

“Luck”

A Pilot

Written by

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INT. TOWN CAR - DAWN

Two men, one at the wheel, the other in the town car's back seat, head west from Chino on the Pomona Freeway. The man in the back seat, Chester "Ace" Bernstein, is maybe five years older than the driver, Gus Economou. Both approach an age at which younger people think five years either way makes no important difference. Bernstein wears casual, expensive clothes wrinkled from storage. He would seem to have come through a struggle at a certain cost. Economou is attentive both to his driving and, through frequent glances in the rear-view mirror, to any small change in his passenger's posture or position. Relief and anticipation are in the driver's eyes, a readiness to take up unfinished business. Bernstein's looking out the window --

BERNSTEIN

Prob'ly you should get a tape recorder.

Economou looks to Bernstein in the rear-view mirror, manages a tentative grin --

ECONOMOU

Meaning what Ace?

BERNSTEIN

Meaning 'we should get a goddamn tape recorder.

Economou risks a second look in the mirror, identifies Bernstein's humiliated resignation --

ECONOMOU

Sure, alright. And you'll say when to have it on.

BERNSTEIN

'Good thinking, 'good guess.

Beyond dignity or pride, Bernstein values facing facts --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

I don't hold my thoughts as well, alright?

Economou regrets not having inferred this more quickly --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ECONOMOU

I 'got a pen, 'you want me to write something down?

BERNSTEIN

If you think you're funny you're not.

ECONOMOU

Ace, I 'got a pen right here --

He's hurriedly frisking his suit-coat pocket --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

-- or I know 'I 'got a pencil --

-- pats down the glove compartment and finds the pencil --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

-- I 'got the pencil and an ad from Sears here, I can write on the back of that envelope.

Bernstein doesn't take Economou up on this. After a beat --

BERNSTEIN

How are your trees, in your backyard there?

ECONOMOU

Good. Pretty soon it's time to wrap the figs.

(looks at Bernstein in the rear-view mirror)

You should see my picture on my horse-owner's license. 'Like I just yanked a hair out 'my nose.

CUT TO:

INT. SHEDROW - EARLY MORNING

The Big Horse peers out inquisitively from his stall. He's a grand specimen. His head bobs around. He's waiting for something --

HORSE'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The race track's backstretch world is waking to its business. The Big Horse hears riders' voices, snorts and nickers from other stalls, some mariachi music on a tiny radio, a groom chattering in Spanish as he wraps a stable-pony's bum leg.

At the far end of the shedrow the Big Horse's trainer appears, an old man wearing dated clothes and a straw snap-brim hat. An old dog, a boxer named Bruiser, drag-asses beside the trainer. The dog finds opportunity in the Old Man's looking in at the open door of a tack room to lay down in the shedrow dirt --

INT. TACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Among saddles, bridles, bandages, and other equipment, a Night Watchman sits on a cot with his shoes off. He'd been readying for sleep when the Old Man looked in. The Old Man hands the Night Watchman a Krispy Kreme bag --

OLD MAN

That's frosted, they told me 'the chocolate-covereds weren't fresh.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

(nods his thanks)

The Horse got down and slept all night Mister Walter, and he licked his tub clean.

OLD MAN

Thank you.

The watchman considers the Old Man, who lingers in seeming distraction --

NIGHT WATCHMAN

'Gonna bet that Pick Six this afternoon?

OLD MAN

I may throw a couple bucks at it.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

They say 'the jackpot'll top three million.

The Old Man brings himself to confide --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN

(re the Big Horse)

'His second three-quarters this morning, I'm wondering if maybe in the lane the girl shouldn't loosen her hands.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

'Let the Big Man strut his stuff.

The Night Watchman's not taking a position, only indicating he understands what the Old Man is deciding about. A last meditative beat, then the Old Man starts for the door, indicates the Krispy Kreme bag --

OLD MAN

I told you that's frosted.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Yes Sir.

INT. SHEDROW - CONTINUOUS

The Big Horse sees Bruiser get to his feet as the Old Man comes from the tack room. He nickers as the trainer and the dog start toward him. Just in front of the stall a rooster struts past, pecking at the dirt and preening. The Big Horse doesn't want to play. He stomps a foot. The rooster hops off in panic, flapping flightless wings. The Old Man reaches the stall, offers a peppermint in the palm of his hand --

OLD MAN

What do you know, Bub?

The Big Horse takes the peppermint between his teeth. Bruiser lies down in the dirt. The Old Man rubs the horse's nose --

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

How would you feel about letting it out a notch?

The Big Horse nods vigorously, chewing the peppermint. The Old Man notes coming around the corner the Exercise Girl who is the Big Horse's regular rider --

EXERCISE GIRL

Morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OLD MAN

Morning.

EXERCISE GIRL

Hey Bruiser.

She rubs the side of the Big Horse's cheek, tries to sound nonchalant, the way she's rehearsed all night --

EXERCISE GIRL (CONT'D)

'Bout like last time, Boss?

OLD MAN

Maybe in the lane you could go ahead and open your hands some.

The Exercise Girl's eyes show a grateful, eager anticipation she doesn't let into her voice --

EXERCISE GIRL

He's been pulling my arms off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESCALANTE'S BARN - MORNING

Standing in a stall, Turo Escalante, Peruvian trainer of acknowledged accomplishment and sordid repute, supports the head of the Irish horse, a two million dollar purchase just released to his barn from quarantine. The horse is tranquilized. A Veterinarian, having just concluded her stethoscopic examination, is inserting her right arm in a plastic glove several feet in length --

VETERINARIAN

His gut-sounds are a little slow.

ESCALANTE

So see what's what.

The trainer's law-giving tone seems not to put the veterinarian off. Lubricating the glove, she pulls aside the horse's tail --

VETERINARIAN

Don't you wish this was you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESCALANTE

Loquita, a mental case.

The back-and-forth sounds habitual. Escalante, averting his gaze as the Veterinarian slowly inserts her arm in the horse's rectal cavity, notes apprentice jockey Leon Micheaux, seventeen, the Bug Boy, adjusting the stirrups of another horse -- call him The Cheap Horse -- also trained by Escalante. Nodding a groom forward to take his place holding the tranquilized horse's head, Escalante moves to join the jockey, giving him a leg up while taking away his whip --

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

You don't need no stick.

BUG BOY

Yes sir, Mister Escalante.

ESCALANTE

I 'got to stay here. Jog him'n  
once the wrong way 'round,  
loosem'nup for this afternoon.

The Bug Boy can't hide the focus he must bring to figuring out what Escalante's saying --

BUG BOY

I was telling Joey before, Sir, I'm  
so psyched getting to ride for you.

ESCALANTE

Yeah good.

BUG BOY

We'll run big with this horse  
today.

Escalante glares at the kid --

ESCALANTE

Is this morning today, or this  
afternoon?

The smile freezes on the Bug Boy's features --

BUG BOY

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ESCALANTE

Pinhead, is today this morning so far?

BUG BOY

I guess Sir, yes so.

ESCALANTE

Then jog him'n once the wrong way and shut up on what you don't know before I call Porky Pig on you.

BUG BOY

Yes Sir, Mister Escalante.

At Escalante's nod, a groom leads horse and Bug Boy onto the horse path to the track --

ANGLE - THE VETERINARIAN

as Escalante approaches --

VETERINARIAN

(re the Cheap Horse)

I can't believe 'you got that one to a race.

She's withdrawing her arm from Irish horse's rectum --

ESCALANTE

I can't believe where you put your hands.

The Veterinarian's taking her glove off --

VETERINARIAN

(re the Irish horse)

No displacement, no obstruction or entrapments, I'm pretty sure 'it's a transient colic.

ESCALANTE

Leche, I could give him?

VETERINARIAN

(nods)

Give him some milk of mag' and once he's alert get him walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She's started toward her pickup --

VETERINARIAN (CONT'D)

Have you met the limo-driver yet? --  
that broke the bank in Vegas?

ESCALANTE

(shakes his head no)  
And 'buys his first horse for two  
million? Prob'ly too you think  
'they landed on the moon.

She looks at him with quizzical amusement, stowing her gear --

VETERINARIAN

Monkey business?

ESCALANTE

The three years 'he's Economou  
Livery Service, who did he work for  
before, that the last three years  
is in jail?

VETERINARIAN

Michael Vick?

ESCALANTE

Chester Bernstein, all right? --  
Ace Bernstein, that they call him.

VETERINARIAN

Gorilla business.

ESCALANTE

I got trouble enough without help  
from outside.

Their occupations put time at a premium, and the  
circumscriptions of their psyches keep flirtation from being  
simple. The vet indicates the Irish Horse --

VETERINARIAN

Long trip, quarantine, he's  
entitled to a touch of colic Turo.

ESCALANTE

Gracias.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

VETERINARIAN

Por nada.

The Veterinarian is moving away. Escalante returns to the stall, takes the Irish Horse's shank from the groom, to whom he translates the vet's diagnosis --

ESCALANTE

Poquito de co'lico, La Loca dice.

GROOM

Leche?

ESCALANTE

Leche, si, y andale.

During which, on the cell phone he hates and mistrusts, Escalante attempts to speed-dial a call, with his free hand flaps his fingers at his thumb --

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

(to the groom, re the Bug)

Yap yap yap, esta nino.

Both nickname whites for their dominant traits --

GROOM

(grins, naming the Bug)

"Senor Hablamucho" --

ESCALANTE

"Hablamucho," si, "El Boco'n."

Escalante, waiting for his call to be answered, pats the Irish horse's cheek --

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

For two million dollars, you 'got  
some plain head on you.

Somewhat more alert now, the plain-headed Irish Horse, who in fact can run fast and long, studies Escalante in turn --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - MORNING

The Big Horse, relaxed, in an easy canter forty feet or so away from the inside rail. The Exercise Girl is softly singing to him --

EXERCISE GIRL

Sleep, you weary hobo,  
Let the towns slip slowly by.  
Listen to the steel rail hummin'...

