

KINGPIN

Screenplay by

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Director's Draft

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FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - DAY

An amber afternoon sun hangs low behind an old one-pump filling station in corn country.

SUPER: OCELOT, IOWA 1962

ANGLE ON - CALVERT MUNSON, the owner, early 40's, sitting out front next to a Coke machine. He's reading a Des Moines Register newspaper with the headline: "Glenn Orbits Earth". Calvert is square-jawed, crew-cut, sun-baked...the embodiment of Midwestern decency.

Calvert nonchalantly looks up. Something catches his eye and he smiles broadly.

WIDE SHOT - In the distance, a nine-year-old boy in overalls is running as fast as he can up the road toward the station. It's Calvert's son ROY. Cute, freckle-faced, athletic, Roy could have been plucked from a Norman Rockwell painting.

Roy tries to hurdle a fence but falls, then gets up and races to his father.

ROY

Hey, Pa! You have time for a game before supper?

CALVERT

There's work to be done, Roy. What would your ma say?

ROY

Ma's dead, Pa.

CALVERT

Then I guess there's nothing stopping us. Get your ball and I'll meet you out back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BACK OF FILLING STATION - A LITTLE LATER

Abandoned cars and trucks rust in the back yard. Roy and Calvert are standing across from each other.

CALVERT

Okay, Roy. I wanna see a little smoke on this one.

Roy nods, rears back and hurls... a bowling ball.

ON THE BOWLING BALL - moving with great speed over hard-packed dirt, it smashes into ten homemade hand-carved pins.

ON CALVERT - he whistles softly, impressed.

CALVERT
Put that in a bottle and you got somethin'
sweeter than Yoo Hoo.

Calvert resets the pins and coaches Roy as Roy continues to bowl.

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER

Calvert and Roy, in silhouette from behind as they walk toward their little pink ranch house. The sun is setting. Calvert has his arm around the young Roy.

CALVERT
You've got a great gift, son. It's as if
angels came down from heaven and put a
blessing on your three bowling digits. But
just havin' a gift ain't enough. It's how
a man uses that gift that puts the lick on
the popsicle.

ROY
How's that, Pa?

CALVERT
What I'm trying to say, son, is
that...well, bowling's a lot like life. The
winner isn't necessarily the guy who fires
it hard and straight down the middle.
Sometimes it's good to come in on an angle,
maybe even a little slower, but with an
effective spin.
(beat)
You understand what I'm telling you?

ROY
I should try to hook the ball more?

CALVERT
No, Roy, listen to me. Everything I've
taught you about bowling you can apply to
your daily life. If you do that, you'll be
decent, you'll be moral, and you'll be a
good man. You remember that, son, because
your Pa ain't always gonna be here to
remind you.

Calvert takes one more step and collapses to the ground.

ROY
Pa!!!...

After a moment, Calvert stands up.

CALVERT
Goddam gopher holes.

Calvert continues toward the house, limping, as Roy follows.

MUSIC SWELLS

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPER: 1979

CREDITS ROLL and THE BEE GEE'S 'NIGHT FEVER' PLAYS

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

This is a glittery bowlarama, circa Saturday Night Fever. The place is hopping, all lanes are jammed, and there are beautiful girls everywhere. It's like a disco party at a bowling alley.

The doors burst open and all heads turn to see Roy Munson, now 26, enter a la Tony Manero. Following behind him is a line of sharp-dressed, sycophantic, would-be bowling studs. Bowling is cool here, it's the golden age of 10-pins, a bowling dynasty in which Roy Munson sits on the throne.

PAN UP - to a banner: "CONGRATULATIONS ROY MUNSON, STATE AMATEUR CHAMPION."

ON AN ALLEY - The action in the other lanes ceases and all eyes turn to Roy as he and his boys take their favorite lane. Roy takes off his jacket revealing a tailored bowling outfit complete with flashy white shoes, a custom-designed wide-lapeled bowling shirt, and beltless double-knit polyester slacks.

ON THE GIRLS IN THE CROWD - as they swoon with admiration.

BACK ON ROY - He does a few fancy stretches, then unzips his bowling bag. You can hear the GASPS as he pulls out the most sparkling, SHINY SKY-BLUE BALL ever.

Finally Roy steps to the line and lets one fly down the middle --CRASH! But, uh-oh, three pins are left standing. The crowd seems surprised and a little disappointed. Roy crouches down and inspects the boards, checking for irregularities. He takes his ball and moves one lane over, bowls again, and leaves THREE BALLS STANDING. A MURMUR passes through the crowd.

Roy picks up his ball and prepares to go for the spare. Then he stops, walks back to his friends and borrows a second ball. With his back to the pins, Roy fires a ball down each lane at the same time--DOUBLE SPARE! The crowd APPLAUDS as they realize the great Roy Munson has been toying with them.

BACK ON THE DOORWAY - The doors open and Roy's dad Calvert enters. He sees the crowd around his son's lane and can't help but beam.

BACK ON ROY - When Roy's ball returns, he picks it up and waits for the crowd to quiet, then he lets another one fly. But something strange happens--the ball starts to spin wildly, then, about ten feet from the pins it comes to a halt, though its wild spinning continues. A moment later Roy yanks his fist as though "pulling the string" -- the ball takes off like a rocket again and SPLATTERS the ten pins in all directions. The crowd erupts in CHEERS, and Roy smiles at his proud father.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHINY NEW CONVERTIBLE CAR - DAY

Roy's shiny new candy-apple red Chevy Impala convertible with a sparkling white interior is parked at his father's gas station. Roy puts his suitcase and bowling ball bag in the trunk, then turns to his dad.

ROY

Well...all set.

(nervous)

This is kinda weird, huh? Me on the Professional Bowling Tour.

CALVERT

It's your calling, son. One day when people hear the name 'Roy Munson' they're going to think of the greatest bowling champion of them all.

ROY

Earl Anthony?

CALVERT

No, you! You'll be the best. What Dimaggio was to baseball, what Pele is to soccer, Munson will be to bowling.

ROY

I sure hope so, Dad. I want to make you proud.

CALVERT

You just be true to bowling, son, and bowling will be true to you.

Calvert Munson shakes his son's hand. The two men stand for a moment, awkward, uncomfortable. Finally Calvert pulls out a rickety pocket-watch.

CALVERT

Here. Maybe you can get this old thing working. Or if you get in a pinch, you might get a few bucks for it.

Roy steps forward and hugs his dad.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN'S MAIN STREET - DAY

Roy is at the wheel of his shiny new convertible, a smile on his face, as he drives under a banner that reads: "GOOD LUCK, ROY". As a few TOWNSFOLK wave to him, Roy hits the road on his way to fame and fortune.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Roy's first tournament. It is deathly quiet. We can see from the scorecards overhead this is the last frame. Roy picks up his ball and steps to the line.

ON THE CROWD - frozen with anticipation.

CLOSE ON ROY - His eyes are focused in pure concentration.

ON ROY'S FEET - they move gracefully forward.

ON ROY'S ARM - as it arcs back and pauses at the top beyond where it should be able to go.

ON ROY'S FEET - they skid to a stop right at the line.

ON THE BALL -- as it's released. THE CAMERA TRACKS with it down the alley and through the pins in a cool series of shots that indicates someone other than a mere mortal just threw this strike. CRASH!!!

ON THE CROWD - as it CHEERS wildly.

ON ROY - as he smiles. He crosses to his opponent, shakes his hand and pats him on the back. Roy is handed a giant check from a guy dressed as a footpad. The check reads, DR. SCHOLLS INVITATIONAL... \$1,500. He waves to the crowd.

THE CAMERA TRACKS - through the cheering crowd, stopping on BURT DELAND, a good-looking man in his early thirties, dressed in suit and tie. Burt looks very interested in what has just taken place.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Roy's Impala is parked in front of his nondescript cabin. It's quiet except for the occasional sound of a bug flying into the bug zapper light outside Roy's room. Suddenly we hear a car's tires crunching on the gravel as it pulls in next to Roy's Impala.

ON THE DOOR - to the two-tone Cadillac opens and the figure of a man gets out. We see his feet next to the chrome wire wheels of his car.

CLOSE ON - the gas tank of Roy's car. A hand reaches in and pops open gas cap. Something is poured in the gas tank.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Roy's car is on a hoist. Roy and an OLD MAN are looking up at the engine.

OLD MAN
Engine's blown.

We hear the BELL RING as a car pulls in next to the gas tanks. Old Man heads to the gas tanks and Roy follows.

ROY
How much is it going to cost to fix?

OLD MAN
Twenty-two hundred.

EXT. GAS STATION

CAMERA TRACKS with Roy and Old Man to pumps.

ROY
Twenty-two hundred dollars?! That's gonna wipe me out.

The CAMERA settles on the chrome wire wheels of a two-tone Cadillac.

OLD MAN
What can I do you for, mister?

ANGLE ON - Burt Deland, who is behind the wheel of the Cadillac

BURT
Fill 'er up.

Burt gets out of the car to stretch his legs. He looks over at a distraught Roy.

BURT
Hey, aren't you Roy Munson?

ROY
Yes sir.

BURT

I saw you win the tournament the other day.
You've got something special, kid. You're
goin' places,

Roy glances at his car.

BURT (CONT'D)

Believe me. I know talent when I see it...
I manage bowlers for a living.
(sticks out his hand)
Name's Burt Deland.

ROY

Nice to meet you, Mr. Deland. I didn't
even know bowlers had managers.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - LATER

Roy is having pie and milk. Burt is drinking a scotch and smoking
a cigarette.

BURT

...Life on the road for a young bowler like
yourself can be very difficult. Very
expensive. Have a little bad luck like
you've run into and all your dreams can go
right up in smoke. That's where I come in.
I provide bowlers with supplemental income.

ROY

(with a mouthful of pie)
Supplemental income?

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Burt is driving. Roy is sitting next to him and looks concerned.

ROY

I don't know about this, Mr. Deland.

BURT

It's just bowling, Roy.

ROY

Yeah, I know but...

BURT

Look, if you're not up for it, you're not up for it. Just give me the word and I'll turn the car around. You can go home and tell your mommy and daddy you don't want to be a bowling champion.

Roy thinks about this.

ROY

You don't have to turn around.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A dreary town in the middle of nowhere. Windows are broken out of abandon stores. Newspapers blow past rusted pick up trucks. Burt Deland's car pulls into the parking lot of the run-down bowling alley.

BURT

You know what to do?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

As dreary as outside. The place is nearly deserted. A handful of people are bowling.

ON A SNACKSHOP/BAR - in the back of the alley.

ANGLE ON - Roy and Burt, seated at the bar. The OWNER serves them drinks. Roy looks nervous. Burt nods to him...it's time to begin.

BURT

Two more for me and my friend.

The Owner brings over two beers. Roy pays from a large wad of bills.

OWNER

You buyin' the beers, or the whole place?

Roy shoves wad back in pocket.

ROY

My bonus money. Had a good month.

BURT

Good month? He's the best salesman in the company.

OWNER
What do ya fellas sell?

BURT
Dictionaries. Door to door.

OWNER
You puttin' me on?

Burt gives Roy a look.

ROY
Heck no. That would be...iniquitous of us.

The Owner nods, seemingly satisfied.

ROY (CONT'D)
Burt, let's bowl a couple. Whatta ya say?
Ten bucks a game.

Roy pours his beer into the potted plant. He slams down the empty glass on the bar.

BURT
Forget it, Roy. You're too drunk to bowl.

ROY
Come on, Burt. Just a few games.

BURT
No. I'd just be taking your money.

The Owner turns around.

OWNER
If you're looking for a little friendly action, I know somebody who might accommodate ya.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - LATER THAT NIGHT

The building is dark and completely empty except for the lone lane that is lit in the middle of the alley. Roy and Burt are seated on one side of the alley. The Owner and a group of men are on the other.

We see THE MAN bowling against Roy from behind. He approaches the lane and throws the ball with perfect form. STRIKE!

ON BURT - he winces, then throws back a shot of whiskey. Roy picks up his ball and nervously bowls.

ON THE PINS - as the ball smashes through them. Three remain. The five, seven and the ten. An almost impossible spare.

BURT
Damn! He was robbed!

ON ROY - defeated, walks back and sits next to Burt. THE MAN approaches Roy and holds out his hand.

THE MAN
That's game, fellas. I believe you owe us another twenty-five dollars.

Roy hands him the money.

ROY
I sure haven't gotten much mercy here tonight.

ON THE MAN - A priest, FATHER HINCHEY, smiles.

FATHER HINCHEY
You'll have to forgive me. Bowling for money is my only vice.

Hinchey takes a healthy swig from a flask.

FATHER HINCHEY
Okay. Two vices.

ROY
Let's go, Burt.

BURT
Give us a chance to win back some of our money. What are we into you for, padre? A hundred?

FATHER HINCHEY
Hundred and fifty.

BURT
Double or nothing he can make that spare.

ROY
You're a damn fool, Burt. That's near impossible.

Burt throws back another drink, then turns to the group.

BURT
I've got a thousand dollars. Anybody else want a piece of the action?

ROY
Burt, no...

OWNER
I'll cover that bet. Bowl, boy.

Roy picks up his ball and looks at the man.

ROY
It ain't boy. The name's Roy....

Roy lets the ball fly. He turns and faces the men before the ball reaches the pins.

ROY (CONT'D)
Roy Munson.

ON THE PINS - Roy makes the spare.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A somber Roy is sitting in the passenger seat of the car. Burt, LAUGHING and carrying a huge wad of cash, hops behind the wheel.

BURT
What'd I tell you, Roy? What did I tell you?

ROY
Something about it doesn't sit right with me, Mr. Deland. Are you sure this is legal?

BURT
I never said that, kid. I said it was easy.

Burt's laughter is cut short by an earthquake level CRASH.

ROY AND BURT'S POV - Through the shattered front windshield we see Father Hinchey and the group of men. One of them holds the baseball bat that did the job on the windshield.

ON BURT AND ROY - they look concerned. The back windshield is smashed.

BURT (CONT'D)
A double. Not good.

Burt indicates to Roy that they should get out of the car.

BURT (CONT'D)
Well, let's see what kind of trouble we've got here.

EXT. CAR

Roy gets out and closes the door. Burt floors the gas pedal. The car hauls ass into the distance and disappears.

ROY
Boy, I'm in trouble now. He just took off with all my dictionaries.

OWNER
Hold out your hand, boy.

ROY
Now, fellas, no need to get iniquitous.

The men grab Roy's hand and hold it out. ZOOM IN ON ROY'S HAND - We see the ring on Roy's finger....STATE AMATEUR CHAMPION 1979

CLOSE ON ROY - He knows he's in deep shit.

ROY (CONT'D)
Father, please stop them.

Father Hinchey pulls his fake collar off.

FATHER HINCHEY
Yeah, I'm a priest like you're a dictionary salesman.

ROY
Oh, boy...

CUT TO:

CLOSE - AUTOMATIC BALL RETURN HOLE

The men are holding Roy forcing his arm halfway into the return hole.

ANGLE ON ROY - He looks terrified.

ROY
There must be some way I can work this debt off. I'll reset pins here for a month.

The "Priest" motions to the men who force Roy's arm all the way into the hole. We hear a GROTESQUE GRINDING NOISE and

ROY
Oh my god...No...Noooooooo!!!!

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - DAY

A real shit hole. A sign out front reads: ROOMS BY THE MONTH... WEEK... HOUR.

SUPER: SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA 1995

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

It's worse inside. People can be heard arguing faintly off in the distance. The CAMERA PANS past peeling paint on the walls... stained shades with holes in them let the morning sun come through. The CAMERA continues past the beat up furniture, a hot plate with God knows what splattering all over it, to the back of the head of the man sleeping in the bed. The CAMERA PANS past him, finally landing on a taped together clock radio on a nightstand next to the bed. CLOSE ON THE CLOCK RADIO - The time goes from 7:29 to 7:30. Music comes on. It's GOOD DAY SUNSHINE by the BEATLES.

BEATLES

GOOD DAY SUNSHINE....

GOOD DAY SUNSHINE....

GOOD DAY SUNSHINE....

The man's hand reaches out for the clock but can't find it. Suddenly AN ARTIFICIAL METAL HOOK HAND comes crashing down on the clock radio. It's now quiet. The CAMERA PANS up and we see who's attached to the hook--IT'S ROY. The room looks better than he does.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - DAY

Roy opens his door and pokes his head out. With the exception of a sport coat, he's still wearing tacky bowling attire--wide lapels, double-knit slacks, etc. He looks around nervously. Then, satisfied, he walks down the steps past an OLD DRUNK sitting out front.

ROY

How's life, Frank?

OLD DRUNK

Takin' forever.

Roy climbs behind the wheel of the same Impala convertible he drove seventeen years earlier. Its once candy-red color is now dulled, dirty, and rusted. The bumper barely hangs on by weathered duct tape, the muffler's attached by a piece of rope, and the radio antenna has been replaced by a twisted coat hanger.

OLD DRUNK (CONT.)

Hey, Roy, can you get sick from drinking piss?

This catches Roy by surprise.

ROY

Uh, I don't know, Frank.

OLD DRUNK

I gotta find out.

Roy nods and as he turns the engine over he hears:

LADY'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, Captain Hook, wait up!

ROY'S POV - It's his landlady, MRS. DUMARS, one of the angriest and ugliest women God ever let loose on this planet. She's dressed appropriately in floral housecoat and terry cloth slippers.

Roy puts the car in drive and SPEEDS OFF.

MRS. DUMARS
(CALLING OUT)
I want that rent by tomorrow or you're outta here!

CUT TO:

EXT. LANCASTER BOWL - DAY

The bowling alley parking lot. Roy's car pulls in. He rolls up his window and gets out. The window crank is still in his metal hand. He takes it out, opens the car door and tosses it in. He shuts the car door and starts to walk away but stops when he realizes the door handle is still in his artificial hand. He removes the door handle from "hand" and puts on his sports jacket. The metal hand tears through the length of the right sleeve.

ROY
Son of a bitch.

Roy walks around and opens the trunk of the car. He's looking for something. He finds it. He fumbles with it for a moment.

CLOSE ON ROY - He brings right hand up into frame. He now has a prosthetic hand on over "the hook." Not the best, but pretty good. He looks at the rubber hand and smiles.

CLOSE ON HAND - On the third finger the big, tacky ring which reads: STATE AMATEUR CHAMPION 1979.

Roy grabs a clipboard and walks to the entrance of the bowling alley.

INT. LANCASTER BOWL - NIGHT

Hasn't changed much since the fifties. A bar-grill. Register and shoe rental area. Jukebox, pinball machines, video games. A few people are bowling. Ugly people. Bowling's heyday has come and gone. Now it's about as cool as...well, bowling.

INT. LANE MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

RICH CARRUBA, the twenty-year-old rotund manager of Lancaster Bowl is at his desk. He's flipping through the pages of ASIAN BRIDES MAGAZINE. Roy walks in, clipboard in hand.

ROY

Okay, Mr. Carruba, I checked your stock and made a list of what you need.

RICH

I already told you. We don't need anything.

Rich continues to look through the magazine.

ROY

Let me be the judge of that. Okay, I've got you down for a fifty gallon drum of lane oil, a gross of bowlers tape, a hundred cases of....

RICH

I said we don't need anything.

ROY

Then what about the novelty machine in the men's room? I better leave you a couple dozen Sexual Positions From Around The World booklets...a few toe nail clippers... some Lord's Prayer magnets... a couple of cases of miniature insult cards.

RICH

We don't have a novelty machine in the men's room anymore.

ROY

And you call this a bowling alley?

RICH

(dog-earing a page in the magazine)

Here we go. Mai Su Lee.

(considering)

Mrs. Mai Su Lee Carruba. Number 752.

(presses intercom on phone)

Madge, get me a two hundred dollar money order.

Rich looks up to see Roy still standing there.

RICH (CONT'D)

Look, Munson, I know you did business with my father in the past...but I buy mail order now. It's cheaper. Besides, no one really wants that crap anymore. There hasn't been a decent crowd in this joint in fifteen years.

