

MILLENNIUM

"Jose Chung's Doomsday Defense"

Written and Directed by

Darin Morgan

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October 14, 1997 (White)

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CAST LIST

Frank Black - Rocket McGrane

Jose Chung

Juggernaut Onan Goopta (in photos and voice over)

Joseph Ratfinkovitch

Detective Twohey

Detective Giebelhouse - Kleiger

Elderly Cashier (non-speaking)

The Feminist - Crime Scene Photographer (non-speaking)

Mr. Smooth - Roland

Robbinski

Peter Watts

Nostradamus Nutball



After the heraldic BOOM BOOMS and flash frame meant to simulate a still photograph, FADE IN: on a still photograph. The first in a--

1 SERIES OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHS

1

A black and white studio portrait from the 1930's of a BABY boy. Bald--yet sporting a full beard--the babe bears a striking resemblance to fully-grown Indian/English author Salman Rushdie. PULL BACK TO REVEAL him swaddled in blankets, being held by his MOTHER and FATHER.

CHUNG (V.O.)

Once upon a time...yes, I just said, "Once upon a time". I can hardly believe it myself. Just shows how traditional this story is. Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away--Seattle--two East Indian immigrants gave birth to a baby boy, whom they loved very dearly, yet nevertheless named Juggernaut Onan Goopta. Other than the name, and the preternatural beard, he was a normal boy, who suffered all the usual humiliations of a normal childhood--

DISSOLVE TO:

HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK

Amongst a row of portraits displaying All-American youths circa mid-1950, there's a picture of Goopta, sticking out like a bald, bearded sore thumb.

CHUNG (V.O.)

--so I won't bore you with the painful details. Suffice to say, upon graduating high school, he went off to college with the dream of someday becoming a famous neuroscientist.

DISSOLVE TO:

PHOTO OF A HUMAN BRAIN

held in human hands. PULL BACK TO REVEAL Goopta, in a SCHOOLROOM LAB, unsuredly holding the precious cargo, before SLOWLY PUSHING INTO Goopta's unsure face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHUNG (V.O.)

His goal was to be the first to comprehend how the biology of the brain gives birth to the greatest mystery of life: self-consciousness. Unfortunately, his own brain could not comprehend Basic Biology, and he flunked out during his first semester. He quickly switched majors to Philosophy, but alas, while reading Kierkegaard's The Sickness Unto Death, he became sick and nearly died--

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING PHOTO OF A SANITARIUM

A sign in the f.g. reads: "Spotnitz Sanitarium".

CHUNG (V.O.)

--leading to a stay at the Spotnitz Sanitarium, "Treating Those Taking a Well-Deserved, Required By Law, Rest". During recovery, though still obviously suffering from dementia, Goopta set forth on a new dream--

DISSOLVE TO:

PHOTO OF GOOPTA IN A HOSPITAL BED

slumping sickly; a typewriter on his lap.

CHUNG (V.O.)

--to become a writer. His first forays into detective fiction proved so inept, they were mistaken for brilliant parodies, and found immediate publication in the famous pulp, The Dark Veil--

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COVER OF THE DARK VEIL

a pulp detective magazine, with a lurid illustration of a screaming dame and a big-gunned private dick.

DISSOLVE TO:

GROUP PHOTO IN A CONFERENCE ROOM

taken in the late '50's. Posed stiffly around a table, on which is displayed an issue of The Dark Veil, stand a group of serious looking young men, including Gopta. PAN AND PUSH IN on one of the young writers, who bears resemblance to Jose Chung (introduced later).

CHUNG (V.O.)

--alongside the work of a talented group of young writers, one of whom would go on to become the leading literary light of his generation!

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF PHOTOS OF JOSE CHUNG

depicting this writer maturing through life.

CHUNG (V.O.)

Composing profound stories in a style that made Proust seem pallid, combined with rather provocative book jacket photos, his lovable flamboyancy made him not only a literary icon, but a cultural one, as well! Why, he even made a cameo appearance in an award winning film at Cannes!

