clark doesn't notice, beams at his success.

CLARK (CONT'D)

There. Now that wasn't so bad, was it? It's always best to shake hands...

(thinks a beat)

Unless of course he's just sneezed into it...or he has a stump...

(aside to Griff)

That could be a little weird...

Griff stares at him, incredulous. Clark turns back to the guys.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (6)

12

CLARK (CONT'D)

Now, go on. Everybody get to class.

Paco gives Clark a look, turns to Griff.

PACO

Cross me again, Griffy Boy, and even Mr. Rogers here won't be able to save your ass.

He and his Guys head for the exit. Clark CALLS after them.

CLARK

Ah, gentlemen, I believe classes are this way...

Paco and the gang turn, give Clark the finger. Then, they exit.

GRIFF

Uh...they're not in school here anymore.

CLARK

Oh...

(eyes Griff closely)

Are you in school here?

Griff nods. Clark gives him a friendly smile.

CLARK (CONT'D)

First day, huh?

GRIFF

Not really...

CLARK

Mine too. I'm Mr. Clark. What's your name?

GRIFF

Griff. Griff McReynolds.

Clark puts his arm around Griff, they walk down the hall.

CLARK

You know, Griff, trying to fit in at school is a lot like learning how to swim. I remember the day my father taught me...

(thinking back)

...standing there with those cement blocks around my ankles, the old man tossing me off the dock.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (7)

12

CLARK (cont'd)

(pause)

You know, I had a lot of time to think about things, lying there at the bottom of that lake.

They stop. Clark looks into Griff's eyes. This is the truth.

CLARK (CONT'D)

And then I realized what my father was trying to teach me. Swimming's the easy part...

(points at Griff)

It's getting the cement blocks off your ankles that's tough. Do you understand, Griff?

GRIFF

Uh, huh.

CLARK

What do you understand?

GRIFF

Why he wanted to kill you.

13 INT. BARRY HIGH HALLWAY - DAY

13

Beneath a banner that reads: "SEXUAL AWARENESS WEEK", a NURSE is handing out Sex Ed. literature. She staples a condom to each pamphlet -- unfortunately, she's stapling right through the center of the condoms. Gives one to a prim-looking GIRL. *

NURSE

Here you go, you little slut.

Clark rounds the corner, absorbed in his map. Stops at the table.

CLARK

Could you point me to Room 306?

The Nurse points O.S. Clark heads off that way.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

ANGLE - HALL

A stern, forbidding WOMAN in her mid-fifties, dressed conservatively. Moves like a prison warden. Carries a baseball bat, and is BARKING orders through a bullhorn.

*

WOMAN

Keep moving. I repeat, keep moving. Do not congregate in the hall. No loitering. Get to class. Keep moving. Keep moving.

*

She SPEAKS through the bullhorn to a MALE STUDENT.

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WOMAN (CONT'D)

You there, move out of my way.

Gives the boy a tap on the head with the bat. Konk. The boy rubs his head, moves out of the way.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You, too. Move aside.

Hits ANOTHER KID on the head. But, he's got a Kid'n'Play hairdo. The bat bogs down in the thick wedge of hair. The Woman is forced to konk him on the side of the head where it's shaved.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

13

ANGLE - CLARK

crosses to the Woman, stops the bat just as she's about to
konk another Kid. Takes it away.

CLARK

Excuse me...but this kind of behavior...
Well, I'll bet the Principal would frown
on this sort of thing.

WOMAN

Who the hell are you?

CLARK

(puffs up)

Richard Clark, teacher. Who are you?

WOMAN

(snarls)

Evelyn Doyle -- Principal.

CLARK

(recovering quickly)

Nice bat... 36 ounce? You know they've
gone totally aluminium in college now...

Principal Doyle snatches the bat back from Clark.

MISS DOYLE

Shut up. Look, Peckerhead, I don't know
what nursery school you come from -- but
here, you screw up, you die. Now, I'm a
woman of few words. No miracles. Dumping
ground.

CLARK

I'll need more words than that, ma'am.

MISS DOYLE

Alright, let me spell it out for you...
No one expects anything here. Every bad
kid in the city is dumped into our laps.

CLARK

With all due respect, Miss Doyle, I
don't believe there is such a thing as a
'bad kid'.

A door opens behind him. VICTORIA CHAPPELL emerges. She's
conservatively dressed and intelligent-looking, but it's
obvious, beneath the glasses and high collar, she's a very
beautiful woman. As she posts a memo on the hall board,
Victoria takes great interest in what Clark's saying.

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(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (3)

13

INDUSTRIES will be on campus today to discuss bullet-proofing your cars." As she pins up the announcement, Victoria takes great interest in what Clark's saying.

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MISS DOYLE

Let me tell you something, Mr. Clark.
We're in a war zone here. Barry High is
the only school in the district with its
own cemetery. So, don't tell me there's
no such thing as a bad kid!

CLARK

But, they don't start off that way! I'm
telling you, I can reach these kids!

(showing off for PASSING
STUDENTS)

I know the tip! I know what's def,
what's jam, what's wack, and what's
straight up booty!

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Several students exchange looks. Victoria's impressed by
Clark's passion.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(plunging ahead)

These are all basically good kids. They
should be allowed to have the same
experiences we all had in high school --
dating, going to proms, begging for
sex...

MISS DOYLE

Mr. Clark, let's get one thing straight.
Our primary job here is to warehouse
most of this vermin until such time as
they can be released into the general
population, or sent to a real jail.

She points a finger at Clark.

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

Now, if you want to keep your job, I'm
warning you -- you better watch your
step.

She turns, motors away. Disappears into a door labeled:
"FACULTY SHOOTING RANGE". Clark shakes his head, looks down
at his map.

VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me...

Clark turns, comes face to face with Victoria. He's stunned
by what he sees. Victoria motions to Clark's map.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (4)

13

VICTORIA

Having a hard time finding your way around?

CLARK

Uh...yes. I'm looking for Room 306.

She extends her hand.

VICTORIA

Victoria Chapell.

They shake hands.

CLARK

Richard Clark.

VICTORIA

Nice to meet you, Mr. Clark. It's down this way.

They start off down the hall.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

I couldn't help overhearing what you just said, and I must tell you... I fear for your life.

CLARK

(doesn't know how to answer this)

Ah...

VICTORIA

By the way, are you...any relation to Thaddeus Clark, the headmaster of The Wellington School?

CLARK

(head down)

Yes...uh...he's my father.

VICTORIA

He's a brilliant man. Every school in the district uses his book as a faculty primer.

She holds up a textbook: "Why You Can't Teach Certain Kids Anything" by Thaddeus C. Clark. A big picture on the cover shows the author in a tweed coat, smoking his pipe.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (5)

13

CLARK

So, what do you teach, Miss Chapell?

*

VICTORIA

I'm Principal Doyle's administrative assistant.

*

A BELL goes off.

CLARK

Classes starting already?

Goes to look at his watch. Notices it's gone. Only thing around his wrist is the tan line.

VICTORIA

No, that's the burglar alarm of the convenience store across the street. They usually hit it about this time for lunch money.

A PERSON (gender in question) walks by, dressed in loud colors, face painted garishly. Looks a lot like Norma Desmond. Clark stares dumbfounded.

CLARK

Uh...

VICTORIA

Drama coach.

Clark nods. They round a corner. Victoria points at a classroom.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Ah, here we are. Room 306. Mr. Farnhoff's old room. It's a shame what happened to him.

CLARK

Yes, it is... What did happen to him?

VICTORIA

He committed suicide. Jumped six stories off the top of the school.

CLARK

Isn't...the building only three stories?

VICTORIA

Well, yes, but the first jump didn't kill him.

(sighs)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (6)

13

VICTORIA (cont'd)

When it came to teaching, I guess he
just cared too much.

*

She opens the door. Clark enters. It's akin to a religious
experience for him. Victoria follows, watching him curiously.

14 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

14

Two GUYS in hazmat suits emblazoned with "ASBESTOS
SPECIALISTS" are coming off ladders. They breathe through air

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

tanks strapped to their backs -- sounding a lot like Darth Vader. Clark approaches through the haze of dust, checks out the crates they're carrying, full of ceiling tiles. *

CLARK

Ah, great. Asbestos removal.

GUY #1

(muffled through his helmet)

No, installation. *

Clark looks up, surprised. He watches the Guys exit. Then, he looks around the room. Not much to speak about -- pretty run-down. But Clark doesn't see the blight. He swells with pride as he runs his hand along his desk. Feels the chalk. Smells the eraser.

He pulls out his framed teaching diploma, puts a tack on the wire, uses a stapler to hammer it into the wall. One tap and a big chunk of plaster breaks out. The diploma drops down inside the wall, between the studs. Clark peers into the hole, incredulous.

CLARK

Guess I'll...get that later.

ANGLE - VICTORIA

impressed by Clark's enthusiasm.

VICTORIA

Sorry, all the classrooms are in dire need of repair. We've lost a lot of our funding.

CLARK

No, I think it has great character. Sure it needs a little paint and plaster...

His foot breaks through the floor. The other end of the board springs up, slams him in the face. Ouch! That hurt.

CLARK (CONT'D)

...floorboards...

Pulls his foot out of the hole, shakes off a family of rats clinging to his pants leg.

CLARK (CONT'D)

But, with just a little elbow grease...

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

Goes to snap on the lights, gets one humongous shock.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeow, Jesus! ...And new wiring. She'll be back to shape in no time.

(deep breath)

Smell those seats. It says...teach me. Help me. I want to learn.

*
*

ANGLE - DOOR

In B.G., two BOYS bump into each other in the hall, square off.

BOY #1

Man, why you in my shit?

BOY #2

You in my shit.

BOY #1

Nobody gets up in my shit. We gonna throw down!

They go at it. Through it all, Clark's back to the door. He seems oblivious to the fight. He just goes on:

CLARK

Somewhere in the world there's a kid crying out 'Show me a consonant', 'Teach me pi-R-squared', 'Point me toward the Aleutian Islands'.

In B.G.:

BOY #2

I'm gonna get down in your weak shit!

BOY #1

You dyin', mofo!

BOY #2

You the one dyin'!

CLARK

(over the din)

Minds like thirsty little sponges waiting to soak up knowledge.

He quietly pushes the door shut with his foot to drown out the confrontation. He sees Victoria staring at him.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

CLARK (CONT'D)

You must think I'm a...

(grotes for the word)

Oh... a silly idealist. But...

VICTORIA

No, no... I really admire your dedication. I'm sure your...wife must be very proud of you.

CLARK

Actually, I'm not married.

VICTORIA

I find that surprising.

CLARK

It's kind of hard to be married if you've never had a steady girlfriend. But, I'm too busy with work to think of much else other than...work.

VICTORIA

That's...very admirable. The last teacher I heard speak like that was old Mr. Riley. After Farnhoff died he substituted here for awhile.

CLARK

Retired?

VICTORIA

If you can call being bludgeoned to death with a flaming two-by-four at a pep rally retiring...

*

She exits FRAME. Clark GULPS.

15 INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY

15

Empty bottles of vodka and vermouth litter a table. A PAIR OF HANDS RATTLE a chilled shaker, mixing up a wicked batch of martinis.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

Clark and Victoria come through a door with "FACULTY LOUNGE" written on the glass. An empty coffee mug in Clark's hand is embossed with a smiley face and the words: "Have A Happy Day!".

*

*

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

ANGLE - VARIOUS TEACHERS

Draped on the tattered furniture. Clark and Victoria head for the coffee-maker. Victoria pours herself a cup of joe as Clark looks around.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV

A TEACHER is strapping on a bullet proof vest.

RESUME - CLARK

Hm...that's interesting. A FEMALE TEACHER steps up, fills Clark's mug with martinis, CLINKS his cup with her shaker. She tosses back a healthy slug of booze.

CLARK

A little early to start drinking, isn't it?

FEMALE TEACHER

Who stops?

She moves off. Clark's a little stunned by this. He turns to ANOTHER TEACHER reading "Soldier of Fortune" magazine.

CLARK

Hi, I'm Richard Clark, new history teacher.

The guy ignores him.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What department do you teach in?

TEACHER #2

(waving him off)

I don't know...something on the third floor.

Goes back to reading his magazine. Victoria takes Clark's arm, motions to a MAN and WOMAN standing nearby.

VICTORIA

Richard, I want you to meet our athletic director, Bernie Raveling.

Clark pumps the hand of the one nearest to him.

CLARK

It's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Raveling. Trying to let the mustache grow in, I see.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

VICTORIA

Uh, Richard...

CLARK

By the looks of the stubble, I'd say
it's going to be a beaut. I had one in
college...

Victoria pulls him aside.

VICTORIA

That's Ms. Wells, the girls gym teacher.

CLARK

(uh, oh...)

Did I mention how attractive you look,
Ms. Wells? That black sweat suit really
brings out the color of your eyes...

MS. WELLS

You coming on to me, asshole?

CLARK

Oh, no... I'd never dream of that...

MS. WELLS

Oh? Not good enough for you?

(stares at him)

You aren't some kind of fluffy boy, are
you?

Yipe! How does he get out of this gracefully?

CLARK

Well...it's been a real pleasure.

Victoria guides him away.

CLARK (CONT'D)

They should really fix the lighting in
here.

The BELL RINGS. No one appears to have heard it.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Well, that's the bell for assembly...

Heads for the door. No one else moves. Clark turns back,
confused.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

CLARK (CONT'D)
Shouldn't we be getting to the
auditorium?

*
*
*

TEACHER #2
(shaking his head)
We like to give 'em twenty minutes 'til
they run out of ammo.

*
*
*
*

Clark's eyes widen. The Teacher rises, slaps Clark on the
back.

*
*

TEACHER #2
(CONT'D)
Don't worry. You'll get used to it.

*
*
*

He exits. Clark turns to watch him go. Now we see the guy has
attached a sign to Clark's back. It reads: "BLOW ME."

*
*

16 INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

16

A FLOCK OF PIGEONS nesting in the rafters.

CRANE DOWN TO REVEAL

Armed SECURITY GUARDS patrol the perimeter with alert
DOBERMANS. In the auditorium, the students are raucous, out
of control. Another uniformed SECURITY GUARD, sawed-off
shotgun and nightstick in his belt, is doing the best he can
to get the kids to sit down.

*
*
*
*

ANGLE - CLARK AND VICTORIA

*

Seated in the bleachers among the bored, apathetic FACULTY.

*

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

ANGLE - PRINCIPAL DOYLE

HOLLERS through her bullhorn.

*

MISS DOYLE

All right! Settle down, people!

Approaches the microphone, SPEAKS into it through the bullhorn.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

Quiet! Settle down! I want quiet! Shut up, or I'll let the dogs loose again!

*

*

The NOISE doesn't stop. Principal Doyle CALLS out.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

Security!

ANGLE - SECURITY GUARD

FIRES his shotgun into the air. Three dead pigeons plummet from the ceiling. The place quiets down.

RESUME - PRINCIPAL DOYLE

puts aside the bullhorn, SPEAKS into the mic.

MISS DOYLE

It's a new semester. That means new I.D. cards, strip searches, and fresh fingerprints.

ANGLE - INTERPRETERS

An AFRICAN, ASIAN, and HISPANIC stand at mics, TRANSLATING. It's a cacophony of NOISE.

*

RESUME - DOYLE

Eyes the Interpreters malevolently.

MISS DOYLE

Shut up!

The Interpreters immediately vacate their mics. Principal Doyle turns back to the crowd.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

No knives or guns are allowed in school. Keep 'em in your cars where they belong. Now, as you know, Mr. Arnott, the assistant principal, is still missing.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

She holds up a milk carton with a picture of a harried-looking MAN on it. "Have You Seen Me?".

*

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

If you know of his whereabouts...or if you have him...contact me immediately. Also, don't forget in less than two months the state will administer the Academic Proficiency Tests. Anyone planning on going to college is required to take these exams...

(aside to another Faculty Member)

Which means we can probably hold them in a phone booth.

(back into the mic)

And as usual, on Friday, the U.S. Marines and the Michigan Militia will have a recruiter on campus. Stop by and say hello.

Clark is incredulous. This is no ordinary school.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

All right now, listen up. We have a new teacher. His name is Richard Clark. It's his first day -- give him at least a week before you do something terrible to him.

(turns)

Mr. Clark, got anything you want to say?

Turns back without waiting for an answer. Is about to continue...

CLARK

Actually...yes.

Principal Doyle rolls her eyes as Clark rises unsurely, moves to the podium. The place is silent as he fixes the microphone to fit him. There's an awkward BLAST of electronic FEEDBACK.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(into mic)

I...was asked a while back what teaching meant to me.

(a groan from the crowd)

I didn't have an answer then...but I do now. My...reward is being able to mold and shape agile young minds -- like yours...

*

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (3)

16

ANGLE - STUDENTS

Exchange bewildered looks. Is he talking about us? In the middle of the auditorium, Griff listens closely to Clark's words.

*

RESUME - CLARK

Fellow faculty members are staring dumbfounded at him, hanging on his every word.

CLARK

Someday you will be the world's
leaders...

He pauses, looks out at a particularly hostile group of faces with vacant eyes. One GUY's carving initials into his arm with a knife.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Or...at least cleaning the offices of the
world's leaders. But the important thing
is, that I see in you the future of
America.

A beat.

VOICE IN CROWD
(O.S.)

Fuck you!

Clark is surprised. Principal Doyle stands, wags her finger at a stern-faced WOMAN in her fifties who stares back defiantly, flips her the bird.

MISS DOYLE

That will be enough, Miss Foley.

Clark returns to his seat next to Victoria.

VICTORIA

She's the school librarian.

CLARK

Geez, talk about low morale.

*

17 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

17*

Rowdy. Kids LAUGHING, TALKING, tossing wadded up paper at each other. All UNDERSCORED by MUSIC coming from several boom boxes. Griff sits off by himself. Tardy BELL RINGS.