ROY

I'll admit, Mr. Carruba, bowling's in a little slump but it'll come back. It always does. It's America's game. It slumped in the 50's, peaked in the 60's, did okay in the 70's, fell off again in the 80's. It's due for a comeback, mark my words. And when it does you'll want to be well-stocked.

RICH

I got news for you. If it weren't for these video games in here, I'd go broke. Face it--bowling's dead. Dead!

ROY

You watch your tongue, pal.

RICH

Munson, I'm sorry. I really am. Before you go, stop by the grill and have an egg salad sandwich. It's on the house.

He pats Roy on the shoulder and leaves. Roy stands and screams after him.

ROY

You've got some nerve, you little piss ant! Bowling will never die. Do you hear me?! Never! And do you think you can buy off seventeen years of hard work with a crummy egg salad sandwich?! Well do you?!!

INT. BOWLING ALLEY -THE BAR GRILL AREA

CAMERA TRACKS past a couple of people at the counter and stops on Roy, eating an egg salad sandwich. He's reading the 'USA Today' and is completely over his tirade. Suddenly he hears what sounds like A THUNDERCLAP.

PUNCH IN - on Roy's face as he turns to where the sound has come from.

ANGLE ON A BOWLING ALLEY - ISHMAEL BOORG, a giant of a boy, in his twenties, sweet looking...longish blond hair, physique of an offensive lineman. A straight arrow all American farm boy. He's on the lane by himself. Ishmael has just bowled the "thunderclap" strike. As Ishmael is about to bowl again, Roy walks up behind him.

ROY

You stroke a helluva ball. But I'll bet
when you're off you leave a lotta buckets.

ISHMAEL

Excuse me?

ROY

Buckets. The 3 - 5 - 6 and 9. It's from
hitting your target pin too square which
chops the five and deflects off the back.

ISHMAEL

You can tell all that from watching me
throw one strike?

ROY

I didn't see the strike. I heard it.

ISHMAEL

Heard it?

ROY

Try moving two boards to the right. It'll
minimize the chop and get you cleaner to
the pocket.

Ishmael reluctantly does it. He lets the ball go with a
tremendous amount of force.

CLOSE ON ROY - a THUNDERCLAP again. LOUDER this time.

ISHMAEL (O.C.)

Golly.

ROY

(to himself)

Sweeter than Yoo Hoo.

Ishmael begins gathering his things.

ISHMAEL

How do you know so much about bowling?

ROY

Maybe this'll answer your question.

Ray holds out his hand with his championship ring on it.

ISHMAEL

Wow, that's really something. What's it
made out of?

ROY

Fourteen karat gold.

ISHMAEL
Really? It looks like rubber.

ROY
Not the hand. The ring.

ISHMAEL
Oh. Wow, State Champion.

ROY
Name's Roy Munson.

ISHMAEL
Ishmael Boorg.

ROY
You've got as smooth as stroke as I've ever
seen, son. What's your average?

ISHMAEL
I don't know, 265...270.

Roy WHISTLES. Ishmael nervously rushes away, and out the front door.

ROY
Hold on. What's the hurry?

As Roy races after Ishmael, he passes the bowling alley manager, Mr. Carruba.

RICH
You're wasting your time, Munson. The kid
lives out in Brimfield.

ROY
So?

RICH
Brimfield's an Amish community.

ROY
He's Amish?

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ishmael is about to take off on his bicycle when Roy comes outside.

ROY
Hey, wait up. I want to talk to you.

ISHMAEL
About what?

ROY
 Look, kid, I've been thinking about getting into managing some bowlers. Maybe you can be the first to join my stable. With your talent and my knowledge, you could be a champion. I mean that.

ISHMAEL
 I'm sorry, sir, but I don't want to be a champion.

With this, Ishmael turns and pedals off on his bike.

ROY
 (to self)
 Don't want to be a champion...
 (shakes head)
 Goddam MTV generation.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROY'S MOTEL -- AFTERNOON

We see Roy's car parked out front. PAN UP THE STREET to a convenience store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Drab as hell. The fluorescent lighting makes the bags under the CLERK's eyes seem even more yellow than they are.

ON A PAY PHONE IN THE CORNER - Roy is on the phone.

ROY
 (into phone)
 That's right, fifteen minutes. Don't be late....Okay.

Roy hangs up, pours himself a cup of coffee and moves to the counter.

ROY (CONT'D)
 Where's the milk for the coffee?

The Clerk looks up from reading Hustler.

CLERK
 We're all out.

ROY
 What do you mean you're all out? What do you call that?

Roy points to a row of milk containers in the cooler.

CLERK

If you want to buy one, help yourself, but the freebies are all out. We open one carton a day and that's it.

ROY

Come off it. Milk always comes with coffee. It's like peanut butter and jelly, mustard and hot dogs, talk shows and morons. You're telling me I can't have milk with my coffee?

CLERK

No. I'm telling you you can't have free milk. Like I said, you're more than welcome to buy a carton if you'd like.

ROY

(pissed)

Forget it.

Roy pulls out a twenty-dollar bill and holds it up.

ROY (CONT'D)

Here you go. Oh...

He points behind the Clerk.

ROY (CONT'D)

...I'll also take a pack of Marlboros. Do they come with matches?

The Clerk turns to get it.

ANGLE ON THE TWENTY - in Roy's hand. There's a ten hidden underneath it. When the Clerk turns, Roy puts down the ten. The Clerk picks up the ten and gives Roy change for a twenty.

CLERK

Seventy-five makes four, five, and five is ten, and ten is twenty.

ROY

If you ever need to just talk, call me.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINI-MART - AFTERNOON

Roy comes out of the store and starts up the street. He comes upon a MOTHER having trouble getting her BABY in a stroller over the street curb.

ROY

Ohhhh...

Roy walks over and helps the Mother.

ROY (CONT'D)

There you go.

MOTHER

Thank you.

Roy bends over to take a look at the Baby holding its bottle.

ROY

Absolutely precious. Treasure this special time. They grow up so fast.

Roy brushes his hook under the Baby's chin as the Mother looks on nervously.

ROY (CONT'D)

Coochie coochie coo.

Roy smiles. The Mother hurries away. Roy starts back toward his apartment. As he does, he pulls the baby bottle out of his jacket and squirts milk into his coffee.

ROY

(under breath, still pissed)

Charge me for milk...What a low-life.

Roy mixes the coffee with his hook, then nonchalantly tosses the baby bottle into a garbage can. He begins to walk, then suddenly stops in his tracks.

ROY'S POV - His ornery landlady, Mrs. Dumars, is being mugged by a CRAZED-LOOKING MAN in his mid-30's. He waves a switchblade in her face.

CRAZED-LOOKING MAN

Give me the pocketbook, lady.

ON ROY

ROY

Hey!

Roy hurries to the rescue. The Crazy-Looking Man grabs her pocketbook, then jumps back as Roy steps between him and Mrs. Dumars.

ROY (CONT.)

Give it back, pal. What are you, a sissy, you need a purse?

Roy takes a step closer and the Robber raises his knife. Roy raises his hook at the Robber.

CRAZED-LOOKING MAN

Step back, pal, or I'll slice your throat.

The Robber takes a swipe at Roy. He steps back, avoiding the blade, then throws his steaming coffee into the Robber's face.

CRAZED-LOOKING MAN (CONT.)
 Shit! You burned me, you bastard.

Roy lunges again, hooking the purse out of the robber's hand.
 Finally the Robber hightails around the corner.

ROY
 (CALLING OUT)
 That's right, you chickenshit, run home to
 mommy!

Roy turns to see Mrs. Dumars looking at him in shock.

ROY (CONT.)
 Are you okay?

MRS. DUMARS
 I'm fine, I'm fine.

Roy hands Mrs. Dumars her purse.

MRS. DUMARS (CONT.)
 That was a very brave thing you did,
 Munson. You're a hero, a genuine hero!

ROY
 I don't know what happened. I guess it was
 instinct. Believe me, nine out of ten times
 I'd be running the other way.

Roy starts into his apartment, then turns.

ROY (CONT'D)
 Oh, by the way, I'm sorry about the rent. I
 want you to know that--

MRS. DUMARS
 --Don't you worry about that, Roy. You can
 pay me the money whenever you get it. I
 know you're good for it.

This brings a half-smile to Roy's face, then he continues to his
 apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roy is paying off the "robber" from downstairs, LENNY. He lays the
 money on the kitchen table.

ROY
 What fifty bucks? We agreed on twenty-five.

LENNY
 I think I deserve a little extra for
 getting third-degree burns on my face.

Lenny starts walking around the room like he's looking for something.

ROY

Hey, I told you not to use any weapons. I'm trying to buy a little extra time on my rent, not give the lady a heart attack.

LENNY

I had to make it look real, didn't I? Where's your newspaper, I've gotta take a dump.

ROY

I didn't get the paper today.

LENNY

Oh come on, man, I gotta go bad.

ROY

There's a bottle of Prell on the bathtub.

LENNY

New, improved? With the propylene glycol?

ROY

That's the one.

LENNY

I've already read it.

Suddenly there's a KNOCK at the door. Roy picks up the twenty-five bucks and pushes Lenny toward the open window.

ROY (CONT.)

(whispering, to Lenny)

Take this and get the hell out of here.

LENNY

Give me fifty or I stay.

ROY

(panicked)

Thirty-five.

LENNY

Fifty.

But it's too late. Mrs. Dumars opens the door with her key. She's carrying a bottle of bourbon.

MRS. DUMARS

Roy, I know how you like to drink so I brought--

She freezes when she sees Lenny.

MRS. DUMARS (CONT.)
 Why you no good--
 (figures it out, stares at
 Roy)
 --son of a bitch!

Lenny's seen enough. He ditches back out the window.

LENNY
 Roy, you still owe me twenty-five!

ROY
 (winging it, after Lenny's
 gone)
 And stay out!

He turns to Mrs. Dumars, but he's at a loss for words.

MRS. DUMARS
 Munson, I'm calling the cops. You're
 history.

She turns to leave.

ROY
 No, Mrs. Dumars, wait. Maybe we can strike
 an arrangement. Let me work it off. There
 must be something around here that needs
 tendin' to.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S ROOM - LATER

Mrs. Dumars and Roy are in bed. Mrs. Dumars, in afterglow, is smoking a cigarette. God, she's ugly--like the "Throw Momma From the Train" lady without the pretty eyes. Roy is in the fetal position WHIMPERING.

MRS. DUMARS
 Stop it. It wasn't that bad.

As she stands to get dressed, WE SHOOT HIS PAINFUL REACTION to her nakedness through her pathetically misshapen, varicose-mapped legs.

MRS. DUMARS (CONT.)
 That's one month. I'll be back for the rest
 on Friday. You read me, Tiger?

Roy GRUNTS. She walks to the door and picks a bowling magazine off a table.

MRS. DUMARS (CONT.)
 I got two bits of advice for you, Munson.
 Number one: Why don't you forget this
 bowling crap and get yourself a real job.

She tosses the magazine onto the floor besides Roy's bed.

MRS. DUMARS (CONT.)

Number two: If I were you I'd start doing a few tongue exercises before Friday.

She wiggles her tongue at him wantonly, then SLAMS THE DOOR as she leaves.

ON ROY - He looks terrified, unable to move. He lays there and shivers for a few moments, then he notices something on the floor:

ON THE BOWLING MAGAZINE - It reads: "The Reno Open, \$1,000,000 Winner Take All".

Roy thinks about this for a moment, and we

CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

An Amish woman, RACHAEL, cuts and cleans vegetables in the kitchen. The light from the window illuminates her face (which happens to be bearded.) There is a KNOCK on the door.

ON RACHAEL - she crosses to the door and opens it. Roy is there in overalls, workshirt, straw hat and Amish beard.

ROY

Good day. I'm Hezakiah Munson, passing through on my way to Ohio. Any shinglin' or butter churnin' need doin'?

INT. BOORG DINING ROOM - LATER

Roy is seated at a long table in the country kitchen of the Boorg farmhouse. At the end of the table is Ishmael's father, SAMUEL. His mother Rachael is putting another platter of food on an already bountiful table. Their handsome son THOMAS, 30, his pretty wife SARAH, 22, and the Boorg's youngest son LUCAS, 10, are also there. Rachael sits down as young Lucas reaches for a biscuit. So does Roy.

SAMUEL

You know better than that, Lucas. We're waitin' on your brother to get in from the fields...

He puts it back. Roy takes a bite out of his, then noticing that everyone's staring at him he spits it out and puts it back on his side dish--then feeds it to the family DOG.

RACHAEL

So how many children do you have, Brother Hezakiah?

ROY
(not paying attention)
None, that I know of.

Samuel and Rachael exchange looks.

ROY (CONT'D)
I mean...what I meant was, uhh..we're
unable to have children... a nasty
railsplitting accident as a young man. So
we decided to adopt. Two twin Quaker boys
and a Menonite girl. My wife - the
liberal.

Ishmael comes through the back door.

ISHMAEL
Sorry I'm late.

SAMUEL
Ishmael, I'd like you to meet our guest
from Ohio, Brother Hezakah.

Ishmael turns and is frozen in stunned silence.

SAMUEL (CONT.)
Stick out your hand, boy, You're looking
at him like he's a tourist with a camera.

Ishmael shakes Roy's hand, unable to believe he's there in full
Amish regalia. Everyone bows their heads. Ishmael continues to
look at Roy in horror.

SAMUEL
Lord, bless our home and this bountiful
table. We thank you for the guest
providence has brought our way. I'm sure
Brother Hezakah's stay here will serve to
enrich our lives. Help us find a way to
enrich his as well.

ROY
Amen.

Roy and Ishmael exchange looks. Thomas also glances at Roy, sizing
him up.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOORG HOUSE FRONT PORCH - DUSK

Roy is sitting on a wooden chair, feet up on the fence. Ishmael
comes out of the house and looks around nervously.

ISHMAEL
You can't stay.

ROY

I'm an invited guest.

ISHMAEL

Why did you come here?

ROY

We didn't get a chance to finish talking at the alley.

ISHMAEL

Your going to make trouble for me. I'm already the black sheep around here. Look, my grandfather took me bowling when I was a little kid. It was our secret. The Amish don't like secrets. If anyone around here found out I go to that bowling alley now and then... well, I don't know what would happen.

ROY

Ishmael, in two weeks there's a bowling tournament at the Showboat Hotel in Reno, Nevada. First prize is one million dollars. The best bowlers in the country are gonna be there and with my help I think you can beat every one of them.

ISHMAEL

Nevada? They say that's sin city.

ROY

Actally it's a state. And you can't believe everything you see in the movies.

ISHMAEL

I've never been to the movies.

ROY

This may be a good time to talk about our financial arrangement.

ISHMAEL

We don't take our pleasures in material rewards.

ROY

So the standard eighty-twenty split would be agreeable?

ISHMAEL

Look...

ROY

I'm kidding. Everything we make we split right down the middle. Equal partners. Fifty - forty-five, all the way.

ISHMAEL

What happens to the other five percent?

ROY

You don't want dental?

ISHMAEL

I think it's best that you go. By tomorrow they'll surely find out that you're a fraud.

ROY

How?

ISHMAEL

You don't understand, sir. Amish people demand more of themselves. We take pride in working half again as hard as you do. You people work eight hour days, we work twelve. We do whatever you people would do, plus a half. That's how we survive. I don't think you're the type of man who can keep up.

ROY

Oh no? Don't underestimate me, kid. I'll show you who can keep up and who can't.

Suddenly a beautiful girl, REBECCA, appears from around a corner. She glows with decency and innocence. A Botticelli in a Monet.

REBECCA

Hi, Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

Evening, Miss Rebecca.

REBECCA

I came over to see if you'd like to go for a walk.

ISHMAEL

Wow. You bet.

Ishmael shoots Roy a look, then heads off for a stroll with his girlfriend.

A moment later, the front doors open and Ishmael's mother comes out reprimanding young Lucas. The family dog follows.

RACHAEL

If I told you once, I told you a thousand times, Lucas. You don't hit a dog!

LUCAS

But he's disobedient.

RACHAEL

I don't care. Son, know who you are. You are Amish, and the Amish people do not condone violence toward man, beast, or any living thing. Now, if I ever see you raise a hand to that dog again, so help me God, you'll be sleeping in the barn for a week.

Rachael goes back in the house.

Roy is left with young Lucas and the Hound Dog on the porch. The boy sits down, pouting.

ROY

Your Ma's right, boy. Violence only begets violence.

LUCAS

But he won't do anything I say. I ask him to sit, he stands. I ask him to fetch, he runs the other way.

ROY

Well, maybe you're not going about teaching him the right way. I've always found that the flick of a finger is just as effective as the blow of a clenched fist.

LUCAS

Really?

ROY

Oh sure.

(beat)

'Course you gotta flick him in the right place. You rattle them gonads pretty good and that pooch'll do just about anything you want.

Lucas thinks about this and smiles.

LUCAS

Thank you, sir. I appreciate your advice.

Ishmael's father Samuel appears in the front door with his son Thomas.

SAMUEL

It'll be an early morning, Lucas. It's best you get to bed.

Lucas leaves.

SAMUEL (CONT.)

There's a barn-raising in the morning, could use another hand.

ROY
Tell me about it.

Roy holds up his rubber hand. Samuel grows uncomfortable.

SAMUEL
I mean we could use some help tomorrow.

ROY
Oh, yeah, sure. You can certainly count on old Jeremiah.

THOMAS
Jeremiah? I thought your name was Hezakah?

ROY
It is. Jeremiah... is my nickname. Had it since I was a kid...On account of this pet...See, Jeremiah was a bullfrog, was a good friend of mine. Well, joy to the world.

As Roy heads off, Thomas gives him a long hard look.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOORG HOUSE - MORNING

Sunrise. Dew. Mist. Samuel, Rachael, Ishmael, Sarah and Thomas are in the buggy waiting. Everyone looks unhappy. Thomas, particularly stoic and perturbed, glances at his pocket watch, then to the barn.

Lucas comes out of the barn.

LUCAS
Pa, his bed's made and he isn't in there. He must've left.

Ishmael looks pleased.

THOMAS
I guess Brother Hezekiah was afraid of getting his fingernails dirty.

SAMUEL
Thomas, you shouldn't be so quick to judge your brother.

Just then, they hear a HOLLER, and look to see a chipper Roy come from around the back of the barn. He's lugging a huge, SLOSHING pail of milk and wearing a MILK MUSTACHE.

ROY
Mornin'! Hope you don't mind but I got up a little early so I took the liberty of milking your cow.

ON THE BOORG FAMILY - they look at one another.

ROY (CONT'D)
Took a while to get her warmed up, she sure is a stubborn one. Then, POW, all at once!

SAMUEL
Uh, Brother Hezekiah, we don't have a cow.
(beat)
We have a bull.

Roy (with thick milk mustache) nods at this, deadpan.

ROY
Would you happen to have an extra toothbrush lying around?

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Inspirational Music. From all directions tiny ant-like shapes converge at a rise in the meadow. As we get closer we see that the figures are Amish men carrying tools, meeting wagons filled with lumber.

ON THE AMISH WOMEN - they pull up in buggies and begin unloading food in preparation for the mid-day feast which is many hours away.

ON THE CHILDREN - running through high golden grasses to catch a butterfly. ON THE MEN - strapping on toolbelts and unloading lumber all with good cheer, fellowship and enthusiasm.

ON THE BOORG BUGGY - as it arrives. Everyone gets out. Samuel and Ishmael head toward the barn raising. Rachael, the girls and Roy head to where the food is being prepared. Ishmael runs over, grabs Roy by the arm and redirects him to where the work is.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARN RAISING MONTAGE - DAY

A large hole is drilled with a hand auger. A peg is pounded into a hole. It fits with exacting precision. A piece of lumber is hand sawed and planed with surgical accuracy. ETC. All of the images indicate that this is a group effort of flawless, old world craftsmanship.

ON THE SIDE OF THE BARN - An Amish worker nails a long board on the side of the barn.

He is able to do it with two forceful, expert swings of the hammer. CAMERA TRACKS to a second worker who does exactly the same. CAMERA TRACKS to Roy hammering. His board has ten bent nails in it and a hundred hammer marks.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON THE ROOF - From the crest of the roof a man passes a handsaw down the line of several men seated along the rafter. When it gets to the last man he saws off the end.