A LIVE-ACTION CLIP

from the cinematic masterpiece, LIDSVILLE.

CUT TO:

GROUP PHOTO IN CONFERENCE ROOM

Return to Chung's image in the Dark Veil group photo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHUNG (V.O.)  
His tour de force life would  
truly make a fascinating  
documentary...but, uhm...we're  
here to focus on Goopta.

PAN BACK TO GOOPTA in the group photo.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
After the demise of the  
magazine, Goopta could not sell  
his work, and he became  
destitute and suicidal.

DISSOLVE TO:

SQUALID APARTMENT BATHROOM

Sitting the wrong way on the seat, Goopta is hunched over his  
typewriter, perched on the toilet tank. A bare overhanging bulb  
illuminates the sad scene.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
Not capable of "writing what you  
know", out of pure desperation  
he managed--in a single,  
feverish night--to crank out a  
book...that revolutionized  
publishing history.

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF BOOK COVERS

which simply display their titles, except the last, which  
features a dramatic lightning bolt.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
How To Be Happy Even When You  
Shouldn't single-handedly  
created the self-help genre.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHUNG (cont'd; V.O.)

It was quickly followed by the best sellers: How to Manipulate People By Your Apparent Friendliness, and How to Overcome Your Fears By Making Others Fear You, and upon the release of his masterpiece, Neurobotics: The Power Of Positive Negation--Goopta hit the lecture hall circuit, always preaching to Standing Room Only, for he shrewdly refrained from providing chairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

PHOTO OF GOOPTA ON A LECTURE HALL STAGE

standing behind a lectern. He points one index finger at his head, the other out towards his audience.

GOOPTA (V.O.)

Every painful moment in your life is engraved into your neurobiology. Until you clear away these dark memories, you will remain in a negative groove, never seeing the light of your true Self. Thus: those who cannot forget their past, are condemned to repeat it!

As APPLAUSE erupts--

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING PHOTO OF SANITARIUM

The previously seen PHOTO of the Spotnitz Sanitarium. The sign, however, now reads: "Institute of Selftology".

CHUNG (V.O.)

Goopta then opened an institute, to help people learn how to become more self-helpful.

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OFFICE

where a "PATIENT" holds the handles of an Onan-meter (a modified, portable cassette player/lie detector). PULL BACK TO REVEAL he is being monitored by two clipboard-carrying STAFF MEMBERS, dressed like mailmen. Everyone seems to be having the time of their lives.

CHUNG (V.O.)

For a not-so-nominal "donation", patients--who are called "doctors", since the term "patient" has unhealthy associations--undergo therapy to shed the darkness of their minds. If unable to afford the donations, doctors must recruit other doctors, or join the institute's staff, which--to inspire a sense of empirical transmigration--is modeled after the U.S. Postal Service.

DISSOLVE TO:

AN UNDETAILED MAP OF THE U.S.

with a red dot at Seattle.

CHUNG (V.O.)

The institute proved so popular, Selftology branched out, and institutes popped up throughout the nation.

Red dots crop up: in California, in New York City, another in California, one in Salt Lake City, another in California, the one in Salt Lake suddenly disappears, one in Florida, and then a whole bunch more--all in California.

CHUNG (V.O.)

The revenue from donations soon reached into the millions, and Goopta, now known simply as "The Post Master", announced a new evolution to Selftology.

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STUDIO PORTRAIT

A striking photo of Gopta, wearing a postman's safari helmet.

GOOPTA (V.O.)

After clearing its mind of  
darkness, the Self must then  
clear its eternal soul, which,  
from all its previous  
incarnations, has stored up a  
warehouse of pain.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING PHOTO OF SANITARIUM

The previous seen PHOTO of the Institute of Selftology (formerly  
the Spotnitz Sanitarium). Now the signs reads: "Church of  
Selftology".

CHUNG (V.O.)