ANGLE - THE OLD MAN

seated high enough up in the grandstand to have a view of the Big Horse's workout. The Old Man's binoculars are raised, he addresses the supine Bruiser --

OLD MAN

(re the horse)  
Just hobby-horsing him.

ANGLE - JOEY RATHBURN

a jockey's agent, seated at a table near the Degenerates, addresses his cell phone with exclamatory dismay --

RATHBURN

You're k-kidding T-Turo!

Rathburn's businesslike civility only underscores the awkwardness of his stammer --

INTERCUT - CLOSE ON ESCALANTE

keeping the cellphone at his ear with his shoulder while holding up the Irish Horse's head; the groom, using a dose-syringe, is squirting antacid into a corner of the horse's mouth --

ESCALANTE

I don't kid, you Porky Pig son-of-a-bitch! He's chirping 'how he's gonna run big, when I tol' you that horse had no chance!

This ire seems more calculatedly theatrical than real --

INTERCUT - RATHBURN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RATHBURN

(into cell phone)

`G-guy like y-you th-throws us a  
b-b-bone? -- g-gets this k-kid  
exsposure if he f-finishes up the  
t-track? -- n-now h-he's gonna  
r-run his m-mouth on you?!

INTERCUT - ESCALANTE

ESCALANTE

(into cell phone)

Just tell him shut up, and loose  
lips sink fucking boats!

INTERCUT - RATHBURN

RATHBURN

(into cell phone)

He's c-coming t-toward me T-Turo,  
and he's g-going to the w-woodshed,  
b-'lieve me!

Rathburn wipes spittle from his shirt, waits for Escalante's  
reply, realizes after a beat or two the trainer's no longer  
on the line --

RESUME - THE OLD MAN

his binoculars up --

OLD MAN

(to Bruiser)

Here she comes up to it now --

The Old Man lowers his binoculars, checks his stopwatch,  
raises his binoculars again --

OLD MAN'S POV

The Big Horse and the Exercise Girl --

OLD MAN (CONT'D) (V.O.) (CONT'D)

-- `gonna ease him down to the  
rail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The horse pushes into the bit and his neck bows to the Exercise Girl's hands as she angles the horse toward the rail. The Exercise Girl keeps singing --

INTERCUT - THE OLD MAN

starting his watch at the Exercise Girl's and the Big Horse's passing the six-furlong marker --

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

`Just broke off.

INTERCUT - TWO DEGENERATE GAMBLERS, MARCUS AND JERRY

Marcus, late fifties, is seated in a battery-powered invalid's scooter, uses a small green tank of oxygen to aid his ragged breathing. Absorbed in berating his companion, he's oblivious to the action on the track --

MARCUS

"Tapped." When yesterday you left the grounds a three hundred ninety dollar winner.

Jerry, mid-thirties, has haggard good looks, wears a wryly defeated expression --

JERRY

Commerce Casino For Poker Fun After Dark.

MARCUS

Aware of a several million dollars Pick Six carryover, and that without ammunition we're walking corpses, you hand your bankroll to the ricers.

JERRY

Here's my picks.

Jerry proffers a paper napkin on which he has scrawled six numerical sequences of varying lengths --

MARCUS

Fuck your picks, you degenerate prick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JERRY

Don't wind yourself up, your face  
is going all different colors.

MARCUS

Fuck my face!

RESUME - THE BIG HORSE

navigating the sweeping turn toward the stretch. The  
Exercise Girl still rides high, but she's no longer singing --

RESUME - THE OLD MAN

fans his stopwatch in front of his nose, binoculars trained  
on horse and rider --

OLD MAN

Jesus Christ have mercy, you 'got  
no conscience whatsoever.

An unrepentant Bruiser has silently expelled flatus --

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Fifty yards, she may want to open  
her hands.

RESUME - THE BIG HORSE AND THE EXERCISE GIRL

coming off the turn and into the stretch. The Exercise Girl  
opens her hands a little, which loosens her hold on the  
reins. She lowers her butt to the saddle --

EXERCISE GIRL

Alright Pops.

The words sound almost like a whinny. Released from the  
pressure of the bit, the Big Horse drops his head. He  
quickens and lengthens his stride --

INTERCUT - THE OLD MAN

lowering his binoculars with the horse's closer approach,  
eyes narrowing as judgment and hope are confirmed --

INTERCUT - MARCUS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

considering the approach of another degenerate, Renzo, mentally less well-endowed, whose bald pate is fringed with stringy hair --

MARCUS

Here comes the neurosurgeon.

Renzo proudly displays a fold of currency between the fingers of his right hand --

RENZO

I 'got my disability -- two hundred fifty-five simoleons.

MARCUS

(to Jerry)

Meaning against the disability he's gonna get he took a Deferred Deposit Advance, which is the mumbo-jumbo those juice-joints use to get around the usury laws.

RENZO

They 'got to make a living too.

Jerry's attention is on the Big Horse, now all but flying through the stretch, with the Exercise Girl sitting chilly. Obsession not yet having stolen from him the capacity for awe, he distractedly pushes the napkin on which he's made his selections toward Renzo --

MARCUS

(re Jerry)

That napkin's his whole put-in, this sick degenerate.

Jerry's attention doesn't waver --

ANGLE - JOEY RATHBURN

no less transfixed than Jerry by the Big Horse's movement through the stretch --

RESUME - THE OLD MAN

clicking his stopwatch as horse and rider cross the finish line, the Exercise Girl rising in the stirrups, leaning her

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

body back to apply restraint to the reins. The Old Man bites down hard to keep his emotions in check --

OLD MAN

(to Bruiser)

'Guess 'I still know a peach when I see one.

RESUME - THE BIG HORSE

gradually easing off as he gallops toward the 7/8ths pole --

EXERCISE GIRL

Ho-ly shit.

The Exercise Girl leans forward, runs a hand through the Big Horse's mane --

INTERCUT - THE DEGENERATES

Renzo is marshalling will to voice an opinion about Jerry's napkin --

RENZO

Huh. You single the fourth, I had the fourth a semi-spread.

Jerry doesn't answer. Marcus hasn't been able to resist overseeing Renzo's study of Jerry's napkin --

MARCUS

A triple-Bug apprentice 'hasn't won ten races in his life, he's going to single, on a horse hasn't run in two years.

RENZO

Yeah, but Escalante's the trainer.

MARCUS

Ooooh. Turo Escalante.

Despite the acid tone of which, Marcus' grudging admiration for the strategy's boldness is clear --

ANGLE - RATHBURN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

coming to the rail of the track to debrief the Bug Boy, who is less than ten yards away, walking the Cheap Horse clockwise on the outer margin of the track --

BUG BOY

Hey Joey, I met Mister Escalante at his barn.

RATHBURN

Oh y-yeah? -- h-how'd that go?

BUG BOY

Good. You know, foreign, he's a little hard to understand.

RATHBURN

(lowering his voice)

You di-did some job pi-pissing him off.

BUG BOY

I did?

RATHBURN

Ye-Yeah you did, with your w-wise-ass ch-chirping how g-good 'you th-thought 'this h-horse'll run.

BUG BOY

I was just saying something to say something.

RATHBURN

That's wh-what the w-weather's for.

BUG BOY

Great trainer, I wanted to have something to say.

Rathburn's voice goes lower still --

RATHBURN

Suppose 'he's m-making a b-bet?  
'You think 'he wants a b-big-mouth on his horse?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

BUG BOY

He's betting, Mister Escalante?

RATHBURN

I d-don't know, and if y-you want  
to 'I don't want your b-book --

BUG BOY

I don't, forget 'I asked.

RATHBURN

You're a B-bug. You r-ride  
everything h-hard, and d-don't  
ch-chirp on w-what ain't your  
b-business.

BUG BOY

(low)

He could be on "go," Joey. 'Moves  
like a shine on Saturday night.

RATHBURN

(equally low, but  
emphatic)

Did I just s-say k-keep your m-mind  
right?

The chastened Bug clucks the Cheap Horse into movement toward the barns beyond the head of the stretch, looks back at his agent with saddened naivete --

BUG BOY

I was telling you.

Rathburn's attention has gone to the Old Man, who has gone to the rail to receive the Exercise Girl's report --

ANGLE - EXERCISE GIRL

who has slowed the Big Horse to a walk and turned him back "the wrong way" to the finish (i.e. clockwise) --

OLD MAN

'Eleven and two, pulled up in  
'twenty-three and change.

Her voice is little more than a whisper, as if she's telling a secret in church --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

EXERCISE GIRL

Mister Walter, listen: this guy has  
got nine more gears.

ANGLE - OFFICER KAGLE

a heavy-set security guard, addressing the public at large --

OFFICER KAGLE

Track's closed for renovation folks  
-- admission gates open 'ten-  
thirty.

The guard's near the Degenerates. Marcus 180s his scooter so  
it's close to Kagle's toes --

MARCUS

'Anyone morbidly fat? 'Anyone  
order a heart-attack?

OFFICER KAGLE

Yeah, I wouldn't hold my breath.  
Oh, I forgot, you can't.

MARCUS

When's the last you saw your prick  
without a mirror?

Jerry's on his feet to drift between Marcus and the guard --

JERRY

'Got the Pick Six in your cross-  
hairs, Kagle?

OFFICER KAGLE

I hold a few opinions. Would you  
maybe gonna step up?

ANGLE - MARCUS

rolling away, with Renzo beside him --

RENZO

(marshalling nerve to  
confide)

There may be more development at  
the coffee shop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

MARCUS

What kind of development?

RENZO

I'd as soon not say.

MARCUS

A development of what type?

RENZO

No, so if it doesn't happen.

MARCUS

You're a moron.

As Jerry catches up --

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(to Jerry, re Kagle)

Do not reach out to that three-point-a-week-charging blood-sucker.