ON ISHMAEL - working on the ground, sweating.

Rebecca approaches with a glass of lemonade. He wipes his brow and they smile at one another.

IN THE BACKGROUND - we see Lucas working with his dog. The pooch SITS, then ROLLS OVER, then WALKS ON ITS HIND LEGS. Lucas looks pleased.

DISSOLVE TO:

ON A HUGE WALL - being hammered together on the ground. Ten men lift the huge framed wall a few inches off the ground. Roy, along with six other men, place a long pole under it and begin pushing it upright, straining under its tremendous weight. Men seated along the roof reach out to grab the wall as it inches its way closer and closer to them. We cut back and forth between these groups of men sweating, reaching, straining, pushing. ON AN AMISH WOMAN - standing under a large tree where the food is set out, rings a BELL to let the workers know lunch is ready.

CLOSE ON ROY - he looks up and lets go of the pole.

WIDE SHOT - Roy races down the hill to the food. Behind him in the distance, we see the barn wall collapse backward. Men fall off the roof lunging for it. Startled horses pull wagons into what's left of the structure, sending the entire morning's work crashing to the ground.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Roy is seated at the head of a table. His plate is piled high with food which he is devouring. He looks up.

ROY'S POV - All of the men, many bandaged and bruised, stare at him in disgust.

ROY
I said I was sorry.

THOMAS

I don't know how a barn-raising's done in Ohio...but here in Pennsylvania no one runs for a biscuit in the middle of lifting a twelve-hundred pound wall!

ROY

Thomas, doesn't it say in the Bible to forgive and forget? It's in chapter... it's in the middle somewhere.

Thomas stands and walks off.

SAMUEL

If we're going to finish the barn by sunset, it's best we get going.

The men begin making their way back to the hill. Samuel walks up to Roy. Ishmael is there.

SAMUEL (CONT.)

I'm sorry Brother Thomas lost his temper with you, Brother Munson. We've been faced with bad times here lately and he took his frustrations out on you.

Samuel walks back to the barn-raising.

ROY

Bad times?

ISHMAEL

Our farm didn't do well last year. The bank is talking about foreclosing on our loans and selling our land.

ROY

That's why I was sent here. To help.

ISHMAEL

The answer's no.

ROY

Don't you see it? It's the reason we were brought together...

(pointing above him)

He wanted it. He planned it.

ISHMAEL

Mr. Munson, if God truly wants us together, he'll show me a sign.

Ishmael grabs his tools and is off. Roy looks up to God, thinks better of asking for a favor and trudges back up the hill for the barn raising.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BARN - LATER THAT DAY

The skeletal framework of the barn is nearly completed. The men seem to be everywhere on the structure working with robust spirit.

INT. BARN

Samuel attaches a thick rope to an extremely heavy, hand-hewn beam. Samuel looks up and the CAMERA follows the rope to a massive wooden pulley attached to the top of the roof.

CAMERA follows rope through pulley down to another worker who attaches the rope to a horse.

EXT. ROOF

where Ishmael is working on a rafter. Roy sets his tools down next to him. Ishmael grabs his tool belt and hops to another rafter.

ON SAMUEL - signaling to man by the horse.

SAMUEL

Take her up! Nice and easy now.

The horse is pulled forward and the beam slowly rises toward the roof. Samuel holds the rope trailing from the beam, helping to gently guide it.

ON THE HORSE - suddenly becomes skiddish. As the workman tries to quiet the horse, he looks down to see...

ON A SNAKE - near the horse's hoof.

ON THE HORSE - snorting and wild-eyed, charges forward.

ON THE BEAM - inside the barn is pulled up at an alarming rate. The trailing length of the rope whips through the air, wrapping itself around Samuel, yanking him twenty five feet off the ground. We see that the rope is around his neck. He is choking, struggling to get out.

ON THE HORSE - still struggling, breaks free and bolts. The rope ZOOMS back through the pulley.

ON SAMUEL - he drops a few feet but the rope gets bunched up like on a giant fishing reel, stopping Samuel's fall, but trapping him high off the ground. There is pandemonium.

ON ROY - who is on the rafter closest to the pulley, takes in the situation, hesitates for a moment, then moves decisively. Roy shimmeys down the rope to the beam. Samuel hangs a few feet below him. Roy holds up his right hand and pulls off the paper stuffed work glove with his teeth, revealing...THE HOOK. He reaches down with THE HOOK, and uses it scissor like to cut the rope from Samuel's neck. The rope is cut.

Samuel falls to the ground where he is caught in a tarp held by a group of men.

Samuel's quick release has made the beam wildly unbalanced. Roy is thrown from it violently but at the last minute he is able to swing up his right arm, embedding THE HOOK into one end of the beam. He reaches up with his left arm, wrapping it around the other end of the beam.

ON THE AMISH WORKERS AND THEIR WIVES - gathered below stare in awe.

CUT TO:

ON ROY - with the sun behind him, hanging Christ-like on the beam.

ON ISHMAEL - looking up at Roy.

ISHMAEL

Brother Munson, you've got yourself a bowler.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNRISE

Ishmael and his girlfriend REBECCA hold hands by the side of the road.

REBECCA

I'm frightened for you, Ishmael. Promise me you'll be careful when you're out among the English. Do not allow yourself to be corrupted.

ISHMAEL

Don't worry, Rebecca. Your goodness gives me strength. Nothing can make me stray.

REBECCA

Remember that I carry your heart within my chest. If anything happens to you, it happens to me, too.

Roy pulls up in the car and waves to Ishmael. Ishmael kisses Rebecca on the cheek and as he runs to the car:

ISHMAEL

Tell my parents God spoke to me to go on a mission with Brother Munson. If the good Lord sees fit, I'll be back with enough money to save the land.

He gets in the car. Rebecca calls after him.

REBECCA
I'll be waiting right here for you.

The car pulls off. We stay on Rebecca. Actually we stay on her for quite some time. After a few moments the car backs into frame.

ISHMAEL
It's going to be about six weeks.

REBECCA
Oh. Then I'll wait in the house.

Rebecca runs to the farmhouse.

INT. CAR

ROY
Ready son?

ISHMAEL
Yes sir.

Roy reaches under his seat and drags out a dusty black leather case and opens it. A couple of early Beatles eight tracks are in it.

ROY
Hope you like the Beatles.

ISHMAEL
The Beatles?

ROY
Yeah. John, Paul, George, and Ringo.

ISHMAEL
Who?

ROY
The most famous band in the history of rock and roll.

ISHMAEL
The history of what?

Roy shakes his head.

ROY
Buckle up. You're about to embark on a great adventure.

EXT. ROAD - SUNRISE

The car pulls away, climbing a hill. The cassette player starts to blast, "REVOLUTION."

As the car is about to reach the crest of the hill:

CUT TO:

OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL

The car comes over the top of the hill and stops.

A small fender bender between two hay trucks has caused a major traffic jam. They have traveled about a hundred yards and will be here for awhile.

Roy shuts off the music and turns to Ishmael.

ROY
It'll get better.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Roy and Ishmael are now cruising along. Roy lights a cigarette and offers the pack to Ishmael.

ROY
Smoke?

ISHMAEL
No thanks. You really should try to quit, Mr. Munson. They say it damages your heart, your lungs, and it quickens the aging process.

ROY
(cocky)
Is that right? Well how old do you think I am, son?

ISHMAEL
I don't know...fifty, fifty-five?

Roy reacts to this.

ROY
Yeah, well my heart and lungs are fine.

ISHMAEL
The Surgeon General says that every puff you take is a breath you lose.

ROY
Hey, get off the pulpit, pal, you're not in Quaker Oats Land anymore. Besides, who's done more research on the subject than the good people of the American tobacco industry? And they say smoking's harmless.

ISHMAEL
But the Surgeon General--

ROY
--Yeah, let's talk about the Surgeon General. Do you know that that's the same fruitcake who says to cut out cheese, buttermilk, and bacon from your diet?

ISHMAEL
No...?

ROY
Yes. And how many eggs do you eat a day, kid?

ISHMAEL
Eight.

ROY
No, a day.

ISHMAEL
Eight.

ROY
Well, according to your Mr. Surgeon General, you're only supposed to eat two...a week.

ISHMAEL
That's crazy. Why would he say that?

ROY
I'll tell you why, because it's
(makes quotation marks with fingers)
"politically correct." Think about it--if he admitted that smoking was okay, he'd be out of a job.

Ishmael thinks about this.

ISHMAEL
Give me one of those bad boys.

Roy pops Ishmael a cigarette and he lights up.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)
I sure feel lucky, Mr. Munson. If I have to be away from home it's nice to know I'm with someone as informed, smart, and decent as yourself.

They've pulled up to a TOLL BOOTH. Roy throws in a quarter with a string attached. As the gate goes up, he yanks out the quarter and takes off.

ROY
I appreciate those kind words, son.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A dozen rundown wooden cabins in a semi-circle. All of the rooms look out onto a patch of weed-choked grass with a dilapidated swingset.

The office, a low-slung fifties-style box, has a cheesy replica of the Eiffel Tower on the roof. A neon sign reads: LEFT BANK ECONO LODGE - "A TOUCH OF PARIS IN THE POCONOS" - USE OUR COMPLIMENTARY SHOE POLISHER AT THE FRONT DESK.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Two single beds - nightstand between them. A few cheap knick-knacks to keep the Paris theme going. Ishmael is lying in his bed drinking a carton of milk and smoking a butt. Roy is at the sink flossing his teeth.

ISHMAEL
Whatcha doing there, Mr. Munson?

ROY
(string in mouth)
Flossin'.

ISHMAEL
You're kidding me? Where did I get 'Munson' from?

ROY
No, my name's Munson. What I'm doing is flossin'.
(holds up the string)
This is called floss. It cleans between your teeth. You should try it sometime. You'd be amazed what you find.

ISHMAEL
Huh. I guess I don't know much about life outside of Brimfield.

ROY
You're not missing much.

ISHMAEL
I was never in a car before. Never slept in a fancy motel. Never been more than ten miles from home. I don't mind telling you, Mr. Munson, when I stop and think about it all, it can get pretty scary.

ROY
What's there to be afraid of?

ISHMAEL
It's just...the Lord's given us a
considerable task and I'm not so sure I'm
the one who can do it.

Roy sits on the foot of Ishmael's bed and grows introspective.

ROY
Kid, I know what it's like to be afraid.
I've laid in bed many nights shaking in my
boots, petrified of my own shadow, having
panic attacks, thinking thoughts you don't
want to know anything about. Then one day I
was selling bowling supplies in northern
Michigan and I came upon an Indian
reservation where I met a great man. I told
him of my fears and he gave me something
that I carry with me to this day.

Roy moves to his bag, takes something out and hands it to Ishmael.

ISHMAEL
What's this?

ROY
They call it Prozac. Take one a day.

Ishmael smiles and swallows a pill, washing it down with the milk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOTEL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Very quiet now. No cars on the highway.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It is 4:27 according to the clock on the nightstand. Ishmael is
sound asleep. A hand reaches in to shake him awake.

ROY
(quietly)
Ishmael, wake up.

Ishmael sits up a bit dazed.

ISHMAEL
What is it, Mr Munson?

ROY
Time to start training.

ISHMAEL

This is earlier than we get up on the farm.

ROY

Welcome to the big leagues.

EXT. MOTEL OFFICE - NIGHT

Dimly lit from a lamp on a desk. The NIGHT MANAGER, an old man in a beret, with a pencil-thin mustache, is asleep in a Naugahide chair.

Slowly and silently the Impala creeps into frame. Roy is behind the wheel. He nervously glances into the office. As the car continues past the office, we see that Ishmael is pushing it.

HIGHWAY

in front of motel. Ishmael continues to push the car. Roy leans out the window,

ROY

Roadwork's over. Hop in.

Ishmael gets in. Roy cranks up the engine and peels off down the highway.

CUT TO:

EXT. OHIO INTERSTATE - AFTERNOON

Wide shot of the Impala traveling through Ohio farmland. We here the Beatles "LOVE ME DO".

BEATLES

LOVE, LOVE ME DO...
YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU....
I'LL ALWAYS BE TRUE....

INT. CAR

Roy and Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

What are those shiny bumps in the middle of the road for?

ROY

They're highway divider reflectors. Keep you from drifting into the wrong lane.

ISHMAEL

I wonder who the person is who invented them.

Roy shrugs and makes the 'money' sign by rubbing his thumb and forefinger together.

ISHMAEL
He's loaded, huh?

Roy flicks a booger out the window and turns to Ishmael.

ROY
What's that?

ISHMAEL
Is the guy who invented those reflector things rich now?

ROY
Oh, I don't know. Probably. That's the thing about this world, kid. Sometimes it's the simplest things that set you up for life.

ISHMAEL
Yeah, I know. I heard about this guy, um, I think he was like a scientist or something, and he invented this one little thing--I think it was the cure for polio--yeah that was it. Anyway, he's like rolling in it now.

Roy shoots him a look.

ROY
It's five o'clock. Let's pull over and find you an alley. If you expect to compete with the big boys in Reno, you're going to have to stay sharp.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY

Roy and Ishmael are at a lane. Ishmael is putting on his shoes.

ROY
You get warmed up, kid. I'm gonna grab us a couple coffees.

ISHMAEL
None for me, thanks. I don't drink coffee.

ROY
Why not?

ISHMAEL
Because it's a stimulant.

ROY

What the hell do you think cigarettes are?

Ishmael thinks about this. Then:

ISHMAEL

All right. Make it a large. Two sugars,
lots of cream.

Roy nods and heads off. Ishmael grabs his ball and fires it down the lane.

ON THE PINS - an explosive strike!

ON THE LANE NEXT TO ISHMAEL'S - a MIDDLE-AGED MAN WITH A
POT-BELLY watches Ishmael.

POT-BELLIED BOWLER

Hey, big stuff, you're pretty good, but
I've got a hundred bucks says I'm better.

ISHMAEL

I beg your pardon, sir?

POT-BELLIED BOWLER

I said I'll bet you one hundred smackers I
can beat you.

ISHMAEL

Oh no. I don't bet.

POT-BELLIED BOWLER

What do you mean you don't bet? What are
you, soft? Come on--a hundred bucks.

ISHMAEL

You don't understand, sir. My religious
beliefs won't allow it. If you'd like,
though, I'd be happy to play you for some
good clean fun.

POT-BELLIED BOWLER

Good clean fun? What kind of shit is that?
What, are you afraid of me?

Roy returns with the coffees.

ROY

Hey, buddy, you heard the kid. He said
betting's against his religion.

(beat)

But it's not against mine.

POT-BELLIED BOWLER

How much you got?

Roy reaches for his wallet and takes all his money out.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY PARKING LOT - DAY

Roy paces frantically. Ishmael hangs his head.

ROY

What the hell happened in there?

ISHMAEL

I don't know. I thought I played pretty good. He was just a little better.

ROY

Pretty good?! You lost to a schmuck! 186, where did that come from? You're carrying a 270 average, remember?

ISHMAEL

Well, what do expect? You guys with the ten frames...

BEAT.

ROY

What do you mean 'you guys with the ten frames?'

ISHMAEL

Grandpa always taught me to bowl fifteen frames. I told you we Amish do things half again as hard as you guys. Ten frames, that's for wussies.

Ishmael sneers at this. This hits Roy hard.

ROY

You're telling me your 270...that's... that's fifteen frames?!

ISHMAEL

Jeez, Roy, I only get to bowl once a month or so. What do you expect?

Roy looks sick.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Roy is at the wheel. Ishmael is upset.

ISHMAEL

I ain't going home.

ROY

I'm sorry, kid, but we've only got a hundred bucks left--that's not enough to get us to Reno. And even if we did have the dough, you wouldn't stand a chance against those guys.

ISHMAEL

But you said I was the best prospect you'd ever seen. You said you could make me a champion.

ROY

Kid, when I said that, I thought you already were one. Anyway, what do I know, I've been liquored up for the past seventeen years. My judgement's obviously not what it once was.

ISHMAEL

Oh, I see. Just because it's not going to be a cake-walk you want to quit, huh? Because it's going to take a little hard work, you want out. Well maybe it's good we find this out now because I don't need to be dragged down by someone like you. With all due respect, sir, you're a loser. Pull the car over, I'm getting out.

ROY

Kid, don't play Jesus on me. I'll drive you home.

ISHMAEL

I don't want to go home. Now pull the car over!

Roy pulls over.

ROY

Come on, this is silly. You've only been gone a couple days. They'll forgive you.

ISHMAEL

I'd sooner get munson'd out here in the middle of nowhere than lose face in front of my friends and family.

ROY

What? What did you just say?

ISHMAEL

I said I don't want to lose face in front of my--

ROY

No, no, no, before that.

Ishmael thinks a moment.

ISHMAEL

I said I'd sooner get munson'd out here in the middle of nowhere--

ROY

Munson'd? What's that?

ISHMAEL

You know, munson'd. To be up shit creek without a paddle. To have the whole world in the palm of your hand and blow it. It's a figure of speech.

ROY

Munson'd, huh? Where did that come from?

ISHMAEL

I don't know. Where does 'dog eat dog' come from? I picked it up in some bowling alley.

Roy Munson thinks about this and shakes his head. Ishmael gets out of the car.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

I'm going to Reno, Mr. Munson. You can go back to whatever life you had before you met me.

Ishmael crosses the street and starts walking in the other direction.

HOLD ON ROY'S FACE - Ishmael's speech seems to have hit home. Then something catches his eye in the REAR VIEW MIRROR.

ROY'S POV (THROUGH REAR VIEW MIRROR) - It's a leering Mrs. Dumars, her fingers making a V-sign at her mouth, her tongue darting between them.

Roy blinks hard and she disappears.

EXT. CAR

Roy pulls a U-turn and drives up next to Ishmael.

ROY

(smiling)

You passed the test!

ISHMAEL

Huh?

ROY

I was wondering how you'd respond to a little adversity. A true champion doesn't quit, and neither did you.

ISHMAEL
(brightening)
You mean you were testing me?

ROY
That's right. A little Roy 101.

ISHMAEL
So I did good, huh?

ROY
A-minus. It would've been an A except for that 'loser' crack. I don't tolerate that sort of behavior from my pupils. Now hop in, kid, school's just beginning.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF ROY COACHING ISHMAEL:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

Roy, with a no-nonsense attitude, is standing at a lane lecturing Ishmael.

ROY
...You're holding the ball too close to the center of your body. That's forcing a wrap-around delivery where you're swinging out and around your hips.

SEVERAL SHOTS of Ishmael bowling, INTERCUT with Roy yelling instructions.

ROY
You're drifting. You're drifting. Square up!

ISHMAEL BOWLING

ROY
Too much shoulder rotation...Flex those knees. You're bending at the waist.

ROY AT A CHALKBOARD, SCRATCHING DOWN A FORMULA LIKE A PHYSICS PROFESSOR

ROY
Now I want you to take a little juice off your ball. You're throwing it too fast, that's why the pins are jumping straight up in the air. You want to slow it down to 17 miles-per-hour. That's 2.4 seconds from point of release to head pin, the optimal speed to create the perfect domino effect.

ISHMAEL BOWLING, NOW BLINDFOLDED, WHILE ROY HOLDS A STOP WATCH

ROY
Too fast. You gotta feel it.

ANOTHER TOSS

ROY
Still too fast. You're not feeling it.

AND ANOTHER TOSS

ROY
That's the one. There you go. That's it.

SWEATING NOW, MINUS BLINDFOLD, ISHMAEL BOWLS SOME MORE

ROY
Now put a little English on it! Make it talk.

ROY
That's it. Pull the string!

ROY
Snap it at the line.

PINS FLYING

ROY
Snap it!!

PINS FLYING

ROY
Snap it!!!

PINS IMPLODING - in on themselves, like wooden houses in atomic bomb films.

WIDE SHOT - A delighted Roy and Ishmael high-fiving each other. As they do, ROY'S HAND FLIES ACROSS THE ROOM.

ON A COFFEE SHOP TABLE - an embarrassed Roy picks his hand out of a customer's soup bowl.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BATHROOM - DAY

Roy is at the sink washing his face.