ANGLE - CLARK

enters, carrying a loose leaf. Sees the CHAOS.

CLARK

All right! Everyone take their seats!

A KID flies through the air in front of him, slams face-first into the blackboard.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Return to your desk, son.

The Kid staggers off, totally disoriented. Clark puts the folder on his desk, tries to make the best of the situation.

CLARK (CONT'D)

We're a bit noisy today. Why don't we all sit down?

ANGLE - CLASS

Some Students sit. SEVERAL TOUGHS defiantly remain standing.

CLARK

Fellas, you want to take your seats, please?

The Toughs hurl their chairs against the wall. Clark thinks for a beat. This might work...

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

CLARK (CONT'D)

All right. Remain standing.

The Toughs, refusing to take an order, pick up their chairs, sit down. A beat. They realize, "He got us to sit down". They slap their foreheads in disgust.

CLARK (CONT'D)

That's better.

He turns his back on the class, begins writing his name on the blackboard. Instantly, a fusillade of everything from spitwads to books is hurled past him onto the blackboard. Clark turns around to face the class.

CLARK (CONT'D)

I understand... I'm the enemy. I'm the...
(makes quotation gesture)
..."grown up".

He moves away from the board, revealing a perfect silhouette of himself outlined in spitwads.

CLARK (CONT'D)

But, darn it, I was a kid once. I haven't led a choir boy's life. I got my share of parking tickets. At a ball game once, I moved down to the expensive seats. Yeah, I'm not proud of it... So, believe me, I know where you're coming from.

A couple of Students exchange looks.

*

CLARK (CONT'D)

Now, in order for me to get to know you, I've got a little system I use...

Picks up a bundle of index cards, cuts them, shuffles them.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

CLARK (CONT'D)

I mix them up and pull a card. When I
read your name, I'd like you to stand up
and tell me a little about yourself.

He pulls a card, READS the name.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Natalie Thompson?

(no answer)

Is there a Natalie Thompson here?

A DOOR OPENS O.S.

FEMALE VOICE

(O.S.)

I'm here... I'm here...

ANGLE - NATALIE THOMPSON

17, beautiful, sexy, comes down the aisle. Every head turns.
She sits down next to Griff, gives him a perfunctory smile.
Clark waits for her to settle in.

CLARK

Why are you late?

NATALIE

(matter of factly)

Because the bell rang before I got here.

This is one Clark hasn't heard.

CLARK

Well... Now that you're here... I'm
asking the class to share a little
personal information. Perhaps you'd like
to tell us something about yourself?

Natalie thinks for a moment.

NATALIE

Well, for the last week I've had a
hellified yeast infection.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

CLARK

Uh, not that personal. Something about what you enjoy doing...

NATALIE

Well, I like writing poetry.

Clark's now moving about the room.

CLARK

Oh, a poet. Maybe you have a nice one you'd like to share with us?

NATALIE

(shrugs)

Well...okay...

She stands, opens a dog-eared folder stuffed with scraps of paper.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Here's one I wrote yesterday.

(reads)

Oh, hopelessness... White, unyielding, tear-stained hopelessness. Forty watt white hopelessness, so thick and heavy it smothers any chance of peace, any dream of salvation. I am but one voice in the stark whiteness, lost in a viscous sea of unemployment, a rolling, twisted shell of a life, fighting my way through this necro-narcoleptic world.

(pause)

It goes on for two more verses...then it gets depressing.

She sits. Clark's incredulous.

CLARK

It's...very nice, Natalie. What...do you call it?

NATALIE

"A Ray Of Hope".

Clark nods, okay. He draws another card from the stack, reads it.

CLARK

Is it...Anthony Jefferson?

A wiry black KID stands. His pants hang so low, his belt's around his thighs.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (4)

17

ANFERNY
It's Anferny.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CLARK
Beg your pardon?

ANFERNY
Anferny.

Clark looks down at the card.

INSERT - CARD

Sure enough, it says "Anferny Jefferson".

RESUME - CLARK

CLARK
Oh, I thought this was a typo. Well...
whatever. Tell us a little bit about
yourself...Anferny.

ANFERNY
I enjoy riffin' with my posse, burnin' a
bomb, hittin' skins with my old lady, and
hangin' my ass over the line taggin'
freeway bridges. And I'm down with that
poetry shit, too. Wanna hear?

CLARK
(unsurely)
Well, I...uh...guess so...

ANFERNY
I call it "Ode To Eazy E".
(recites)
My benevolence is upset, and so is my
pride. That's why I took my bitch for a
ride. I'm down with the bros and I'm up
with my shit. 'Cuz I love it when I'm
with my bitch. Whichever one I'm with.
Ode to Eazy E.

Natalie rolls her eyes in disgust. Anferny sits.

CLARK
Well...
(pulls another card)
Julie Rubels.
(looks around)
Miss Rubels?

(CONTINUED)

A very pregnant, pretty, white trash girl struggles to stand.

JULIE

That's Mrs. Rubels. See, right after I got out of prison, I met Tito. He had just done a stretch in Chino for boosting cars. So we immediately had something in common...

She lifts three month old twin BABIES into FRAME.

JULIE (CONT'D)

And, that's when little Maria and Juan came along...

Clark stares gap-mouthed.

CLARK

Well... I certainly hope you learned a valuable lesson.

JULIE

Yes. Basically, as far as vasectomies go, never use the home kit.

She sits. Clark winces in sympathy pain.

CLARK

Oooo...

(recovers, pulls another card)

Ah. Griff McReynolds.

(to class)

Mr. McReynolds and I have already had the pleasure of meeting.

(smiles at Griff)

Where do you see yourself in twenty years, Griff?

Griff crosses his arms, looks straight at Clark.

GRIFF

Livin' in your house, homes. With your cracker ass buried under the front porch.

The students VOICE their agreement. "Whoo!" Anferny gives Griff a high five as the room erupts into NOISE and chaos. Clark watches dumbfounded as his control -- along with several chairs -- goes right out the window.

18 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

18*

Victoria makes her way down the hall. Checks out her appearance in a darkened classroom window. Brushes an errant wisp of hair from her forehead. Dismissal BELL RINGS. The hallway is flooded with Students. She has to dodge and weave to reach Clark's room. She stands in the doorway.

VICTORIA

How was your first day?

ANGLE - VICTORIA'S POV - CLARK'S CLASSROOM

The room is a complete shambles. Someone has written a hundred times on the board: "Mr. Clark is a homo". Clark is busy hosing down his burning desk with a fire extinguisher.

CLARK

(ever the optimist)

Not bad. Not bad at all.

18A INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

18A

Victoria enters as Clark puts the last of the flames out quickly.

CLARK

There. Victoria, I wonder if I could catch a ride with you? My car was stolen.

VICTORIA

Don't worry about it. All the teachers lose their cars the first day. Of course I'll take you home... If you promise to help me chaperone the Welcome Back Dance tonight.

She starts to walk out. Clark looks down at his singed clothing.

(CONTINUED)

18A CONTINUED:

18A

CLARK

In that case, I'll need to stop at The Gap, too.

He starts to follow her out. Stops abruptly.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Uh... Could you help me with these?

Victoria turns to see:

ANGLE - VICTORIA'S POV - CLARK'S ANKLE

cuffed to the charred desk.

19 EXT. BARRY HIGH GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

19

Big banner draped across the entrance: "Welcome Back Dance". Hip hop MUSIC wafts out. A steady flow of Students arrive. Two GUYS with their pants hung low on their hips go up the steps.

*
*
*

20 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

20

TIGHT ON the basketball standard. The upright is bent, the rim misshapen from constant slam dunks.

DRIFT DOWN TO a D.J. spinning records. KIDS on the gym floor, dancing to MUSIC coming out of several speakers. The school mascot, a frothing, SNARLING PIT BULL, is tied up near the door, lunging at anything that moves.

ANGLE - D.J.

slaps a record on the turntable, SPEAKS into a microphone.

D.J.

All right! Now we gonna pump it up and kick some ballistics with Queen Latifah!

A rowdy NUMBER from Queen Latifah BLASTS out of the speakers. Clark approaches carrying a case.

CLARK

(over the din)

Listen, I have a record I want you to play.

The D.J. nods. Clark opens the case, gently pulls out an album. He tugs on a pair of white cloth gloves, carefully removes the record from its sleeve.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

CLARK (CONT'D)

Don't you think a slow dance would be nice? I think the young people here would really enjoy that. And something with a melody.

D.J.

What you got?

Clark lovingly extracts the record from the dust cover, lays it tenderly on the turntable. The D.J. looks at the title.

D.J. (CONT'D)

Hey, cool, man.

Clark smiles, takes off the gloves, closes the case. He starts away. Just then, the D.J. begins mixing the record -- sampling it with the song already playing.

INSERT - CLARK'S RECORD

The needle scratching across its surface, tearing up the groove. Spirals of vinyl corkscrew everywhere.

ANGLE - CLARK

turns back to the D.J., horror on his face.

D.J.

These jams be kickin'! Got any more of this funky fresh shit lyin' around the crib?

*

Clark stares gap-mouthed at his ruined record.

ANGLE - GYM ENTRANCE

A group of STUDENTS come in. The rabid mascot lunges for them, snapping feverishly. They scatter in fear. Right behind them, Griff enters, looking good. The GROWLING dog goes for him. Griff stares at the animal, who backs away, WHIMPERING.

ANGLE - NATALIE

standing with Julie Rubels and some other Girlfriends. Julie sees Griff come in.

JULIE

Look, there's Griff McReynolds.

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE

Who?

JULIE

Griff McReynolds! He sat next to you in class. You didn't notice?

Natalie looks over at Griff.

NATALIE

Oh, yeah... I remember.

JULIE

C'mon, girlfriend. He's got that throw-me-in-a-pit-with-naked-lesbians look.

(sighs)

Mm, mm, mm... If it wasn't for Tito, I'd do him in a second.

Natalie gives her a look.

NATALIE

Julie, have you ever slept with a white guy?

Julie thinks about this for a moment.

JULIE

Other than my father..?

Julie shakes her head. Natalie and the others are horrified.

JULIE (CONT'D)

Oh, there's Tito. Gotta go.

She takes off. Natalie watches her go. Turns toward the door, bumps right into Griff.

GRIFF

Hey.

NATALIE

Hi.

GRIFF

You're in my History class.

(Natalie nods)

I'm Griff McReynolds.

He extends his hand. Natalie doesn't take it.

*

(CONTINUED)

GRIFF (CONT'D)

Usually when you introduce yourself, the
other person introduces themselves back.

She looks at the floor, looks back at him -- not sure she
wants to get involved with this guy.

NATALIE

I'm still thinking on it...

(pause)

Okay. I'm Natalie Thompson.

They shake. An awkward beat. Both turn, stare at the people
dancing.

GRIFF

That was a pretty cool poem you read in
class. How do you think of that stuff?

NATALIE

I try not to. My Mom says I think too
much. But you know, when I see society
breakin' down, I gotta speak out about
it. Life can be so unfair.

GRIFF

Yeah, I know what you mean. You know,
like when they expanded the strike zone.
And now that no dancing rule in
football... What's up with that shit?

She looks away for a beat, turns back to him.

NATALIE

I was thinking a better example might be
the way that boys like Anferny riff on
women.

GRIFF

Oh... Yeah, I'm down with that, too. I
mean, even if they are bitches, you
shouldn't call 'em that.

Natalie's jaw drops. She's about to get to angry. But, a big
grin from Griff disarms her. She smiles briefly, then stares
intently at Griff's face.

NATALIE

Is it true you used to run the gang
before Paco?

(CONTINUED)

GRIFF

Yeah, but I'm through with gangs. In juvie they gave me a choice. If I screw up again, I go down hard.

(looks back at the dancers)

But you know, I had time to do some thinkin' and some readin' when I wasn't milkin' cows or repavin' a highway. You know, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandella, some Cosby...

He shrugs. Natalie studies him closely.

NATALIE

You know, you're different from everybody else here...

(glances toward dance floor)

All the other boys I know are all so immature and crude. Most of the time they just want to stare at girls' breasts.

Griff pries his eyes up from Natalie's tight sweater.

GRIFF

I'm sorry... What?

She looks back at him, nods toward the dance floor.

NATALIE

Dope jams, huh?

Griff nods.

GRIFF

(nervously)

You...uh...you want to bust one?

NATALIE

I don't know... We just met.

Griff holds out his hand.

GRIFF

C'mon, it's just an innocent little dance...

They move onto the floor, begin to dance -- writhing, grinding, pelvic-rubbing steps. So much for "innocent".

21 EXT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

21

Two GUYS with their pants belted just below their butts make their way toward the dance. A fancy Mercedes 190-E pulls up. Paco climbs out, joins Two Bags, Alonzo, and several other Phat Doggs waiting at the curb. He bounces his rubber ball, grins at his gang.

*
*

PACO

All right, let's party.

They head for the gym. Pass by a couple of HOMEBOYS wearing their pants slung so low, their belts are around their knees. They're walking very slowly, taking mincing steps, trying to be cool.

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ANGLE - LARGE BLACK LIMO

glides up next to Paco. The window powers down to reveal SALVATORE DEMARCO, a pony-tailed Colombian with an earring, gold-capped teeth, and several gold chains draped around his neck.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

DEMARCO

Paco.

Paco pockets his ball, approaches cautiously.

PACO

Yo, Mr. DeMarco. In the house. What up?

Paco looks into the car. Up front, behind the wheel, is his bodyguard, RHINO, a burly African American with a shaved head who looks like he could bend a Cadillac with his bare hands.

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DEMARCO

What's the 411 on my shipment?

PACO

Same as always. Le Vintage restaurant, Friday nights. You bring the cash, we bring the drugs. You know the drill.

*
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*

In B.G., the two Homeboys are trying to climb the gym steps. But, their pants are hung so low they can't raise their legs high enough to step up. They try hopping. One Homeboy falls. SOMEONE has to carry him up the steps.

*

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

DEMARCO (CONT'D)

You tell Mr. "A" to expect me.

*

PACO

I'll do that. Now, if you'll excuse me,
I gotta mingle with my customers.

The limo slides away. Paco and his Gang heads for the gym.

22 OMITTED

22

A23 INT. GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

A23

Clark and Victoria sit at a table with a placard that reads: "CHAPERON". They're oblivious to everything but each other.

CLARK

...So I refused to let the fact that I
couldn't live up to my father get me
down. I mean, there was a time I turned
to all the self-help gurus... You know,
Tony Robbins, Oral Roberts, Susan Powter.
And drugs -- prozac, monoxodil... Well,
that was for my hair loss. *That* did get
me down. But you know, in the end what
worked for me? Dim Sum. I know it sounds
crazy, but whenever I'm feeling
overwhelmed by life, I just head to
Chinatown.

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O.S. VOICE

Mr. Clark!

Clark looks up to see Anferny and a couple of other Guys
approaching quickly.

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED:

A23

ANFERNY

Yo, Mr. Clark, Paco's guys are headin' in. You want us to bust 'em up? *

Clark leaps to his feet.

CLARK

Look, we're not gonna start with the muscle bit.

ANFERNY

We can handle that many without even breakin' a sweat.

Others agree with AD-LIBS: "Yeah," "No doubt".

CLARK

Now, listen to me. Violence is not the answer. Instead of using your fists, try using this...

He points to his head.

ANFERNY

Head butting?

CLARK

I can see this is a new concept for you. Look, just put two guys on this door and one on the other door.

ANFERNY

What other door?

CLARK

Don't you have fire laws in this town?

ANFERNY

You mean, like for when we set 'em?

CLARK

Never mind. Just pick a window and guard it.

Victoria pipes up.

VICTORIA

Richard, are you really going to try to keep Paco and his gang out? They always come to the dances.

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED: (2)

A23

CLARK

Not anymore. From now on, Barry students only.

ANFERNY

What happens if they have guns and knives?

CLARK

Who'd bring guns and knives to a dance?

The Students stare at him, incredulous. Clark gets the message.

CLARK (CONT'D)

In that case, maybe this would be a good time to call the police.

The Kids nod enthusiastically. Clark turns to go.

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED: (3)

A23

VICTORIA

Wait, Richard. The last time they did that here, four people ended up in the hospital.

CLARK

I see your point. We can't have kids going to the hospital.

VICTORIA

Who said anything about kids? The cops were beaten senseless.

The kids exchange looks, relishing the thought.

ANGLE - DOOR

Paco and his Gang coming in. Clark and his Guys move in to bar their way.

CLARK

Say, nice leather jacket. Armani?

PACO

Shut up with the small talk. We're comin' in. So stand aside, Teach.

CLARK

Not this time, gentlemen. This dance is for Barry students only. We're not gonna have your gang inside the school.

Paco squeezes his rubber ball tensely.

PACO

Who's gonna stop us?

ANFERNY

My gang.

(motions to his Homies)

We already inside the school.

*

Clark shoots a look at Anferny, turns back to Paco.

CLARK

Look, Paco, if you were interested in coming back to school, working toward a career so you could make a decent living, I'd be willing to speak to...

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED: (4)

A23

PACO

Why would I want to do that? I'm
eighteen, I make a hundred and fifty G's
a year already. How much you make,
douche bag?

CLARK

Well, any chance of a recommendation
from me just went out the window.

(CONTINUED)

PACO

Shut up!

He whips out a switchblade, sticks it beneath Clark's chin.

PACO (CONT'D)

Now, are you gonna move aside...or am I gonna have to turn your eyebrows into a mustache?

VOICE (O.S.)

Yo, Paco, chill, man.

Paco slowly turns to face Griff.

PACO

Stay out of this, Griff.

Natalie steps up, puts her arms around Griff's shoulders.
Paco's incredulous.

PACO (CONT'D)

Since when have you been down with
o.p.p.?