ANGLE - THE JOCKEY'S AGENT JOEY RATHBURN

still at his table, addressing his cell phone --

RATHBURN

Wh-wherever it is 'you're f-flopped  
Ronnie, f-find your clothes, f-find  
your keys, f-find your car and  
g-get to the gym, 'c-cause if I  
d-didn't just see a D-Derby horse  
work, I'm a Ch-Chinese d-dentist --

As Rathburn goes on his impediment seems to diminish --

RATHBURN (CONT'D)

P-Plus the mount's open -- an  
exercise g-girl was up.

(trying for a tougher  
tone, stammer returning)

Would you p-please c-call me  
b-back, you s-sorry, n-no-good,  
d-drunken p-prick?

As Rathburn snaps his cell phone closed --

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

ACE BERNSTEIN'S POV

The manager of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel has come down its steps to open the town-car's door --

MAURICE

Welcome home Mister Bernstein.

BERNSTEIN

If you've been partying up in my place Maurice, 'they 'better all be out.

MAURICE

If I missed one or two, send 'em down the fire escape.

Climbing the steps, Bernstein indicates to Maurice the casually vigilant Economou a half-step ahead and several feet to their side --

BERNSTEIN

How about this guy --

MAURICE

The Man With The Golden Arm.

BERNSTEIN

I leave town, he hits a slot for five million.

ECONOMOU

(re working for Bernstein)

I only do this now for fun.

There's some sense of performance in this, as if they're running lines. Economou indicates a young bell-hop holding open the lobby door --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

(to Bernstein)

"Joey," I don't know his last name

--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A YOUNG BELL-HOP  
(big welcoming grin)  
I graduated Mister Bernstein.

BERNSTEIN  
Good for you Kid, so did I.

As they move away --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)  
(low, to Economou, re the  
bell-hop)  
We had to do with that?

ECONOMOU  
(nods)  
Graphic designs, he was studying.

Off which --

CUT TO:

INT. ROD'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Renzo, Jerry, and the scooter-bound Marcus move toward a single figure seated at a table for two. This is Lonnie --

RENZO  
There he is.

LONNIE  
Why do you sound so surprised?

RENZO  
I'm not, because I never guaranteed  
you'd be here.

MARCUS  
(to Renzo and Lonnie)  
'You two taking that table? 'You  
mind if I get by?

RENZO  
That's Lonnie, Marcus -- you met  
him once before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LONNIE

(to Jerry)

And you're Jerry, that we've met  
also, and I don't expect you to  
remember.

Renzo indicates a booth, makes a sweeping gesture --

RENZO

Let's all sit here together over  
here --

As they execute these logistics --

LONNIE

(to Marcus)

'You know what I still call you? --  
(indicates Renzo)  
-- when I'd ask him how you were  
doing?

MARCUS

Asshole?

LONNIE

The Brains Housing Department.

MARCUS

Am I handicapped-accessible?

Lonnie explains himself with relish --

LONNIE

Off I met you at Hollywood with  
Renzo, and you gave me a triple,  
which I had to leave before I  
played it --

MARCUS

Does this story turn out sad?

LONNIE

No no no, I played it on T.V.G., I  
had to go to work: 'hundred  
seventeen bucks it paid.

The waitress has come to the table. Addressing her, Jerry  
points to Renzo, Marcus, and himself --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JERRY

Usual, usual, usual --

RENZO

Yeah, I'll have my usual.

LONNIE

(to Marcus, re Renzo)

And I'd always say to him, that  
he'll verify a hundred percent --

JERRY

(to Lonnie)

What do you want to eat?

LONNIE

(to waitress)

Eggs over easy, bacon burnt.

RENZO

(to Marcus, re Lonnie)

"How's the Brains Housing  
Department?" -- he'd always ask.

LONNIE

And he'd tell me some genius way  
'you guys picked out some horse to  
bet --

MARCUS

And the horse still lost.

WAITRESS

(to Lonnie)

Home fries?

LONNIE

Nah, I'm watching my figure.

(to Renzo, as the waitress  
leaves)

No and what would I always say to  
you?

RENZO

(to Marcus, as Lonnie)

"Let me once make half-a-score,  
I'll bankroll that genius gimp."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

A beat --

MARCUS

Define "half-a-score."

All eyes on Lonnie as he produces a fold of money and names its source with haughty pride --

LONNIE

From two insurance agents,  
simultaneously paying me to fuck  
'em senseless.

CUT TO:

INT. BEVERLY WILSHIRE HOTEL - BERNSTEIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bernstein stands reflected in a mirror on a closet door. He's in the hallway between the suite's master bedroom and its living room, showered, shaved, and now wearing a suit and tie. Economou emerges from another of the suite's bedrooms, wiping his hands on a towel --

ECONOMOU

They 'got a tape recorder at the  
desk 'they said 'we could borrow  
Ace.

BERNSTEIN

Then you'll buy us one that's top  
of the line.

ECONOMOU

(nods)

Maurice says 'Korg, twenty-four  
bits. He sounded like Ming of  
Mars.

BERNSTEIN

And how'd you leave it with  
Escalante?

ECONOMOU

I'd call from a few minutes out.

Economou takes in the distracted Bernstein's tracing the gap between his shirt collar and his neck --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

Letters in there Ace, two big boxes.

Bernstein stares a beat at Economou's reflection, then opens the closet door, eyes narrowing as he sees two cardboard boxes filled with letters and small packages --

BERNSTEIN

We responded?

ECONOMOU

(nods)

I called, or either wrote to the return address. Everyone understood.

Bernstein closes the door, lingers at the mirror, hoping, as Economou understands, to get an appraisal of his appearance --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

Excellent. Lunch.

Bernstein nods, looks away --

BERNSTEIN

I don't know if I still 'got this in me.

ECONOMOU

Pass then, Ace, bullshit. Fuck Nick DiRossi and his floor show.

BERNSTEIN

Not if I still 'got plans. Everyone knows 'I'm out.

Bernstein turns away from the mirror. He starts through the living room, his finger tracing the gap between his collar and his neck --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

I 'got to get new shirts.

Economou's a step behind --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ECONOMOU

You might want to try those Korgs,  
the twenty-four bits with the  
rainbow stripes.

-- catches up in time to open the door. They're gone. Off  
the empty apartment --

CUT TO:

INT. RACE TRACK - GRANDSTAND - DAY

Minus Jerry, the Syndicate members study newspaper sports  
sections and Racing Form past performance charts while  
marking trial Pick Six tickets --

MARCUS

I'll illustrate this degenerate's  
mind, 'why his vote's for singling  
the third.

RENZO

(low, to Lonnie, re  
Marcus)  
Jerry, he's saying.

MARCUS

Off form it's completely open, you  
should prob'ly use every horse.  
But he ain't handicapping the  
horses. He's handicapping  
Escalante.

RENZO

(to Lonnie, still low)  
'Jerry's thinking, Marcus feels.

MARCUS

'Enters a horse 'away two years,  
all slow workouts, gives the mount  
to a triple-bug apprentice. If if  
the horse jumps up, who's the hero?

RENZO

(to Lonnie)  
Escalante, Jerry's thinking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Marcus is at closing argument; a defiant conviction comes into his voice --

MARCUS

No, he ain't certain 'the horse is live. What he knows for a fact, the third's a grab-bag and so is the eighth. Four deep here, six in the last, we remain exposed on both flanks. 'Single Escalante here, if Escalante jumps up, we knocked out three-quarters of the tickets, we're excellently protected the four races subsequent, and if we make it to the eighth 'we're fully spread in a grab-bag race with a two million dollar carry-over.

Marcus presses his oxygen mask to his face --

MARCUS (CONT'D)

'Is what that degenerate's thinking.

Lonnie nods, nudging Renzo, indicating Marcus --

LONNIE

"Brains Housing."

Marcus squints, his eyes searching for Jerry --

MARCUS

'Feels bad 'cause he tapped out at poker. 'Prob'ly got that fat fuck's fangs in his neck.

RACK FOCUS TO JERRY AND KAGLE observing borrowers at an ATM --

JERRY

Kagle.

KAGLE

Would you loan you a thousand dollars?

JERRY

I'm not asking for a thousand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KAGLE

One policy fits all. Thousand  
dollars minimum.

JERRY

You're your own boss, why one  
policy?

KAGLE

Do I look self-employed in this  
uniform?

JERRY

As a shylock. In that capacity.

TRACK ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Horses are on the track. Pick Six  
windows close promptly at off-time.

JERRY

Does one pant-size fit all?

KAGLE

Yeah good, insult my weight.

JERRY

Hat-size, I said.

KAGLE

I ain't chasing you for vig on  
three hundred lousy dollars. A  
thousand minimum, three points a  
week on the balance.

JERRY

Then let me hold the fucking  
thousand.

KAGLE

You ... do not ... qualify.

JERRY

Fuck you then and the Goodyear  
blimp.

Jerry starts away --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KAGLE

'You want to make ten bucks?

Jerry stops, sees Kagle holding out the sawbuck --

KAGLE (CONT'D)

Mark my program for the Pick Six.

As Jerry studies Kagle --

CUT TO:

EXT. MISTER D'S RESTAURANT - PARKING LOT - DAY

Economou holds off from within the first try of a red-vested Latino parking attendant to open the driver's-side door, mimes to the attendant his and Bernstein's need for a brief moment more before they exit --

ECONOMOU

Give me a second, my nut's outside  
'my truss.

The attendant, whose lack of English Economou has assumed, nods his understanding and books --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

Tell me "fuck myself" Ace, I think  
'I should stay here with you.

BERNSTEIN

"Hello," "thank you," and you're  
gone. I want you meeting  
Escalante.

Economou knows better than to make his case twice. He exits, opens the door for Bernstein, who climbs out. Economou hands the attendant the car keys and a twenty-dollar bill, shows his right hand --

ECONOMOU

Cinco minutos.

The attendant nods his understanding and points to where he'll keep the car available for an easy exit. As Bernstein and Economou cross the lot --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNSTEIN

Your attitude with him, business, a  
hundred percent.