MEDIUM SHOT OF ISHMAEL - sitting on a toilet, reading a newspaper.

ISHMAEL
Hey, coach, why do they call it a classified ad?

ROY

I don't know.

ISHMAEL

Huh.

(BEAT)

Coach, do you think five-hundred dollars sounds like a fair price for an English Bulldog with only one testicle?

ROY

How the hell do I know? Look, kid, I'm getting a little tired of all your questions. I'm not gonna teach you everything about everything in the world. I'm teaching you about bowling and that's it.

ISHMAEL

Okay, jeez, take it easy, it's not like I'm from outer space or something. I mean, give me some credit, Mr. Munson. I got common sense, I can figure things out on my own.

Roy glances over at Ishmael and does a double-take.

HIS POV - Ishmael is taking a crap on the urinal. TWO MEN urinate on either side of him, looking very uncomfortable.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Roy and an excited Ishmael are back on the road.

ROY

Now, if we're going to do this, we've got to do it right. We should work the minor league lanes--you know, the dive alleys, the ma-and-pop operations--where the good players never go.

ISHMAEL

I can beat the good players--you saw how those pins were exploding.

ROY

Kid, you're good, but in those big city alleys you never know when you're gonna run up against some ace-in-the-hole. No, we've got to take the back roads and go small-time. It's a much safer bet.

Ishmael REACTS to this.

ISHMAEL

I'm going to bet?

ROY

That's right. Otherwise we don't have enough dough to get to Reno.

ISHMAEL

I don't know...

ROY

Look, kid, you can't have it both ways. If you really want to earn a half million dollars and save that town of yours, you're going to have to bend your rules a little.

Ishmael thinks it over. Then:

ISHMAEL

I'm sorry, but I just can't do that, sir. Betting's against my religion.

ROY

You don't have to bet, you banana-head. I'll bet for you.

ISHMAEL

Oh, well that's cool.

Ishmael smiles.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

Hey, it should be easy to find people to bet against. We'll just tell them we're pro bowlers on the way to a big tournament and we're trying to sharpen up our game.

ROY

Uh, maybe we should skip the 'pro bowlers' part. It might scare the timid ones off.

ISHMAEL

But that doesn't seem quite right. Shouldn't we be right up front with them? I mean, it seems sort of like cheating.

ROY

Cheatin' shmeatin'. It's just being humble. The other way makes you seem like a braggart. And you know what the Bible says about bragging.

ISHMAEL

No, sir. What?

ROY

(beat)

It's against it.

This soothes Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

Yeah, I guess you're right. Besides, even if they did find out we were pros, what's the worst thing that could happen?

Roy holds up his hands as if to say 'Beats me.' Then he glances at his hook and lowers it quickly. Roy looks uncomfortable for a moment, then turns on the radio.

RADIO SONG (V.O.)

"Put your hand in the hand of the man who..."

Roy changes the station.

RADIO SONG (V.O.)

"I want to hold your hand. I want to hold your hand..."

Roy pushes another knob.

RADIO SONG (V.O.)

"Do the hand jive. Do the hand jive. Yeah..."

Again Roy clicks to another station. Finally finding 'Mr. Sandman', Roy nods.

ROY

This is good.

RADIO SONG (V.O.)

"...bring me a dream...Make him the cutest that I've ever seen...Give him two lips, like roses and clover...Tell him that his lonesome nights are over...MR. HANDMAN, I'm so alone...Don't have nobody--"

Roy glares at the radio, horrified, then quickly turns it off.

ISHMAEL

Everything okay, Mr. Munson?

ROY

Sure, kid. Sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A dreary town in the middle of nowhere. Windows are broken out of abandon stores. Newspapers blow past rusted pick-up trucks.

TRACKING SHOT along store fronts and empty lots, finally stopping on a nondescript cinder block building sitting out by itself along a lonely stretch of highway. The neon sign over the entrance reads: SAM HITTLE'S BOWL.

A pick-up truck with high school kids in the back pulls to a stop underneath the sign. They break a couple of the letters with rocks and speed off laughing.

The sign now reads: S HIT BOWL. The CAMERA pans down from the sign to Roy's car pulling into the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY BAR - NIGHT

CLOSE - BARTENDER

BARTENDER

So you two are dictionary salesmen?

ON ROY AND ISHMAEL - seated at the bar in the bowling alley.

ROY

Yes, you would be....punctilious in assuming that.

BARTENDER

(to Ishmael)

Your buddy here tells me you're the best dictionary salesmen in the whole company.

ISHMAEL

Yep.

The bartender looks at Roy.

ROY

You don't have to read em' to sell em'.

(to Ishmael)

So, Steve, what do you say we bowl a couple?

Ishmael doesn't react.

ROY

Steve? Stevie! Yo, STEVEARINO!!

BARTENDER

I think he's talking to you.

ISHMAEL

Oh. Right. You want to bowl for some big money, hey? Well, okay. But I'll probably lose my entire bonus check since I'm so bombed.

BARTENDER

You've only had one Coca-Cola.

ROY
He was sniffing glue out in the parking lot.

BARTENDER
Refresh my memory. How does the rest of this hustle work?

The Bartender walks away.

ROY
(to Ishmael)
Nice work, DeNiro.

ISHMAEL
Who's DeNiro?

The bartender returns and hands Roy a slip of paper.

BARTENDER
If you fellas want a straight up money game, go to this address tonight at midnight. If you got a big enough bankroll.

Roy pulls out a wad of bills with a hundred on the outside.

ROY
Mr. Franklin here is anxious to get started.

ISHMAEL
Yeah, I sure am.

Ishmael gives Roy a wink. Roy gives him a sarcastic thumbs-up back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANSION - MIDNIGHT

This is a huge gothic structure out in the middle of nowhere. Roy and Ishmael stand beside the Impala which is parked outside a black wrought-iron gate. Roy is pacing nervously.

ISHMAEL
Wow, look at that. I feel a lot of good energy coming from this place, huh, Mr. Munson?
(no response)
Are you all right, sir?

Roy stops fidgeting and approaches Ishmael.

ROY
Ishmael, there's something I've got to show you.

Roy takes out the wad of bills and fans it. There's a hundred on the outside and the rest are fake.

ISHMAEL

Fake.

ROY

I made more charitable contributions than I thought this year.

ISHMAEL

But the bartender thinks...

ROY

It doesn't matter! We've got a hundred. That's enough to get us in the first game. Guaranteed. If you win, we just keep rolling along. If you lose, everything we've planned, hoped for, talked about, dreamed of... for a day...will go up in smoke.

ISHMAEL

There's nothing to worry about, Mr. Munson. We won't lose. "It's the centurion's faith that wins him divine favor." We're doing God's work. You said it yourself.

MARSHAKOWSKI, a bear of a man with a thick eastern European accent, steps out of the darkness.

MARSHAKOWSKI

Grab your goddamn balls!

Roy and Ishmael jump up and grab their crotches.

MARSHAKOWSKI

Bowling balls. Come with me.

Marshakowski opens the gate and they follow him into the darkness toward the house.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Contemporary art on every wall. Televisions, stereos, and VCR's stacked everywhere, next to the cartons they came in. A dramatic curved glass staircase leads to the second level and appears to float in space.

Roy and Ishmael sit disappearing into a large white sofa. Marshakowski sits in front of a big screen television watching Beavis and Butthead. He makes a GRUNTING SOUND like a Frankenstein monster who's just learned how to laugh. We hear a VOICE from the top of the stairs.

VOICE

Idiot! Turn that garbage off.

Marshakowski picks up his remote and turns off the television.

ON THE STAIRS - we see STANLEY OSMANSKI -- Fila running suit, Nike pumps, Rolex, gold chains. An iron curtain Bob Evans.

OSMANSKI

Start acting like a professional or you'll get a mop, a bucket and a one-way ticket to Chernobyl.

Osmanski heads over to Roy and Ishmael.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

I apologize for keeping you gentlemen waiting but my business takes up more and more of my time. I sell peace of mind... and for that...there are no store hours.

ISHMAEL

We sell dictionaries. I got a big bonus for...

ROY

Son...let's leave that one for another day.

OSMANSKI

So, my people tell me you are serious bowlers.

Roy holds out a "hand" with championship ring.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

Whoever did that to you did a very professional job.

ROY

The ring.

OSMANSKI

Oh. "State Amateur Champion 1979."

ROY

My career was cut short. Now I manage. Once it's in your blood...

OSMANSKI

Yes! Yes! It's a thrill to meet people in this country with the same fervor for the sport that I have. In Poland, everyone loves bowling...mainly because you can play it indoors drunk... I have always loved it for its simplicity, its beauty, its grace...I took this place from the former owner just because it had a bowling alley.

ROY

(looking around)

Musta cost a pretty penny.

OSMANSKI

I said I took it.

(extends hand)

Stanley Osmanski. My friends call me Stan.

Roy shakes his hand.

ROY

Roy Munson. Nice to meet you, Stan.

Osmanski suddenly grabs Roy by the collar.

OSMANSKI

What are you, a wise guy? I said my friends call me Stan.

ROY

Oh, uh, sorry, Stanley.

Osmanski releases him.

ROY (CONT'D)

This is my bowler, Ishmael Boorg.

Osmanski indicates for Roy and Ishmael to follow him.

OSMANSKI

Mr. Munson, why don't we adjourn to my bowling alley to see how much money your protege can win you.

As Roy and Ishmael follow we can see that Roy is having second thoughts about this.

ROY

Uh, you know, maybe we should just play for fun. Sometimes money gets in the way of friendships and someday I'd love to be able to call you Stan, uh, Stanley.

Osmanski spins around. They all stop underneath the glass staircase. In Roy's face.

OSMANSKI

Don't bullshit me, Munson. I know you're a hustler. Now can your kid play or not?

Roy swallows hard.

ROY

He can play.

OSMANSKI

Fine, then it's a thousand dollars a game.

As Roy and Ishmael react to this, we hear the sound of HIGH HEELS ON GLASS above them. They all look up.

THE GROUP'S POV - A beautiful woman in a short, tight, white mini, descends the clear glass staircase directly above them. The woman, CLAUDIA, stops midway and looks down through the stairs,...

CLAUDIA'S POV - Between her feet we see the men looking straight up at her.

CLAUDIA

The architect knew what he was doing, hey guys?

They stop looking up. Claudia continues to the bottom of the stairs. She's unbelievable. Hot, distant, a little bored, very unattainable. She crosses over to where the men are standing and staring.

OSMANSKI

Gentlemen, please meet Claudia. She is my..well, you know what she is.

(then, to Claudia)

Please join us in the bowling alley.

CLAUDIA

Okay. Let me turn down the air conditioner first. I don't feel like wearing a bra tonight.

She walks to the thermostat. It's a sexually cathartic experience just to watch her perform this mundane task and all eyes are on her.

OSMANSKI

Is she not the most incredible woman you've ever seen?

Roy nods. Osmanski slaps him on the back and walks off.

Roy and Ishmael continue looking. Ishmael giggles.

ROY

What's so funny?

ISHMAEL

I won't be the one to tell him, but with those narrow hips, I don't think she could have more than six or seven children.

Roy looks at Ishmael stunned.

ISHMAEL

You buy a couple of skinny cows at auction - you learn these things.

Ishmael turns and follows Osmanski. Roy takes one final look and follows Ishmael.

INT. OSMANSKI'S BOWLING ALLEY - LATER

Probably a library before the bowling alley was put in. Leather couches and chairs. Dark wood paneling. A well-stocked bar.

Roy and Ishmael are seated on a sofa next to Claudia who looks bored. Marshakowski is keeping score on an overhead projector. We see that Osmanski is working on a spare in the last frame.

OSMANSKI picks up the ball, approaches the line and lets it go. He leaves one pin. Osmanski turns around, fist clenched in rage. He stalks back to his seat.

OSMANSKI

A nine! Off a fucking spare in the last frame! I WAS ROBBED, GODDAMN IT!

ROY AND ISHMAEL

ROY

He's got a 248.

Ishmael walks over to his ball.

ROY (CONT'D)

(softly)

We need all three strikes, son.

OSMANSKI

Now it's getting interesting -- yes? Two minute warning. Bottom of ninth. Last frame.

Osmanski continues talking as Ishmael steps to the line.

OSMANSKI

There's no question your boy is a fine bowler - but competing under pressure...?

The THUNDERCLAP. A strike.

ON OSMANSKI - he gives Claudia a look. She knows what to do - she's done this for Osmanski before. As Ishmael is about to bowl again...

CLAUDIA spills a beer, completely drenching the front of her dress.

CLAUDIA

(jumps up)

Shit!

All eyes turn to her.

GROUP POV - Claudia is blotting herself with a napkin. Her top is completely soaked through. Jackie Bisset from THE DEEP. Ungodly. Memorable. ISHMAEL moves toward her, Osmanski stops him.

OSMANSKI

Maybe later. We got match. Get going.

Ishmael turns quickly....bowls....THUNDERCLAP.

ISHMAEL

Strike.

Ishmael walks through the group of men to Claudia. He grabs his jacket from a chair and puts it over Claudia's shoulders.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

You don't want to catch cold. There's nothing to you as it is.

CLAUDIA

Thanks.

Ishmael walks back to bowl. As he passes Osmanski.

ISHMAEL

She really should eat more butter and cheese.

Osmanski, a bit stunned, watches as Ishmael matter-of-factly grabs his ball, bowls.... STRIKE.

OSMANSKI

So. Game.

HOLD ON OSMANSKI - as we see him try to contain a slow burn. The guy isn't used to losing, and he doesn't like it at all. Claudia can't help but bark out a LAUGH.

CLAUDIA

You must be getting old, Stanley. Your balls don't have the action they used to.

OSMANSKI

There is no dishonor in losing when bowling against such a formidable opponent.

CLAUDIA

Oh, cut the shit. Why don't you just scream or hit something before you pop a blood vessel?

Osmanski glares at her, furious, like McEnroe on angel dust.

OSMANSKI

That's not a bad idea.

(stiff smile)

I'd like a word with you in the other room, dear.

Claudia hesitates, then follows him out of the room. They close the door behind them. A few moments later we hear a SLAP, a SCREAM, then nothing. Roy stands and glances at Ishmael nervously.

Ishmael makes a weak gesture for the door, but Marshakowski steps in his way. Finally the door opens and Osmanski re-enters the room alone. He seems to have lost his edginess.

OSMANSKI

Okey-dokey, I believe I owe you gentlemen some money.

Osmanski pulls out a thousand dollars and hands it to Roy. Roy takes the dough and tries to act nonchalant.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

Night is young. Another game?

As Roy puts the thousand with his bankroll.

ROY

Uh, I don't know, Stanley. I mean, it's getting late and it is a school night--

OSMANSKI

--What the fuck is that?

ROY

What the fuck is what?

Osmanski hits Roy in the stomach and takes all the money.

OSMANSKI

This. A hundred-dollar bill wrapped in Monopoly money.

Roy writhes in pain on the floor. Ishmael goes to help him. He glares at Osmanski.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

You look like you want to hit me.

ISHMAEL

We don't raise our hands in anger against others.

Osmanski bends down next to Roy.

OSMANSKI

Unfucking believable. You dishonor my home... You disgrace the game... BY BETTING WITH MONEY YOU DON'T FUCKING HAVE?!!!

Osmanski stands and turns to Marshakowski.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

Remember how you handled the problem with the Padroski brothers?

Marshakowski nods.

OSMANSKI (CONT.)

This time, don't use good knives.

Marshakowski moves toward Roy and Ishmael.

THE LIGHTS GO OUT - Pitch black. Confusion. Yelling in Polish. Punches thrown. Crashes. Cursing. After a few more moments of this,

THE LIGHTS COME BACK ON - Marshakowski has a bowling ball in a headlock and is punching it repeatedly. Osmanski is standing at the light switch. He looks around. Roy and Ishmael are gone. The place is demolished. Marshakowski drops the bowling ball.

MARSHAKOWSKI

FUCKING BITCH!

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Roy, Ishmael, and Claudia come running out the front door and tear down the long driveway to the Impala.

CLAUDIA

Give me the keys!

ROY

Why?

CLAUDIA

Just give me the keys, goddamit. I'll get us out of here.

Roy flips her his keys and they hop in the car.

INT. CAR

They peel out. Claudia is driving, Roy is up front and Ishmael is in the back. Claudia looks in the review mirror.

ROY

Thanks for helping us out back there...

Claudia ignores him, intent on driving.

EXT. STREET

The Impala comes hauling ass around a tight curve at 90 miles per hour glued to the road. It roars over a rise in the road, flying through mid air. It hits hard with sparks coming off the pavement and it becomes a speck instantly as it disappears up a long stretch of road.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Roy digs his fingers into the dashboard.

ROY

Hey, take it easy. You're gonna get us all killed.

CLAUDIA

Stanley's not gonna let me go easy. If he catches up to us, I promise you he'll whack all of us.

ROY

Oh, I've known a lot of guys like Stan in my time. They talk big. They let off steam. But in the end their bark...

CLAUDIA

HE BURIED HIS LAST THREE LAWYERS UP TO THEIR NECKS IN HIS BACKYARD, THEN RAN OVER THEIR HEADS WITH A LAWNMOWER!

ROY

(in defense of Osmanski)

Yeahhh, but lawyers...

Suddenly a PORSCHE comes SCREECHING out of a side street and pulls in behind them.

CLAUDIA

It's them!

QUICK CAR CHASE - over hills, around corners, etc. By using her wits and managing a few sharp turns, Claudia manages to get a hundred-yard lead on the Porsche.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - NIGHT

Lights flashing, bells ringing. The gate is already down.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

As they approach the crossing, the train is approaching fast.

ROY

No...NO! Don't try it!

But she does. The Impala breaks through the wooden gate and over the crossing. A half beat later the TRAIN ROCKETS PAST.

INT. ROY'S CAR

Roy looks out the back. The train is blocking any chance of Osmanski catching up to them. Roy lets out a long VICTORIOUS YELL.

CUT TO:

BACK ON THE PORSCHE - As it SKIDS to a stop before the train.

The door opens and Osmanski steps out. He stares off in their direction, cold, emotionless.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

Roy seems pleased to have escaped from the Porsche, but Claudia starts banging on the steering wheel angrily.

CLAUDIA

Godammit!

ROY

What's the matter?

CLAUDIA

I don't know why I did this. It was total impulse. I don't know where I'm going. And I don't have a clue what I'm gonna do when I get there.

ROY

We'll take you wherever you want to go.

CLAUDIA

I JUST SAID I DON'T KNOW WHERE THE FUCK I'M GOING!

(conversation with herself)

Back on the road again. Why couldn't it have worked out? Stanley bought me expensive clothes. He took me nice places. He hit me, THE FUCK! AND HITTING I DON'T TAKE!

ROY

All right, get a grip. Now just try to calm yourself down like the kid here.

Roy looks back at Ishmael and notices that he isn't moving.

ROY (CONT.)

Kid...?

He snaps his fingers in front of Ishmael's face. Nothing. He's completely catatonic.

CUT TO:

EXT. IMPALA - NIGHT

The Impala is parked behind some bushes and Ishmael is sprawled out on the grass with a beer in his hand and a wet towel on his forehead.

ROY

There you go, drink up, that's better...

ISHMAEL

I want to go back home.

ROY

Oh come on, that's crazy talk.

(BEAT)

Look, I won't lie to you. We've been thrown a curve...to borrow a metaphor from a lesser sport...but that's what this "seasoning" process is all about...to toughen you up for the big game.

ISHMAEL

I had no idea there was so much violence in the world of bowling.

ROY

Oh, we've never been in any real danger...

ISHMAEL

The Amish are brought up to lead a simple life. It's the only way I know. I'm sorry. I'm not cut out for this.

ROY

Not cut out for this? You won back there. Second time out of the gate. And I got news for you--that guy was good!

ISHMAEL

He hit you. He hits Claudia.

ROY

So we ran into a bad apple. I'm sure even where you come from that can happen.

ISHMAEL

(hesitant to squeal)

The Vanderhoovens buy their clothes at Sears and tell everyone they make them.

ROY

See. It's like the Manson family.

ISHMAEL

Who?