GRIFF

What're you trippin' about?

PACO

You're with my girl.

NATALIE

I'm not your girl, Paco.

PACO

Since when?

NATALIE

What are you, brain dead?

Griff shoots her a look. "You're a big help." Everyone else winces. Oooo...

NATALIE (CONT'D)

We went on one date. And had I known you were going to hold up a liquor store, I never would've gone.

PACO

No one got hurt, did they?

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED: (6)

A23

NATALIE

Only because the clerk was wearing a
bullet-proof turban...

CLARK

All right, that's enough!

PACO

Fine. I don't want you anyway, you
freaky bitch. She's all yours, Griffy
Boy.

Griff shakes his head at Paco.

GRIFF

You're a major dick, you know that?

Paco eyes Griff, nods his head back at his Phat Dogg guys.
They step forward menacingly.

PACO

Aren't you forgetting something?

GRIFF

Oh, sorry...
(to Phat Doggs)
You guys are all major dicks, too.

Paco shoves Griff, who shoves back. Clark steps between them.

CLARK

I said that's enough! Break it up, I
mean it!

Peace restored, Clark stares from Griff to Paco.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Look, we're all civilized human beings.
Surely, we can come up with a compromise
here...

PACO

All right, how about a Chickee Run?

Crowd freezes, begins to WHISPER: "Chickee Run! Chickee Run!"
Paco turns to Griff.

PACO (CONT'D)

Ever done one?

Griff looks around, suddenly on the spot.

(CONTINUED)

A23 CONTINUED: (7)

A23

GRIFF

Sure...lots of times.

CLARK

There. That's good. A Chickee Run. See?
Now, isn't that better than fighting?

(to crowd)

Okay, everybody, let's go back to
dancing.

(to Paco)

And, we'll see you...what?

PACO

Ten minutes. Beck's Bluff.

CLARK

Right.

A CHANT goes up: "Chickee Run! Chickee Run! Chickee Run!"
Everyone scurries for the door, the dance quickly empties. A
proud Clark EXALTS to Victoria.

CLARK (CONT'D)

See? There's always an intelligent way to
solve our differences.

O.S. the doors BANG. Clark turns to find himself and Victoria
all alone in the cavernous gym. He sees the horrified
expression on Victoria's face.

VICTORIA

My God, Richard, you don't know what
you've just done.

He grabs her shoulders.

CLARK

Listen, whatever it is, it can't be
worse than fighting.

(sees the panic in her eyes)

...Can it?

They stare at each other in horror.

SFX OVER: THE ROAR OF CAR ENGINES

SMASH CUT TO:

23 EXT. BECK'S BLUFF - NIGHT

23

Two cars, pointed toward the cliff, engines REVING. Griff's
in one car, a nondescript sedan, checking the door, making
sure it opens properly. The other car has a lighted sign on

*
*

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

the roof that reads: "DOMINIC'S PIZZA." Paco drags a gangly,
uniformed DELIVERY DRIVER from the backseat at gunpoint.
Shoves him away from the car.

*
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*

Two rows of cars are lined up on either side of the cars,
their headlights illuminating the pathway to the cliff.

*

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

ANGLE - NATALIE

NOISE and dust swirling around her, takes her place before the cars. Stands there, bathed in the light from the head-lamps. She SHOUTS above the DIN.

NATALIE

All right, first one to jump out before the edge of the cliff loses!

She unties the scarf around her neck, raises it high above her head, feels the rush of adrenaline. She loves the power.

ANGLE - GRIFF

Kisses his finger, relays the kiss to a statue of SAINT CHRISTOPHER standing on his dash.

ANGLE - PACO

Kisses his finger, reaches over, affectionately rubs the kiss on his dashboard statue of DON KING.

A24 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A24

Victoria's convertible, a 1962 Corvette, cherry condition, SCREECHES around the corner.

B24 INT. VICTORIA'S CAR - NIGHT

B24

Clark's at the wheel, driving like a maniac. Victoria grips the dash in fear.

CLARK

I can't believe I let this happen! I set it up! I pushed them into it!

VICTORIA

Richard, it isn't your fault. Please slow down.

Clark eases up on the gas pedal a bit.

CLARK

You're right... It's not like anyone's ever died from one of these.

VICTORIA

Of course they do! The winner always dies!

A look of horror crosses Clark's face. He floors it.

C24 EXT. BECK'S BLUFF - NIGHT

C24

Natalie's whipping the scarf around over her head. With each pass the cars REV higher. The ROAR is deafening. Griff glances at Paco, who defiantly munches a piece of pizza as he stares back. Griff turns, looks over at...

ANGLE - NATALIE

Still out in front of the cars, enjoying her moment. Her eyes are closed, she's chewing sensually on the scarf, writhing around in ecstasy, rubbing herself all over.

NATALIE
Ready... Set...

She lets the scarf drop. Nothing happens. Natalie opens her eyes, looks around, confused.

ANGLE - NATALIE'S POV

Everyone's staring at her with gap-mouthed lust, including Griff and Paco who are literally hanging out of their cars, their tongues lolling with desire. Even their cars are overheating, steam's coming out from under the hoods.

RESUME - NATALIE

Throws her arms in the air.

NATALIE
Go!

ANGLE - GRIFF AND PACO

Both stomp on the gas. Engines WHINE as their cars ROAR into motion. Natalie spins in place as they race past her, watches them head toward the cliff. She joins the throng of kids running after them, leaving the scarf lying in a crumpled heap on the field.

ANGLE - GRIFF

Every ounce of attention is focused on his path.

ANGLE - PACO

Driving fearlessly. Casually lights a cigarette with the lighter.

24 OMITTED

24 *

25 OMITTED

25

26 EXT./INT. VICTORIA'S CAR - NIGHT

26

Speeds onto the scene, SKIDS to a stop.

*

VICTORIA

Richard, just promise me you'll be careful.

She gets out of the car, turns back to face Clark.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Remember, some things are irreplaceable...

CLARK

(moved)

Nothing's gonna happen to me.

He peels out. Victoria CALLS after him.

VICTORIA

I was talking about my car!

ANGLE - GRIFF'S AND PACO'S CARS

200 yards to the cliff. Suddenly, Clark races between them.

ANGLE - CLARK

BEEPING the HORN, motioning for the guys to pull over.

CLARK

Listen to me, boys! Going fast never solved anything! We can talk this mess out!

ANGLE - GRIFF AND PACO

look at Clark. Is he nuts?

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

ANGLE - CLIFF

100 yards away. Coming closer and closer.

ANGLE - PACO

losing his nerve. Grabs onto the door handle.

ANGLE - CLARK

trying to talk some sense into these kids.

CLARK

I was wrong! This is no way to resolve a dispute! I want you both to get out of your cars right now and settle this in an adult manner...like a fist fight.

ANGLE - GRIFF AND PACO

look at each other, look back at the onrushing cliff. Don't have to tell them twice. They both bail out of their cars.

ANGLE - CLARK

smiles at his "success".

CLARK

There. That's better.

He looks up ahead. His eyes widen in horror.

CLARK (CONT'D)

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - THE CLIFF

coming up fast.

ANGLE - CLARK

Quickly applies the brakes. Nothing happens. *

ANGLE - CLARK'S FRONT FENDER *

Hooked together with the other two cars' fenders. *

RESUME - CLARK *

Tries to open the driver's side door. THUNK! It's blocked by Griff's car. Tries the passenger door. THUNK! Blocked, too, by Paco's vehicle. Clark's trapped. He quickly goes for the release snaps on the rag top. *

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

ANGLE - GRIFF

Rolls along the ground, into some bushes. Jumps up, dusts himself off.

ANGLE - PACO

Slides on his belly in a cloud of dust. Manages to stop himself just before crashing into a tree. He stands, breathes a SIGH of relief. Turns...and is immediately mowed down and trampled by the hyped-out crowd running toward the cliff to see what's happening.

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26 CONTINUED: (3)

26

ANGLE - THREE CARS

Side by side by side, hurtling toward the edge. Clark's conspicuously alone in the middle car.

ANGLE - CLARK

struggling to release the roof. Fierce wind whipping his hair. He frees the last snap, starts to retract the roof. Suddenly, the wind catches it, peels it right off. Clark catapults out of FRAME.

CLARK
WHOOAAAAAAAAAAA!!!

Clark flies through the air, clinging to the billowing rag top. He's hurled out of FRAME. *

ANGLE - CARS

All three go over the cliff in tandem. Plummet straight toward the roof of an OIL REFINERY. Just before impact, we CUT TO: *

ANGLE - THE KIDS *

Creeping cautiously toward the bluff. *

ANGLE - CLARK'S HAND

Appears above the edge of the cliff. *

ANGLE - CLARK

Struggles to drag himself onto level ground. Below him, we see the car top snagged on a tree jutting out from the side of the cliff. He works his way up, collapses in a heap before a semi-circle of awed Kids -- including Griff, Natalie, Julie, and Anferny. Clark picks himself up, dusts himself off.

CLARK
Nobody panic. I'm okay... Now, here's the tip -- no one needs to know about this... It'll be our little secret... *

KABOOM! A huge fireball EXPLODES up the side of the cliff. Everyone takes cover. Clark turns to look at the fireball. His pants have been burned clear through -- his smoldering bare butt is visible. *

CUT TO:

27 INT. PRINCIPAL DOYLE'S OFFICE - DAY

27

A television set shows live news footage of an unholy conflagration ravaging the L.A. landscape. (Stock footage). Fire planes BUZZ through the smoke, dropping tons of chemical on the flames. Anchorperson PAT HARVEY COMMENTS on the action.

*

PAT HARVEY (V.O.)

*

...Firefighters from all over Southern California are still trying to contain the flames that have blackened over 200 acres and caused several blocks of homes to be evacuated. Police are attempting to piece together the mystery of this conflagration.

*

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*

Pat Harvey appears on the television screen.

*

PAT HARVEY

*

(CONT'D)

*

The charred remains of three cars, one a classic Corvette, described by experts as being 'irreplaceable'. Next up, Steve's going to tell us about that unexpected storm moving in from the coast...

*

*

*

A HAND reaches over, SNAPS the TV off. CAMERA PANS UP the arm to Clark's sheepish face.

CLARK

I think we've heard enough bad news for one day.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

ANGLE - PRINCIPAL DOYLE

sits across the desk, staring hard at Clark, who carefully folds his hands in his lap. In B.G., Victoria can be seen through the open door, filing papers, listening.

MISS DOYLE

We've been hearing rumors that some of our students may have been involved in this fire... And very possibly, even a teacher...

She begins to circle Clark, who swivels his chair to keep her in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

27 . CONTINUED:

27

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

You wouldn't know anything about this,
would you, Mr. Clark?

As he swivels away from her, we see Clark's hair is singed.

*

CLARK

(shrugs innocently)

No.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

Principal Doyle studies him hard.

MISS DOYLE

I've been watching you, Clark. I don't think we see eye to eye on our philosophies of education.

CLARK

I know, Miss Doyle, that you think I'm a...

(gropes for the word)

Oh, an...

MISS DOYLE

Asshole?

CLARK

(taken aback)

No.

MISS DOYLE

Jerkoff?

CLARK

No.

MISS DOYLE

Dickhead? Pea-brained dildo?

CLARK

No, no... An *idealist*.

MISS DOYLE

Look, I told you I'm a woman of few words...

She puts her hands on the arm rests of Clark's chair, leans in close to his face.

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D) .

Ethnic cesspool.

CLARK

Beg your pardon?

She straightens up.

MISS DOYLE

Let's just get one thing straight right now. I don't like you, Clark. And it's doubtful I ever will. So, you either play by the book, or I'll bounce you out of here faster than a homo at Fort Dix.

(MORE)

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(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3)

27

MISS DOYLE (cont'd)
Now tell me, what's it gonna be?

*

MUSIC STING. Clark GULPS.

28 INT. - HALLWAY - DAY

28

Clark makes his way toward his classroom, zombie-like, still stinging from his encounter with Principal Doyle. A STUDENT goes by, stares respectfully. ANOTHER KID smiles, gives Clark a thumb's up. SOMEBODY gives him an enthusiastic clap on the back. Clark claws at his coat, searching for the imagined "Blow Me" sign. ANOTHER GUY rushes up to him, just has to shake his hand. A MALE STUDENT gives him a high-five that lapses into a series of wild handshakes. A GIRL gives him a flower. Clark is dumbfounded by the sudden attention and sincerity.

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ANGLE - PACO

hanging in the hallway, sullenly bouncing his ball, watching the Kids' new worship of Clark. Next to him, Two Bags drops coins into a vending machine -- instead of soda, this machine offers a selection of hard-core malt liquor. Two Bags pushes the button for Bushman Ale. The beer drops down the chute, already wrapped in a brown paper bag.

ANGLE - PACO'S POV - CLARK

Sees Victoria approach. After a brief exchange (MOS), Clark shyly pulls the flower from behind his back, offers it to Victoria. She's extremely pleased by this offering. Obviously, their relationship is on track to become more than professional.

RESUME - PACO

smiles maliciously to himself.

29 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

29

Clark enters briskly, SPEAKING loudly.

CLARK
Alright! Everyone take your...!
(stops, looks around)
...seats...

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - CLASS

Everyone sits quietly at their desks, attentive, staring at Clark with reverence.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

RESUME - CLARK

Astounded by his students' behavior, a bit unnerved.

*

CLARK

Today we're going to...

He turns to write on the board, tense, waiting for the inevitable barrage of debris. Quickly snaps back to face the class.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - CLASS

Nobody's moved an inch.

RESUME - CLARK

incredulous, moves to his desk.

ANGLE - CLARK'S DESK

Around it is a barrier of chicken wire -- like the ones set up in rough and tumble bars, used to protect bands.

CLARK

Well... I guess I won't need this after all...

Begins to roll up the chicken wire.

30 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

30

Paco's looking through a window in the door of Clark's classroom, glowering at the orderly, attentive class. He turns to Two Bags and Alonzo.

*

*

PACO

One lousy Chickee Run and they forget who I am? Enough is enough. I say it's time to send this pain in the ass a message he'll never forget.

He and his Guys head off down the hall.

31 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

31

Clark puts the roll of wire in the corner, rubs his hands together.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

CLARK

Well, let's begin, shall we? Yesterday I
was about to start with The Bill of
Rights and how they apply to all of us...

Everybody looks at Griff who pulls out a Walkman, puts on the headphones, folds his arms, and leans back in his chair. The other Students pull out Walkmans, magazines, and video games. One GUY pulls a bunch of different locks, methodically begins picking each one of them. Everybody tunes out. Clark knows he's still got a long way to go.

*

32 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

32

Classes are over for the day. The corridor's empty. Ankle-deep trash is strewn across the floor. A small wastebasket sits amid the debris, completely empty. A CUSTODIAN swings by, using a LEAF BLOWER to propel the mounds of trash down the hallway. The NOISE is deafening.

ANGLE - VICTORIA

Walks by the Custodian, looks into Clark's room. Clark's nowhere to be seen. She shrugs, heads off down the hall.

ANGLE - MAN

A nylon over his head, peeks out of a classroom, watches Victoria pass. He steps into the hall behind her, following quietly. MUSIC STING.

33 INT. HALLWAY STAIRCASE - DAY

33

Clark comes up the stairs. He sees a candy wrapper on the floor. Picks it up, puts it in a trash can. Walks on a few feet, sees a high heel shoe in the hall. Picks it up. Hmm... interesting. Walks on. Sees another shoe, picks it up, keeps walking. Picks up a woman's jacket. "Damn strange". Can't quite piece the puzzle together.

34 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

34

Barren shelves, a thick layer of dust everywhere. Looks like nobody's been in here for years. Victoria, her clothes torn, is caught in a half-nelson by the masked man. In plain sight on his arm there's a big tattoo that reads: "PACO".

PACO

You tell your boyfriend this is just
the beginning. He better back off.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

VICTORIA

Get your hands off of me!

PACO

C'mon, I know you want this. I read Mike
Tyson's book.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

She viciously bites his arm. Paco releases her with a YELP. Victoria lunges for her spilled purse. Paco dives on top of her. They struggle across the floor. Her hand gropes inside the purse. As Paco roughly flips her over, she comes up with a can of PEPPER SPRAY, squirts the hell out of him. Paco reels backwards, clutching his face, SCREAMING in agony.

*

A35 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A35

Clark hears the SCREAMS and SCUFFLING. Looks through the library window.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - VICTORIA

Grappling with her attacker.

RESUME - CLARK

Struggles frantically with the locked door. Down the hall he sees a student he recognizes. A look of relief crosses Clark's face. He CALLS out:

CLARK

Javier!

*

ANGLE - STUDENT

Using a slim jim to break into lockers. He turns around. It's the guy from Clark's class who was practicing picking locks.

CLARK

You got a second?

B35 INT. LIBRARY - DAY

B35

Victoria grabs up a wooden pointer, smashes it over Paco's shoulder. She snags a stapler, starts popping staples at him. Paco fends off the assault as best he can. Victoria picks up an empty metal card catalog drawer, rears back to deliver the coup de grace...

*

*

*

ANGLE - CLARK

Blunders in. His woman's in distress!

CLARK

My God! Victoria! Let me handle this!

He grabs Paco. Draws back to hit him. His elbow catches Victoria on the jaw. It staggers her. Paco deflects Clark's punch, throws one of his own. Clark neatly ducks the blow. Unfortunately, Victoria is standing right behind him. Paco's fist hits her in the face. She's reeling. Clark rises, uses

(CONTINUED)

B35 CONTINUED:

B35

his head to clip Paco on the chin. Paco staggers backwards. Clark, wanting to cover up Victoria, starts to take off his sportcoat.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Put this on.

In taking it off, he straightens out his arm, his fist clips her on the side of the face. Victoria's knees buckle.

VICTORIA

(groggy)

Richard...