ECONOMOU

(even-voiced, low)

Jesus Christ, you 'got that tape  
recorder here.

Economou undemonstratively points at the inside jacket pocket  
of his own suit-coat. Bernstein's eyes invoke in a general  
way what prudence might presume could be camera vantages --

BERNSTEIN

Spilt milk.

ECONOMOU

Just don't take off your fucking  
coat.

BERNSTEIN

You're friendly with him, but you  
'got all the friends 'you need.

ECONOMOU

With Escalante, understood.

They near the entrance to the restaurant --

BERNSTEIN

"Spare me the hat-dance, just train  
the horse."

CUT TO:

INT. MISTER D'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Nick DiRossi, posted at the bar, squinting at the entrance of  
Bernstein and Economou, back-lit by the unforgiving day.  
DiRossi rises with a show of affability --

DIROSSI

Oh! 'Back from college!

Off the cold alertness in DiRossi's eyes, his vital,  
mirthless smile --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - WALKWAY BETWEEN SADDLING AREA AND PADDOCK  
WALKING RING - EARLY AFTERNOON

The Big Horse's Exercise Girl stands with Exercise Girl #2 at the wooden rail restraining spectators. They're watching the jockeys head for the walking ring, the Bug Boy in particular. As he passes the exercise girls --

BUG BOY

Chicas. `Bon temps roulez.

EXERCISE GIRL

Go get `em jock.

The second exercise girl leans out over the rail, keeping her eyes on the Bug Boy's ass --

EXERCISE GIRL #2

Janey says `he likes to spank her.

RACK FOCUS TO JOEY RATHBURN

outside the restraining rail on the opposite side of the walking ring. Among owners and trainers in the grassy area inside the walking ring path, Rathburn's gaze is fixed on the stoic, solitary Escalante, who had been watching the Cheap Horse, led by his groom, circling on the walking path along with the other entrants in the third race. The trainer glances briefly at, then appears to ignore the Bug Boy approaching him with an excited, expectant smile --

ANGLE - ESCALANTE AND THE BUG BOY

BUG BOY

How `you doing Mister Escalante?

ESCALANTE

Listen to me. You keep'm'n covered up. When you ask'm'n, you take'm'n wide to don't get stopped.

BUG BOY

Yes Sir.

The Paddock Judge calls "Ri-ders up." Escalante cups a hand to give the Bug Boy a leg up. The Bug Boy's prepared a few words --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUG BOY (CONT'D)

I hope 'this is the first of a lot  
of races 'I ride for you Mister  
Escalante.

ANGLE - RATHBURN

watching, thinking out loud --

RATHBURN

Get on the horse, jock.

RESUME - ESCALANTE AND THE BUG BOY

ESCALANTE

Get on the horse.

BUG BOY

Yes Sir.

The Bug Boy offers his bent left leg; Escalante grasps the  
jockey's left ankle and helps him into the saddle. The  
jockey balls his right hand, holds it out to Escalante --

BUG BOY (CONT'D)

Give me a pound.

ANGLE - RATHBURN

wincing as he imagines some violent response by Escalante --

RESUME - ESCALANTE AND THE JOCK

Escalante only ignores the jockey's offered fist --

ESCALANTE

He 'gonna finish for you, don't  
get'm'n fucking stopped.

BUG BOY

Okay. All right. Here we go.

As the Cheap Horse, with the Bug Boy aboard, joins the line  
of horses heading for the track --

CUT TO:

INT. MISTER D'S RESTAURANT - NICK DIROSSI'S OFFICE

A portion of the office is given over to a large mahogany dining table, at a corner of which DiRossi and Bernstein are having lunch --

DIROSSI

This is why the country's in the shitter -- stand-up guys go away while the mugs steer us straight for the falls.

BERNSTEIN

'Far as the Greek, I appreciate the trouble people went to.

DIROSSI

He beat a slot, God Bless him.

BERNSTEIN

I wanted him kosher to buy the horse, showing income and paying taxes.

DIROSSI

They needed the exercise, the people 'you put through some hoops. Who I hope that horse gives pleasure to is you, Ace.

BERNSTEIN

I gotta keep my distance.

DIROSSI

No, understood.

BERNSTEIN

'Til I feel my parole out, if there's any play on the leash.

Throughout this, DiRossi appears to have been measuring Bernstein's acuity --

DIROSSI

'Tell you the truth, those people who helped you are interested, 'what's going on at that track.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNSTEIN

How wouldn't they be?

DIROSSI

S'posedly close to belly-up.

BERNSTEIN

'Jerk-offs, who've got it now.  
'Patience and a bank-roll, it's  
sitting there for a move.

DIROSSI

Brains, vision, and balls, is why  
you'd have that opinion.

BERNSTEIN

They're jerk-offs, the operators,  
the state and local governments are  
tapped, with a tax base 'shrunk in  
half. If ever 'was a time a casino  
could get through --

DIROSSI

Right on the grounds, you're  
saying.

BERNSTEIN

That's on hundreds and hundreds of  
acres, with how many million people  
thirty minutes or less?

DIROSSI

As far as a listening post, this,  
with the Greek, I could think of  
worse situations.

Which seems to give Bernstein pause --

BERNSTEIN

I'm not getting in the middle of  
anything.

DIROSSI

No no no, no one would want you to.

BERNSTEIN

I don't know if I'd still be an  
asset.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DIROSSI

You're entitled to some leisure,  
and to set your own pace, is the  
only fucking point.

DiRossi notes Bernstein tapping at his suit-coat pocket, as  
if discovering the presence of something he hadn't expected --

BERNSTEIN

See this, I don't hold my thoughts  
as well.

Now, the restaurant owner's eyes widen as Bernstein produces  
the tape recorder and puts it on the table between them --

DIROSSI

Whoa.

BERNSTEIN

That Maurice at the hotel loaned it  
to me, I forgot I had it in here.

Dirossi vamps while he decides on a course --

DIROSSI

Maurice, yeah? How's he?

BERNSTEIN

The same.

DIROSSI

Good, yeah.

Rubbing his neck, Dirossi indicates the tape recorder with a  
show of good humor --

DIROSSI (CONT'D)

I know that hasn't been on.

BERNSTEIN

He gave it to me at the hotel desk,  
I forgot to leave it in the car.

DIROSSI

Yeah, huh?

BERNSTEIN

What, I'm making you nervous?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DIROSSI

No no no.

BERNSTEIN

Then what are you staring at? Open it up, look at it, see if it's been on.

DIROSSI

C'mon, Ace --

Bernstein takes off his suit coat --

BERNSTEIN

I do three, protecting how many people, and you'd entertain suspicions like that?

DIROSSI

Absolutely not.

(re the recorder)

That's like a memory-aid, a work-around --

His outrage seeming to feed on itself, Bernstein rips open the front of his shirt --

BERNSTEIN

Why don't you fucking toss me --

DIROSSI

Ace, basta.

Bernstein's lowering his pants and undershorts --

BERNSTEIN

Don't "basta" me, you guinea prick. Three years, getting forgetful and everything else --

DIROSSI

Would you pull your fucking pants up please before I start getting aroused?

Bernstein looks away, as if to reassemble the elements of his personality, leans down to pull up his pants --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BERNSTEIN

Make a fool of myself, 'first I get out.

DiRossi's pushed a button on his desk --

DIROSSI

A you didn't, B you're with a friend.

BERNSTEIN

'Tore my buttons off my shirt and my trousers.

DIROSSI

Everyone appreciates what you did, Ace, and everyone knows who you are.

A perfunctory knock is followed by the entrance of a DiRossi underling --

DIROSSI (CONT'D)

Run Mister Bernstein to the Beverly Wilshire Jimmy.

JIMMY

Yes Sir.

DIROSSI

(to Bernstein, indicates the office back door)

'Motorized canopy, you'll step right into the car. Jimmy'll call ahead, they can meet you with clothes to walk in with.

Jimmy can't dissemble his uneasy taking-in of the tape recorder DiRossi's holding --

BERNSTEIN

(to Jimmy)

Listen to it, I think I said one word.

DiRossi hands Bernstein the tape recorder --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

DIROSSI  
Nobody needs to listen.

DIROSSI (CONT'D)  
(to Jimmy)  
'Pull around for him --

JIMMY  
(to Bernstein, indicates  
the office's back door)  
'Be outside for you in just a  
second, Sir.

As Jimmy exits, and DiRossi hits the switch initiating the  
motorized canopy's extension --

DIROSSI  
You think that other topic's worth  
a sit-down?

BERNSTEIN  
Let's see what a few days bring.

DIROSSI  
Absolutely, get your sea-legs.  
Maybe you'd bring the Greek.

BERNSTEIN  
(seemingly distracted)  
Here, listen --

Bernstein puts his tape recorder on "play," holding it up to  
invite DiRossi's hearing. Bernstein is heard speaking in an  
unnaturally deep voice --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)  
"Homeopathy."

He mistakenly accents the first syllable --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)  
'The one word on it.

DiRossi nods, plainly not certain he has a firm fix on  
Bernstein's state of mind --

DIROSSI  
Uh huh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BERNSTEIN

'Reminds me a type of doctor 'I  
want to see.

DIROSSI

(re Jimmy)  
Here he is outside.

As they move into the canopy which gives on the parking lot --

BERNSTEIN

My neck size shrunk, I 'got to get  
new shirts.

Off which --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - THE STARTING GATE - AFTERNOON

BUG BOY'S POV (HE WILL HAVE A CAMERA PLACED IN HIS HELMET)

A starting assistant leads the Cheap Horse into the gate. As the Bug Boy looks from side to side, we see other horses being positioned. His horse, Mon Gateux, is relaxed and standing quiet. The Bug Boy rises in his stirrups, straightens his saddle by shifting his weight abruptly, sits down and exhales deeply, runs his hand from near the horse's head down his mane toward the saddle --

STARTING ASSISTANT

(to Bug Boy)  
'You alright Kid?

BUG BOY

I'm good, we're good.