ROY

The point is, this isn't about going to Reno to win a million bucks in some silly tournament.

This gets Claudia's attention.

ROY (CONT'D)

We're God's soldiers on a quest to save a community. A way of life. Remember that "Centurions-faith" thing from the Bible? It's your destiny, Ishmael. If you don't at least try, you'll just be another loser in a funny hat who quit when the going got rough.

ISHMAEL

Mr. Munson, I...

CLAUDIA

Do it, Ishmael.

Claudia crouches down and grabs his hand.

CLAUDIA

Please.

ISHMAEL

Okay.

ROY

(to Claudia, not meaning it)

Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOORG HOUSE (AMISH COUNTRY) - SUNRISE

Ishmael's father Samuel and his brother Thomas stand beside a HORSE-DRAWN COACH. In the background we see Lucas still working with his dog. The DOG IS WALKING ON ITS HIND LEGS, BALANCING A BEACH BALL ON ITS NOSE.

SAMUEL

Good luck, Thomas. Be careful out there. Ishmael has always been a strange boy, but I love him. Please bring him back home.

THOMAS

I will, Father. I promise you I will not return without him.

Thomas climbs into the coach, WHIPS the horses and they race off into the early morning light.

CUT TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT - ROADHOUSE TAVERN - DAY

Roy's Impala is in the parking lot.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

Roy, Ishmael and Claudia are seated at a booth. Plates of burgers and fries are on the table. They are holding hands as Ishmael says grace.

ISHMAEL
Bless us oh Lord, for these thy gifts,
which we are about to receive from thy
bounty...

Ishmael stops. He looks down at his hand. Claudia's fingers softly caress Ishmael's hand.

ON ROY - as he takes this all in.

ROY
Are you finished?

ISHMAEL
No.

ROY
I was talking to her.

Claudia shoots Roy a dirty look.

ISHMAEL
(quickly)
...through Christ our lord, amen.

EVERYONE
Amen.

They release hands.

ISHMAEL
(to Claudia)
You know, Miss Claudia, you should've
ordered the double cheeseburger. If you
filled out a little, you could have your
pick of half the men in my village.

Claudia calls back to the waitress.

CLAUDIA
Give me an extra milkshake and some
chili-fries please.

Ishmael smiles. Claudia smiles at him and then at Roy.
Flustered, Roy knocks over a glass of milk onto his lap.

ROY
Damn this hand!

CLAUDIA
Where do you get something like that?

ROY
(sarcastically)
The Sharper Image. They're in the
catalogue next to the nose-hair trimmers.

As Roy wipes the milk off his lap, a pretty young woman, BARB, approaches the table. She's bouncy and friendly and about one drink over her limit.

BARB
Hey, handsome, how 'bout a dance?

Roy checks her out and perks up.

ROY
I appreciate you asking, darlin', but we've
had a helluva day so far and--

BARB
--I wasn't asking you. I'm asking your son.

She smiles at Ishmael.

BARB (CONT.)
How 'bout it?

ISHMAEL
D-D-Dance? No, I'm sorry. I don't know how
to dance.

BARB
Well then it's about time you learned.

As she pulls him onto the DANCE FLOOR, Ishmael looks helplessly
back at Roy and Claudia.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR - The slow, sappy song, "Baby, I'm A Want
You" by Bread plays as Barb pulls a stiff Ishmael in close.

CUT TO:

BACK ON ROY AND CLAUDIA

ROY
Look, we really appreciate what you did for
us back there with your boyfriend, but...

CLAUDIA

You look. I did it for the kid. He didn't deserve to get the shit kicked out of him by those Pope-lovin' inbred mental cases. A cheap hustler like you--I couldn't have cared if they put a bullet in your head.

ROY

I'm a cheap hustler? Honey, I gotta news flash for you...Just because you spend most of your time in the missionary position, it doesn't make you a missionary.

Claudia smiles and lights a cigarette.

CLAUDIA

This is going to work out fine.

ROY

What?

CLAUDIA

It's better that we don't like each other since we're gonna be business partners. You know, checks and balances.

ROY

Business partners?

CLAUDIA

Yeah. Could you hand me the ashtray or do you need a squirt of 3-in-1 oil to do that?

ROY

You listen good. You're not gonna hone in on this. I discovered that kid. It's my first break in a long time. For seventeen years I've been shit on a shoe. I've scraped. I've scrounged. I've participated in experimental testing just to put gas in my car. Airbags weren't always safe and I've got the headaches to prove it. But that's all behind me now because it's payback time. My payback time.

CLAUDIA

I saw your phony roll. You don't have enough money to get to Reno. And if you expect to get there by using that kid, you're in trouble. I'll admit, the kid's got potential--maybe even more than you know--but right now he's raw. Sure, he beat Stanley, but Stan's a choker. Half the bowlers between here and Reno brave enough to roll for money are going to hand him his Pennsylvania Dutch ass on a platter.

ROY

He's Amish and you don't have to worry about us. Just eat your chili-fries and drink your shake and then go throw up or do whatever it is you do to keep that ass of yours in business.

CUT TO:

ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Ishmael and his dance partner Barb are still moving to the beat of 'Baby, I'm a Want You.' Ishmael seems to be enjoying himself.

ISHMAEL

So this is rock n' roll.
(nodding)
I like it.

Suddenly Barb lifts her head off Ishmael's shoulder, alarmed.

HER POV - a big burly trucker comes walking in the door followed by three of his buddies.

BARB (CONT.)

Shit...It's my boyfriend Seabass.

CUT TO:

BACK ON ROY AND CLAUDIA

Still at their table.

CLAUDIA

No offense, Mr. Munster, but you're not exactly the smartest guy I ever ran across.

ROY

Oh and who are you, Alfred Einstein?

CLAUDIA

Look, your act is about as fresh as a Beach Boys concert. It's right out of the seventies. I know how to give it a new spin. On your own, you're gonna make jack.

ROY

Don't worry about us. I know a little something about this racket--learned it the hard way.

CLAUDIA

What are you guys selling, encyclopedias? Diabolical.

(leans forward)

I've got stake money. Five hundred bucks. My guess is you could use it.

Claudia reaches over and lifts up Roy's burger bun with her knife. There's a bug under it.

CLAUDIA (CONT.)
Otherwise you wouldn't have put that under
your bun to beat a twelve-dollar check.

ROY
(feigning horror)
Oh my God. I'm gonna have to talk to the
manager.

A WAITRESS passes by carrying food to another table.

WAITRESS
That routine's got whiskers on it. You're
not beating me on the check, friend.

Claudia leans in.

CLAUDIA
I'll tell you something else: The kid likes
me.

ROY
You're not his type.

CLAUDIA
Oh I'm his type. I'm every guy's type.

ROY
And I'm sure you have the mattress button
marks to prove it.

CLAUDIA
Be nice to me... or I'll cut you out all
together.

Claudia looks up and notices something O.S.

CLAUDIA (CONT.)
Uh-oh...

ROY AND CLAUDIA'S POV - Seabass has Ishmael pinned against the
wall.

BACK ON ROY

ROY
Well, I've had enough to eat. I'm going to
go warm up the car. The engine's been
sounding a little funny.

CLAUDIA
Get over there, you blowboy. The kid's
going to get his ass kicked.

ROY

He's a big boy. I'm sure he can handle himself.

CLAUDIA

Oh yeah, I almost forgot about all those famous Amish kickboxers.

Reluctantly Roy gets up and starts toward the dance floor.

ON ISHMAEL - Seabass is still pinning him against the wall.

BARB

Seabass, you stop that right now. This boy didn't do nothing wrong.

ISHMAEL

I meant no disrespect, sir. If it makes any difference to you I'm already spoken for.

SEABASS

It don't.

Just as Roy arrives on the scene, so do SEABASS'S THREE FRIENDS. Roy sees that this is even more trouble than he thought.

SEABASS (CONT.)

(to Ishmael)

You got a lot of nerve coming in here thinking you can make time with other guys' girls.

SEABASS FRIEND #1

Ain't you got no manners? You don't take what don't belong to you.

SEABASS FRIEND #2

And what kind of anti-Christ cult do you come from wearing that get-up around here? You recruiting, boy?

SEABASS FRIEND #3

Kick his ass, Seabass!

Finally, Seabass and his Friends turn to Roy, wondering just what the hell he wants. Roy hesitates a moment, then hauls off and SUCKER-PUNCHES Ishmael. As Ishmael falls to the ground like a sack of potatoes, Roy YELLS:

ROY

Take that, you freaky piece of shit!

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Roy, Ishmael, and Claudia are back on the road. Ishmael is dabbing blood from under his nose and rubbing his eyes.

CLAUDIA

That was really heroic, Munson.

ROY

Hey, I did the kid a favor: If I hadn't knocked him out, he would've gotten his butt kicked by those animals.

CLAUDIA

You didn't have to have beers with them afterwards.

ROY

I didn't want them to think we were in cahoots.

CLAUDIA

Oh I think you clearly dispelled any notion of that when you rubbed tabasco in his eyes.

ROY

Look, the punch couldn't have hurt that bad. I hit him with my rubber hand.

ISHMAEL

I think it was the steel bar underneath it what really rung my bell.

Claudia hands some styrofoam take-out boxes to the boys.

CLAUDIA

Here, I had them wrap up your burgers, seeing as you don't have any more money and this'll probably be your last meal for awhile.

ISHMAEL

Thanks, Miss Claudia.

Ishmael smiles. Claudia smiles at him and then at Roy. Roy sees he doesn't have much choice.

ROY

Uh, I just had a thought, Ishmael. Seeing as how Claudia here has been so kind, why don't we invite her to come along with us so we can help her get back on her feet.

ISHMAEL

You've got a kind soul, Mr. Munson. You'll be rewarded for that one day.

Roy takes a bite of his burger. We hear a CRUNCH. Roy stops chewing. He realizes what it is and pulls out a huge bug.

ROY
Oh, life's a constant reward.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Roy's beat-up Impala, with the top down, barrels by on an open stretch of Midwestern interstate.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Roy's driving. Ishmael is next to him staring at Claudia who is stretched out in the back seat. Claudia is in shorts and a tank top rubbing suntan lotion on her legs and shoulders. Roy looks over at Ishmael, then in the rearview mirror. He doesn't like the picture.

ROY
Be careful not to spill any of that grease
on the upholstery.

Claudia leans forward, her cleavage pressed against the back of Roy's seat.

CLAUDIA
It's sunblock. Want some?

ROY
No thanks.

CLAUDIA
Suit yourself...but your nose is gonna end
up in the same pail as your hand.

ROY
Lean back. I don't want any silicone on my
upholstery either.

ISHMAEL
I'll take a smidgen.

Claudia leans in incredibly close to Ishmael. She applies the sunblock to his nose slowly, erotically, seductively.

CLAUDIA
All done.

She sits back.

ISHMAEL

Boy that cream makes your body tingle all over.

ROY

Maybe I'll take a little.

Claudia nonchalantly flicks the tube at Roy which ricochets off his ear. Roy gives her a dirty look in the rearview. Behind her hand, so Ishmael doesn't see, she flips Roy the bird.

ISHMAEL

So have you done much traveling before, Miss Claudia?

CLAUDIA

Tons. I've been all over the world.

ROY

You'll have to regale us sometime with stories of the great ceilings you've seen.

CLAUDIA

What's that supposed to mean?

ROY

Oh come on, honey, you're not telling me Osmanski was keeping you around just for your Mensa connections.

CLAUDIA

You don't know anything about Stanley and me, buddy. Sex was the last thing that would keep me around that moron--he was a lot like you in that regard. Nah, he didn't want sex. He wanted to get married.

ROY

Please. Guys like that don't get married.

CLAUDIA

Not to me they don't. It would've been okay if he just wanted to have a good time--nice nice, you know-- but the stupid Stoly-head wanted to settle down.

ROY

You expect me to believe that you weren't his sex kitten?

CLAUDIA

To tell you the truth, I only went to second base with him.

(leans forward, whispers in his ear)

You know, I fucked him.

Roy reacts to this.

ROY

Ah, pardon me for asking, but...what's third base and home to you?

CLAUDIA

Let me put it this way--only two guys have been there: One's dead and the other's writing a book.

ISHMAEL

When's it coming out?

Ishmael pops in the tape. "I FEEL FINE" blares over the speakers.

BEATLES

BABY'S GOOD TO ME, YOU KNOW...SHE'S HAPPY
AS CAN BE, YOU KNOW...SHE SAID SO. I'M IN
LOVE WITH HER AND I FEEL FINE.

CLAUDIA begins swaying to the beat. As the music continues, she really gets into it. Sexy. Twitchy. She jumps up on the back seat and begins dancing with total abandon. she can't help herself. It's just the way she is. Hair flying. Stomach pulsating. Hips pumping. She's moving and gyrating in an incredibly erotic, out of body manner. Ishmael is riveted. Roy drives with one eye on the road, one eye on the rearview mirror.

WIDE SHOT - The car going down the highway. A weird and incredible sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - HUSTLING ON THE ROAD - (to the song "DO THE HUSTLE")

ROY AND ISHMAEL - Talking to a STEELWORKER type at a bar in a bowling alley.

ISHMAEL - bowling against the STEELWORKER. The match is in progress. The STEELWORKER gets ready to bowl but something catches his eye on the lane next to him.

CLAUDIA - in one of those short ice skaters skirts that twirl up a lot. She smiles at Ishmael's opponent and grabs her ball. Claudia and the big lug approach the line. She bowls first. The skirt does what it's supposed to. It twirls up.

The STEELWORKER has seen the face of God. He bowls. One eye on the pins, the other on Claudia, who's now walking back to her seat in heart-stopping, slow-motion profile.

The STEELWORKER'S ball knocks down one pin.

Claudia leaning over the handblower. Her hair is swept back. She looks like she's in the middle of a fashion shoot. A gutter ball.

Claudia shaving her legs with electric razor.

Bowling ball CRASHES through a window.

STEELWORKER paying off a grinning Roy.

CUT TO:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT

Roy and Claudia POP a champagne bottle. She pours each of them a glass, then motions to see if Ishmael wants a glass. He hesitates, then nods 'what the heck.' They pour him a glass, then they all toast and drink. CAMERA moves across a road map. Sandusky, Ohio....Muncie, Indiana...

CLAUDIA - bowling in an updated Daisy Mae affair. Cut offs. Open denim shirt.

A FARMER paying off Roy.

ROY - flossing at a bathroom mirror while Ishmael looks on with interest.

CLAUDIA AND ISHMAEL - dancing 'The Hustle' while Roy looks on happily.

CAMERA continues west across the map.

THOMAS (Ishmael's brother) - racing his horse and carriage down the Interstate while tractor trailer trucks zoom past him.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF VARIOUS SHOTS

--Ishmael bowling with a butt in his mouth and a cigarette pack rolled up in each Amish sleeve. Claudia exuding sexuality and sensuality.

--An eighty-year-old lady paying money to Roy.

THE CAR - cruising along another stretch of highway. Ishmael and Claudia are now both standing in the back seat dancing. Ishmael is wearing a beer-can helmet with a hose leading into his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Ishmael is fast asleep in bed, still wearing the beer-can hat. There are empty champagne bottles scattered around the room. Roy is asleep in the next bed. Ishmael starts to stir, then sits up. He looks hungover but unfazed, until he looks down.

ISHMAEL
AAAAUUUUGGGGHHHHH!!!!

Roy jumps out of bed and tries to catch his breath.

ROY
What's the matter? What is it, kid?

Ishmael is staring at a tiny FOUR-LEAF CLOVER that is TATTOOED onto his chest.

ISHMAEL
It's this! W-W-What is it?!

ROY
Relax. It's just a tattoo.

ISHMAEL
Just a tattoo?! You don't understand--Amish people don't get tattoos! It's a cultural thing. Mormon kids go on missions, Jewish kids go to college, Amish kids don't get tattoos! How could you let me do this, Roy? How could you?!

ROY
I don't know, I don't remember much. The night's a blur to me, too.

Ishmael flops back on the bed.

ISHMAEL
I desecrated my body--it's a mortal sin. I can't go home now. I'll never be able to go home.

ROY
Relax, you can get those things removed. And that's just a tiny one, they'll never know it was there.

ISHMAEL
Yeah? You think?

ROY
Sure. No problem.

ISHMAEL
Phew. That's a relief.

Ishmael takes a deep breath, then springs out of bed and moves to the mirror to examine it.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)
Nah, this isn't so bad.

ON ROY - he does a double-take at what he sees.

ROY'S POV - Ishmael's entire back is covered with the tatoo of a NAKED WOMAN with gigantic BARE BREASTS.

CUT TO:

CONTINUE MONTAGE (TO THE SONG 'DO THE HUSTLE')

The map. Different bowling alleys as they head west. Ishmael bowling. Claudia as the sexy diversion.

THOMAS - holding a picture of Ishmael. The OLD LADY they hustled earlier is nodding.

ISHMAEL - flossing his teeth in a motel bathroom while Roy looks on in disgust. It's Ishmael's first time flossing and the string is lined with chunks of beef, shrimp, broccoli, etc.

ROY, CLAUDIA, AND ISHMAEL exit a movie theater. Roy and Claudia look bored. Ishmael is doubled over with LAUGHTER.

ISHMAEL

That has got to be the greatest movie ever made!

As they continue walking we see a neon marquee above them.

STOP! OR MY MOM WILL SHOOT
SYLVESTER STALLONE ESTELLE GETTY

CLAUDIA pops another bottle of champagne in the car as they cruise down the highway. She turns to pour Ishmael a glass, but we see him in the backseat sucking on a two-foot high BONG.

Money being paid to Roy by various opponents. Money. Money. Money.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT - JOLLY CHOLLY'S AMUSEMENT PARK MOTEL- NIGHT

We see an upscale motel, with a nice swimming pool on the grounds and a rinky-dink amusement park next door.

INT. ROY AND ISHMAEL'S MOTEL ROOM

Roy is lying on his bed, smoking a cigarette. Ishmael is in the next bed watching TV. He's flipping around with the channel-changer like a kid with a new toy. Finally Roy crushes out his smoke and sits up.

ROY

I think I'm going to take a walk.

ISHMAEL

You want me to come along?

ROY

Nah, you stay here and get some rest.

With that, Roy is out the door.

ON ISHMAEL - He continues running through the channels.

ON THE TV - Ishmael flips past a series of talk shows and infomercials and finally stops on an ad for 976-PARTY. We see THREE BIKINI-CLAD GIRLS. The sexiest one PURRS in a kittenish voice.

BIKINI-CLAD GIRL

...This is your invitation to the best party in town. You can talk to up to twelve different exciting people at the same time. What are you waiting for? Call 976-PARTY.

He sits up and stares at the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Roy KNOCKS on Claudia's door. She opens it.

ROY

Hey, Claudia.

CLAUDIA

Roy.

ROY

Mind if I come in for a moment?

She arches her eyebrows.

ROY (CONT'D)

It's not what you think. It's just that... I've been with that kid for too long. He's sweet and all but he's driving me nuts, asking his stupid questions all day. 'What's in a lightbulb?' 'Who invented the squeeze ketchup bottle and when?' 'How does "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman" stay on the air?'

(BEAT)

Anyway, I just want someone halfway intelligent to talk to. That's all. Really.

She thinks about this, then swings the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. ISHMAEL'S ROOM

Ishmael is talking on the phone.

ISHMAEL

My name's Ishmael....I'm twenty-seven. How old are you?....Nine? Well, that's a great age, Eddie. Hey, what are you doing up this late?....No kidding, you're parents are sleeping....No, this is my first time using the party line. In fact, it's my first time using a phone.

CUT TO:

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM

Roy is talking to Claudia.

ROY

I don't know why you have to be such a snob about it.

CLAUDIA

Because I don't want to sleep with you and that's final.

ROY

I didn't say I wanted to sleep with you. I just want to...you know, sleep...in the same bed.

CLAUDIA

That's called sleeping with me.

ROY

No, you don't understand. It'll be purely platonic. I mean, I'm under the impression that you don't want anything more than that...right?

CLAUDIA

Well that's a piercing analysis of the obvious.

ROY

Then we're in agreement. Look, all I want is one good night's sleep. Please.

Claudia thinks about this for a moment.