(CONTINUED)

B35 CONTINUED: (2)

B35

CLARK

I know, don't worry. I'm here.

Is about to place the jacket over her shoulders when he looks up, sees Paco charging him. Clark throws the jacket at Victoria -- it drapes over her head. Blinded, disoriented, she walks into a metal post. "Fwangggg". Out on her feet, she stumbles backwards.

ANGLE - CLARK

Drives his shoulder into Paco's midsection. Hurls him O.S.
THUMP! Clark turns around, sees:

*

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - PACO

Has landed on the librarian's desk...and smack dab on top of Victoria.

*

RESUME - CLARK

Perceives that Paco has jumped her.

*

CLARK

You animal!

He pulls Paco off Victoria. We hear Paco CRASHING into a bookcase O.S. Clark helps Victoria to her feet, grabs a chair for her.

CLARK CONT'D)

Here...sit down.

Suddenly, Paco comes at Clark with a knife. Clark tosses the chair at him -- just as Victoria is about to sit. Clark's oblivious as she sprawls on the floor. He grabs Paco's wrist. They wrestle for the knife. Clark bangs Paco's hand on a box sitting on a shelf.

ANGLE - LONG BOX

marked in big letters: "Lost And Found". We TRACK along with the two grappling wrists. Inside the box are assorted mittens, notebooks, scarves, hats, A LIVE CAUCASIAN BABY, car keys, folders, jackets.

RESUME - FIGHT

Clark shakes the knife out of Paco's hand. Paco punches Clark, sends him flying. Now Paco grabs him, slams him onto a table, starts to choke him. Clark's fighting for his life -- kicking, trying to free himself.

(CONTINUED)

B35 CONTINUED: (3)

B35

ANGLE - VICTORIA

climbs up from the floor -- finally coming around -- just as quickly, it's lights out. Clark's flailing feet kick her in the head.

ANGLE - CLARK

Life is being choked out of him. He grabs the librarian's rubber stamp, peppers Paco with the stamp's imprint, right across the forehead: "OVERDUE", "OVERDUE", "OVERDUE".

PACO

Yeowwww!

Clark gets his feet on Paco's chest, propels him backwards. Paco CRASHES out the window. Drops from sight. Only blue sky visible through the shattered glass.

PACO (O.S.)

(cont'd)

AHHHHHHHHHH!

Clark helps Victoria to her feet, they look out the window, wince.

ANGLE - POV - OUT WINDOW

They're on the first floor. The ground's about four feet away. Paco's lying flat on his back on the lawn, getting drenched by the sprinklers, still SCREAMING.

PACO

Ahhhhhhhhh!

He hops up, races away.

RESUME - CLARK AND VICTORIA

Clark tries to enfold Victoria in his arms. She cowers from him -- after all, he's been beating the hell out of her.

VICTORIA

(groggy)

No, Richard... Richard...

Clark gently holds her, sympathetically. That young man really terrified her.

CLARK

There, there, you're safe. He won't hurt you again.

(CONTINUED)

B35 CONTINUED: (4)

B35

Principal Doyle bursts in. Looks around at the shambles, takes in the disarray of Clark and Victoria.

MISS DOYLE
What the hell's going on here?

VICTORIA
I was attacked.

Principal Doyle takes in her torn, revealing clothes.

MISS DOYLE
Dressed like that, what do you expect?
And alone with *him*...

CLARK
No, no... It wasn't just me. There
were three of us.

MISS DOYLE
Oh, that makes it all better...

CLARK
No, no. I was wrestling with the other
guy. He was trying to have sex with her.

MISS DOYLE
I don't care what your arrangement
was, or how it went wrong! Clark,
you've only been here two days and
already some very suspicious things
have been happening.

Clark has no idea what she means.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)
(raging)
I warn you, one more thing -- one
more tiny infraction -- and I swear
I'll personally kill you and make
your skull into a musical instrument.
Do I make myself clear?

Clark nods. Principal Doyle sees something on the floor.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)
Whose underwear is that?

Clark takes a quick peek down the front of his pants.

(CONTINUED)

B35 CONTINUED: (5)

B35

CLARK

It's the other guy's.

35 EXT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

35

A small house on a tiny lot in a fairly nice section of the city.

36 INT. VICTORIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

36

Victoria, wearing her torn blouse and rumpled skirt, sits on the edge of the bed petting a PURRING CAT. Clark kneels in front of her, applying ice packs to her bruises.

CLARK

Does it hurt here?

He touches her jaw. Major pain.

VICTORIA

Ouch! Yes!

Clark applies the ice pack. He touches her breast.

CLARK

How about here?

Victoria shakes her head, "no".

*

CLARK (cont'd)

And here?

VICTORIA

I can't feel your hand.

CLARK

That's because I'm touching *myself*.
Ooh... Ahh... I better get you something to wear. You have a t-shirt around here somewhere?

VICTORIA

Top drawer.

She leans forward to slip her shoe off. CLUNK! Clark opens the drawer, clips her in the head. She collapses on the bed, out cold. The Cat licks her face.

CLARK

(pulls out shirt)

Well, here we are...

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

Turns back, sees her lying there, her blouse parted sensually. Clark smiles.

CLARK (cont'd)

You poor thing. You must be exhausted.

He shoos the Cat away, sits next to Victoria.

CLARK (cont'd)

Here, let me loosen that bra and give you some air. *

He starts to remove her bra. Can't figure out the hook. Victoria wakes up.

VICTORIA

Richard, please...

She gathers her tattered blouse around her.

CLARK

I'm really sorry about all this. It's all my fault. But, if they think by attacking you they can scare me off, they're nuts. They can attack you all they want. I'm going to get through to these kids!

Victoria gives him a look -- not sure she agrees with this logic. Clark doesn't notice. He's getting revved up.

CLARK (cont'd)

Getting them to come to class is a small victory. But it isn't enough. I could get 20 kids from a mental institution to come in there and fill those seats... Of course, I'd have to strap 'em down first...maybe shoot 'em with tranquilizer darts...

VICTORIA

Richard, don't you see? They have to want to learn. Somehow you have to open their minds.

CLARK

That's exactly my point! And I think Griff is the key. He seems to be a leader. If I can just reach him, I might be able to get through to the others...

(CONTINUED)

Victoria gently puts her finger to Clark's lips.

VICTORIA

Remember the promise you made to
Principal Doyle. You have to be careful.
Getting involved in these kids' personal
lives is dangerous. It's like walking
naked into a ferret cage. If you raise
their expectations, dreams, and hopes,
and then you fail... You could destroy
them, as well as yourself.

*

*

CLARK

But...

VICTORIA

Richard, you have to trust me on this.
I'm your friend.

(looks into his eyes)

I'm more than a friend.

CLARK

To me?

VICTORIA

Yes, why not?

CLARK

Well, it's just...no one who ever
looked like you...has ever looked at
me.

VICTORIA

(not taking her eyes off Clark)

That's their loss.

CLARK

You know... I've never been very lucky
with relationships. In fact, most of
mine always ended with: 'Hey! What're
you doing in bed with that other woman?'

(beat)

And that was *me* talking.

Victoria gives him a look.

CLARK (cont'd)

Victoria, I do find you very
attractive... That isn't sexual
harassment, is it?

(CONTINUED)

Victoria sits up, thinks about this for a beat.

VICTORIA

No. If you would have said, "Hey, baby, let me tweak your hooters and maybe you'll get a promotion!", that would have been sexual harassment.

*
*

CLARK

Just wanted to be sure.

They stare at each other. Clark reaches over, gently takes off her glasses. She lets down her hair. It falls over her face. She sweeps it back, looks enticingly at Clark. They kiss. It turns into a long, sexy kiss. Clark pulls away.

VICTORIA

What's wrong?

CLARK

Well, I'm...scared.

VICTORIA

That's all right, you can be on top.

CLARK

(shakes his head)

No, no... What I mean to say is...

(sighs heavily)

Trouble just seems to follow me around. Everywhere I go, there's always someone looking to bust my balls.

VICTORIA

Oh, Richard. Don't worry.

(takes him into her arms)

Your balls are safe with me.

Clark's eyebrows arch. Victoria pulls him close. A long kiss. MUSIC SWELLS. Slow, romantic, love making MUSIC. They drift out of FRAME. Clothes start flying everywhere, landing on the lamp, muting the light. We can hear the hot and heavy PASSION. After about a minute, Clark GROANS.

CLARK (O.S.)

(passionately)

Oh my God! You're still a virgin!

VICTORIA (O.S.)

No, no... I still have my panties on.

More heavy BREATHING.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (4)

36

CLARK (O.S.)
I still can't...

VICTORIA (O.S.)
Richard, I'm over here.

O.S. we hear the high-pitched SCREECH of the CAT. MEROWWWWW!

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. INNER CITY STREET - NIGHT

37

Ramshackle buildings. Trash heaped in the gutters. Graffiti everywhere. A METRO BUS tears around the corner.

*

38 INT. METRO BUS - NIGHT

38

Clark's standing by the door, holding the safety pole, staring out the window.

*

*

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - THE BLOCK

*

Lined with a liquor store, bail bonds office, a gun store, another liquor store, bail bonds, another gun store, then a store selling bail bonds, liquor, and guns.

*

*

*

RESUME - CLARK

*

Realizes his stop is fast approaching, but the bus doesn't seem to be slowing down. Clark turns to the DRIVER.

*

CLARK
Ah, I'm the next stop...

DRIVER
Forget it, Pal. We don't stop in this neighborhood.

39 EXT. METRO BUS - NIGHT

39

Rolls close to the curb, slows to about 20 m.p.h. The door opens. Clark has to jump out. He hits the ground, WHUMP! Tumbles along the sidewalk, lands spread-eagle in the gutter. The bus speeds off in a cloud of diesel smoke. Clark staggers to his feet, dusts himself off. He looks up, sees:

*

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - GRIFF

*

Down the block, heading into a bar. A sign above the building reads: THE SWAMP.

*

(CONTINUED)

40 INT. THE SWAMP - NIGHT

40

Typical strip joint -- runway bar, mirrors, fireman pole. A hard rock SONG blaring out of the jukebox. Griff sits at the horseshoe bar, sipping a Coke. Nearby, a DANCER, mid-thirties, clad only in a G-string and bra, gyrates her way toward him.

CLARK (O.S.)

Griff!

Griff turns, sees Clark heading toward him.

GRIFF

(surprised)

Mr. Clark?

CLARK

What're you doing here?

GRIFF

I live here.

CLARK

Yes, I realize a lot of these men do...
but you can get help for this, son.

Griff gives him a look.

GRIFF

No, I mean, my Mom and I live in an
apartment upstairs.

In B.G., the Dancer is moving nearer along the bar. Her bra's off. She's rubbing herself with it. Her tassels spin wildly.

CLARK

Oh... Well, Griff, the reason I came
to find you was because... eeeYIPES!

Clark suddenly finds the Dancer's buttocks thrust in his face. He endeavors to carry on the CONVERSATION despite the quivering flesh before him.

CLARK (cont'd)

I feel like I can... I sense you want
to make something of yourself.

The Dancer flops her breasts into Clark's face, shimmies enthusiastically. Clark's face is buried deep in her cleavage.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

CLARK (cont'd)
(muffled)
You're a leader...

Clark turns to Griff. His hair's all messed up and flying.

CLARK (cont'd)
And, if you help me, I think we can turn
the school around. And, that can only be
good for you.

*
*

He turns back to the Dancer, returns to nuzzling her bosom.

GRIFF
Why me, man? Get somebody else. I got
my own problems.

The Dancer now sits on the bar, wraps her legs around Clark's
head, starts drawing him in. Clark resists as best he can.

GRIFF (cont'd)
Besides, I ain't got time. I look after
my brothers and sisters when my Mom's
workin'. I'm all they got.

*
*
*

Clark puts a five spot into the Dancer's G-string. She
continues to gyrate in his face. He stuffs in a ten. The
Dancer won't leave. In desperation, Clark stuffs his whole
wallet into her G-string. She finally moves on. He struggles
to regain his composure.

*
*
*

CLARK
You know, Griff, you remind me a lot
of myself when I was your age...except
I was white, I had both parents, I lived
in the suburbs, and I don't have any
brothers or sisters...
(thinks for a beat)
Maybe you remind me of someone else...

GRIFF
Mr. Clark, I'm poor. I'm black. And I
can't dribble.

CLARK
Don't you have a dream?

Griff shrugs, shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

CLARK

Don't you have a dream?

Griff shrugs, shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

 GRIFF
You wouldn't be interested.

 CLARK
Sure I would. Tell me.

Griff hesitates. Looks seriously at Clark.

 GRIFF
Promise you won't tell anyone?

 CLARK
You have my word.

Griff looks around, leans in close to Clark, WHISPERS something.

 CLARK (cont'd)
 (loudly)
College!?! You gotta be..!

The MUSIC stops. Everyone turns, stares at Griff.

 CLARK (cont'd)
 (sheepishly to Griff)
I'm sorry...sorry...

Bar activity begins again.

 CLARK (cont'd)
Griff, I'll make you a deal. If you help me get these kids to learn, I promise you, I'll do everything in my power to get you into...some kind of college.

 GRIFF
Don't play me, Mr. Clark. I've been promised stuff before that didn't come true. I mean, where would the money for college come from?

 CLARK
You ever heard of scholarships?

Griff brightens.

 GRIFF
Yeah...

(CONTINUED)

CLARK

Well, you probably won't get any of those. But there are grants, work study programs, hand outs, selling pamphlets in airports, panhandling on freeway onramps, infomercials... It may not get you to there right away, but it's a start.

GRIFF

I don't know...

Clark grabs a drink coaster, writes something on the back. Behind him, we see the SILHOUETTES of a STRIPPER dancing. The silhouette of a DOG is humping her leg.

*
*

CLARK

Griff, listen to me. If you care about something, then maybe, just maybe, other people will care, too. 'Cause when you do a good thing, it leads to another. And, pretty soon it spreads, and other people start doing good things, too.

He hands the coaster to Griff. On it he's written: "This is your chance." Clark's getting really revved up. He leaps to his feet. Heads turn toward him.

CLARK (cont'd)

(passionately)

But, it's gotta start with one person. And that person is you, Griff!

All MUSIC has stopped. Dancing grinds to a halt. Tassels stop twirling. Clark raises his VOICE to address the entire bar.

CLARK (cont'd)

You don't have to live like this! In dirt and squalor! You don't have to live infested with crime and drugs and gangs! You don't have to end up in a sleazy bar watching some over-the-hill strippers exposing themselves for a few measly dollars in their G-strings!

Bar patrons CHEER. Clark nods, waves, sits back down, looks at Griff.

CLARK (cont'd)

But don't just take my word for it. Go home, talk it over with your Mom. I'm sure she'll agree with me.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED: (4)

40

 GRIFF
I can ask her right now.
 (turns toward the bar)
Mom?

The Dancer who was tormenting Clark steps over.

 GRIFF (cont'd)
Mom, this is Mr. Clark.

Clark stares at Griff, stunned. The Dancer rears back, decks him.

*

41 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

41

Every chair full. Clark finishes writing on the board in big letters: ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY TEST. He underlines it several times, turns to his class.

 CLARK
In the next six weeks, I'm going to
try and cram as much knowledge into
your heads as humanly possible...

Sees the vacant, moronic stares on the Kids' faces.

 CLARK (cont'd)
...Or, well, as space will allow.

He begins to distribute books to the Students.

 CLARK (cont'd)
This will be our text for the semester.

Kids stare blankly at the books. Clark realizes what's happening.

 CLARK (cont'd)
They open like this...

He demonstrates. The Kids GASP in amazement.

 CLARK (cont'd)
Okay...you all try it.

Everyone turns, looks to see what Griff's going to do. Clark holds his breath. Griff's leaning back in his chair. His eyes sweep from Clark to his classmates. Finally, he leans forward, opens his book. Clark breathes a SIGH of relief. The rest of the Class attempt to open their books -- for most of them, it's obviously the first time.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

CLARK (cont'd)

All right, I think we better start
with basic English.

Turns to the board, chalk in hand.

CLARK (cont'd)

Now, who can give me a complete sentence?

ANGLE - PACO

stands in the doorway, flanked by Two Bags and Alonzo.

PACO

Yo, you wack punk! You be goin' down
the hard way!

Without turning around, Clark begins writing on the
blackboard, "Yo, you wack punk..."

CLARK

Good. Okay, let's examine that sentence.
'Yo' -- a common colloquial greeting,
comma. 'You wack punk' -- a collective
noun, and the subject of the sentence.
Exclamation point...

Paco stares in disbelief, sorry now that he said anything.

CLARK (cont'd)

...'You be goin' -- bad syntax. Verb
should be conjugated. 'You will be
going'...

Paco and his guys back quietly out of the room. The Kids are
riveted on Clark.

MUSIC UP. BEGIN MONTAGE

42 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

42

Two Bags goes along the wall spray painting graffiti. He
starts to exit, hears a COMMOTION behind him, turns, stares
incredulously at:

ANGLE - CLARK

and Griff and the rest of the class armed with buckets, mops,
and painting equipment, cleaning up the hall. A roller slaps
paint over his fresh, dripping logo. In B.G., other Kids
paint lockers, sweep the hallway.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

ANGLE - TWO BAGS

Amazed as his "artwork" disappears.

43 EXT. INNER CITY STREET - DAY

43

Clark and the Kids painting a store front. In B.G., PEOPLE are waiting at the bus stop. BUS comes into view. Everyone crouches in the sprint position. The bus speeds close to the curb, it's doors open. People race after it, hurl themselves at it, trying to jump on as it tears by. Some make it...some don't.

44 EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

44

Julie and Anferny are laying sod while Griff and Natalie plant vines at the base of the graffiti wall. Nearby, Clark and Victoria supervise the planting of a couple of trees in the courtyard. Other Kids stand around gawking. One Kid digging down in the hole hits something with his shovel. It's a HUMAN SKELETON dressed in gang garb, clutching a can of spray paint. Kid leaps out of the hole, terrified.