We hear b.g. the chatter of the assistant starters and the other jockeys, then a shout of "all in." The chatter stops --

BUG BOY (CONT'D)

Spring it, spring it!

ANOTHER JOCKEY

(to the Starter)  
Wait wait wait wait wait!

-- and the gates open to the clanging of a bell --

INTERCUT - THE DEGENERATES

in their seats reacting as the gate is sprung. In the background the Track Announcer's voice "And away they go" --

LONNIE

C'mon number-fucking-five!

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

his view of the horses and jockeys ahead of him shaking and distorted as his own mount's hooves hit the ground. Clots of the track's synthetic surface fly past or hit his goggles, and the flanks of the horses and jockeys on either side veer toward him and away; during all of which --

INTERCUT - RACE TRACK - ESCALANTE'S BOX - AFTERNOON

Escalante, sitting alone in a box near the finish line, watches poker-faced as the field passes before him heading for the clubhouse turn. On a narrow shelf in the front of the box, an enormous pair of binoculars rests unused. As the horses round the clubhouse turn, moving toward the backstretch --

ESCALANTE

Ca'lmate, pinhead.

INTERCUT - THE DEGENERATES

watching --

LONNIE

(to Renzo)

How's he running?

RENZO

(to Jerry)

How's he running Jerry?

JERRY

He's on the rail, fourth or fifth.

RENZO

Yeah, but how's he running?

MARCUS

Would you please shut the fuck up?

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

The voice of the Track Announcer is muted. The Bug Boy has settled Mon Gateux between horses one off the rail. Directly in front of him a trio, inches apart, moves together. The gray horse maintains his position on the rail and on the outside two horses are at Mon Gateux's shoulder --

JOCK

(on the outside next to  
the Bug Boy)

I got two inside.

One of the horses ahead is falling back and the horses to the Bug Boy's right drift out as a unit. As they approach the turn, he finds third place by default as the gray on his inside slowly slips back. He is close on the heels of the two leaders as the field bends around the far turn. To his outside only one horse remains --

BUG BOY

(glancing to his right)

Not yet, not yet Papa.

INTERCUT - RATHBURN

lowering his binoculars, watches intently --

INTERCUT - ESCALANTE

his elbows resting on the ledge in the front of the box seat, brings his binoculars up for the first time. In the background we hear the Track Announcer: "They are approaching the quarterpole... Chowder Bay and Bristol Cloud are head and head, in the green and white Lost Cause is now making his run on the outside ...."

ESCALANTE

You stupid Baby Pinhead, you  
got'm'n trapped on the rail ....

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

Straightening into the lane, the horse outside the Bug Boy is slowly pushing his head in front of the Bug Boy's horse. The Bug Boy is holding Mon Gateux hard, looking to his right, then over his right shoulder, desperate to find a way out, addresses a plea to the jock on his outside --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUG BOY  
Scootch over, let me out!

JOCK #1  
I've got run -- are you in trouble?

BUG BOY  
Give me a fucking break!

JOCK #1  
'I look like your fucking daddy?

Scrubbing hard on his horse, the jock outside the Bug Boy rides even closer to Mon Gateux --

INTERCUT - ESCALANTE

Escalante tosses his binoculars onto the box's ledge --

ESCALANTE  
Co'nyo.

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

Approaching the sixteenth pole, in resolute determination, the Bug Boy angles Mon Gateux toward the rail --

BUG BOY  
C'mon Papa!

The horse is full of run, closes on the leading twosome. Eighty yards from the finish, Mon Gateux forces his way into a thin slice of space between the inside horse and the rail --

BUG BOY (CONT'D)  
(screaming)  
Inside! Inside!

INTERCUT - THE DEGENERATES

JERRY  
He's got horse!

RENZO  
Where is he?

JERRY  
Inside, inside!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

As the Cheap Horse's head comes even with the head of the horse just outside him --

INTERCUT - RATHBURN

RATHBURN

Switch your stick! Get to your left!

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

at the bottom margin of the camera's field of vision the Bug Boy's whip switches from his right to his left hand, as part of the same motion strikes the Cheap Horse's left flank --

BUG BOY

Haaahh!

INTERCUT - THE DEGENERATES

in a paroxysm of hope and fear --

MARCUS

Oh my God!

INTERCUT - ESCALANTE

ESCALANTE

Get up, you Baby Pinhead!

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

at the last stride, as the Bug Boy's hands push forward onto the horse's neck, the horse's head drops out of the bottom of the frame; only the tops of his ears can still be seen --

INTERCUT - RATHBURN

by the slight, approving protrusion of his lower lip participating in the brave excellence of the Bug Boy's ride --

INTERCUT - RACE TRACK - THE DEGENERATES

MARCUS

My God, oh my God he won! Did he win?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jerry makes a spider-hand at Marcus --

JERRY

Push-ups, my brother.

Using his left hand to press his oxygen mask to his face, Marcus flexes his fingers back at Jerry with his right --

INTERCUT - THE TWO EXERCISE GIRLS

leaning over the rail, keeping the horses in sight in the race's aftermath --

EXERCISE GIRL

That Cajun punk can pump.

INTERCUT - ESCALANTE

-- rising, his features a circus-mask caricature of Latin simplicity and surprise as he heads for the Winner's Circle --

ESCALANTE

Holy cow! -- that horse run very good!

His words are directed at no one in particular; that his show of surprise is patently insincere seems to fulfill his deepest intention --

INTERCUT - BUG BOY'S POV

as the horses gallop out, passing the 7/8ths pole --

JOCK #1

Alright, Kid.

BUG BOY

(evenly)

Bon temps, ami.

CUT TO:

INT. RACE TRACK - PRESS BOX - AFTERNOON

In the press box above the grandstand, the Flack comes to join the Columnist's observation of Escalante's entrance into the Winner's Circle --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLUMNIST

Whoever's the Patron Saint of  
Consecutive Long-Shots, executives  
all over the track are now busy  
lighting candles to.

FLACK

(as if intoning a newsreel  
headline)

"Multi-million Dollar Pick Six Pay-  
Off Distracts Schmuck Gamblers From  
Track's Insolvency."

The Columnist's looking toward the Winner's Circle --

COLUMNIST

Check out Escalante, serving it to  
the gringos cold.

COLUMNIST'S POV

Escalante holds the Cheap Horse's rein, smiles naively at the  
track photographer. The delighted Bug Boy is still astride --

BUG BOY

How'd I do Mister Escalante?

Escalante's expression doesn't change, nor does he look to  
the Bug --

ESCALANTE

I told you take him'n wide.

As the photographer snaps the picture --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - GRANDSTAND - DAY

The Degenerates. Lonnie's feeling frisky --

LONNIE

(to Renzo)

I am on some fucking roll.

When this fails to pique the interest of others --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LONNIE (CONT'D)

D'you tell 'em that story, how this  
dough 'I put up came about?

RENZO

You said not to.

LONNIE

(feigned humility, to  
Jerry and Marcus)  
I'll tell if you want to hear it.  
'Somewhat toots my own horn.

MARCUS

No, tell us another time.

ANGLE - MARCUS

leaning close to Jerry; his voice is low --

MARCUS (CONT'D)

'The fuck?

Jerry's voice is lower --

JERRY

Kagle might have our same ticket.

Marcus takes this in, leans farther forward, his voice lower  
still --

MARCUS

I want to gouge your eyes out.

JERRY

'Go to him for juice, he tells me  
'I don't qualify --

MARCUS

I'd like to watch you hit by a bus.

JERRY

'Walking away, he offers ten for my  
figures, I figure take the ten,  
I'll bet Escalante straight ....

Eyes down, Jerry produces his winnings --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JERRY (CONT'D)

I wanted to pull my weight in the  
Syndicate.

Marcus ignores the offered money --

MARCUS

Do you know 'Kagle bought the  
ticket?

JERRY

No.

MARCUS

Do you know 'he did, and you're a  
weak-willed degenerate 'too afraid  
to admit?

JERRY

I don't know if he bought the  
ticket Doctor Phil.

After a long beat, Marcus offers grudging conciliation --

MARCUS

'Some hurdle we cleared. 'Some  
handicapping, 'your part.

CUT TO:

INT. RACETRACK - GRANDSTAND - DAY

In an isolated part of the grandstand, having submitted his  
winning tickets to an automated teller, Escalante collects  
the cash vouchers the machine dispenses in return. An  
unkempt stooper, displaying a soiled pair of Jockey shorts on  
the end of a pole, emerges from behind a pillar. The Stooper  
uses the pole, broken off a push-broom, to probe the refuse  
containers deployed around the track --

STOOPER

Look Escalante! Somebody shit  
themselves, threw away their  
underpants!

Startled, Escalante raises his shirt, displays the upper band  
of his boxers --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESCALANTE

Not me, Senior.

This could be taken for half-hearted obsequiousness, or as dissembling, temporizing prologue to some different behavior entirely. The Stoooper's bitter insanity finds florid expression --

STOOPER

You motherfucker! They should put you next to Madoff you fucking thief!

Escalante studies the Stoooper --

ESCALANTE

Shhhhh, Co'nyo.

STOOPER

Blow you to pieces when you start your car!

Escalante's phone is playing "La Cucaracha." He flips it open to answer, brings it to his ear --

ESCALANTE

Who is this?

ECONOMOU (O.C.)

Gus Economou, Mister Escalante, I'm here at the gate.

ESCALANTE

Good, okay, I come pick you up.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARN AREA - DAY

On the wide dirt path bisecting the stable area, Joey Rathburn makes his way toward the shedrow where the Big Horse is stabled. The horse-barns flanking the path also house grooms and other backside workers whose laundry is strung outside their makeshift living quarters. Rathburn passes a rudimentary cantina. A handful of grooms idle near a payphone and several battered vending machines. To one side, a salvaged wooden picnic table and a few aluminum lawn

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

chairs. Some flicker of uneasiness prompts Rathburn to flip open his cell phone and speed-dial a number --

RATHBURN

It's m-me Ronnie, I'm a-bout to put our hand in on that h-horse.