CLAUDIA

We'll just sleep side by side? You won't even lay a hand on me?

ROY

Not a finger.

CLAUDIA

You swear to God?

Roy raises his right hand.

ROY
On everything that is holy to me.

CUT TO:

INT. ISHMAEL'S ROOM

Ishmael sits cross-legged on the bed, still on the phone, drinking a beer.

ISHMAEL
(into phone)
Hey, Tom, you don't have to tell me. Big sisters can be a real pain in the you-know-what sometimes...Sure, she's in the sixth grade so she's starting to think she's hot stuff....
(big LAUGH)
...Flat as an ironing board! Oh man, you're nuts!...Hey, who's that?... Eddie, that you?...All right, you're back!....Tom, you know Eddie? He had to hop off. Thought he heard his folks get up....Okay, we'll talk to you later. Hey, good luck at camp. Say hi to little Miss Ironing Board...
(another YUCK)
Boy, this is some party, eh, guys!

CUT TO:

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM

Roy and Claudia are lying side by side in bed beneath the covers.

ROY
Let me just put it in halfway. I won't even move it.

CLAUDIA
Forget it, Munson.

ROY
Come on, I just want to feel it for a second. It'll help me get to sleep.

CLAUDIA
I said no! And if you ask me one more time I'm throwing you out of here.

ROY
Okay, take it easy.

CLAUDIA

No I won't take it easy. I want to get to sleep. Now if you feel your hormones are too out of control to sleep in the same bed with me then I suggest you leave.

ROY

All right, all right, I can sleep. Jeez, it's not like I'm some 16-year-old kid. You think you're the first naked woman I've ever slept with who didn't have sex with me?

CLAUDIA

Shut up and go to sleep.

CEILING POV - Claudia rolls over and closes her eyes. Roy lies beside her on his back, his eyes wide open.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLAUDIA'S ROOM - LATER

CEILING POV - Roy's still lying on his back, wide-eyed. Claudia sleeps peacefully beside him.

SERIES OF TIME-LAPSE SHOTS - Claudia assumes various sleeping positions, while Roy always remains the same: on his back with his eyes wide open.

In the final shot, Roy is in the same wide-eyed position, but now the sun is up. Claudia stirs, then sits up and YAWNS.

CLAUDIA

Oh boy, I needed that.

ROY

Yeah. That was refreshing, wasn't it?

Claudia hops out of bed.

CLAUDIA

I'm going to brush my teeth.

ON ROY - As his eyes instantly snap shut and he falls deeply asleep. We see the clock next to his head reads 7:30. HOLD ON IT as we

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CLOCK - now reads 12:30.

ON ROY - still fast asleep. We hear LAUGHTER and SCREAMING coming from outside. Finally Roy wakes up. He lies there for a second trying to get his bearings, then looks at the clock and sits up, alarmed. Panicking, he jumps out of bed and runs to the window.

HIS POV - The Impala is still there.

He lets out a SIGH OF RELIEF, then notices something else.

HIS POV - a 200-foot high BUNGEE CRANE is set up in the parking lot. CLOSE ON THE CRANE - a TEENAGE BOY does a swan-dive off the platform. He comes within ten feet of the ground, then springs back up.

ROY
Crazy bastard...

Then Roy sees something that almost knocks the wind out of him.

HIS POV - Ishmael is next in line atop the platform. He's getting strapped in.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL

A frantic Roy comes rushing out with only a towel around his waist. Claudia is standing with a CROWD OF ONLOOKERS beneath the crane.

ROY
What the hell is going on here?!

CLAUDIA
Hey, sleepyhead.

ROY
Don't give me that shit. What's he doing up there?

CLAUDIA
What does it look like?

ROY
Are you out of your mind?! I just got the kid in bowling shape. If he breaks an arm or a leg, I'm out a million bucks, lady!

CLAUDIA
You mean we're out a million bucks.

ROY
Whatever.
(YELLS UP)
Ishmael, I want you to come down from there right now! Do you hear me?!

ON ISHMAEL - atop the platform.

ISHMAEL
(CALLING BACK)
Sure thing, Mr. Munson.

He JUMPS. The bungee cord stretches and stretches and stretches, until Ishmael LANDS FEET-FIRST ON THE GROUND, SOFTLY, and then DOESN'T SNAP BACK UP.

ON ISHMAEL - He stands on the ground, unharmed but exasperated.

ISHMAEL

What a gyp!

ROY runs over to him, holding the towel firmly around his waist.

ROY

Don't move, I'll get you out of there, son.

Roy starts to unhook Ishmael from the harness. As soon as he does, THE BUNGEE CORD SNAPS BACK UP, GRABBING ONTO ROY'S HOOK AND CATAPULTING HIM SKYWARD, OUT OF FRAME, WITH IT.

HOLD ON ISHMAEL AND CLAUDIA - looking up. Roy's TOWEL FALLS into frame and onto Ishmael's head.

LONGSHOT - of a naked Roy, dangling above the crowd.

BIRD'S EYE POV - of Claudia and Ishmael looking up at Roy.

ISHMAEL

Wow! That must be pretty embarrassing, huh, Mr. Munson?!

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A pissed-off Roy is sitting alone having a cup of coffee. He looks at his watch, impatient. A moment later, Claudia enters.

ROY

(sarcastic)

Thanks for helping me down.

CLAUDIA

Those firemen seemed to know what they were doing. By the way, I didn't know you were Irish...or was it just incredibly cold up there?

Roy throws her a look. Then we hear Ishmael's voice off-camera.

ISHMAEL (O.S.)

Hey, Mr. Munson.

ANGLE ON - Ishmael coming through the front door. He's carrying packages...and for the first time since we've met him, Ishmael is not in his normal Amish garb. He's wearing a loud, mismatched suit, a t-shirt that says 'HARDBODY', and two-tone shoes.

ROY

What the hell's this all about?

CLAUDIA

Lighten up a little. He's making money.
Let him have a little fun.

ISHMAEL

I picked it out myself. What do you think,
Mr. Munson?

ROY

I think you should lay off the bong hits
before you shop.

ISHMAEL

Oh, we didn't do any bong hits today, Mr.
Munson. We were healthy. We ate mushrooms.

Roy shoots Claudia a look.

CLAUDIA

Look, Munson...I called a friend of mine in
New Orleans. There's a highroller there
looking for some action. Big Money. I say
we go.

ROY

Too far out of the way. We'd miss the
tournament in Reno.

CLAUDIA

The tournament's a waste of time. A long
shot. This is thirty-five thousand in a
weekend.

ROY

Forget it. End of discussion.

CLAUDIA

Ishmael should have a vote. What do you
think, honey? Would you rather go to Reno
or New Orleans?

ISHMAEL

Well gee, Miss Claudia, they got the world
championships there in Reno...

Roy shoots Claudia a smug smile.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

...but that Bourbon Street does sound
pretty nice, too, don't it?

Roy's smile is gone. A song comes on the jukebox.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
Well, you don't have to make up your mind
right now. Come on, Ishmael, let's dance.

As they hit the dance floor we go

ON ROY - who looks aggravated as hell.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ishmael is asleep. He is shaken awake. When he bolts up, Roy puts his hand over his mouth.

ROY
Let's go. It's an emergency. We gotta get
the hell out of here.

ISHMAEL
But...

ROY
No if, ands, or buts? Let's move.

ISHMAEL
I'll go next door and get Claudia.

ROY
Don't worry about Claudia. I'll explain it
all later.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Roy and Ishmael run toward the Impala.

ROY
The army came in and evacuated
everybody!...

ISHMAEL
Evacuated?

INT. CAR - NIGHT

They jump in.

ROY
A big military train derailed and the
entire area's in danger of being
contaminated by a huge cloud of...

Roy looks in the rearview mirror and is shocked to see Claudia sitting there.

ROY (CONT'D)

Shit!

ISHMAEL

A huge cloud of shit. Wow.

Ishmael realizes Claudia is there.

ISHMAEL

Hi, Claudia. Okay, Mr. Munson we're all here. Let's go before that shit cloud gets us.

CLAUDIA

Roy, could I speak to you in private for just a moment?

ROY

Surely.

Roy and Claudia get out and walk away from the car.

ISHMAEL

Make it quick. I fell in a septic tank one summer and they had to hang pinecones on me for a year before people could get close to me.

ANGLE ON ROY AND CLAUDIA - as they walk from the car.

ROY

What were you doing in the...?

CLAUDIA

I had a funny feeling we might have to leave in a hurry tonight.

ROY

That's a sixty-dollar motel room and you sleep in the car? That makes a lot of sense.

CLAUDIA

(sarcastic)

Yeah, don't I feel like a fool.

ROY

Look, I know what you're thinking, but once I explain...

Roy turns, Claudia kicks him in the nuts, dropping him like a sack of potatoes.

ROY (CONT'D)
(through clenched teeth)
Mommy...Wow...you must have...a wide foot.
You got... both of them.

He writhes on the ground like an animal.

CLAUDIA
I can't believe you were gonna shaft me. I
thought we were partners.

ROY
Spare me the indignant routine. You've
been rubbing your tits in that kid's face
from the minute we hooked up so you could
steal him from me.

CLAUDIA
What?

Roy struggles to stand back up.

ROY
Don't give me that 'what' crap. Half the
dresses you got you need two hairdoos to
wear. Admit it, your plan was to take him
and leave me flat...and I just beat you to
the punch.

CLAUDIA
You're pathetic.

ROY
I've been screwed over so many times in my
life I've developed a fifth sense about
these things. It's like I have a little
voice in my head that always tips me off at
the very moment someone is about to do me
wrong.

Claudia punches Roy in the face.

ROY (CONT'D)
As I've gotten older, sometimes there's a
five-second delay.

CLAUDIA
How dare you accuse me of anything. That
kid worships you and all you've done is
feed him a load of bullshit so you could
line your own pockets.

ROY
At least I didn't do it in butt-floss
underwear and a demi cup bra.

Claudia punches Roy again.

CLAUDIA

Come on. Right now. You and me, bud.

ROY

Listen, lady, I've done a lot of creepy things in my life but I'm not going to lower myself to having a fist-fight with a girl.

CLAUDIA

What, are you afraid of me?

ROY

Afraid? Yeah, right. That last punch felt like a butterfly landed on my nose.

She fires off two more rapid PUNCHES to Roy's face.

ON ROY - he has a bloody nose and one eye is blackened and swollen shut.

ROY (CONT.)

Okay, I'm a little afraid.

Claudia connects with a haymaker to the other eye.

Roy has had enough--he winds up and pops her one in the face. Energized by this, she connects a couple more times. Roy's counter leads to a full-fledged brawl, straight out of the old west. For every good shot Roy gets in, she lands a better one. This isn't sissy fighting, scratching or biting. It's an all-out fistfight with blows connecting left and right. Back and forth they go, rolling over cars, punching each other's lights out.

Suddenly Roy looks back toward the car.

ROY

Ishmael!!!!

HIS POV - Ishmael is gone. There's a note on the windshield under the wiper.

Roy and Claudia run into shot and pick up the note.

ROY

(reading)

I thought you were my friends.
Goodbye...Ishmael.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Ishmael stands in place hitchhiking, still wearing his beer can hat. A few vehicles go by and finally a car pulls over about fifty feet past him. Ishmael continues to thumb, however, unaware that the car has stopped.

The driver BEEPS, hangs out the car and tries to get Ishmael's attention. The Amish kid fails to turn around and eventually the car drives off. Finally Ishmael turns and continues walking, oblivious to what just happened.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY OUTSIDE A GAS STATION - SUNRISE

A large pickup with giant monster truck tires pulls to the side of the road. Ishmael opens the door and jumps the six feet to the ground.

ISHMAEL

Thanks again for the lift.

The truck pulls out and Ishmael yells after it.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

Remember, if you're ever in Pennsylvania, I meant what I said about that quilt discount! Oh, and thanks for the massage!

The truck turns off the road and heads down a deserted road.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Ishmael walks up to the ATTENDANT in the garage.

ISHMAEL

Hello.

ATTENDANT

What can I do for you?

ISHMAEL

I'm workin' my way out to Reno and I was wonderin' if you could use any help?

ATTENDANT

Sorry, son, but things've been pretty slow around here.

ISHMAEL

Well, much obliged.

ATTENDANT

Hold on. My cousin owns a farm up a piece on the highway and he's always looking for extra help.

ISHMAEL

A farm! That's great. I grew up on a farm!

CUT TO:

EXT. CINDERBLOCK BUILDING - DAY

The sign reads, "Orvis Meecham's Reptile Farm"

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON ISHMAEL - He's holding a large RATTLESNAKE, one hand on its head, one on its tail, and as far away from him as possible. There is a tall beaker on a table before him. ORVIS MEECHAM, who we see from the back, is yelling at him.

ORVIS (O.S.)
Come on, you goddamn candyass...hook its
goddamn fangs over the beaker and milk its
head!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ishmael pounding the pavement.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS

A sign outside a diner reads, "Experienced Waiter Wanted." Ishmael walks in. We DISSOLVE and he walks out disappointed.

A sign outside a car dealership reads, "Experienced Salesman Wanted." Ishmael walks in. DISSOLVE. He walks out disappointed.

A sign outside another building reads, "Experienced Lap Dancer Wanted." The word "Experienced" is crossed out. Ishmael spots the sign, smiles and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

A divey-trucker place. Ishmael sits at the bar. The BARTENDER walks up to him.

BARTENDER
What can I do for you, Opie?

ISHMAEL
I saw your sign. I'd be interested in
trying my hand at lap dancing.

BARTENDER
Okay.

ISHMAEL
Okay? Really? That's it?

Ishmael shakes the bartender's hand.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)
Thanks. I won't let you down.

The bartender just stares at him.

CUT TO:

CLOSE -- ISHMAEL SITTING IN A CHAIR

We hear hard-driving music. A beautiful g-stringed rear-end pops into shot, very close to Ishmael's face. It bobs, sways, twitches to the music. It drops down and gives him a grinding, hot, lap dance. Ishmael's eyes go wide as blonde hair gets whipped in his face.

ISHMAEL
Lord loves a working man.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

Ishmael is disheveled and totally drained as another girl finishes up a lap dance for him. The bartender walks over.

BARTENDER
How's it goin'?

ISHMAEL
Great.

BARTENDER
Time to settle up.

ISHMAEL
Terrific.

BARTENDER
Ten dollars a lap dance times fifteen dances comes to a hundred and fifty dollars.

ISHMAEL
Up until now the best job I ever had was tappin' a maple tree and workin' with an egg incubator...but this beats that by a long shot. This lap dancin's so much fun, I almost feel like I should be the one payin' you.

CUT TO:

A CHAIN LINK FENCE that Ishmael is thrown against.

ISHMAEL

I'm supposed to pay you?!

We're in an empty lot behind the bar. The bartender shoves Ishmael in the gut with a baseball bat, sending him to his knees.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

I guess it does make sense if you think about it logically.

The bartender raises the bat.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

Wait! Maybe I could work it off.

He lowers the bat.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

I'm not bad with a needle and thread. I could fix the girls' costumes. They must get pretty frayed the way they rub on those things.

The bartender raises the bat again.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

Please, sir, I'll do anything...

The Bartender thinks about this.

BARTENDER

Anything...?

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S CAR - DAY

Roy and Claudia still searching for Ishmael.

CLAUDIA

What makes you think the kid didn't just give up and go home?

ROY

I know him. He's no quitter. He doesn't have the brains to be a quitter.

CLAUDIA

He actually thinks he's got a chance to win in Reno?

ROY

Hey, you never know. You saw his improvement. That match against those old ladies he rolled a 760 series. You put up numbers like that you can beat anyone on a given day.

Roy notices something on the highway. He slams on the brakes and skids off the road.

CLAUDIA
What's the matter?

Roy is looking at a highway sign through his front windshield. It reads: Ocelot, Iowa...17 miles.

ROY
I didn't realize it. We're near where I grew up.

CLAUDIA
What time are the tours to your boyhood home?

Roy doesn't even hear her.

ROY
It's been seventeen years since I showed my face around here.

Roy looks in the mirror and makes a pathetic effort to fix his hair.

ROY (CONT'D)
How do I look?

Claudia looks at him for a long beat. She has to be honest.

CLAUDIA
(sweetly)
Like you've lived an incredibly hard life.

ROY
If I had it to do all over again, I would have gotten more facials.

Claudia smiles and indicates it's time for him to give it a shot.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCELOT, IOWA

Roy drives the Impala slowly through town, but nobody recognizes him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MUNSON FILLING STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

This is Roy's dad's old place. It looks like it's been closed for over a decade. It's all boarded-up, weeds growing everywhere. CAMERA PANS TO THE BACK - where we see Roy sitting on an old tractor tire. Claudia approaches and sits beside him.

CLAUDIA

You okay?

ROY

It's just not what I expected.

(BEAT)

This used to be my home.

CLAUDIA

You're not going soft on me, are ya?

ROY

Nah...I'm bowling people. We're cut from heartier cloth.

CLAUDIA

(BEAT)

What's taken you so long to come home, Roy?

Roy thinks about this.

ROY

I guess I was ashamed. Everyone expected so much. Believe it or not, I used to be something special around here.

(BEAT)

At least my dad thought so.

Roy pulls something out of his pocket and holds it up to her.

ROY (CONT'D)

He gave me this when I left town. Never could get the damn thing working. It's kind of funny--it's like time stopped for me when I left this town.

Roy stares at the place where his old childhood bowling alley used to be.

ROY (CONT'D)

Right over there he and I used to practice bowling every night. He taught me an awful lot out here.

(BEAT)

I got word he died about ten years ago...I didn't even have the nerve to show up for the funeral.

Disgusted with himself, Roy throws the watch in the dirt. Claudia puts her hand on his shoulder, showing her first inkling of compassion.

CLAUDIA

Well, your old man would be proud. I mean, here you are passing all that bowling knowledge on to Ishmael.

Roy thinks about this.

ROY

It wasn't just bowling he taught me out here.

(beat)

And no, he wouldn't be proud.

Roy stands and walks toward the car.

ROY (CONT'D)

Come on, we've gotta find that kid.

Claudia begins to follow him, then picks up the watch and puts it in her pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - DAY

Roy and Claudia are back on the highway. Roy seems to have a new sense of resolve.

CLAUDIA

Do you think Ishmael has enough street smarts to get to Reno by himself?

ROY

Street smarts? Claudia, you're talking about a kid who's never heard of a Q-tip and thought Dixie cups protected soldiers balls in the Civil War.

CLAUDIA

Poor guy. He's like a baby out there.

(SIGHS)

I hope he doesn't get munson'd out in the middle of nowhere.

Roy shoots her a look, then turns back to the highway.

CLAUDIA

Roy, I want to tell you something. You were right. I was going to screw you over with the kid. You beat me to the punch. Your fifth sense was right.

ROY

Thanks for sharing.

CLAUDIA

I decided to be honest with you. I want you to know that's really hard for me--being honest.

They look at each other for a long beat, then Roy looks away.

ROY

What am I supposed to do, give you a medal?

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Roy and Claudia are talking to the gas station Attendant who Ishmael met earlier. The Attendant points up the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORVIS MEECHAM'S REPTILE FARM - DAY

Roy and Claudia are talking to Orvis Meecham. One of his eyes is swollen shut. There are scars and bumps all over his face from where he's been bitten.

ORVIS

I told the little candyass you build up an immunity to a snake bite over time...

A snake he's holding bites him on the chin. He swats it away like it's a fly.

ORVIS (CONT.)

But he wasn't interested.

ON ROY AND CLAUDIA - who look concerned.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

The Impala pulls into the lap dancer bar. The parking lot is now jammed, business is booming.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Roy and Claudia enter and squeeze their way to the bar. The place is packed, with mostly men.

ROY

You see a big blond Amish kid come through here in the last couple days? Mid-twenties, friendly, a little stocky...

BARTENDER

Kinda stupid?

ROY

Well...naive.

BARTENDER

Turn around.

Roy and Claudia turn.

HIS POV - there's a stage with a banner over it that reads 'THE GREAT FABULINA.' We hear a DRUM ROLL. A fey ANNOUNCER is at the mike.