45 OMITTED

45

46 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

46

A marked improvement in decor. Clark's in front of the class.

CLARK

Okay, you and your G's are on someone else's turf, cruising along in your fly ride at about 20 miles per. A posse of ten homeys are sittin' in front of their crib, just chillin' on the porch, playing some fresh jams...

ANFERNY

Who they got on the box?

CLARK

Uh, they're riffin' with Ice, maybe some Tag Team. I don't know. It doesn't matter. You grab your gat, a Mac 10, standard banana clip. You start blastin' -- really light 'em up. Only two homeys manage to get to their hooptie and escape. Now, what percentage of the posse did you cap?

The Students work this out in their notebooks. Hands fly into the air. Clark beams proudly. In B.G., Principal Doyle watches through the doorway, horrified at Clark's unorthodox teaching methods.

*
*
*

47 OMITTED 47*

48 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY 48

Clark doing a rapid-fire Q & A with his Students.

CLARK
What's the capitol of Nebraska?

GRIFF
Lincoln.

CLARK
Right. And who freed the slaves?

JULIE
Lincoln.

CLARK
Yes. Who makes the best towncar?

ANFERNY
Cadillac?

CLARK
No. Natalie?

NATALIE
Lincoln.

CLARK
Right. Charles Keating cooked the books
of what S & L?

KIDS
(in unison)
Lincoln!

CLARK
Amazing! Now we're getting somewhere!

49 OMITTED 49*

50 OMITTED 50

49 CONTINUED:

49

CLARK

Welcome back to the world, buddy!

A look of terror crosses the Teacher's face. He lets out a
YELP, dives back into the corner, balls up in a fetal
position. Clark shakes his head, turns to the Female Teacher.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What does he teach anyway?

FEMALE TEACHER

Psychology.

Clark stares dumbfounded as the WHIMPERING begins again.

50 OMITTED

50*

- 51 INT. HALLWAY - DAY 51
- Kids moving along in an orderly fashion, carrying books -- no running, fighting or dancing. Principal Doyle moves through the crowd with her baseball bat, surprised at the good behavior around her.
- 52 EXT. THE SWAMP - DAY 52
- The street is being fixed, the buildings being painted. Clark, Victoria, and the Students are planting trees along the sidewalk.
- A53 OMITTED A53*
- 53 EXT. BUS STOP - DAY 53
- People "on their marks", waiting. Bus comes around the corner, they start running. However, they stop halfway down the block as the bus actually pulls to the curb. Doors WHOOSH open. DRIVER smiles at the stunned crowd as they climb on.
- 54 INT. PRINCIPAL DOYLE'S OFFICE - DAY 54
- Principal Doyle doing paperwork, hears FOOTSTEPS, looks up. A MAN stands in her doorway -- emaciated, hollow-eyed, unkempt beard, wearing a moth-eaten suit and dirty shirt. Looks like he's been buried for a couple of weeks.
- MISS DOYLE
(dumbfounded)
Mr. Arnott? Where have you been?
- The Man shrugs.
- MAN
They released me...
- 55 OMITTED 55*

54 CONTINUED:

54

MAN
They released me...

55 EXT. SCHOOL GRAFFITI WALL - DAY

55

Paco, a can of spray paint in one hand, paws feverishly through what appears to be a bush.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

*

The wall's now covered with vines. Paco's searching in vain for his tag. He steps back, eyes the foliage for a new place to spray. He's frustrated by the leafy growth. Just then, two

(CONTINUED)

56 EXT. BARRY HIGH - DAY

56*

The picture of a perfect campus. All graffiti and grunge is gone. In it's place are freshly painted ivy-covered walls, big oaks and pines reaching toward the sky, happy Students carrying books.

57 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

57

Clark tours the aisles among his attentive Students.

CLARK

Who was the first President to use a telephone? Anferny?

ANFERNY

Nixon?

CLARK

No. Griff?

GRIFF

Uh...Garfield?

CLARK

Correct. First President to be on television? Anferny?

ANFERNY

Johnny Carson?

CLARK

He wasn't President. Natalie?

NATALIE

Eisenhower.

CLARK

Yes. Okay. Who was the last President to ride in a horse-drawn carriage?

ANFERNY

Kennedy?

Clark starts to shake his head, thinks about it a bit.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

CLARK

Uh... You're right.

Students break into CHEERS and APPLAUSE. Anferny high fives his classmates.

CLARK (CONT'D)

All right, open your math books to the chapter on Quantum Hyper Geometry.

58 OMITTED

58

59 EXT. VICTORIA'S STREET - NIGHT

59

Clark's car (now a different color thanks to whatever chop shop had it) drives through the neighborhood. As it passes each driveway, it sets off security sensor floodlights until the entire street is bathed in light. He pulls to the curb in front of Victoria's house.

A60 INT./EXT. CLARK'S CAR - NIGHT

A60

Clark cuts the engine, puts on the parking brake.

CLARK

I'm so proud of those kids. I think they're gonna do very well on the test.

VICTORIA

And what if they don't?

Clark looks at her, confused.

VICTORIA

Never mind. Good night, Richard.

She gets out of the car, starts up the walk toward her house. Clark follows her.

CLARK

Victoria...? What...what's wrong?

She stops, turns toward him.

VICTORIA

Richard, you know I admire you terribly for what you're doing... But, well... I've been thinking...

(her eyes well with tears)

What I'm trying to say is, maybe we should just keep it...friends... I know it isn't very much to offer...

(CONTINUED)

rev. 9/15/95 (green)

76A.

A60 CONTINUED:

A60

CLARK

Victoria... I don't understand...

*
*

(CONTINUED)

A60 CONTINUED: (2)

A60

VICTORIA

What I'm trying to tell you... Well, I've
been down this road before. I've had
stars in my eyes. I lost them the hard
way. I don't want to risk being hurt
again.

*
*
*

CLARK

Again?

She takes a deep breath. MUSIC STARTS.

VICTORIA

I knew a teacher very much like you
once. Terry loved his students, too. He
fought for them, and refused to believe
that there was anyone who couldn't be
helped if he tried hard enough.

*

(pause)

One day, a fourteen year old girl was
attacked in the school corridor by one
of his "successes". The next morning,
Terry took a loaded rifle into a fast
food restaurant and opened fire on the
employees.

CLARK

Couldn't handle the failure?

Victoria's fighting back tears.

*

VICTORIA

No, he found a hair in his soup the night
before.

*
*

(starts to breaks down)

I guess I should've seen it coming --
there were plenty of clues. Like that
weeping image of the Virgin Mary that he
kept seeing in the bathroom mirror...

*
*
*
*
*

(sobs)

Well... I just thought he was great in
bed. I'm sorry. I'm sorry...

*
*
*

She buries her head in Clark's shoulder, SOBBING. Clark
gently pats her back, looking a bit stunned.

*
*

60 INT. BARRY HIGH HALLWAY - DAY

60*

A sign posted next to Clark's door reads: "Academic Proficiency Test Today". Clark stands outside his class, giving his arriving students the thumb's up. Victoria appears in the doorway, a wan smile on her face. She slowly closes the door.

*
*
*

61 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

61

The Class is now looking very studious wearing glasses and sporting pocket calculators. Victoria passes out the tests.

*

VICTORIA

*

The Academic Proficiency Test...

FUMP! She drops a booklet in front of Griff.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

*

You have eight hours in which to complete the exam...

(flips over an hourglass)

Begin now. And...good luck.

*

The Students break the seals, dive in to their tests.

SERIES OF QUICK CUTS:

Griff pondering a question in his booklet.

62 INT. CLARK'S HOME - DAY

62

Clark pulls a brand new C.D. out of a Wherehouse bag -- "Music To Make Time Go Faster". He sets about trying to open the sealed shrink wrap. He's scratching, tearing and pulling but can't break through the cellophane. He goes at it with his car keys, tries using a knife. The cellophane is impervious. Finally, in frustration, he takes a hammer to it, smashes the C.D. to pieces.

63 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

63

Natalie chewing on the end of her pencil. Next to her, Julie concentrates on her test while rocking her newborn INFANT in a stroller. Victoria patrols the room.

*

64 INT. CLARK'S HOME - DAY

64

Clark in front of the television, watching infomercials, sorting potato chips by size. He checks his watch, SIGHS.

65 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY

65

The clock TICKING away. Griff erases an answer, quickly enters another one. Nearby, Anferny's using the pencil sharpener.

66 OMITTED 66

67 INT. CLARK'S HOUSE - DAY 67

On the television is an ad for The Flo-Bee. WIDEN TO REVEAL Clark trying to give himself a haircut with one of the suction cutting tools.

68 OMITTED 68

69 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY 69

Griff furiously writing in his booklet. Natalie using her calculator, enters an answer in her booklet. In the B.G., Paco's staring in the window, a look of determination on his face. Victoria draws the shade. *

70 INT. CLARK'S HOME - DAY 70

Clark exercising along with a BODYBUILDER on the tube. He's on his back, a spring-loaded AB ISOLATOR hooked around his feet. He grips the handles tightly, tries to pull himself up to a sitting position. FWANG! The coiled contraption flies out the window.

71 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY 71

A bunch of Students lined up in front of the pencil sharpener. Pencil shavings overflow the wastebasket, spill onto the floor.

72 INT. CLARK'S HOME - DAY 72

Clark takes a mechanical device out of a box labeled "The Scrotum Isolator". It's a robotic-looking contraption with finger-like appendages. He lowers it out of FRAME, lies back on his exercise mat. O.S. we hear a HUMMING sound. Clark starts squirming around, a look of pleasure and pain on his face. *

73 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY 73

Julie's breast-feeding her child as she fills in an answer.

- 74 INT. CLARK'S HOME - DAY 74
- A spent Clark sits smoking a cigarette, watching the television. Lying on the couch next to him is "The Scrotum Isolator", still HUMMING and undulating. Clark pets his CAT as both watch a video with images of BIRDS and FISH. As a swallow flies across the T.V. screen, Clark and his Cat turn their heads in unison, watching with great interest. *
- 75 INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DUSK 75
- Outside the window, the sky has grown dark. Victoria checks her watch. *
- VICTORIA *
- Okay, time's up. Stop, close your booklets.
- She gathers up the tests.
- VICTORIA (CONT'D) *
- Your scores will be posted by the end of the week. *
- The Kids are drained. Most of the Boys have heavy five o'clock shadows. Griff and Natalie help a spent Anferny from the room.
- 76 INT. BARRY HIGH - PRINCIPAL DOYLE'S OFFICE - NIGHT 76
- Victoria loads the test booklets into a safe, closes the door tightly, spins the combination dial. She turns off the light, exits. *
- A beat. In the darkness, a window SCRAPES open. The beam of a flashlight plays across the room, falls directly on the safe. *
- MUSIC STING.
- 77 EXT. SWAMP STREET - NIGHT 77
- Griff and Natalie walk hand in hand down the street. Even though it's not the best part of town, everything looks a little less dismal when you're in love.
- NATALIE
- How do you think you did on the test?
- GRIFF
- I don't know... But for the first time in my life I feel I did something right.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

NATALIE

Me, too.

Griff pulls out a letter.

GRIFF

Remember that college I told you about?
I got a letter back from them yesterday.
Now I think I have a real chance to make
it in. I guess I owe a lot to Mr. Clark.

Folds the letter, puts it back into his pocket.

NATALIE

(absently)

I think all the kids feel the same way.

GRIFF

I know it means everything to me...to my
family. I think now I can show them
there's a way out. That there's hope. I
can give my Mom a break now.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED: (2)

77

They walk along for a moment. Then, Natalie stops, turns to Griff, kisses him tenderly.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Griff, this is...the happiest I've ever been. It's the first time in my life that I haven't prayed for a meltdown at the nuclear plant. Or for a gas line to rupture under my house while I'm smoking...

Griff puts a finger to her lips, hushes her. Ssshhh... He waits a second, takes it away.

NATALIE (CONT'D)

Or that I lived in a trailer park during a tornado.

His finger goes back to her lips.

GRIFF

Natalie... I'm glad you're happy.

He kisses her, shakes his head.

GRIFF (CONT'D)

I can't believe you think about that stuff.

NATALIE

Doesn't everybody?

*

Griff doesn't answer, just pulls her along.

GRIFF

Come on, I want you to meet my family.

78 INT. THE SWAMP - DAY

78

Griff opens the door, leads Natalie in. Not a nude body in sight. All the Strippers are in costume, performing "MACBETH".

*

*

*

GRIFF'S MOM

*

Out, damned spot! Out, I say! One: two: why, then 'tis time to do 't. Hell is murky. Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our pow'r to account? Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

The bar PATRONS -- the same cigar smoking sleazebags -- CHEER
and APPLAUD. SOMEONE stuffs a twenty in Griff's Mom's tunic.

*
*

Griff waves at his Mom, turns to Natalie.

*

GRIFF

*

(proudly)

*

That's my Mom.

*

A half dozen MEN (Asian, African American, Caucasian) dressed
in Shakespearean garb hover around upstage. Griff nods in
their direction.

*
*

GRIFF (CONT'D)

And, uh, one of those guys is my father.

Natalie stares, stunned. Behind her head, prominently
displayed on the wall is a poster reading: "NEXT WEEK -- ALL
NUDE IBSEN!"

79 OMITTED

79

80	OMITTED	80
81	INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY	81
	Clark is waiting along with Griff and the other Students for the A.P.T. scores.	
A82	INT. HALLWAY - DAY	A82*
	Victoria and Principal Doyle, carrying a computer print-out, make their way towards Clark's classroom.	* *
B82	INT. CLARK'S CLASSROOM - DAY	B82*
	The door opens. Grim-faced Principal Doyle enters with Victoria. Clark's and Victoria's eyes meet, then she looks away. Clark turns to Principal Doyle.	* * *

CLARK
(hopeful)
Well..?

MISS DOYLE
As expected, every member of your class failed. Lowest scores in the country.

CLARK
There must be some mistake...

MISS DOYLE
That's right, and you're it.

B82 CONTINUED:

B82

Victoria looks at Clark, pain in her eyes. Principal Doyle hands the printout to Clark.

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

See for yourself. Figures don't lie. When asked what an isosceles triangle is, to a student they answered 'A dessert dish at Der Wienerschnitzel'. You know we're not dealing with Rhodes Scholars here.

Griff tears up his university letter, throws the pieces on the floor. He passes Clark on his way out.

GRIFF

It's time I just accepted what I am and get on with my life.

CLARK

Griff...no...

Picks up the pieces of Griff's letter. Realizes what it is.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Griff! Wait!

Griff is gone. Principal Doyle leans in close to Clark.

MISS DOYLE

You see what you've done? I told you to leave 'em at the bottom of the pit where they were more comfortable.

(points her finger)

Consider yourself terminated as of *right now*.

*
*
*
*

Clark turns, starts dejectedly for the door. Victoria steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

B82 CONTINUED: (2)

B82

VICTORIA

Wait a minute!

Principal Doyle shoots her a look. Clark stops, turn back.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Miss Doyle, you're making a huge mistake!
Mr. Clark helped this school! He's a good
teacher... And I'm not just saying that
because we slept together.

MURMUR from the Students. Clark's jaw drops. (Thanks for the
help). Principal Doyle is unmoved.

MISS DOYLE

Clean out your desk, Clark.

Clark sinks even lower. He exits. The Students throw down
their books, start walking out. *

VICTORIA

Have you forgotten what Mr. Clark has
done for all of us?

The Students stop, turn back. Victoria points at an
intelligent-looking YOUNG MAN.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You. You had a "D" average before Mr.
Clark started tutoring you. Now, you're
on the Honor Roll!

The Young Man shrugs, nods. Victoria points at ANOTHER
STUDENT.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And this boy... Everyone thought he had
Turret's Syndrome until Mr. Clark
discovered he was a Hindu exchange
student.

The KID blurts out some GIBBERISH, nods at those around him.
Victoria points at a KID IN A WHEELCHAIR.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

And you! You couldn't walk before Mr.
Clark came here.

He looks incredulously at her.

(CONTINUED)

B82 CONTINUED: (3)

B82

WHEELCHAIR KID

I still can't walk.

He turns his chair, motors out of the room, along with the rest of the Kids. Victoria SHOUTS after them.

*
*

VICTORIA

Oh, sure, let's blame that on Mr. Clark, too!

82 EXT. BARRY HIGH - NIGHT

82

A CROWD OF STUDENTS clog the school entrance, some waving hand-lettered placards reading: "Clark's A Fraud!" One out-of-place GUY among the crowd holds a sign that reads: "No Nuclear Dump In Ward Valley!" A SECURITY GUARD escorts Clark through the UNRULY MOB who hurl INSULTS and wave angry fists at him.

ANGLE - VICTORIA

Trying to push her way through the crowd.

*

VICTORIA

Richard! Richard, wait!

Clark doesn't hear her.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

RICHARD!

Not even a glance back from Clark. The swirling crowd steals him from her sight. A tear runs down Victoria's cheek.

MUSIC UP: "TOWN WITHOUT PITY" by Gene Pitney

ANGLE - CLARK

Rain pouring down mercilessly. The crowd's lined up along his path...it's a gauntlet. Everyone's shaking their fists, YELLING at him.

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - THE CROWD

Thrusting their angry faces right in his face. It's a grotesque, nightmare vision, punctuated by rain and flashes of lightning.

*

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - THE CROWD

thrusting their angry faces right in his face. It's a grotesque, nightmare vision, punctuated by rain and flashes of lightning.

*

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

82

RESUME - CLARK

Passes Griff and Natalie.

GRIFF

I should've known better than to believe
you! And I dragged everybody else down
with me! You used me, man!