W-Walter Smith, B-Barn Twenty-Three, if you're on your w-way.

(beat)

I h-hope 'you ain't there and n-not picking up, you p-prick!

(beat)

'K-kid won, l-last jump, 'little r-race-riding S.O.Ba-B.

He flips his cell phone closed, realizing he's come upon the Old Man, holding the horse's shank while the horse grazes in the grassy area within the ring. The Old Man's back is to Rathburn, who's ten or so paces distant --

ANGLE - THE OLD MAN

the trainer's talking to Bruiser --

OLD MAN

Easy as breaking sticks, is how he did it, and never turned a hair. And here's he's tight and cold and eating like he's going to the chair.

After a beat, the Old Man reaches with a rub-rag to flick a fly off the colt's back --

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

'Forget about keeping to ourselves, I'll tell you that much. How you can run, who your daddy was ....

ANGLE - RATHBURN

as he turns away, deciding to give the Old Man and the Horse and the Dog their privacy --

RESUME - THE OLD MAN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

That'll start over too. Two thousand miles ain't going to make a difference. Why didn't I do this or that? How couldn't I've heard it going on?

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - GRANDSTAND - DAY

The Degenerates. Marcus and Jerry could be taken for trapped in some oxygen-depleted environment which requires for speech an heroic effort of will. It's unclear to what juncture the Pick Six sequence has arrived, or if the Syndicate is still in action. After a long beat --

JERRY

Here comes Kagle.

Jerry indicates the security guard's labored progress along the aisle below. Marcus stiffens, lowers his eyes --

MARCUS

Does he look miserable?

JERRY

Yes.

MARCUS

That might only be exertion.

Pausing at the base of the stairs, arms spread wide, palms turned upward, a breathless, sweating Kagle signals a silent inquiry to Jerry about the Syndicate's status in the Pick Six. Jerry smiles brightly, shows an uplifted right thumb. Kagle's despondent head-shake "no" to Jerry's signal of inquiry about Kagle's own status prompts Marcus to begin rapping his knuckles on top of his own head while exuberantly sucking in oxygen --

LONNIE

There's our possible payoffs.

The other Degenerates follow Lonnie's gaze to the infield tote-board --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RENZO

Wow. Wow.

LONNIE

(to Jerry)

Forty-eight thousand eight sixty is  
the lowest, right?

JERRY

Plus fifteen consolations.

RENZO

(to Marcus)

Nothing wrong with forty-eight  
thousand four hundred and change.

MARCUS

I'd prefer it to two-point-seven  
million -- it's less of an  
adjustment.

LONNIE

(eyes narrowing, to Jerry)

Which are what, "consolations?"

MARCUS

(to Jerry)

Here we go.

(for Kagle's hearing)

Everyone keep calm! This is not  
The Big One!

Kagle's started the climb to where they sit --

RENZO

(to Jerry)

Why's he coming up?

JERRY

'Try to buy into our ticket.

LONNIE

What are "consolations?"

MARCUS

Shut up.

(calling down to Kagle)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
C'mon! Let's go! Take 'em two at  
a time!

CUT TO:

INT. ESCALANTE'S BARN - AFTERNOON

Escalante and Economou watch a groom walk the shedrow,  
leading the Irish horse --

ECONOMOU  
Is there some like crucial time 'he  
better shit?

ESCALANTE  
He ain't walking uncomfortable or  
looking behind himself, or they'll  
sometimes even bite at their  
stomachs.

ECONOMOU  
So that's all good.

ESCALANTE  
That's all good. I wish 'he'd  
shit, but I think 'he's all right.

Escalante points out the Cheap Horse, who's "done up," and  
standing at the front of his stall --

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)  
This one won a couple 'hours ago.

ECONOMOU  
No kidding.

ESCALANTE  
Twelve-to-one, what a surprise.

ECONOMOU  
Yeah, I wish I'd've known.

ESCALANTE  
That makes you and me, b'lieve me.

Escalante's gone to the nearby feed room, comes back with a  
handful of carrots --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

'Give him a carrot, El Ganador.

ECONOMOU

I wouldn't want to fuck him up.

ESCALANTE

How 'you gonna fuck him up? That's what they eat.

Economou takes the carrot, carefully approaches the Cheap Horse --

ECONOMOU

That's his name, El Ganador?

ESCALANTE

'Means "the winner," El Ganador, in Russian. Like this --

Escalante holds out a flat hand to show him. Economou emulates the gesture, offering the horse the carrot. The horse bites off half the carrot and begins to chew --

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

'Acting like you don't know.

ECONOMOU

First I ever did it, honest to God.

ESCALANTE

I 'gonna call you "El Natural."

Economou stares at him, realizes he's getting his balls broken --

ECONOMOU

Should I call you "El Bullshitter?"

ESCALANTE

Como mucho gente -- like many other people.

Grinning, Manuel, the groom, is approaching from the other side of the shedrow, leading the Irish horse by the shank, and with his free hand holding up like a trophy or a torch a shovel-full of fresh manure --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ESCALANTE (CONT'D)

There -- we come from the woods,  
you could tell whoever would care.

Off both poker-faced men --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - OUTSIDE JOCKEY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The subdued Bug Boy emerges from the Jockeys' Room to ride in the day's final race. Joey Rathburn, waiting outside, falls in beside him. They're heading for the paddock walking ring, from which agents are excluded by rule --

RATHBURN

There's p-paint on your b-boot  
still.

BUG BOY

From when I went through on the  
rail.

RATHBURN

Five r-races ago. 'The v-valet on  
st-strike in there?

They walk a beat in silence --

BUG BOY

Acted like I set his house on fire,  
Mister Escalante.

RATHBURN

Th-That's him, you know.

BUG BOY

(imitates Escalante's curt  
staccato)  
"I said to take'm'n wide."

RATHBURN

Y-You c-couldn't get wide. Y-You r-  
rode that horse great.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUG BOY

'Tell you the truth Joey, I  
wouldn't mind sometimes if people  
out here were more friendly.

RATHBURN

Yeah, w-well.

Other riders have come from the Jockeys' Room, are moving  
past them into the walking ring. Rathburn indicates the  
horses already circling inside --

RATHBURN (CONT'D)

This one h-here isn't m-much.

BUG BOY

She ran decent four races back, I  
saw.

Rathburn almost laughs --

RATHBURN

R-Ronnie could do with your  
a-attitude.

BUG BOY

Wasn't Ronnie coming out?

RATHBURN

Yeah, I g-guess he got ki-kidnapped  
by pirates.

The Bug Boy grins, heads into the walking ring --

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - GRANDSTAND - DAY

The Degenerates and Kagle. Marcus pretends to a befuddled  
solicitude --

MARCUS

What I don't understand, you had  
Jerry's figures, could've bought a  
whole ticket on your own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAGLE

I don't spend eight hundred sixty-four dollars to single that thieving spic.

JERRY

Old business.

MARCUS

And now here you are, with us having "all" in the last, where we cannot possibly lose.

KAGLE

(re Marcus)

'Mutual opportunity, 'still has to try to humiliate me.

JERRY

No one's trying to humiliate you.

KAGLE

Yeah, tell whoever put me in this body.

MARCUS

(to Lonnie and Renzo)

Someone call Ronald McDonald.

Kagle would be perceived as ignoring Marcus --

KAGLE

(to the others)

For your Pick Six ticket, whatever the payoff is, I pay you that full amount. Plus, 'cause that amount the IRS already took its piece from, I give you twenty-five cents on the dollar 'what the IRS withholds.

Renzo and Lonnie look at Kagle as if he's speaking Croatian --

MARCUS

(to Renzo and Lonnie, re Kagle)

Then he cashes the ticket, files his tax-return, all 'the losing

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
tickets 'he gets every day from the  
dumpster-divers 'he claims on his  
return as deductions, 'gets Uncle  
Sam to refund the whole dollar on  
what he paid twenty-five cents for.

Kagle portrays injured dignity --

KAGLE  
What's that to you?

MARCUS  
I'm a crusader for truth.

Kagle takes the offensive, addressing the Degenerates as a  
group, but targeting Lonnie and Renzo --

KAGLE  
'Anyone low-profile with the  
government? Any delinquencies,  
warrants, garnishments liens or  
judgments 'might make signing a tax-  
form awkward?

LONNIE  
(to Renzo, low and  
authoritative)  
They do exchange information, IRS  
with the other agencies --

RENZO  
(likewise)  
Dog The Bounty Hunter gets tips  
from the IRS.

Kagle turns his hole card --

KAGLE  
Does thirty-three percent get it  
done?

MARCUS  
Which happens to be the going rate.

KAGLE  
The rate 'you can get is the going  
rate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The sparring approaches conclusion --

JERRY

So you're offering thirty-three.

LONNIE

Not for nothing --

(re himself and Renzo)

-- we did the heavy lifting on that ticket.

(now as the center of attention)

Monetarily. Financially.

Marcus' antipathy toward Kagle trumps whatever resentment Lonnie's intrusion might ordinarily arouse --

MARCUS

(to Kagle)

Yeah, excuse us while we consult.

KAGLE

Good. Beautiful. Have your losers convention.

Kagle's bringing himself to his feet --

KAGLE (CONT'D)

(to Jerry)

I'm offering thirty-three. You bring me the say-so --

(indicates Marcus)

-- I don't want to hear from Wheels.

Marcus calls after Kagle as the guard starts down the steps --

MARCUS

'You still stationed by that broom closet?

Kagle gives no sign he's heard. As they watch him go --

JERRY

Thirty-three's the right number.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARCUS

Let him worry 'we'll get it  
somewhere else.

(turns to Lonnie)

I don't want to hear about heavy  
lifting.

(indicates Renzo)

He brought you to us. You asked if  
you could put in.

LONNIE

Fine. Don't get up in arms.

MARCUS

You bought an equal share -- that  
doesn't come with voting rights.