ANNOUNCER

Gentlemen, I would like to introduce you to the one...the only...Fabulina!!

The CROWD APPLAUDS as the CURTAIN OPENS and we see Ishmael standing there, dressed up like Divine. The song 'It's Raining Men' starts to blare and to the crowd's hearty approval, a clearly uncomfortable Ishmael starts to dance.

Roy and Claudia look at one another in shock. The Crowd starts to chant 'TAKE IT OFF' and Ishmael, loosening up, starts to do just that. As Ishmael starts to show more and more skin, a concerned Roy and Claudia make a dash for the stage, pushing their way through the crowd. They're intercepted by the Bartender and a couple BURLY BOUNCERS.

BARTENDER

What do you think you're doing?

Roy flips open his wallet.

ROY

Roy Munson. FBI. Amish division.

He flips his wallet shut.

ROY (CONT'D)

That boy's wanted throughout Pennsylvania Dutch country on ten counts of buggy-jacking, embezzlement of butterchurning funds, and interstate transportation of counterfeit "God Bless This House" potholders.

BARTENDER

I say you're full of shit. Now this boy owes me money and he's damn well gonna work it off.

Roy and Claudia are forced to watch as the now shameless Ishmael strips down into a g-string, working the crowd into a FRENZY.

CLAUDIA

How long does he have to dance?

BARTENDER

Just until that last piece comes off.

Claudia looks with concern at Roy. Suddenly Roy stabs his HOOK into the crotch of the Bartender and starts to pull. The Bartender SQUEAKS OUT A YELP.

ROY
One move, pal, and those babies are gonna
be shish-kabobed.
(to Claudia)
Pull the car out front.

Claudia takes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Claudia is sitting in the Impala, engine running. Suddenly the doors burst open and Roy and Ishmael (still in g-string, carrying his clothes) race out. They dive in the car and the Impala SQUEALS AWAY just as the Bartender and a couple Bouncers run out into the parking lot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

Roy is driving, Claudia's in the front, Ishmael's in the back.

ROY
How can you still be mad at us? We just
saved your butt.

ISHMAEL
I heard what you said about me...about each
other. I thought we were partners, but I
guess I was wrong.

ROY
Look, Ishmael, let me explain something.
It's tough out there. The world can kick
your ass. I only have a vague recollection
when it wasn't kicking mine. It's why
Claudia and I had that fight. We've both
had a rotten run of it for awhile....And
when you're hurt by people over and over
again, you stop trusting everybody... that
way you can't get hurt again.

This registers with Claudia. Roy is telling the truth.

ROY (CONT'D)
If you really want to call an end to this,
we'll drop you off wherever you want. Go
forward and from here on out and we'll all
work together as a team.

Claudia agrees.

ROY (CONT'D)
And no more bullshitting. Promise.

A small smile brightens Ishmael's face.

| DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RENO SKYLINE -- NIGHT

As the Impala comes over a hill, we see the bright lights of Reno in the distance. Claudia and Ishmael stand up and start HOWLING. Roy pumps his fist from the driver's seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOWBOAT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The garish sign outside reads:

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWLERS TOUR WELCOMES YOU TO
THE SHOWBOAT INVITATIONAL

.
.
.
.

SECOND SMASH WEEK
SHERMAN HEMSLEY IN 'THE JEFFERSONS ON ICE!'

INT. SHOWBOAT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

This place is great. Gold rails, thick carpets, etc. Roy, Ishmael, and Claudia are checking in to the big-time and they look very happy.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mississippi gambler motif, in formica. The three of them holding their giant menus.

ISHMAEL
Wow. There's so much to choose from.

ROY
Welcome to the heady world of the
professional athlete.

WAITRESS puts down three plates, piled high with food.

WAITRESS
There you go. Two number sixty-fours and a
forty-one.

ROY

Their sixty-four is supposed to be the best in the city.

ISHMAEL

That forty-one don't look too bad, either.

WAITRESS

You can go to the potato bar whenever you're ready.

The Waitress leaves.

ISHMAEL

Grab your spud, kids.

Roy and Ishmael cross to the potato bar. They start to put on the toppings.

MAN (O.S.)

Watch it, son, your sleeve's in the ranch dressing.

Roy looks across the potato bar. There's a man staring at him and smiling. It's Burt Deland.

BURT (CONT.)

Well hello, Roy.

Burt sticks out his hand to shake Roy's. Roy just stares at him.

ROY

It's been a long time.

BURT

About a year for every topping.

CLAUDIA (O.S.)

Oh shit.

Burt looks at Claudia and smiles.

BURT

Oh..my..God. Claudia.

ROY

You mean you two know each other?

BURT

It's a small world when you got big tits, Roy.

(LAUGHS)

Claudia and I had a lot of fun out in Chicago a couple years back.

Burt smiles at Claudia, who almost looks embarrassed.

ROY
The two of you...?
(to Claudia)
You and him...?

BURT
You can read all about it in my book. Comes
out in the fall.
(to Claudia)
So how you doing, C? Why don't you stop
slumming and come back to work for me?

CLAUDIA
I'd rather mop the floors at a peep show.

Burt LAUGHS.

BURT
I see you still got your good stuff.

ROY
Why don't you get the hell out of here. You
ruined my life, you bastard.

BURT
That's sad, Roy. Pathetic really. There was
a time you could've been the best. I guess
it makes sense that you'd need a scapegoat
for a wasted life.

Ishmael reacts to this.

ROY
I think you had a little something to do
with it, Burt.

BURT
Hey, I remember that night pretty clearly,
pal. Nobody twisted your arm.
(gets the pun, smiles)
Nobody twisted your arm...

Roy hauls off to smack him, but Ishmael grabs his arm.

ISHMAEL
Don't do it. He's just trying to lower you
to his level.

BURT
Let me give you some advice, kid. Stay away
from this guy. He's got a cloud over him.
He can't help it, just one of those people.
I spotted it on his face the moment I first
saw him. A born loser.

At this, Ishmael floors Burt with one punch.

ISHMAEL

You shut up, Mister! Roy Munson is one of the best friends I've ever had and you have no right to speak to him in that manner. Now I don't know who the heck you think you are, and I certainly don't know why Miss Claudia would ever hang around with a guy who has child-bearing hips, but if you don't wiggle your way out that door in five seconds, you're gonna find your nose sniffing my big Amish ass!

A shaken Burt stands and hurries out the door.

ON ROY AND CLAUDIA - They stare at Ishmael in shock.

ROY

Uh...thanks, Ish.

Ishmael doesn't respond. He just storms off.

ROY (CONT.)

(to Claudia)

Why don't you go back to your room. I'll talk to him.

Claudia looks concerned as we

CUT TO:

INT. CLAUDIA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and Claudia enters. She starts to move across the room when suddenly she stops in her tracks and GASPS.

HER POV - Stanley Osmanski is sitting in the corner wearing a big smile.

OSMANSKI

Hey, pumpkin.

CLAUDIA

Jesus, you almost gave me a heart attack.

For a moment neither of them move. Then Osmanski rises and approaches her. He hesitates in front of her, then gives her a kiss on the cheek.

OSMANSKI

So how'd it go?

CLAUDIA

Fine. Great. You know, they have no idea.

OSMANSKI

Good. I got a little nervous when you stopped calling.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, well, we lost the kid for a while.
The last couple days have been crazy.

OSMANSKI

But you got some money for me, right?

MONA

Thirty-two and change. It's all in my bag.

Osmanski smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. ROY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Roy stands outside the bathroom door.

ROY

Hey, Ishmael, you okay? You've been in
there a long time.

No answer.

ROY (CONT.)

You're not taking a crap in the sink, are
you?....Kid...?

Still no answer. Then the door opens. Ishmael's face is red and
swollen from crying. He wipes his nose.

ISHMAEL

It's over, Mr. Munson.

Ishmael holds up his hand. That's swollen, too.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

It's broken...

Off Roy's reaction, we

CUT TO:

SAME SCENE - LATER

Roy and Ishmael are sitting on the floor where we last saw them.
Ishmael's hand is now in an ice bucket.

ISHMAEL

There is no God.

ROY

Don't say that, kid, it's blasphemy.
There's a God all right.

(beat)

He's just a mean son-of-a-bitch.

ISHMAEL

I guess I shouldn't be surprised. After all, I broke God's golden rule.

ROY

Burt Deland is the devil himself. Why would a fair and decent God punish you for hitting that dirtball?

ISHMAEL

That's not what I mean.

(lowers head)

I found the dirty magazines in your suitcase.

ROY

That's silly. Why would God punish you by breaking your right--

(realizing)

Oh...

ISHMAEL

So what do we do now?

ROY

I'm sorry, Ishmael. There's nothing we can do. We might as well break it to Claudia.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Roy and Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

Poor Miss Claudia. She's gonna be pretty disappointed. She had such high hopes for us.

When they get to Claudia's room the door is open and a maid's cart is out in the hall.

INT. CLAUDIA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Roy and Ishmael enter and see a MAID straightening up.

ROY

Excuse me, but is the lady who's staying here around?

MAID

No lady staying here. Everybody check out.

Roy turns to Ishmael, alarmed.

ROY
Ishmael, what did you do with the bag I
gave you to hold?

ISHMAEL
Um....I think Miss Claudia has that. Why?

Roy sits on the bed, devastated.

ROY
No....Oh God no....

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Roy and Ishmael are carrying their bags down the empty hall.

ISHMAEL
I don't know why we can't at least stick
around to watch the tournament.

ROY
Because it's too depressing, that's why.
Besides, we don't have enough money to pay
for the room.

Roy stops in his tracks.

ROY (CONT'D)
Wait a second, I got an idea! Punch me in
the face.

ISHMAEL
What?

ROY
I said punch me in the face. I'll go
downstairs and say I got mugged in the
elevator. They got fifty grand off me, I'll
say. Believe me, they don't need that kind
of publicity. They'll give me the dough
just to shut me up!

ISHMAEL
I don't know, Roy...

ROY
Just do it, kid. But you've got to nail me
real good. If this is going to work, it's
got to look realistic. Now hit me as hard
as you can with your left hand. Come on.

ROY'S POV of a huge fist approaching.

ROY hitting the floor like he was dropped from a telephone pole.
He shakes his head, and slowly sits up. Blood is coming from his
nose, mouth, and ears.

ROY (CONT.)
Jesus, kid, that's a pretty good left hand.

ISHMAEL
Well, I'm left-handed. I only bowl right.

Ishmael helps Roy to his feet.

ROY
Okay, you wait around here. I'll be right back up.

Roy walks about ten feet, then pulls a U-ey and comes back to Ishmael.

ROY (CONT.)
Let's get out of here. This is never going to work.

Roy picks up his bags and we

CUT TO:

INT. SHOWBOAT LOUNGE - LATER

A tiered, Vegas-style lounge. A lot of people at small tables enjoying the entertainment. CAMERA TRACKS through the crowd and stops on Roy and Ishmael at the bar. In the background we see the cast of "The Jeffersons" on ice skates.

SHERMAN HELMSLEY
Weezie! What did Lionel do with my lottery ticket?!

Roy is staring into space, his face a little swollen from the punch. For a few moments neither of them speak. Then, irrationally, Roy turns to the Man beside him.

ROY
Who you calling a psycho?

THE MAN
(nervous)
I didn't say anything.

The man downs his drink and leaves. Roy turns drunkenly to Ishmael.

ROY
I can't believe I trusted her. Thirty thousand dollars. She cleaned us out of every goddam penny! I don't want to live.

ISHMAEL
She'll be back. Claudia wouldn't steal from us. We're her friends.

ROY

You're a SCHMUCK! We're never gonna see her again.

ISHMAEL

I think you're wrong, Mr. Munson...but it doesn't matter. The money we set out to win was in Reno. At a legitimate tournament. No stories about selling dictionaries. No girls in short dresses as distractions. Just a straight-ahead sporting contest where the best player wins because he's the best player. And we have the best player. I feel it in my heart more strongly now than ever.

ROY

Keep talking, son.

ISHMAEL

You can't stop God's soldiers. We're going to do what we set out to do--win that tournament.

ROY

(perking up)

Damn right. I knew you were a champion the first time I saw you bowl, kid.

ISHMAEL

I'm not bowling. You are.

Roy stares at Ishmael for a moment, and then LAUGHS.

ROY

You're a beauty, kid.

Roy takes a healthy swallow from his glass.

ISHMAEL

I know you can win that tournament.

ROY

No I can't.

ISHMAEL

Why? Because you're a little rusty.

Roy twists his hand. It SQUEAKS softly.

ROY

Bad choice of words.

ISHMAEL

So you haven't bowled in a while. You were a champion. That never goes away. I'll bet if you get through the early rounds you'll find your touch again.

ROY

(measured)

It's not just the hand, kid. I can't do it because...

(gestures to his heart)

...because I don't have it in here anymore. You gotta believe you're a winner and they took that away from me seventeen years ago.

ISHMAEL

And this is your chance to change that. To start over.

ROY

It's not that easy.

(SIGHS)

Ishmael, the greatest athlete of all time was Jim Thorpe. Baseball. Football. The Olympic Games. He excelled at them all. You know what happened to him? He ended up a hopeless alcoholic in a carnival dressed like Geronimo. You know why? Unlucky. If the breaks don't go your way, it doesn't matter how good you are. I got bad news for you, son: Burt was right--I'm a born loser.

ISHMAEL

That's crazy talk. You're not a loser. You're a winner, a champion, a guy who's got everything going for him.

(checks watch)

Oooh, we gotta get going. If we want a bed at the mission, we gotta be there by midnight.

Ishmael stands up.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

You coming?

Roy doesn't budge, he just sips his drink.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

Come, Roy. You're gonna need sleep if you want to stand a chance.

ROY

Just get the hell out of here, kid. I told you I'm not bowling.

Ishmael starts to go, then turns back.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

We had a mule back home that kicked all the men in the testicles. Everyone was set on giving up on her...but I had a feeling I could get her going right. Spent the whole summer. It took every ounce of patience I had. And while I was showing the elders the progress I had made, she kicked me in the testicles. So I had to give up on her, too. You know what we did to that mule? Nothing. We just left it all alone. A pathetic mule.

Ishmael leaves. Roy stares into his drink. In the B.G. we hear the SCRAPE OF SKATES. Ice from the stage flies into Roy's face, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RENO MISSION FOR MEN -- MORNING

Ishmael comes out into the bright morning sunshine and finds Roy sitting on the front steps with a butt in his mouth. He looks like he hasn't slept much, if at all.

ISHMAEL

Roy...

ROY

Kid...

(BEAT)

I don't think I'm gonna be much good today, but I'm willing to give it a shot. We've been through a lot together, son. I couldn't live the rest of my wretched life knowing you thought I was a quitter.

Ishmael smiles and throws his arms around Roy. Then:

ROY (CONT.)

Kid, you know that valise of mine in the trunk of the Impala? Go get it.

Ishmael runs off.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF ROY MAKE-OVER - WE PLAY OLD WEST MUSIC AS IF AN OVER-THE-HILL GUNSLINGER WAS READYING FOR A SHOOTOUT (a la Lee Marvin in 'Cat Ballou.')

--Roy doing pathetic sit-ups.

--Roy doing girly push-ups from his knees. Then he does them with one hand behind his back.

--Ishmael giving Roy a back-rub.

--Quick shots of Roy practicing bowling. He throws two strikes, then he throws a gutter ball. Ishmael looks on, concerned.

ISHMAEL
You want a drink?

ROY
(thinks for a moment)
No. No booze.

--Roy throws another strike, and another, and another.
--Roy sitting in a steaming tub of water at the mission, while Ishmael pours more buckets on him.
--Finally Ishmael opens the valise. Roy stands in the middle of the room in his underwear. Ishmael pulls a midriff girdle from the bag. Ishmael holds it out, Roy steps in, Ishmael has to pull it hard to get it over Roy's beer belly. Ishmael gets behind him and pulls it tight, sucking Roy in and up.
--Ishmael pulls out the same double-knit beltless polyester slacks that Roy wore in 1979. He unfolds them carefully and Roy steps into them.
--Roy slides on the same wide-lapeled shirt from 1979.
--Ishmael polishes the hook and Roy snaps the rubber hand into place. Afterwards Ishmael pulls out a bowling glove and slides it over the rubber hand.
--Finally Ishmael pulls out the bowling ball bag. Carefully he unzips it and with reverence pulls out what is still the most sparkling blue bowling ball in the whole world.
--Roy stands there now, a complete and imposing bowling specimen. Suddenly we hear APPLAUSE. Roy turns to see all the winos at the mission clapping their approval.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER - DAY

Hotel, Casino and 180 Lane Bowling Center. This is Oz to the bowling world. A monumental shrine to the sport.

INT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER LOBBY - DAY

Tournament banners everywhere. Registration and courtesy tables are set up. Hundreds of bowlers. Roy and Ishmael enter.

ROY
Ishmael. Welcome to my church.

Roy stops and drinks this scene in. He's home.

ISHMAEL
It's a little intimidating being in the presence of so many great athletes.

Everyone around them is seriously out of shape, smoking cigarettes, carrying bowling balls.

ROY
Boy. It's a young crowd. I don't recognize a single...wait a minute.

Roy spots a short, stocky bald guy, NATE NOUCHI.

ROY (CONT'D)
Nate! Nate Nouchi!!

Roy grabs him and starts pumping his hand.

ROY (CONT'D)
I thought you'd be dead from syphilis by now, you old sheep-fucker. You still bird-dogging anything that moves?

NATE
I'm Nate Nouchi Jr.

ROY
Oh. Your father had a helluva hook. Good to see you again.

Nate walks off. Roy steps up to the REGISTRATION TABLE. An older woman wearing the name tag MARIANN is there.

MARIANN
(writing)
Name?

ROY
Munson, Roy E.

MARIANN
Amateur or professional?

ROY
(taking card from wallet)
Professional.

The woman takes the card and looks at it.

MARIANN
We've got a problem here. Your dues are in arrears. You haven't paid them since 1979.

ROY
(concerned)
How much do I owe?

MARIANN
Well...sixteen years of dues plus penalties and fines...thirty-eight dollars.

ROY
Ouch.

MARIANN
And a sixty-dollar entrance fee.

Roy runs his fingers through his hair and turns to Ishmael.

ROY
We need a hundred dollars.

ISHMAEL
Ninety-eight.

ROY
Mind if my aunt gets a birthday card?
What's the difference? Where are we gonna
get that kind of money?

Roy has an idea and turns back to the registration table. He holds his ring out to her.

ROY (CONT.)
I don't suppose you might just hold onto
this and I'll pay you after the tourney.

MARIANN
Come on, bud. What am I going to do with a
rubber hand?

ROY
The ring.

She leans forward and checks it out.

MARIANN
Oh....Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER - DAY

The CAMERA TRACKS down the entire 180 lanes. We catch a glimpse of everyone in the tournament. The faces are varied yet somehow all look like bowlers. The mood is intense.

ANNOUNCER
Good afternoon. The United Bowling Center
in conjunction with the Showboat Hotel and
Casino would like to welcome everyone to
the world famous Showboat Invitational.
Please enjoy your stay here at our fabulous
facility...and remember, "We're still the
talk of the strip with our twenty-two
topping potato bar." Good luck, everyone.
Let's start the tournament.

The CAMERA STOPS on Roy. Lane 180. Everyone has started. Roy is frozen.

ROY'S POV - The pins look like they're half a mile away.

Roy turns and looks at Ishmael sitting with a handful of spectators in the vast bleachers. Ishmael holds up a small handwritten sign that reads: GO ROY!

Roy shakes his head and mouths:

ROY
I can't.

Ishmael flips over the sign. It reads: WILL WORK FOR FOOD. Roy nods. What choice is there? He turns...lifts his ball...approaches the lane...and for the first time in seventeen years... bowls!

CLOSE ON BOWLING BALL - ROY'S RUBBER HAND IS ATTACHED TO IT. It flops around like a wounded duck as it heads toward the pins.

ON ROY - horrified.

ON THE BALL AND HAND - it flies through the pins. A STRIKE.

ON THE CROWD - they're frozen for a long BEAT, not knowing how to react. The silence is broken by an ODD SOUND.