He storms off.

NATALIE

Griff! Wait!

She goes after him. Clark passes Julie Rubels.

JULIE

I'm pregnant again!

Clark shoots her a look. She shrugs sheepishly. Clark passes
Anferny.

ANFERNY

It's An-fer-ny!

RUSH LIMBAUGH is up next.

RUSH LIMBAUGH

You liberal pantywaist! You're no better
than the rest of those Femi-Nazis!

Miss Foley steps up to Clark, surrounded by the Teachers from
the assembly.

*

MISS FOLEY

Fuck you!

They all give Clark the finger. Suddenly, out of the
darkness, the Drama Coach appears in his/her Dolce & Gabbana
outfit.

*

*

*

DRAMA COACH

(husky voice)

Call me.

*

*

*

Clark's chin sinks to his chest. He's a beaten man as he
breaks free of the crowd.

*

CAMERA CRANES UP

We get God's eye view of the whole pathetic scene however, it
is now REVEALED that the rain is falling only on Clark.
Everyone else is bone dry. "TOWN WITHOUT PITY" crescendos to
an end.

83 EXT. BARRY HIGH - DAY

83*

The vines on the wall have been torched and uprooted.
Graffiti again covers the buildings.

*

84 EXT. BARRY HIGH COURTYARD - DAY

84

An L.A.P.D. helicopter hovers in the sky above. An AMPLIFIED VOICE BOOMS through a bullhorn.

*
*

VOICE (V.O.)

*

Drop your weapon, lie face down on the ground! Now! Drop your weapon...

*
*

O.S. GUNSHOTS RING OUT.

*

VOICE (V.O.)

*

...Never mind.

*

DRIFT DOWN TO...

*

The school is back to being a zoo. Kids are dressing sloppily, throwing trash -- and each other -- all over the yard.

ANGLE - BANNER

Draped across the school, reads: "Barry High Career Day!" There's a line of booths crowded with Kids. Paco and the Phat Doggs parade through the quad, leading a bunch of NEW RECRUITS, proudly flying their purple colors. Paco's jauntily bouncing his ball, clearly back in power.

ANGLE - GRIFF

enters the courtyard, walking slowly. He passes a booth with a Marine Corps. logo. A GUY in uniform is talking to a bunch of Kids.

MARINE

...I'm not saying you're gonna be welcomed into every country with open arms. And, it might mean having to kill a few people...

Griff stops at a Burger Hut booth where a FAST FOOD GIRL shows some Kids how to wrap a burger.

*

FAST FOOD GIRL

*

...And then you always ask, 'Would you like a cherry pie with that today?'

Paco, Two Bags, and Alonzo approach Griff.

PACO

Yo, G, I see you got a great future ahead of you.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

84

GRIFF

You wouldn't understand, man. I'm tryin' to help my family.

Paco pulls out a huge wad of cash. Griff's eyes get wide as he peels off a couple of hundreds.

PACO

This is the shit gonna help your family. Not some rinkydink job.

He holds the money out to Griff, who stares at it.

PACO (CONT'D)

Go ahead. I'm sure you could use it.

Griff steps back, shakes his head.

GRIFF

Man, I can't even think about this right now.

PACO

So who's tellin' you to think? Ask Two Bags here, thinkin' hurts.

One look at the vacant Two Bags says it all.

ANGLE - ANFERNY AND NATALIE

Enter FRAME, obviously searching for someone. They stop in front of a booth with a sign reading: "Explore The Exciting World Of Airport Security!" A SECURITY OFFICER is demonstrating a baggage x-ray machine to the kids, pointing at two very different objects on the monitor. One of them looks to be three sticks of dynamite attached to a clock.

*
*
*
*
*

SECURITY OFFICER

This is a bomb. This is toothpaste. Are we clear on that? Bomb. Toothpaste. Master that, and you've got it made.

*
*

Anferny nudges Natalie.

ANFERNY

There he is!

He motions toward Griff and Paco. Natalie heads over.

ANGLE - GRIFF

Paco's still waving the money in front of his face.

(CONTINUED)

PACO

Now, I got a big deal goin' down tonight
with DeMarco at Mr. "A"'s restaurant. You
remember the zip code, right?

(Griff nods)

Anyway, I need a good mule. You up for
it?

Griff looks at his feet, shakes his head.

GRIFF

I don't know, man... Drugs...

PACO

Never mind.

He folds the bills back into his pocket, heads off with his
Guys. Griff looks back at the job fair.

ANGLE - GRIFF'S POV - FAST FOOD GIRL

Handing out official uniform headgear -- tall, brimmed hats
designed to resemble the layers of a hamburger. The Kids are
trying them on.

RESUME - GRIFF

SIGHS, shakes his head, moves on. Natalie approaches, falls
into step with him.

NATALIE

Griff...

GRIFF

Hey, Natalie.

NATALIE

I saw you talking to Paco. I know what's
up. You gotta promise me...

Griff stops, faces her. In B.G., a WOMAN IN A MAID'S OUTFIT
wields a bristle brush, demonstrating to the Kids the proper
way to scrub out a toilet bowl.

GRIFF

I ain't promisin' nothin'. What do you
think I'm gonna do, Natalie? Flip
burgers the rest of my life?

NATALIE

What is it with everybody? Expecting to
pull down a million dollars the first
day. Even Colin Powell didn't start out

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (3)

84

NATALIE (cont'd)

commanding the whole army. I'll bet he pulled K.P. a few times in his life. And you think Jesse Jackson scored a big pay check his first day on the job?

*
*
*

GRIFF

Dude never had no job.

NATALIE

Okay, maybe he's not a good example. But you know what I'm talking about. Remember what Mr. Clark said...

GRIFF

Listen, nobody's gonna look out for me -- except me. You wanna go on chasin' a dream, be my guest. I gotta go.

He exits. Natalie watches him go, tears in her eyes. Behind her, in a booth marked "Elmo's Glue", a BUSINESS EXECUTIVE pats the flanks of an OLD PLOW HORSE.

BUSINESS EXECUTIVE

...Then, we shoot 'em, and make glue out of 'em. Anyways, you don't need to know this. What we need is people to work in the bottling plant...

Natalie slowly turns, heads off through the job faire. She passes a booth where a GARBAGE MAN is showing some Students how to empty trash barrels into the back end of a mock-up garbage truck.

GARBAGE MAN

Now, you see this watch here? I found it wrapped in a dirty diaper. So, if you're thinkin' this job is only \$7.50 an hour, you're wrong. The fringe benefits are limitless.

O.S. Natalie hears VOICES, LAUGHTER. She dries her tears, peeks around the corner of the booth.

ANGLE - NATALIE'S POV - ALONZO AND TWO BAGS

SPEAKING confidentially.

TWO BAGS

Yo, brother, switchin' them tests was the best idea Paco's ever had.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (4)

84

ALONZO

No doubt. We finally got rid of that wack
pain in the ass Clark.

They high-five each other, turn and reclaim their places in a
long line waiting for the campus pay phone. Everyone on line
has their BEEPERS out, checking their pages.

*
*
*

RESUME - NATALIE

*

around the corner, listening, her eyes wide with horror.

85 OMITTED

85*

86 EXT. BARRY HIGH COURTYARD - DAY

86

Victoria posts a Missing Persons notice on a bulletin board. Seems Mr. Arnott has been snatched again. She walks over to a nearby booth adorned with a banner that reads: "STEP INTO AN EXCITING CAREER IN BEGGING!" Anferny stands holding a sign that reads: WILL WORK FOR FOOD. A PANHANDLER stands next to him.

*
*
*

PANHANDLER

*

For best results, I recommend to always buddy up with a mangy dog...or a small child. Now, in the event that someone actually offers you work, just tell 'em you don't take rides from strangers.

(nods at Anferny)

*

Okay, kid.

*

Anferny drops the first sign, revealing a new one underneath: "IN BAD NEED OF LIVER TRANSPLANT".

*
*

ANGLE - VICTORIA

*

Natalie and Julie race up to Victoria. Natalie's near hysterics.

NATALIE

Miss Chapell! We have to call the police! I overheard Paco and his G's talking..!

*

VICTORIA

Now, now, that's not against the law.

In the B.G., Anferny has switched signs again. He's now holding one that reads: "NEED TO SEPARATE FROM SIAMESE TWIN." In succession he drops one placard after another to reveal; "NEED TO GET WIFE'S FUR COAT OUT OF STORAGE," "HAVE HUGE CABLE BILL," "WIFE NEEDS BREAST IMPLANTS," "JAG NEEDS TUNE-UP".

*
*
*

NATALIE

No, no... They switched our tests! Planted fake ones! Now I'm afraid Griff's gonna join the gang again!

*
*

VICTORIA

Oh, my God! That means Richard was fired for... We've got to find him!

*
*
*

(thinks a beat)

But where? Where do you find the most depressed man in the world?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED:

86

JULIE
...The White House?

*
*

Victoria doesn't hear. Suddenly, her face lights up.

*

VICTORIA
Dim sum!

*
*

She takes off. Natalie and Julie exchange a look, head off
after her. Julie grabs Anferny who's now holding a sign that
reads: "JAG NEEDS A TUNE-UP." They exit past the Panhandler.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2)

86

PANHANDLER

Now, a word about housing...

He steps past a large wardrobe box. Motions to a nearby shopping cart, piled high with bags and junk.

PANHANDLER

(CONT'D)

Of course, some folks prefer the freedom of a mobile home.

MUSIC UP

87 EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

87

Victoria, Natalie, Anferny, and Julie on the street. Victoria is showing Clark's picture to PASSERSBY. She stops an ASIAN WOMAN, thrusts the picture in her face.

VICTORIA

Have you seen him?

The Woman shrugs. She doesn't understand. Victoria points at Clark's picture, points at herself.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

My boyfriend... Boyfriend..?

ASIAN WOMAN

Ah!!! Yes!

Victoria brightens. The Woman smiles, nods, pulls out her own picture of a handsome Asian Man.

ASIAN WOMAN

(cont'd, broken English)

My husband.

(a whole sheaf of pictures unfold)

Grand kids.

88 OMITTED

88*

89 EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

89

Victoria and the Kids still canvassing the neighborhood. They see a GUY standing on the bridge railing, ready to jump into the river below. Victoria rushes toward him.

VICTORIA

Richard! Wait! Don't jump! Don't jump!

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

89

Guy turns around, overjoyed. But upon seeing Victoria, his face falls. So does hers. It's not Clark. It's an ASIAN MAN.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2)

89

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
You're not Richard.

ASIAN MAN
You not Wing Su.

The Man's totally despondent. Victoria turns, sees a neon light in a window that says: "DIM SUM". She hurries toward it. In B.G., the Man leaps off the bridge. "Ahhhhhhhhhhh!"

90 INT. MOU MOU BAR - NIGHT

90

Grungy, rundown, dangerous. A couple of CHICKENS peck around the packed crowd of SHOUTING PEOPLE, most of them Asian. Victoria comes down the wooden stairs, pushes her way into the room. She obviously doesn't fit here. She makes her way to the bar, starts turning guys around, looking for Clark. A GUNSHOT O.S. catches her attention.

ANGLE - CLARK

sitting at a rickety table. He's unshaven, looks like he's been on a six week bender. There's a bandana tied around his head. He stares with blank eyes across the table top.

ANGLE - ACROSS TABLE

A stone-faced ASIAN, bandana around his head, too. Staring back at Clark.

ANGLE - CROWD

YELLING out dollar denominations -- \$20, \$50, \$100. A STOUT Oriental MAN raises his hands for silence. He slams a revolver down on the table, spins it. It ends up pointing at Clark.

ANGLE - CLARK

picks up the pistol, puts it to his head. The Crowd is absolutely silent with anticipation. Clark pulls the trigger. There's a loud CLICK. The Crowd erupts into a frenzy. Money changes hands. Clark lays the gun back on the table.

STOUT MAN
Mou! Mou!

The Asian Guy picks up the gun, puts it to his temple. Suddenly, Victoria's at the edge of the table. She thrusts her face in close to Clark's.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

VICTORIA

Richard! What are you trying to do to
yourself?

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (2)

90

Clark stares at Victoria, obviously doesn't recognize her. Victoria puts her hands on his face, looks into his dead eyes.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Richard, snap out of it! It's me! Don't you recognize me?

ANGLE - CLARK'S POV - VICTORIA'S FACE

floating before him, out of focus. Looks like it's been shot through Vaseline -- which, of course, it has.

RESUME - CLARK

his head lolls, his VOICE is weak.

CLARK

Mom?

VICTORIA

No, it's me!

She gives him a big, soulful, tongue kiss. Instant recognition from Clark.

CLARK

Father O'Flannery?

*

O.S. there's a BANG!

ANGLE - ASIAN GUY

He's shot himself. Slides out of his chair. Victoria absent-mindedly sits in the empty chair, leans across the table toward Clark, YELLS above the noisy BETTING of the Crowd.

VICTORIA

Richard, it's me! Victoria!

A flicker of recollection in Clark's eyes. The Stout Man slams the gun down in front of Victoria.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Richard, you have to come with me! Griff's in trouble!

STOUT MAN

Mou! Mou!

(CONTINUED)

VICTORIA

I know you're hurting. I know your dreams
have been shattered. But, Richard, I love
you! And I think you love me.

STOUT MAN

Mou! Mou!

Victoria absently picks up the gun, puts it to her head.

VICTORIA

Together we can turn your life around,
make you a whole person again!

Victoria pulls the trigger. CLICK! She suddenly realizes what
she's done, looks hysterically at the gun.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

AHHHHHHHH!

She flings the pistol on the table.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Richard, you always said to stand up for
what you believe in. Believe in yourself
now! Get up and walk out of here!

CLARK

(coming out of his fog)

I let them down... Griff and the rest...
I don't ever want to teach again.

Victoria looks around at the NOISY, grungy bar.

VICTORIA

Aren't you overreacting a little bit?

CLARK

(really depressed)

Life really is a deep, dark hole.

The Stout Man shoves the gun at Clark.

STOUT MAN

Mou! Mou!

Clark puts the gun to his head.

VICTORIA

Don't do this! I'm begging you, don't...!
Think of what you're throwing away! My
God, I don't know how you stayed alive
down here so long, playing this crazy
game.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: (4)

90

Clark ignores her, pulls the trigger. The gun GOES OFF. Incredibly the shot misses Clark's lolling head, hits the chain holding a huge lamp hanging from the rafters. Cuts the chain cleanly. The lamp crashes down on top of the Stout Man, sending him sprawling onto the table. Victoria stares, incredulous.

*
*
*
*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
(now she understands)

Ah.

Suddenly, the seemingly dead Stout Man reaches up, grabs Clark's throat, begins to strangle him. Horrified, CLARK begins to SCREAM.

VOICE (O.S.)
You, mister! Mister, calm down!

91 INT. MOU MOU BAR (REVAMPED) - DAY

91

The same place, but slightly less dismal. Clark's vision clears. The dead man's face DISSOLVES into the living visage of the BARTENDER (actually played by the same actor). He's leaning over Clark, his hands on his shoulders, shaking him.

BARTENDER
Mister, mister, you okay?

ANGLE - CLARK

sitting at the same table, which is littered with shot glasses. There's no crowd, no gun. The only chickens are the ones roasting on a rottiserie in B.G.. Clark's been suffering from a drunken hallucination. He shakes his head in an attempt to clear it.

*
*

CLARK
Huh..?

BARTENDER
This girl here, she ask about you.

He jerks his thumb O.S.. Clark looks to see...

ANGLE - VICTORIA

approaches, worried.

VICTORIA
Richard. Thank God!

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

CLARK
(weakly)
Victoria..?

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

91

VICTORIA

I've been looking everywhere for you.

She takes in the pile of shot glasses, the empty Sake bottle at Clark's elbow.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Richard, I didn't know you...
(looks around)
...drank.

CLARK

I drank? I thought it was just my pet g'rilla here.

He slings his arm around an elderly Asian WOMAN in a fur coat sitting next to him. Stares hard into her face, trying to focus. Victoria looks at the Woman, then back at Clark. She holds up three fingers in front of Clark's face.

VICTORIA

How many fingers, Richard?

CLARK

Thursday.

Victoria shakes her head.

VICTORIA

We gotta get you out of here.

92 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

92

Anferny's fly ride -- a 1963 Impala convertible -- rips around a tight corner at an ungodly speed. The hydraulic front end is BOUNCING up and down.

93 EXT. CITY STREET/ INT. CAR - NIGHT

93

Anferny's behind the wheel. Natalie sits in the passenger seat. Victoria and Julie are wedged in the backseat holding Clark upright. Victoria's handing him doughnuts. He's gulping them down, ravenously. The car hits a pothole, BOUNCES VIOLENTLY. Clark has trouble finding his mouth with the doughnut. There's powdered sugar all over his face.

VICTORIA

Now, Richard, you're sure you're okay?

CLARK

I was feeling better before I got in this car. Just keep the doughnuts coming. And maybe some saltines for the sea sickness. Or a patch behind my ear.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

Natalie hands back a ridiculously large cup of coffee. Clark immediately tears off the lid, starts to guzzle it.

NATALIE

Careful, we just got that from
McDonalds.

Too late. Clark's poured the scalding coffee down his throat.
He SPUTTERS, his head turns LOBSTER RED.

CLARK

(high hoarse whisper)
Hot! Hot! Hot!

VICTORIA

Richard, pull yourself together. We've
got to get Griff out of that drug deal
before it's too late.

CLARK

Shouldn't we just be calling the cops to
handle this?

NATALIE

That'd be fine...if I didn't mind waiting
twenty years to see Griff again.

Clark looks at her.

CLARK

He'll still be a relatively young man.
And you'll still have some quality child-
bearing years left...

*
*
*

Natalie bursts into TEARS.

VICTORIA

Richard, please! We don't have time for
this. We'll take care of calling the
police. You just get Griff out of there
before they arrive.