LONNIE

I'm just tracking what's going on.

MARCUS

What's going on is, that fat fuck  
can sit on his hands a while.

Renzo invokes the brighter Big Picture --

RENZO

And we've got "all" in the last.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

ANGLE - TV MONITOR

panning the post parade. The Bug is on Tattered Flag, a 60-1  
filly wearing an extension blinker over her right eye meant  
to discourage lugging-out by unsound horses --

ANGLE - BUG BOY AND PONY BOY

BUG BOY

'Been with her before?

PONY BOY

No Sir. 'Wouldn't know the first  
thing to tell you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUG BOY  
(to Pony Boy)  
I got her, turn her loose.

PONY BOY  
'Way you go.

The Pony Boy jogs away. The Bug uses his riding crop like a scraper to flip lather from the filly's neck --

BUG BOY  
You' crabby behind some, huh Cher'?  
Let's loosen up that caboose.

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

watching the warm-ups, with the exception of Marcus who's rocking back and forth with his hands over his ears --

LONNIE  
All's 'I'm asking, if I volunteer  
to dumpster-dive 'why do we need a  
middle-man?

RENZO  
I'm not familiar enough to take a  
position.

JERRY  
Moratorium. Moratorium 'til after  
the race.

Marcus keeps rocking, recites what sound like mantras --

MARCUS  
Throw me off 'the roof,  
put a bullet in my brain,  
decapitate me with garden shears --

RESUME - BUG BOY AND PONY BOY

The filly has broken into an easy canter. The Bug leans over her neck, speaks softly near her fluttering ear --

BUG BOY  
Now you 'moving like a hootchie-  
mama.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE - JOEY RATHBURN

in his clubhouse box, binoculars on the ledge, on the cell phone --

RATHBURN

Yeah R-Ronnie, I g-guess 'you're not showing up, so I j-just thought 'I'd t-tell you to fuck yourself.

He's about to flip his phone shut, doesn't --

RATHBURN (CONT'D)

P-Prob'ly we'll eat at the Hundred-To-One, let the K-Kid shoot some p-pool and unwind. Prob'ly leave in twenty minutes.

He's watching the Bug on the filly, still doesn't flip the phone shut --

ANGLE - EXERCISE GIRLS ON THE FENCE

watching the jockeys and horses approach the starting gate. The Exercise Girl drips some tobacco juice from her lower lip --

EXERCISE GIRL

That Old Man prob'ly feels like Custer by now.

The Second Exercise Girl stares at her friend, knowing where this is going --

EXERCISE GIRL (CONT'D)

Agents all over him.

EXERCISE GIRL #2

You don't get to ride that horse in a race.

EXERCISE GIRL

I'm going to ask him.

The Second Exercise Girl nods, looking back to the track --

EXERCISE GIRL #2

Ask away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EXERCISE GIRL

Once he tells me no 'I can stop  
trying to make weight.

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

watching the horses led into the starting gate. A sullen  
Lonnie retrieves a discarded beer cup, addresses its bottom  
while sipping its dregs --

LONNIE

Anyways, good luck --

RENZO

(to Jerry)

I've never had a bet on every horse  
before.

LONNIE

(to himself, re dumpster-  
diving)

-- revisit it subsequent fresh.

MARCUS

(to Jerry, re Renzo)

'Cheering 'em all on equally,  
Socrates.

JERRY

(to Renzo)

But the longest odds we root for  
balls-out --

RENZO

Definitely, sure.

Jerry looks toward the self-exiled Marcus --

JERRY

Kick them jams out Big-Time -- and  
show me that Itsy Bitsy Spider.

As Marcus averts his eyes and makes his famous mid-air spider-  
touch gesture in Jerry's direction --

ANGLE - BUG BOY

pulling down his goggles as Tattered Flag fidgets in the gate. Perched in the gate beside the Bug, the gate crew assistant is watching the starter --

GATE CREW ASSISTANT

Tie yourself on Bug, he's gonna pop it.

BUG BOY

Pop that shit!

As the bell rings --

BUG BOY'S POV

The doors of the starting gate opening outward, horses' flanks and tails and jockey's backs, clots of the track's synthetic surface flying into the Bug's goggles as most in the field open several lengths on the filly --

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

eyes glued to the Jumbotron TV monitor in the infield --

RENZO

What's happening?

LONNIE

What's happening?

MARCUS

Shut up.

ANGLE - RATHBURN

binoculars raised to watch the race, flinching as the athletic under-sized figure taking the seat beside him nudges him hard with his shoulder --

RATHBURN

J-Jesus Christ, Ronnie.

JENKINS

Where's the Bug?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rathburn still watches through his binoculars, feels with a free hand to flip shut the cell phone on the chair to his other side --

RATHBURN

Green and white, way b-back.

As Jenkins finds the Bug's colors and follows his progress --

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

watching the action on the track, except for Marcus who watches on the Jumbotron where he can also monitor the posting of the race's interior fractions --

MARCUS

Twenty-three and one, something should be coming from out of it.

ANGLE - RATHBURN AND JENKINS

their eyes on the race --

JENKINS

Did you get us on The Wonder Horse?

RATHBURN

That h-horse is from D-Delphi's last crop, W-Walter Smith's his trainer, and I h-held off on raising our h-hand, 'cause it w-wouldn't've been responsible.

JENKINS

You could've just shot the breeze with him Joe, ask if he lied about how that horse died.

RATHBURN

You kn-know, you s-stink from r-reefer and b-booze.

Jenkins' eyes are on the track --

JENKINS

Look 'how they run for this kid.

RESUME - THE DEGENERATES

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Attention alternating between the progress of the race and the fractional times posted on the infield board, Marcus blindly fumbles with his left hand to retrieve something from the back pocket of his scooter --

JERRY

'Kid's horse has got run, 'we won  
on with Escalante --

RESUME - BUG BOY'S POV

at the half-mile pole, the filly beginning to stride out --

BUG BOY

Hey Mama, we be dancin' --

As the horses move round the far turn --

RESUME - THE DEGENERATES

Jerry has retrieved Marcus' inhaler, gives it to Marcus --

RENZO

Who's winning?

Marcus sprays the aerosol into his mouth --

ANGLE - EXERCISE GIRLS

EXERCISE GIRL

The Bug's got run.

ANGLE - RATHBURN AND JENKINS

JENKINS

(evenly)

Outside's the upside, Bug.

ANGLE - BUG BOY

hands urging his mount in time with the filly's stride, his torso's movement synchronized with hers. They're surging forward in the pack, closing ground, darting for a hole on the inside --

BUG BOY

One time Mama --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The filly's stride loses cadence and symmetry. The Bug pops up in his stirrups, pulling hard on the reins, and jockeys behind and on his flank yank their mounts from harm's way --

INTERCUT - EXERCISE GIRLS

their hands covering their mouths -- eyes wide --

ANGLE - BUG BOY AND TATTERED FLAG

The Bug slides from the saddle, keeping hold of the filly's reins, trotting at her side as she staggers forward, the pastern of her front right leg flaccid and grotesquely twisted --

BUG BOY (CONT'D)

Easy Girl, easy does it Cher'.

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

Renzo jumps up and down, watching the other horses in the race come into the stretch --

RENZO

Eight's our co-longest! Eight's our co-longest, right Jerry?!

JERRY

Eight's the whole pot.

MARCUS

(to Jerry, evenly)  
'Chalk's on the outside.

Like Marcus, Jerry's eyes are on the favorite --

MARCUS (CONT'D)

She's drifting out.

LONNIE

Eight's drifting out?

JERRY

The chalk's drifting out.

RENZO

Let's go Eight! -- the chalk's drifting out!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LONNIE  
What's happening?

RENZO  
Is the Eight drifting out or the  
chalk now?

Jerry's rubbing his forehead, amazed by the developing  
possibility --

JERRY  
Jesus Christ.

MARCUS  
Jesus Christ, come on!

LONNIE  
Will someone please tell me what's  
happening.

JERRY  
We win. It's over. We won.

RENZO  
Eight won? -- our co-longest shot?

Lonnie's arms are upraised, he attempts The Ali Shuffle --

LONNIE  
Champion of The World --  
Heavyweight Champ! Everyone kiss  
my ass!

Jerry's eyes meet an equally incredulous Marcus' --

MARCUS  
Two-point-six-eight million and  
some, plus thirty-three percent of  
the withholding, plus fifteen  
consolations.

Jerry wants to see the ticket held sequestered by Marcus in  
his scooter's side-pocket --

JERRY  
Humor me.

Marcus produces the winning ticket for Jerry's scrutiny --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARCUS

I don't want to get it too  
crinkled.

Raising his hands as if Marcus has the drop on him, Jerry  
studies the ticket. He begins to croon --

JERRY

Oh beautiful,  
for spacious skies --

INTERCUT - PRESS BOX

The Flack at the center of a flurry of activity. He's on his  
cell phone --

FLACK

Yes Sir, the tellers have all been  
alerted, they'll contact us right  
away.

(beat)

Absolutely. Shame on us if we  
don't.

(beat)

Yes Sir, absolutely.

He snaps his cell phone shut, looks to the Columnist, whose  
gaze is to the track --

COLUMNIST

(re Flack's conversation)  
The ReichsMarshall?

FLACK

(German accent)

Yah, 'got to find da vidders, big-  
tit girl give 'em da prize,  
everyone fawgets da Chaptah Eleven  
dis morning.

With a self-indicting half-heartedness, the Columnist falls  
in with the caricature --

COLUMNIST

Und dat anoder horse breaks down  
dis ahftanoon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLACK

Yah, dat too.

ANGLE - RATHBURN AND RONNIE JENKINS

The agent's on his feet, worriedly trying to interpret what he's seeing --

RATHBURN

Wh-Where the he-hell did he go?

JENKINS

He's down with her keeping her quiet Joey.