ON THE BALL RETURN - the ball and hand squeeze through. Roy picks it up, embarrassed.

ROY
(to opponent)
You wouldn't happen to have a phillips head screwdriver, would you?

MONTAGE OF THE BOWLING TOURNAMENT

--Roy continues to bowl. He's tentative but definitely finding the groove.

--Pins flying apart on different alleys and scores are entered on overhead opaque projectors.

--Other faces mirror victory and defeat.

--Roy's face becomes more focused.

--Ishmael urges him on.

--A series of great shots by Roy

--Roy smiles. We pull back to reveal he's looking at his name being moved to the next level on a large scoreboard against an entire wall. Roy's won his first one.

--Ishmael pats him on the back.

CUT TO:

ON ROY AND ISHMAEL - seated side by side at a table eating.

ROY
I forgot how competition works up an appetite. How's your soup?

ISHMAEL
Delicious.

ROY
I have to ask something. Excuse me, father?

They're at a MISSION SOUP KITCHEN seated at a long table with a lot of other DOWN-ON-THEIR-LUCK GUYS. A PRIEST turns to Roy.

ROY (CONT'D)
Is that a fresh mint or tarragon I taste in here?

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF BOWLING TOURNAMENT - THE NEXT DAY

--Roy is bowling with increased confidence.
--Ishmael is in the stands. More people are there now.

PAN ACROSS - Roy's scorecard. It's filled with spares and strikes.

--Roy's name continues to advance on the big board.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON ROY AND ISHMAEL

ISHMAEL
You looked great out there today, Mr. Munson.

ROY
I'm starting to feel like a winner again.

We hear the PRIEST'S VOICE from off camera.

PRIEST (O.S.)
Face the wall.

WIDE SHOT REVEALS - Roy, Ishmael, and several other men from the shelter are naked in a large shower, facing the wall. The Priest turns a HIGH-POWERED HOSE on them.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF BOWLING TOURNAMENT - THE NEXT DAY

--The bleachers are now nearly filled to capacity.
--The bowling is now taking place on several of the middle lanes, dramatically lit from above.
--A dozen men, including Roy, are vying for the final spots.
--The men are now paired against each other in individual matches.
--Roy bowls. His opponent bowls. Roy bowls. His opponent bowls.
--Roy shakes hands with the man.
--Roy's name advances to the next round...then the next round...and again to the next round.

ON TWO BOWLING ANALYSTS - SKIP NICHOLAS and DON NAMAHOE, ESPN bowling analysts, holding mikes, looking into mini-cams.

SKIP
Hi, I'm Skip Nicholas.

DON
And I'm Don Namahoe.

SKIP

A Cinderella story is shaping up here at this year's Showboat Invitational.

VIDEO FOOTAGE - of Roy bowling.

SKIP (CONT.)

After a professional layoff of over seventeen years, Roy Munson, the 1979 Iowa State Amateur Champion has come out of nowhere to be a major contender in this year's competition. And the fans are loving it. Don caught up with Roy today and asked him what he's been doing all these years.

CUT TO:

FOOTAGE OF DON AND ROY

DON

Roy, what have you been doing all these years?

ROY

Well, you see, the thing is...Ever since the...A lot of times I uh...(CLEARS THROAT)...I've been doing a lot of drinking.

DON

Oh...I see. You've had some tough times?

ROY

Don, there isn't a moment in the past twenty years I wouldn't mind having permanently erased from my brain with electricity.

DON

How do you think you'll do in the semi-finals tomorrow?

ROY

Well, Don, if I'm lucky enough to win tomorrow...

CUT TO:

INT. OCELOT, IOWA BAR - CONTINUOUS

A dive bar in Roy's hometown. The bowling tournament is on TV. A couple of BAR PATRONS look up and notice Roy being interviewed.

BAR PATRONS

Hey look, it's Roy. Roy Munson!

Everybody perks up, starts HOOTING AND HOLLERING.

CUT TO:

INT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER - THE NEXT DAY

Roy has just released the ball. A BEAT. The large crowd behind Roy jumps to their feet CHEERING.

Roy puts his arm around Ishmael. Flashbulbs pop. The CROWD CHEERS.

CUT TO:

INT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER

Namahoe and Nicholas are standing on the lanes, talking into the ESPN camera.

SKIP

The man everyone is talking about at this year's Showboat Invitational is Roy Munson. The fans have taken to calling him "The Michelin Man" due to the fact that Roy bowls with a rubber prosthetic hand.

DON

It's not just a sports story, it speaks to us all. Baseball has Jim Abbot and now bowling has Roy Munson. And today, after a seventeen-year layoff he's in the championship facing bowling great Dave Ozio.

SKIP

So join us later, live, from the United Bowling Center in Reno, Nevada for "The Duke Out In The Desert..."

CAMERA TRACKS - down the hallway to Ishmael and TWO TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS wearing official tournament paraphernalia.

OFFICIAL #1

Why wasn't he at the the breakfast?

ISHMAEL

I don't know.

OFFICIAL #2

Why wasn't he at the press conference?

ISHMAEL

I don't know.

They stop near the locker room door.

OFFICIAL #1

It's less than an hour before the match. Is this guy gonna show?

ISHMAEL

I don't know. I really don't know.

The Two Officials leave. Ishmael opens the door to the locker room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ishmael enters. He looks around. No Roy. Ishmael sits on a bench and folds his hands in prayer. After a BEAT he hears something that lets him know Roy hasn't let him down. It's the sound of Roy VOMITING in the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ishmael enters as Roy comes out of one of the stalls. He looks like shit. Ishmael looks disappointed.

ISHMAEL

You've been drinking again.

ROY

No. I don't puke when I drink.

(beat)

I puke when I don't.

Roy crosses to Ishmael.

ROY (CONT'D)

I'm scared, kid.

Ishmael hugs Roy.

CUT TO:

ESPN SPORTSCENTER DESK

ESPN ANNOUNCER

From the United Bowling Center in Reno, Nevada, ESPN brings you live coverage of the Showboat Invitational. Here is three-time AC Delco Classic Champion, Don Namahoe, with ESPN's Skip Nicholas.

INT. UNITED BOWLING CENTER - DAY

ON DON NAMAHOE AND SKIP NICHOLAS - complete with headsets, microphones, and blazers.

The bleachers are filled to capacity. The place has the BUZZ of something momentous about to happen.

Bright, hot television lights everywhere.

SKIP

Dave Ozio, one of bowling's most promising young talents, goes up against Roy Munson, another promising young talent...from the nineteen-seventies. This is the first professional tournament Roy has entered in nearly twenty years and he finds himself in the finals.

DON

I've heard about taking a leave of absence, but this is ridiculous. And here comes Dave Ozio.

ANGLE ON - DAVE OZIO as he enters to APPLAUSE. He's wearing a sports jacket with really wide lapels over a knit shirt.

SKIP

He looks terrific. And why shouldn't he? Dave has just signed a big contract with Johnny Carson sportswear.

Dave takes off his jacket and begins to prepare. Which consists of putting on a glove. He sits.

DON

And here comes the Michelin Man, Roy Munson. What a story, a rubber hand and steel nerves.

Roy enters. APPLAUSE as he squints into the bright lights. He moves to his chair.

SKIP

(WHISPERING)

And now Dave Ozio steps to the line.

CLOSE ON ROY - Ishmael is seated behind him. We see Ozio bowling in the background. Roy looks down his lane and squints. He turns to Ishmael.

ROY

This alley seems kind of long.

ISHMAEL

You're gonna do great, Mr. Munson.

We hear PINS SMASH. The audience APPLAUDS.

ISHMAEL (CONT'D)

It's your turn, Mr. Munson.

ROY

Not feeling too good. I'm not sure I can do this.

Roy looks up at the stands.

ROY'S POV - Burt Deland is standing in the back, laughing. Roy stands, determined. Roy picks up his ball. He takes a deep breath. A look of determination and focus comes over his face. He approaches the line and lets the ball go with the grace and fluidity of a dancer. The sheer force of Roy's STRIKE brings the crowd to its feet.

SHORT MONTAGE OF THE BOWLING

--Shots of Dave Ozio bowling
 --Roy bowling
 --Ishmael
 --ESPN computerized video graphics illustrates the path of the ball as it travels down the alley. Don uses the electronic pen to show how Dave Ozio's hips are out of alignment. When he's done, it looks like he's drawn a penis onto his body.
 --More bowling
 --Fans applauding, reacting.
 --tough, grueling action--a back-and-forth head-to-head battle.

ANGLE ON ROY - He bowls and leaves the dreaded 7- and 10-pin standing. The crowd GROANS.

DON

If Roy Munson is somehow able to make his spare, Dave Ozio would have to strike out to win. But, of course, the 7-10 pick-up is just short of impossible, having only happened twice in thirty-two years of televised bowling.

CLOSE ON ROY - Deathly quiet except for the sound of Roy's RAPID HEARTBEAT. Roy studies the sixty feet ahead of him that could change his life.

SLOW MOTION SHOTS

--A drop of sweat falls off the end of his nose.
 --The sweat splashes next to his shoe.
 --The shoe moves forward.

--Roy head-on as he approaches the line. His arm swings up, then forward. As the ball is about to be released.
 --The crowd stands...Ishmael stands...
 --ROY RELEASES THE BALL...

ON THE PINS--The 7-pin goes down, ricochets off the backboard, and bounces into the 10-pin. ROY MAKES HIS SPARE. The CROWD GOES WILD.

ON ISHMAEL as he jumps up and down like a crazy man. He makes eye-contact with Roy and pumps his fist.

ON DAVE OZIO - Under extreme pressure now, he waits for the crowd to quiet, then steps to the line and bowls...a STRIKE.

SKIP

Ozio's not going down without a fight. He can still win if he makes two more strikes.

The crowd grows excited again. Ozio takes his ball from the ball return. He takes a deep breath and bowls again...STRIKE. The crowd grows even more excited.

ON ROY - he swallows hard and wipes the sweat from his forehead.

ON ISHMAEL - a waitress passes with a tray of drinks. He grabs one and throws back a shot of tequila. Suddenly he gets a tap on his shoulder. He turns and GASPS.

ISHMAEL'S POV - his brother Thomas.

THOMAS

It's time to go home, Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

But...But that's my friend Roy. He's about to...I can't...

THOMAS

It's time to go.

ON DAVE OZIO - face covered in sweat, he takes a long, deep breath to calm his nerves, then steps to the line. You could hear a flea fart. Ozio throws his ball down the lane...

SLOW MOTION - as it smashes into the pins, knocking down eight of them....the ninth pin WOBBLES, and finally falls, just glancing the tenth pin, which...

SUPER SLOW MOTION - which WOBBLES, then WOBBLES SOME MORE, and as it finally FALLS we hear the loud, gruesome sound of a BUILDING IMPLoding. Ozio made his third straight strike and the crowd ERUPTS.

ON ROY - He stares down the lane for a moment, then hops to his feet and offers his hand to a jubilant Dave Ozio.

ROY

(shaking hands)

Great game, man. Way to go.

OZIO

Thanks, Roy. You played great, too.

Roy smiles, then steps aside as the ESPN Announcers mob Dave Ozio. Roy looks into the crowd.

HIS POV - Ishmael's seat is empty.

BACK ON ROY - He picks up his ball, puts it in his bag, and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. RENO MISSION FOR MEN - DAY

Roy sits on his bunk...quiet, all alone. He we pan to a letter on his bunk.

ON THE LETTER - it reads: 'Dear Roy, Sorry about leaving on short notice. My brother Thomas came to take me home. Didn't get to see if you made your last shot. Either way, you're a champion in my eyes. Your friend, Ishmael.'

BACK ON ROY - There's a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. He opens it to find Mariann (the woman from the bowler's registration table.)

MARIANN

Mr. Munson, I think you forgot your ring.

ROY

Oh. Yeah. Uh, look, about the money...

MARIANN

Don't worry about the money, Roy. It was an honor just to hold the ring of someone as special as you.

Mariann hands Roy back his ring.

ROY

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. RENO MISSION FOR MEN PARKING LOT - DAY

Roy throws his travel bag into the trunk of the Impala. He closes the trunk, then moves to the driver's side door when suddenly a porsche SCREECHES up, and Marshakowski jumps out and GRABS HIM BY THE THROAT. Stanley Osmanski gets out of the driver's side.

OSMANSKI

Where is she?

ROY

(barely able to breathe)
How the hell do I know? I thought she was with you.

OSMANSKI

She stole my money.

ROY

Welcome to the club.

Osmanski approaches and KICKS Roy in the shins.

OSMANSKI

Who's Burt Deland?

ROY

What?

OSMANSKI

I checked my phone records at the hotel. She called a guy named Burt Deland fourteen times in the last three days. Who is he, and what the hell do you have to do with him?

This is the final insult to Roy. He drives his knee into Marshakowski's gut. The big goon doubles over, releasing his grip on Roy.

ROY

I'll tell you who Burt Deland is. He's the guy who gave me this.

Roy holds out his hand.

OSMANSKI

Nice. What is it, solid gold?

ROY

The hand.

When Marshakowski catches his breath, he looks to get the word from Osmanski whether or not he should annihilate Roy. Osmanski shakes his head 'no.'

OSMANSKI

You mean to tell me this Deland guy's the one responsible for you losing your hand?

Roy thinks about this.

ROY

I don't know. I used to think he was...but maybe not...maybe it was me...maybe it's time I started taking responsibility for my own actions. It's like you, Osmanski. You probably blame Burt for stealing Claudia away. But I bet it was your own fault.

Roy stares Osmanski down. Finally Osmanski turns and heads back to his car. The Porsche drives away as we HOLD ON Roy.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROY'S RUNDOWN SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA HOTEL - DAY

The place still sucks. We see the old drunk, Frank, sitting on the front steps with a quart of beer.

INT. ROY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Roy is at the sink dumping out bottles of booze. At least fifty bottles are on the counter and when he finally gets to the last one, he takes a breath. Then he opens another cupboard where we see fifty more bottles. As he starts to dump those out, too, we hear a KNOCK at the door.

ROY

Go away! I told you you'll get your rent tomorrow!

The door opens, however, and CLAUDIA STEPS INTO THE ROOM.

CLAUDIA

Hey, Roy.

ROY

Claudia...what are you doing here?

CLAUDIA

I got the money, Roy. Sixty-five grand.

Roy turns his back and continues dumping the bottles out. Claudia enters and closes the door.

CLAUDIA

I had no choice, Roy. I had to take off.

ROY

You left us flat, Claudia. You dumped us when we needed you most.

(BEAT)

You tricked us.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, I did trick you, Roy. In the beginning it was nothing but a big scam. But I got to know you you guys...and I couldn't do it anymore. I just couldn't. That's why I had to leave. If I stuck with you, Stanley would've hurt you...and he would've hurt the kid.

Finally Roy turns and faces her.

ROY

What happened to Burt?

CLAUDIA

I never went with Burt. I made those phone calls to throw Stanley off my scent...and maybe give Burt a little payback.

Roy just stares at her, unsure how to take all this. She holds out her bag.

CLAUDIA
Sixty-five grand. We'll split it three ways.

ROY
But we only had half that.

CLAUDIA
Yeah, well, Stanley doubled it. He bet against you.

(BEAT)
But I'm ready to start betting on you, Roy.

This is one of the few honest moments in Claudia's life, and they both feel the awkwardness of it.

ROY
You're a little late, Claudia.

Roy picks a piece of paper off the coffee table and hands it to her.

HER POV - it's a check written out to Roy Munson for \$500,000.

CLAUDIA
What..? A half a mil?

ROY
Michelin. All I gotta do is make a commercial and show up at a couple malls.

Roy snatches the check out of her hands.

ROY (CONT'D)
Sorry, honey...but this check is only gonna be divided...one way.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIMFIELD - DAY

We're at the end of the Boorg dirt driveway. We see the house off in the distance and a moment later the CARRIAGE carrying Thomas and Ishmael PULLS INTO FRAME and stops.

ISHMAEL
I can't face them.

THOMAS
You must, Ishmael. You made a decision and now you must face the consequences.

ISHMAEL
I feel like such an idiot. I wanted to be a hero for once. I wanted to be the one to save the day.

Thomas puts his hand on Ishmael's shoulder.

THOMAS
Brother, everyone knows you meant well.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOORG HOUSE - DAY

Ishmael and Thomas get to the door of the house and Ishmael hesitates. Thomas nods to him. Ishmael takes a deep breath and opens the door.

INT. BOORG HOUSE

As Ishmael enters the house, he catches a dinner roll off the forehead. He turns to see who threw it and his eyes go wide.

HIS POV - sitting at the dinner table with his entire family are Roy and Claudia.

ROY
It's about time, you bananahead. What took you guys so long? The Donner party could've gotten back quicker than that.

ISHMAEL
Roy, Claudia, what are you two doing here?
I heard you...you lost, Roy.

SAMUEL
I'll tell you what they're doing here.

Samuel stands and approaches Ishmael.

SAMUEL (CONT.)
They came to tell us the truth about your trip.

ISHMAEL
(nervous)
Did they tell you...everything?

SAMUEL
(sternly)
Yes, they told us everything. They told us about the booze, and the lusting, and the late nights, and the lying.

Ishmael lowers his head.

SAMUEL (CONT.)

And they told us how you got them to quit all that, how you got Roy to straighten his life out and how you made Claudia into an honest woman. They told us how every time they wanted to quit, you wouldn't let them, how you quoted from the Scriptures to give them strength.

(smiles)

Yes, son, they told us everything...and we're mighty proud of you.

Samuel hugs Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

But, Father, what about the bank? What about the foreclosure?

RACHAEL

That's been taken care of by Brother Roy and Sister Claudia. You saved their lives so they saved ours. They gave the bank a half million dollars, Ishmael. Our troubles are over. Our troubles are over.

Ishmael's eyes fill with tears. He approaches Roy and Claudia.

ISHMAEL

I don't know what to say to you two.

(BEAT)

I knew you'd be back, Claudia. I knew it.

As he hugs Claudia, we

CUT TO:

EXT. BOORG HOUSE - NIGHT

Ishmael is saying goodbye to Roy next to the Impala. Claudia is already in the car. In the B.G. we see a BONFIRE surrounded by dozens of loud, happy Amish revelers.

ISHMAEL

Thanks, Roy. Thanks for everything.

ROY

Hey, kid, you know that old Centurian's faith thing about you saving the Amish people? Well, it was a lot of bullshit.

(BEAT)

It was me you were saving.

ROY

Wow, Mr. Munson. That's pretty syrupy.

Roy smiles and the two men hug. Rebecca comes up to Ishmael.

REBECCA

Come on, Ishmael. Everyone's waiting at the bonfire. They want to hear all about the missionary work you did on the road.

Ishmael forces a smile. Then he puts his arm around Rebecca and they head back toward their people. Roy and Claudia watch them go, then Roy climbs into the Impala.

CLAUDIA

So what now?

ROY

I don't know.

Suddenly we see a SHOOTING STAR flare across the night sky.

ROY.

Hey, I just saw a shooting star.

CLAUDIA

Well make a wish.

Roy thinks for a moment.

ROY

You know what I wish, Claudia? I wish that you and I can somehow muster the willpower to maintain a platonic relationship for the next couple years--I mean until we really get to know each other.

Claudia smiles.

CLAUDIA

That's really sweet, Roy.

(BEAT)

Oh no, you weren't supposed to tell me. Now it won't come true.

ROY

Aw, shit.

Roy grabs her and they start MAKING OUT. After a few moments they stop and smile at one another.

CLAUDIA

Here I got something for you.

Claudia pulls something out of her pocket and hands it to Roy.

CLOSE ON - the POCKETWATCH.

ROY

Oh my God...you got it working.

CLAUDIA
(shrugs)
Yeah. I wound it.

ROY
(BEAT)
It's got a winder?

Claudia rolls her eyes, Roy starts the car and they drive off.

INT. IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

As they head down the driveway, they pass Ishmael's younger brother Lucas who's running along, followed by his DOG ON A UNICYCLE.

ON ROY - He sees this sight and winces.

ROY
Ouch.

As the car continues on, we pull up, up, up...and...

FADE OUT.

ROLL END CREDITS

THE END