NATALIE

Forget it. Griff's screwed.

Clark shakes his head, trying to clear out the cobwebs.

CLARK

No... No. I can do it... I'll just go in
and get him...

Anferny looks back at Clark.

(CONTINUED)

ANFERNY

Look, Mr. Clark, you can't just go in there and say, 'Okay, Griff, we're goin' home.' Otherwise, you be goin' home...in a box.

They hit a pothole. The car BOUNCES wildly.

ANFERNY (CONT'D)

The only way to get Griff out of there is you got to show up in the back room with the cash. You got the cash, you the man.

CLARK

Where am I gonna get the cash?

ANFERNY

Man, DeMarco's gonna be there. What do you think he carries in his briefcase? Food stamps? Your job is to make *his* cash *your* cash.

CLARK

Who's DeMarco?

ANFERNY

Colombian dude. Always wears black. Travels with a very large brother named Rhino. You dig?

CLARK

Yes...I dig. Alright, I can do this.
(determined)
This is something I can do!

Anferny SCREECHES to a stop. Clark takes his cue, stands on the backseat, still looking disheveled, but at least he's upright.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Alright, wait for me here. Nobody move. I'll handle this.

VICTORIA

Richard, sit down. We're not anywhere near the restaurant.

Clark looks up at the RED STOPLIGHT, realizes she's right. As he slides back onto the seat, and the car speeds away, we hear...

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED: (3)

93

ANFERNY (O.S.)

Besides, man, we on Hacksaw turf. You
can't be wearin' that color suit for
another six blocks.

*

94 EXT. "MR. A'S" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

94*

An upscale restaurant. There's a steady flow of customers.

95 INT. "MR. A'S" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

95*

Crowded to capacity. In a back booth, Salvatore DeMarco, dressed all in black, sits alone. Rhino joins him, hands him a briefcase. Very business-like.

DEMARCO

Did you get it?

RHINO

Yeah, it's all in there.

DeMarco opens the briefcase. It's jam packed with bundles of hundred dollar bills. Lots of money. A GUN lies on top. DeMarco closes the case, gently slides it beneath the table.

DEMARCO

Good. We just got time to eat before we meet Mr. "A" in the back.

ANGLE - CLARK

Enters the restaurant, steps past the harried MAITRE D', who's trying to seat people and TALK on the phone at the same time. Victoria comes in behind him.

CLARK

What are you doing?

VICTORIA

I'm here to help you.

CLARK

Are you crazy? This is dangerous. It might require lying, subterfuge, and possibly even violence.

VICTORIA

It's okay... I got a lot of practice with my last boyfriend.

Clark stares at her for a beat. Then, he turns, scans the restaurant.

CLARK

How are we going to tell which one is DeMarco?

ANGLE - VICTORIA'S POV - THE TABLES

Are filled with apple-cheeked, whitebread families...except for the booth in the back. DeMarco and Rhino, dressed in their dark, drug dealer grab, stick out like sore thumbs.

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

ANGLE - VICTORIA

*

Gives Clark a look.

*

VICTORIA

*

We'll just take a wild guess...

*

They head toward the rear of the restaurant.

*

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: (2)

95

ANGLE - MAITRE D' STATION

The Maitre D' hangs up the phone, looks up to see Thaddeus Clark and several of his STUFFY CRONIES enter the restaurant. She smiles at Thaddeus.

MAITRE D'

Mr. Clark! It's a pleasure to see you again. Welcome back. I have your usual table all ready for you.

ANGLE - CLARK AND VICTORIA

Stop at a room labeled: "Employee Locker Room". They look inside.

ANGLE - POV - EMPLOYEE LOCKER ROOM

One employee vest on the rack. A washing machine is going, full of sudsy waiter jackets.

RESUME - CLARK AND VICTORIA

Exchange a glance, look around, then enter the locker room.

96 OMITTED

96*

97 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

97

DeMarco checks his watch, agitated.

DEMARCO

Where the hell's our waiter?

O.S. VOICE

Good evening, Gentlemen...

O.S. there's the sound of WATER hitting the floor. DeMarco and Rhino look up.

ANGLE - CLARK

Standing at the edge of their table, now dressed in a wrinkled waiters' jacket that's not only soaking wet, but also a bit too small for him. DeMarco and Rhino stare at the water dripping on the carpet. Victoria stands behind Clark, wearing the employee vest, looking uncomfortable.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

CLARK

I'm Zack, I'll be your waiter this evening.

(motions to Victoria)

And this is my trainee, Victoria...

He now notices the name tag on Victoria's uniform. It says "PAULA".

CLARK (CONT'D)

Uh...Paula...Paula Victoria. I'm an Aries. I enjoy watersports and dancing. My hobbies are origami and collecting hair samples...

DEMARCO

(interrupting)

Enough small talk. Just bring us two thick t-bones. The best you got.

CLARK

Yes, sir. And would you like those with or without the bones?

DeMarco and Rhino exchange a look. Clark's eyes fall on the briefcase beneath the table. He turns to Victoria, motions at it with his head. DeMarco catches him at it.

DEMARCO

Something wrong with you?

CLARK

(covering, rubs his neck)

Whiplash. I got rear-ended on the way over. I'm meeting with Jacoby and Meyers on my break.

DeMarco shoots him a withering look.

DEMARCO

Yeah, great. And bring us a couple glasses of water, too.

Now Victoria spots the briefcase. She "accidentally" knocks the salt shaker off the table. Bends down to get it. Once out of sight, she reaches beneath the table, tries to pull the briefcase out without being noticed.

CLARK

(stalling)

Well, then, let me tell you a little about our water. It comes from the Los Angeles aqueduct, flowing down a lovely

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

97

CLARK (cont'd)

cement channel on a bed of sun heated
rocks. Then, after being bathed in by
half the city's immigrant population, it
goes directly to our faucets where...

*
*
*
*

DEMARCO

Shut up! Just bring it to us!

*
*

Victoria's almost got the briefcase out. She's trying to
figure how to get away with it. She looks around. Spies A
WAITER passing with a dessert cart.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (3)

97

VICTORIA

I'll take that.

She yanks the cart away. The Waiter shoots her a look. She shrugs, motions at DeMarco.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Sorry... It's his birthday.

The Waiter nods, lets go of the cart. Victoria shoves it alongside DeMarco's table.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Might we suggest a dessert this evening?

DEMARCO

Dessert?!?

CLARK

(surprised, but covering)

Yes. Uh, you know, in Europe, they eat the dessert first.

DeMarco leaps to his feet, gets right in Clark's face.

DEMARCO

Look, you bozo, just bring us what we asked for. Unless you want me to shove this breadstick up your ass!

CLARK

(eyeing the breadstick)

I'm sure it'd taste better if you didn't.

DeMarco goes ballistic. Rhino grabs Clark by the lapels, lifts him off the ground.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(choking)

Ah, you might try buttering it first.

Clark's feet are dangling above the floor. Rhino's about to kill him. Suddenly, A DOZEN WAITERS arrive at the table. ONE holds a cupcake with a lighted candle. Confused, Rhino releases Clark. The Waiters wedge between them.

WAITERS

(singing)

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!
ANOTHER YEAR OLDER, ANOTHER YEAR DONE.
BETTER LIVE NOW AND HAVE LOTS OF FUN...

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (4)

97

Victoria uses the distraction to shove the briefcase on the
bottom shelf of the dessert cart. She and Clark get out of
there fast.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (5)

97

WAITERS (CONT'D)

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY, IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!
THERE'S NO USE IN LYIN', YOU'RE CLOSER TO
DYIN'...

*
*
*

DeMarco looks miserable as the Waiters continue their SONG.

*

98 OMITTED

98*

99 INT. RESTAURANT - BACK STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

99*

A small cramped office that doubles as a storage pantry.
Shelves of cooking utensils and kitchen staples. Off to the
side is the metal door of a WALK-IN FREEZER.

*
*

ANGLE - PACO

*

Bouncing his ball on the desk. Two Bags and Alonzo are
cleaning their guns, loading in clips. Griff sits back,
watching. He absently rummages in his coat pocket, pulls out
a drink coaster.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

99

INSERT - COASTER

It's the one Clark wrote on in the strip bar: "This is your chance." MUSIC UP.

CLARK (V.O.)

It's gotta start with one person. And
that person is you, Griff!

RESUME - GRIFF

Griff stares at the coaster for a beat. He stands decisively,
pulls out his gun, lays it on the desk. Heads for the door.

PACO

Where you goin'?

GRIFF

This is a mistake, man. I can't do it.

O.S. several guns COCK. Griff stops, turns back to see three
pistols pointed at him.

*

PACO

I thought we settled this, Griffy Boy.

Paco slowly crosses to Griff.

PACO (CONT'D)

You better decide right now. You in, or
out? I ain't askin' again.

GRIFF

Define 'in or out'.

PACO

In, you're with us. Out, you're dead.

Griff GULPS.

100 INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - NIGHT

100

Waiters and Cooks moving back and forth. Clark and Victoria
push the cart into a corner. Clark quickly strips off the
waiter's jacket. He glances around, then stuffs the jacket
into an oven. He catches a glimpse of his reflection in a
shiny toaster, stops, thinks a moment as he looks around the
kitchen. He grabs a SINK PLUG, hanging by a brass chain from
the faucet, wrenches it free. O.S. he hears the sound of
tearing cloth. He turns to find...

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*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

ANGLE - VICTORIA

Has torn her blouse open, split her skirt up high. Her hair's down. She's transformed herself into a sultry drug moll.

RESUME - CLARK

Stares in awe at her, dangerously close to meltdown. Victoria looks up at him.

VICTORIA

You ready?

CLARK

Yes, but unfortunately we've got this other thing to do first.

He pops open the briefcase, his eyes bulge at the sight of all that money...and the gun. He gingerly lifts it out, looks around for a place to stash it, tosses it into a MICROWAVE, slams the door shut. They exit FRAME.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: (2)

100

As they leave, a harried WAITER rushes up, flings open the microwave, throws in a limp-looking pasta dish for reheating. He frantically sets the cooking timer at fifteen minutes, hurries away as the microwave begins to HUM.

*
*

101 INT. RESTAURANT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

101*

A HULK stands guarding the hallway. Takes a minute to check the load in his Mac 10.

*
*

ANGLE - CLARK AND VICTORIA

*

Come around the corner. Clark's carrying the briefcase. His shirt's open, the sink stopper chain is draped around his neck. A silver teaball now hangs from his ear. He looks like a drug dealer. They see the Hulk. Instantly, Clark puts on a tough guy swagger. Victoria drapes herself all over Clark as they approach down the hall..

*
*
*
*
*

HULK

What do you want?

CLARK

I'm here to see Mr. "A".

HULK

Who the hell are you?

CLARK

I'm...uh, Mr. "C". Mr. "D" couldn't make it. He's out with Mr. "B".

The Hulk shoots them a look.

*

HULK

You're early.

He moves in, gives Clark a good frisking. Clark's clean.

*

HULK (CONT'D)

Follow me.

*

He leads them down the hallway, passing a leather couch where a WOMAN is writhing and MOANING. Clark motions toward the Woman.

*
*
*

CLARK

(to Hulk)

Strung out on drugs, huh?

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

HULK

No. Performance artist.

(snaps fingers)

That's enough, Alice. We'll let you know.

The Woman gets up, leaves. The Hulk leads them toward a
storage room at the end of the hall.

102 OMITTED

102*

*
*
*
*
*
*

103 INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

103*

Griff, Two Bags, and Alonzo wait expectantly. There's a KNOCK on the door. Paco stops bouncing his rubber ball, checks his Rolex.

*
*

PACO
DeMarco's early...

The door opens. It's Clark and Victoria! Everyone stares dumbfounded.

*

PACO (CONT'D)
You..?!

GRIFF
Mr. Clark..? Miss Chapell...! What're you guys doing here?

*
*

Guns are pulled. The Hulk moves in, gives Clark another good frisking. Clark thinks it's a little weird, but goes with it.

CLARK
(cocky)
We're not in the classroom any more, boys. No need to be so formal.

Paco moves in close, sticks his gun under Clark's chin.

PACO
In two seconds you gonna be one dead teacher. How's that for formal?

*

Clark SNORTS, sarcastically.

CLARK
(bravado)
You're even more lame than I thought, Paco. We've been working for DeMarco all along, buying and selling drugs. Yep, in reality, we're lowlife scumbags, just like you.

*
*
*
*

Paco's not sure how to take this. Clark secretly winks at Griff, who is somewhat confused himself.

*
*

PACO
What're you talkin' about?

*
*

CLARK
What better cover than a teacher and a secretary?

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

VICTORIA
(pointedly)
Administrative assistant.

*
*
*

Clark gives her glance, plunges on.

*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (2)

103

CLARK

Right. Well, enough of the small talk.
I've got business with Mr. "A". Where is
he?

*
*

O.S. VOICE

I'm right here.

Everyone turns as a FIGURE steps out of the shadows. It's
Principal Doyle! Griff can't believe it. Clark and Victoria
exchange looks of astonishment.

*
*

MISS DOYLE

Clark.
(looks at Victoria)
You?

*
*
*

CLARK AND VICTORIA

Miss Doyle!?!

*
*

MISS DOYLE

Around here they call me Mr. "A".

CLARK

Mr.?

MISS DOYLE

I inherited the business from my late
husband.

*
*

Clark quickly gathers himself.

CLARK

I'm shocked.

MISS DOYLE

What, that a woman can run a business?

CLARK

No, that you were ever married.

Everyone winces. Clark hefts the suitcase.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Alright, let's do it.

*

Principal Doyle looks over at Victoria.

*

MISS DOYLE

What exactly is she doing here?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (3)

103

CLARK
She's my bitch.

*
*

Victoria shoots him an indignant look.

*

CLARK (CONT'D)
Well, my significant other... We've been
slappin' skins for quite awhile now.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (4)

103

MISS DOYLE

I don't like this. Something smells
funny... You say you're in with DeMarco?
Why should I believe you?

*
*
*

CLARK

If I don't work for him, what am I doing
with his briefcase?

Principal Doyle looks at the gold engraving on the case:
"DEMARCO"

*
*

MISS DOYLE

That doesn't prove anything. You
could've seen him down in the
restaurant, dressed up like a waiter,
created some kind of diversion, while she
snatched it from under the table.

*

CLARK

(Yipes!)

That's a little far-fetched, isn't it?

VICTORIA

Yeah, think about it... You think he's
capable of all that?

*
*
*

Clark shoots her a look. Guns come out. The Hulk moves in,
frisks Clark again.

*

CLARK

Hey, what's the big idea?

HULK

You work out?

ANGLE - PACO

Beside himself, SLAMS his rubber ball down on the desk.

(CONTINUED)

PACO

I say we off 'em now!

(leering at Victoria)

And then do what we want with their
bodies.

Everyone turns, gives a look at Paco.

MISS DOYLE

Easy, Paco, easy...

She takes a deep breath, turns back to Clark, studies him
closely.

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

So, you like getting high, Clark?

CLARK

(all bravado)

Who doesn't?

He gives Griff another wink.

MISS DOYLE

Then, perhaps you'd like to sample the
finest Crank in town?

Principal Doyle SNAPS her fingers. Two Bags whips out A CASE
OF SYRINGES and A VIAL OF HEROIN. Victoria and Griff watch
worried. Clark GULPS. All he can do now is play it out.

CLARK

Sure, sure... Load me up a spike and
let's kick this party into gear.

Paco grabs Clark's arm, starts rolling up his sleeve.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Hey, easy on the shirt... It's rented.

PACO

Look, man, he's clean. No tracks.

A tense beat. Everyone stares at Clark.

(CONTINUED)

CLARK

I usually take mine in the ass.
(shrugs)
Got used to it as a kid.

The Hulk raises his eyebrows, looks at Clark quizzically.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(pointedly)
Shots!

Paco shoves his gun in Clark's face.

PACO

You startin' to piss me off, man!

Other guns come out. Clark looks at Victoria helplessly.
Victoria seductively walks to a chair, puts her foot up,
exposing a lot of leg.

*
*
*

VICTORIA

Excuse me, something's riding up here.

*
*

Everyone turns to watch as she fumbles with something beneath
her skirt. They're totally engrossed. Clark uses the
diversion to snatch Paco's ball off the desk. Griff watches
quizzically as he tucks the ball into the fold of his arm.

*
*
*
*

MISS DOYLE

(to Victoria)
Hey, what's going on there? Nothing I
know rides up *that* high.

*
*
*
*

Victoria drops her foot. Principal Doyle nods at Paco, who
hands Clark a rubber strap with metal tips.

*

PACO

Here, tie off.

*

CLARK

Of course.

Clark pulls the strap tightly around his arm. Too tight. The
end pops out from between his fingers. FWHAP! It whips Paco
in the face. Paco holds his head.

PACO

Oooo...

Clark finishes tying off. Looks up, sees a giant welt forming
on Paco's forehead.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (7)

103

CLARK (CONT'D)

You should have someone look at that.
Could be malignant.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (8)

103

Principal Doyle hands him the needle. There's no getting out
of it. Clark toasts.

*
*

CLARK (CONT'D)

Well... Here's looking at you, kid.

CLOSE UP ANGLE - CLARK'S ARM

He's injecting the ball.

RESUME - CLARK

*

Fakes being high. Wobbles, sticks his tongue out, bumps into
walls.

CLARK

Whoa, this shit be kickin'. I could
really go for some fresh jams right now.

*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (9)

103

Suddenly, O.S. there's an explosion of GUNFIRE. All duck. The Hulk dashes out. Everyone turns their attention to the kitchen.

*
*

ANGLE - CLARK

Takes this opportunity to put the ball back on the desk where he found it...just in time! Paco reaches over, picks it up, tries to bounce it. The ball hits the floor. THUD! Juice spews out all over Principal Doyle's shoes. She glares hard at Paco, who shrugs and gives a quizzical look at the ball, stuck to the floor like a lump of clay.