Rathburn heads for the stairs leading to the race track proper. Jenkins' eyes are narrowed, a haunted smile fixed on his features --

ANGLE - BUG BOY AND TATTERED FLAG

The filly lies on the track, breathing fast and deep. The Bug is on his knees beside her, cradling her head and tilting her nose upward to keep her from trying to rise --

BUG BOY

Good for you Mama. We 'good right here for now.

The filly makes no attempt to right herself. The Track Veterinarian is approaching at a jog carrying an already-opened leather medical bag --

TRACK VET

You're alright?

BUG BOY

Hurry up Doc.

The Veterinarian hunkers down beside them, keeping his back to the stands --

BUG BOY (CONT'D)

(to Tattered Flag)

Look here girl. Look at Leon Cher'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Veterinarian draws sodium pentobarbital from a brown bottle into a large syringe. Behind him, two attendants jump from a large horse-ambulance drawn by a tractor. The attendants carry a folded green screen. As they set this up to block the view from the stands, the Bug strokes the filly's head, the Vet finds her jugular, inserts the needle and delivers the sodium pentobarbital, and the filly quivers and dies --

INTERCUT - THE EXERCISE GIRLS

in tearful resignation, as Rathburn comes beside them --

RATHBURN

I thought they were b-both going down.

ANGLE - THE DEGENERATES

Jerry slogs ahead with an explanation, addressing Lonnie --

JERRY

Imagine, instead of nine numbers on the one ticket --

LONNIE

For the last race, we're talking about.

JERRY

The last race, yes, imagine 'we have nine separate tickets. As far as the big payoff, eight of those nine tickets are losers, but as far as having five of six, those eight losing tickets win.

Marcus' eyes are on the tote-board --

MARCUS

There, that's the consolation number --

LONNIE

(studying tote-board)  
So we win an extra eighty-nine hundred forty-three dollars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JERRY

Actually, fifteen times eighty-nine  
hundred forty-three dollars.

JERRY (CONT'D)

(to Marcus, re Kagle)

Now?

MARCUS

(shakes his head no)

Let the fat fuck wait 'til  
tomorrow.

RENZO

(to Jerry)

Even the horse that died, we get  
consoled on?

ANGLE - THE VET AND BUG BOY

walking toward the Winner's Circle area. The Vet has a  
rubber girth channel and a bloody saddle cloth in his hand.  
The Bug has his saddle, girth and whip, approaches the agent  
and the Exercise Girls. Behind him, the Track Veterinarian  
can be seen heading for a phone at the weigh-in area --

RATHBURN

'Okay jock?

The Bug nods, regretfully shrugs his shoulders at the  
Exercise Girls, keeps moving toward the tunnel under the  
stands --

ANGLE - RONNIE JENKINS

watching the Bug's approach, falling in beside him --

BUG BOY

She was moving good Ronnie, I  
wouldn't've been asking her.

JENKINS

She was moving great, I was  
watching.

BUG BOY

Did you ever have that? -- the  
light go out 'their eyes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JENKINS

That's why they make Jim Beam.

Rathburn, following behind and close enough to overhear, closes on the two jockeys, addresses the Bug --

RATHBURN

G-Go on in and g-get changed.

BUG BOY

Okay Joey.

As the apprentice heads for the Jockeys' Room --

RATHBURN

Where do you g-get off Ronnie?

JENKINS

About what?

RATHBURN

T-Telling him to get drunk.

JENKINS

I didn't say "get drunk."

RATHBURN

You should be picking yourself up, not dr-dragging him down to wh-where you are.

JENKINS

Yeah okay Mom.

RATHBURN

`C-Course mi-misery loves c-company.

JENKINS

Does that about g-get it, Joey? --  
"how `b-bout w-wipe your shoes before you c-come inside?"

Jenkins and Rathburn avoid each other's eyes. The jockey shakes his head, starts for the parking lot. After a beat, the agent turns, looks in the jockey's direction, calls out as if in rebuke --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RATHBURN

We're going to the Hundred-To-One!

Jenkins gives no indication he's heard. Rathburn turns away, starts in the direction of the Jockeys' Room --

INTERCUT - THE TWO HORSE AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS

attaching a cable to the mat upon which Tattered Flag lies which will pull her remains into the horse-ambulance --

CUT TO:

INT. SHEDROW - DUSK

The Night Watchman appears at the far end of the shedrow, starts toward the Old Man, who sits distracted on his beat-up chair outside the Big Horse's stall with Bruiser beside him in the dirt. The Old Man's drinking a beer, becomes aware of the Night Watchman's nearing him --

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Did you let the girl loosen her hands Mister Walter?

The Old Man meets The Watchman's eyes, finds himself willing to nod --

OLD MAN

He's a good one.

The Night Watchman grins, takes a paper cup of coffee out of his brown paper bag --

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Can I drink with you over that?

OLD MAN

Sure you can.

The Old Man raises his bottle of beer, and the Night Watchman takes the top from his paper cup of coffee, and as they toast the Big Horse together the Old Man goes into his pocket --

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

He's going to want a peppermint.

CUT TO:

EXT. RACE TRACK - SUNSET

The Degenerates are heading for the parking lot --

MARCUS

(to Jerry)

The Sombrero Lodge is a shitbox.

Lonnie overhears, covers the mouthpiece to defend his domicile --

LONNIE

A, it's Triple-A-approved. B, 'til  
it turns into cash that ticket  
doesn't leave my sight.

(into cell phone)

On the sides of me, yes, or move me  
from mine and get us four adjoining  
in a row.

MARCUS

(to Jerry)

Give me the money from that win-  
bet, so it doesn't wind up with the  
ricers.

JERRY

I'll be next door to you Marcus.

MARCUS

'Bright idea when you're up to  
piss, 'you'll be Big Blind against  
Lewis Chan.

RENZO

(to Jerry)

I'm going to send my brother the  
maximum money order for his canteen  
privileges.

JERRY

Attaboy.

RENZO

I'm going to send my aunt a  
thousand dollars, that we lived  
with in Youngstown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Furtiveness and surreptition come into the Degenerates' bearing as they approach an impromptu, sparsely attended press conference being conducted by the Flack on the lawn just outside The Great Race Place's administrative offices --

FLACK

We know 'it was on-site, the machine where the ticket was purchased, and we're eager for the winners to come forward so 'we can give them their money and they can start their new lives.

Once they're past --

MARCUS

(to Jerry)

Their fence is swiss cheese, the Sombrero Lodge, they close the office at eleven, and the security guy's always at Denny's.

JERRY

Marcus. We're rich.

Jerry offers spider-touches. As Marcus grudgingly reciprocates --

CUT TO:

INT. BEVERLY WILSHIRE - BERNSTEIN'S - NIGHT

Semi-darkness. Bernstein in his bed. Bernstein's eyes are half-closed. A beat, then he appears to take up the thread of a conversation --

BERNSTEIN

They don't know what this country is. 'As much idea as them paper-hat kids at the fast-food. We were in the back, putting things together.

His eyes come open as he hears, in the living room, the sounds of Economou's arrival. He sits up in the bed --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

Gus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ECONOMOU (O.C.)

`Anything from the kitchen Ace?

BERNSTEIN

`Glass of water. How'd it go?

ECONOMOU (O.C.)

Good, I think, you know. The horse  
moved his bowels --

Economou comes in with a glass of water for Bernstein --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

`Took that for a positive,  
Escalante, evidently he landed  
bound-up.

BERNSTEIN

And generally, how'd he look?

ECONOMOU

What do I know Ace? All `his four  
legs reached the ground.

BERNSTEIN

But Escalante seemed satisfied?

ECONOMOU

`Says `he's plain-headed, somewhat,  
but he was grinning and pinching at  
his cheek.

BERNSTEIN

Listen to me. Those screws at  
Chino all could buy Cadillacs, what  
I paid to let his race-tapes  
`through the mailroom. That horse  
is all heart. He gets by you --  
forget about going by him.

ECONOMOU

(grinning sheepishly)

As many roosters and birds Ace, and  
cats and dogs and goats, you'd take  
yourself for on a farm out there.

BERNSTEIN

No, I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ECONOMOU

Besides the horses, I'm saying.

Bernstein mildly breaks Economou's balls --

BERNSTEIN

Oh, besides them.

ECONOMOU

I saw a goat out there, 'balls as big as four pumpkins.

BERNSTEIN

Bow-legged?

ECONOMOU

He was, honest to Christ.

BERNSTEIN

He'd have to be, or how would he walk around?

A beat --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

Escalante?

ECONOMOU

Desi Arnaz?

BERNSTEIN

He's some fucking trainer, believe me. I 'followed him twenty-five years, 'climbing up the ladder from nothing.

ECONOMOU

I'd get an idea of him, then wonder if it wasn't him 'moved me to it.

Economou's taken position in the recliner across the room --

ECONOMOU (CONT'D)

'That regard he reminds me of you.

As Economou reclines --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BERNSTEIN

Seven forty-five, 'closing my  
fucking eyes.

ECONOMOU

You had a full day.

BERNSTEIN

So that explains today.

A beat. The CAMERA begins pulling back --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

'Far as them that did what they did  
to me --

ECONOMOU

Are they moving the way 'you  
thought?

BERNSTEIN

Definitely. Absolutely. They're  
going to move on that race-track.

ECONOMOU

You don't often peg that shit  
wrong.

BERNSTEIN

I think 'I played it okay, unless  
I'm really falling apart.

Bernstein's eyes are closing --

BERNSTEIN (CONT'D)

You're their new favorite Greek.

ECONOMOU

Good. All's 'I'm nervous is you  
relying on me, when I'm working out  
past my depth.

BERNSTEIN

You're my secret weapon, and you  
don't know your own depth.

(beat)

Prob'ly I should get a girlfriend,  
to see if they reach out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ECONOMOU

One 'we trust or one 'we don't?

The CAMERA's pulling back now accomodates both men in the frame, reclined, eyes closed --

BERNSTEIN

I don't trust anyone. Including myself.

(beat)

You, I give a pass.

FADE OUT.