*
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*
*

ANOTHER ANGLE

*

The Hulk returns, shaking his head.

HULK

False alarm. Some idiot put a gun in the microwave.

Everyone rolls their eyes. Who could be that stupid? They turn back to Clark, now casually massaging his arm. Principal Doyle motions to the briefcase.

*
*
*

MISS DOYLE

So, it's all there?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

CLARK

As far as you know.

He lays the briefcase on the desk. She opens it.

MISS DOYLE

Half a million?

CLARK

(surprised)

Really?

(catches himself)

Right down to the penny. Now, I'll just take the stuff and be on my way...

MISS DOYLE

All right, wait here.

She and Paco and the Hulk disappear into the inner office.
Two Bags and Alonzo stay behind to keep an eye on things.
They pull out some girlie magazines, are immediately
engrossed. Clark takes the opportunity to pull Griff aside,
WHISPERS urgently.

CLARK

Griff, you gotta get out of here! You're throwing your life away messing around with these drug dealers.

GRIFF

Look who's talking.

VICTORIA

He's pretending! He's not a dealer. He came here to save you!

A beat. Griff stares quizzically at Clark.

GRIFF

You risked your life to come here for me?

CLARK

Of course I did. Well...not the risking my life part. But... Yeah, I did come here for you.

(starts for the door)

Now, let's get out of here before...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (11)

103

Too late. Behind him he hears Principal Doyle and the others return. Clark's forced to cover, immediately shifts gears.

*

CLARK (CONT'D)

...Yeah, like I was sayin', Griffy Boy,
there's always gonna be a market for
good H, you dig? Liquid Twinkle, Evian
From Hell...

MISS DOYLE (O.S.)

All right, here's the stuff.

*

Clark turns, sees several cellophane bags of white powder stacked on the desk. He grabs a knife, sticks it in one of the bags, tastes it.

*

*

*

CLARK

This shit's really sweet.

*

*

MISS DOYLE

It should be...it's sugar.

*

*

Points at some similarly wrapped bags nearby.

*

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

It's the other stack.

*

*

CLARK

Ah... Right.

*

*

Clark hefts one of the bags, holds it up to the light. He has no idea what he's doing.

*

*

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah...stuff looks good...

*

*

Principal Doyle holds out her hand for the briefcase. Clark's just handing it over when...

*

*

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (12)

103

ANGLE - DOOR

Suddenly bursts open. It's DeMarco and Rhino. DeMarco sees Clark, his hand still on the briefcase full of money.

*

DEMARCO

It's the waiter! And his trainee!

*

RHINO

Yeah, where the hell's our dinner?!

DeMarco turns on Rhino.

DEMARCO

You jughead! They're the ones who stole our briefcase!

*

RHINO

Hey! Where the hell's our briefcase?

*

*

(CONTINUED)

This catches Principal Doyle by surprise.

MISS DOYLE

Wait a minute! What the hell's going on
here? We thought Clark was your guy.

DEMARCO

I never seen him before tonight.

Once more, the arsenal of weapons come out, point at Clark.
The Hulk moves in to frisk again. Clark stops him.

CLARK

Hey, another one of these and one of us
is gonna have an orgasm.

Principal Doyle looks hard at Clark.

MISS DOYLE

Clark, you made one huge mistake... You
never should've messed with me.

She opens the walk-in freezer. A gust of cold air swirls
around her grim face. Inside the freezer, we see several
slabs of beef hanging from ceiling hooks, along with a frozen
CORPSE.

MISS DOYLE(CONT'D)

(to DeMarco)

Take care of 'em. I don't want 'em found.

DeMarco hefts a chainsaw into FRAME.

DEMARCO

No problem.

Clark GULPS. Principal Doyle looks at him smugly.

MISS DOYLE

Next time I see you, it'll be on
'Unsolved Mysteries'.

Clark and Victoria are herded into the freezer. DeMarco
cranks on the chainsaw. The NOISE is deafening. Griff's
watching, alarmed. He begins to inch his hand toward the gun
in his waistband.

Principal Doyle clutches the briefcase tightly, turns to
leave. She stops abruptly as she sees...

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (14)

103

ANGLE - ANFERNY

*

And about EIGHT HUGE GUYS blocking the doorway.

*

MISS DOYLE

*

Anferny?

*

ANFERNY

*

In the house.

*

Paco turns, raises his gun to shoot Anferny. Griff acts quickly, punches Paco out. Anferny and his guys swarm in. A melee ensues. Anferny SHOUTS to Clark over the DIN.

*

*

*

ANFERNY (CONT'D)

*

Check it out, Mr. Clark! I'm usin' my head!

*

*

*

He headbutts Two Bags. Spins around, headbutts Alonzo. Both thugs drop to the ground. Anferny grins big time.

*

*

Griff and Paco are slugging it out.

*

Clark rushes Principal Doyle. She fends him off with the briefcase. Then, she gets Clark in a bear hug, starts squeezing the hell out of him. She swings him around roughly. They reel out the door, crash into the hallway.

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104 OMITTED

104*

105 INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - NIGHT

105*

DINERS waiting to be seated turn and stare quizzically as Principal Doyle stumbles out of the kitchen. Clark's on her back, riding her like a donkey. Principal Doyle's trying to swat him off with the briefcase. They spin by the Maitre D' station, go flying into the main dining room. The MAITRE D' doesn't see them. She's busy trying to seat people.

MAITRE D'
(into P.A. mic)
Johnson party of four, your table's
ready...

She looks out into the restaurant.

ANGLE - MAITRE D' POV - CLARK AND PRINCIPAL DOYLE

Tumble onto a table, totally destroy it. Clean linen and shiny silverware fly everywhere.

RESUME - MAITRE D'

Into P.A. microphone.

MAITRE D'
Scratch that. Reed, party of two...

Another huge CRASH O.S.

MAITRE D' (CONT'D)
Never mind.

ANGLE - CLARK AND PRINCIPAL DOYLE

Tumble onto Thaddeus' table. Drinks and food splatter everywhere. Thaddeus looks up, recognizes his disheveled son.

THADDEUS
Richard!?!

CLARK
Dad?!

THADDEUS
My God! What has that school done to you?

Before Clark can answer, Principal Doyle grabs him from behind, begins strangling him.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

THADDEUS (CONT'D)
And who is this...woman?

CLARK
(being choked)
She's...the...principal.

MISS DOYLE
Die, you little weasel!

Clark executes a perfect judo flip. Principal Doyle somehow lands with her feet wrapped around Thaddeus' head -- his face buried beneath her skirt. Everyone in the room stares at Clark, appalled.

CLARK (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... Sorry.

He hurries to extricate Principal Doyle from his father. But she grabs him, flings him hard into a table. Leaps on top of him, begins throttling him.

A106 INT. BACK STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A106*

The fight is still in full swing.

Paco comes at Victoria with a nasty-looking knife, backs her into the freezer.

PACO
Seems to me we got some unfinished business.

Victoria's retreating. Paco's coming after her, relentless. She backs between two hanging slabs of beef.

VICTORIA
You're forgetting one thing, aren't you?

PACO
What's that?

VICTORIA
Richard's not here to help you this time.

Paco looks confused for a moment. Then his eyes bug out as Victoria swings hard. WHAM! It's twilight time for Paco.

B106 INT. RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - NIGHT

B106*

Principal Doyle gets loose from Clark, pulls a gun from inside her jacket. She backs away, swinging the briefcase wildly to clear a path. The briefcase slams into a pillar.

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED:

B106

Half the money spills onto the floor. She holds the gun on Clark, stares forlornly at the scattered cash. She looks up, into the sea of accusing faces surrounding her. The People look away, cower. Principal Doyle turns to Clark.

MISS DOYLE

You know what I'm thinking right now, Clark? My life's over. And you know who I blame? You. That's right...you. With your stupid, high-minded idealism.

(sarcastically mimicking
Clark)

'I can reach these kids. I can save these kids. Miss Doyle, there's no such thing as a bad kid.'

(snarls)

God, I hate you! Nothing's gonna give me more pleasure than to blow your brains out.

She points the gun at Clark's head. Thaddeus PIPES UP.

THADDEUS

Look, so he's not a great teacher. We all knew that. But, it's no reason to kill him...

Principal Doyle swings the gun toward Thaddeus.

MISS DOYLE

Shut up, numbnuts!

Thaddeus dives for cover beneath a table. Principal Doyle turns the gun back on Clark.

MISS DOYLE (CONT'D)

Bon voyage, you pain in the ass.

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED: (2)

B106

Just then, Victoria and Griff burst out of the kitchen with Anferny and his Homies. They're dragging along a battered Paco. Thaddeus sees them enter, his eyes fly open in terror.

THADDEUS
Jesus! More thugs!

Victoria runs to Clark. Griff, Anferny and the others place themselves between Clark and Principal Doyle's gun.

ANGLE - NATALIE

And Julie Rubels and the rest of the Students from Clark's class enter the restaurant. They all join in the human bullet shield.

ANGLE - PRINCIPAL DOYLE

Stares hard at the Students, obviously frustrated by their intervention.

MISS DOYLE
I'm gonna count to three, and if you don't move, I'm gonna start shooting.

Clark can't let that happen.

CLARK
Kids, do what she says. Get out of the way. Don't throw your lives away like this. It's just me she wants.

ANFERNY
(over his shoulder)
Yo, chill, Mr. Clark. This bitch ain't shootin' nothin' but the breeze.

Principal Doyle shakes her head.

MISS DOYLE
I knew I was right. You kids are even bigger morons than I thought.

Griff steps right up to her, gives her a hard look.

GRIFF
That's just what you and people like you want everyone to believe, isn't it? You use that as an excuse to keep us down, to keep us here. But Mr. Clark... He showed us another way out.

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED: (3)

B106

Principal Doyle looks around at the gathered Diners, who are watching spellbound.

MISS DOYLE

Hah! A nice sentiment. And people might believe it if it hadn't been for the fact that you all failed the exams so miserably.

GRIFF

Failed, huh?

He turns to the Students.

GRIFF (CONT'D)

Yo, listen up! If X is seventeen plus the square root of four minus six, what is X?

Clark looks at Thaddeus.

CLARK

Father?

Thaddeus thinks for a beat.

THADDEUS

Well...you know math was never my strong suit...

NATALIE

Thirteen.

Thaddeus shoots her a look. Now Clark steps forward.

CLARK

Who was Vice President during the William Henry Harrison administration?

Thaddeus looks like he's about to answer, but...

STUDENTS

(in unison)

TYLER.

The Students take a menacing step toward Principal Doyle, who grabs Thaddeus, puts a gun to his head.

MISS DOYLE

I'll shoot him! Back off! I mean it!

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED: (4)

B106

CLARK
What was Herbert Hoover's middle name? *

STUDENTS *

CLARK. *

Another step toward Principal Doyle, who retreats toward the door, dragging Thaddeus along. *

MISS DOYLE
Stay away from me! *

CLARK
N.A.S.A.'s Apollo program ended what year? *

STUDENTS *

1970. *

CLARK
Who was responsible for the first moonwalk? *

Before the Students can answer, Anferny PIPES UP: *

ANFERNY
Michael Jackson. *

Everyone stops. The Students turn to him as one, incredulous. *

ANFERNY
Just kidding... It was Louie Armstrong's brother, Neil. *

Students CHEER, APPLAUD. Something O.S. catches Clark's attention. *

CLARK
What civil authority is responsible for protecting our streets and putting drug dealers behind bars? *

Suddenly, the door bursts open. COPS rush in, guns drawn. *

COP #1
Police! *

CLARK
You're right! *

Police swarm in from everywhere, accompanied by a "TOP COPS" CAMERA CREW. The Cops start QUESTIONING people. *

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED: (5)

B106

COP #1

Anybody see what happened?

Without hesitation, everybody points in unison at Principal Doyle. She immediately drops the gun, raises her hands.

GRIFF

(to Cops)

Say hello to Mr. A.

COP #1

This is Mr. A?

(shakes his head)

We've been looking for him for years.

(starts to slap the cuffs on her)

You're under arrest, fella.

She gives him a look. The crowd CHEERS. Anferny steps up to the Cop, motions toward the back room.

ANFERNY

Yo, brother, there's five more gangster pops in the freezer.

ANGLE - PRINCIPAL DOYLE

Being led away by the police. Clark approaches.

CLARK

You know, Miss Doyle, I used to think you were a rigid bitch from Hell. But now I realize the truth... Maybe you just need some warm understanding.

He gives her a sensitive, caring hug. Pulls back, looks down at her chest.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Wonderbra?

Principal Doyle lunges for his throat. It takes three Cops to restrain her.

MISS DOYLE

I swear to God, Clark, when I get out I'm gonna hunt you down and beat you like a circus monkey!

CLARK

Well, it'll be interesting to see if you can still throw a punch in thirty years.

(CONTINUED)

B106 CONTINUED: (6)

B106

The Cops start hauling her away. They pass Griff.

 GRIFF

Yo, Miss Doyle...

She turns, glares at him.

 GRIFF (CONT'D)

Watch out for broom handles.

Huge CHEERS from the crowd.

ANGLE - POV - "TOP COPS" CAMERA

Grainy shots of the police in action. A ROOKIE COP steps over to his commanding officer, SARGE.

 ROOKIE COP

So...what do we do? Take in all the black guys, Sarge? Or just some of 'em?

Sarge looks warily into the "Top Cops" camera. Knows he's being filmed.

 SARGE

Uh...just the guilty ones, Patrolman.

RESUME - CROWD

Everyone hugging and CHEERING. O.S. there are SIRENS, the SCREECH of TIRES. Clark gives a look at Victoria.

 CLARK

More cops?

Victoria shrugs. Just then, a FIREMAN in full gear bursts into the room. A huge CLOUD OF SMOKE follows him in.

 FIREMAN

Some idiot tried to dry his waiter jacket in the oven! The whole restaurant's on fire. She's gonna blow!

Clark looks around, sheepishly.

 CLARK

...Right.

SFX OVER: "POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE" PLAYS. HUGE CHEERS AND APPLAUSE.

106 EXT. BARRY HIGH - ATHLETIC FIELD - DAY

106

Graduation day. "Pomp And Circumstance" playing. The bleachers are filled with CHEERING parents and family, including a proud and beaming Griff's Mom. Hundreds of robed Students fill the sea of folding chairs. There's an electric energy in the air.

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*
*
*

CLARK (V.O.)

*
*
*

Would the graduating class of 1996 please stand?

The Students rise.

*

ANGLE - CLARK

*

Stands behind a podium on the stage, SPEAKS into a microphone, ADDRESSING the gathering. Behind him sits a smiling Thaddeus, decked out with numerous multi-colored educational hoods.

*
*
*
*

CLARK

*
*
*

As I call your name, please step up to receive your diploma...

A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS

*

As our main characters receive their sheepskins.

*

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

106

CLARK
Anferny Jefferson.

*

Crowd APPLAUDS. Anferny shakes hands with Clark, a big smile on his face. He high fives A COUPLE OF HIS HOMIES as he exits the stage.

*

*

*

CLARK (CONT'D)
Natalie Thompson.

More APPLAUSE. Natalie shakes hands with Clark and Victoria. She raises her diploma triumphantly above her head.

*

*

CLARK (CONT'D)
Julie Rubels.

APPLAUSE. A pregnant Julie crosses the stage. She has her INFANT in a carrier on her back, her TWIN TODDLERS in tow.

*

(CONTINUED)

CLARK (CONT'D)
Julie Rubels.

APPLAUSE. Julie heads for the stage. She has her INFANT in a
carrier on her back, her TWIN TODDLERS in tow.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (2)

106

CLARK (CONT'D)

And, our valedictorian, with a 1.35 GPA:
Griff McReynolds.

Huge APPLAUSE and CHEERS. Clark proudly hands Griff his diploma. They go to shake his hands. An awkward moment. They look at each other. Then, Griff embraces Clark emotionally. They've come a long way together. Griff wipes his eye with his sleeve, returns to his seat.

*

CLARK (CONT'D)

Graduates, graduate!

*

A huge UPROAR as everyone moves their tassels across their mortarboards. MUSIC SWELLS. Clark's choked up with pride. Victoria gives him a warm hug. They kiss big time.

*

*

*

ANGLE - GRADUATING STUDENTS

Toss their caps into the air. We follow the mortarboards up into the sky. One of the caps still has a student's hair extensions attached to it.

*

*

CAMERA CRANES UP TO REVEAL

The spotless campus. New trees have been planted, vines again are beginning to crawl up the sides of every building. The school is on its way once more to becoming the picture of a model educational institution.

DRIFT DOWN TO

107 EXT. MARION BARRY HIGH - DAY

107

The statue of Marion Barry in the quad. The flag in its grip has been replaced with a bronze cast guitar. TWO WORKMEN are removing the rock from beneath the statue's foot. ANOTHER WORKMAN is busy changing the head -- the new face looks very familiar... As the rock comes out, the entire statue tilts forward making the pose look like Chuck Berry's classic rock 'n' roll "duck walk". As it tilts, we see the front of school...

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(CONTINUED)

107 EXT. MARION BARRY HIGH - DAY

107

The statue of Marion Barry in the quad. The flag in its grip has been replaced with a bronze cast guitar. A WORKMAN with a grinder is filing down the statue's hair to make it look like a processed 'do. Two other Workmen are removing the rock from beneath Marion Barry's foot. As the rock comes out, the entire statue tilts forward making the pose look like Chuck Berry's classic rock 'n' roll "duck walk". As it tilts, we see the front of school...

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

107

The name across the entrance has been changed to read: "CHUCK
BARRY HIGH".

MUSIC KICKS IN STRONG

END TITLES.