The now tax-exempt religion also  
evolved its own theology. But  
I can't tell you what it is.  
It's a secret. No, I'm not  
kidding.

DISSOLVE TO:

LEGAL DOCUMENT

LIVE ACTION SHOT of the flipping pages of a voluminous legal  
document.

CHUNG (V.O.)

In fact, Selftologist are  
required to sign a non-  
disclosure oath, and because of  
their reincarnation beliefs,  
these contracts are binding for  
one jillion years. Yes--I said  
a "jillion".

The legal document stops on the words "one jillion years".

DISSOLVE TO:

A NEWSPAPER'S OP/ED PAGE

An editorial headline reads: "Selftology: A New Cult?"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHUNG (V.O.)  
All this secrecy and profits  
drew criticism from some  
quarters, but these critics were  
quickly silenced--

A NEW EDITORIAL

from the same editorialist: "Selftology: An Uncoerced  
Retraction".

CHUNG (V.O.)  
--either by libel suits, or by  
what Selftologists call, "Knock-  
knock, Zoom-zoom Affirmations".

DISSOLVE TO:

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION OFFICE

A reprise of the PHOTO depicting a "doctor" undergoing therapy  
by monitoring staff members. Everything is exactly the same,  
except for the "doctor"'s expression--he now looks terrified.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
There were even some internal  
criticism, but these lapsed  
members were quickly  
recondition--er, recounseled.  
If a member continues his  
complaints, he is deemed a  
"Ratfinkovitch", and is ex-  
communicated from the Church,  
with any unpaid donations due  
immediately.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP PHOTO OF GOOPTA

with the heavenly stars as a backdrop.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
Criticism aside, in 1984, J.  
Onan Gopta voluntarily gave up  
his body to pursue his  
neurobotics research in another  
dimension. That means he died  
of prostate cancer.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHUNG (cont'd; V.O.)  
But the religious organization  
he left behind has never been  
more popular, and shows no signs  
of letting up, as we head into  
the next millennium. A happy,  
upbeat ending if ever there was  
one!

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

2

Jose Chung, a smartly-dressed, effeminate, flamboyant, Capote-  
esque man in his 60's, sits at a round dining table, taking  
notes in a small leather folio, as he listens to a handsome  
young MAN, 30s, who exudes confidence, charm, and perfect hair.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
That is, it was, until I re-  
entered the story--and it's  
about time! You see, while  
conducting this research, I was  
contacted by a recent  
"Ratfinkovitch", who, in one of  
those coincidences found only in  
real life and great fiction,  
actually was named  
Ratfinkovitch--Joseph  
Ratfinkovitch...and he promised  
to reveal to me the never-before-  
disclosed sacred secret of  
Selftology's theology.

RATFINKOVITCH  
Gopta...is God.

CHUNG  
That's...it?

RATFINKOVITCH  
I realize to the uninitiated,  
this is a consciousness-  
shattering concept, but--

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

CHUNG

No, I mean--that's it?! To find out the ultimate revelation of a religion is that its God is the guy who invented the damn thing...that's not really much of a "wow", is it?

RATFINKOVITCH

The "wow" is how it can lead to neuro-spiritual happiness, and away from despair, depression...and even flippancy.

CHUNG

Please, I assure you--I regard this subject with the utmost respect and seriousness. You have my word as a writer.

Chung jots down a note on his pad. It reads: "Nutball".

RATFINKOVITCH

That's why I chose to confess this to you. You see, besides J. Onan Goopta...you're my favorite writer. I've read everything you've ever written.

Chung reacts with pleased modesty, and jots another note: after "Nutball" he adds a "?".

RATFINKOVITCH (CONT.)

Including, of course, your most recent short story...which is how I got into all this trouble.

CHUNG

Yes, tell me--you obviously still believe in the church's tenets, so is it fair you were ex-communicated, just for enjoying a piece of forbidden fiction?

RATFINKOVITCH

The church has every legal right to cut me off from...my beliefs...from my friends...from...everything.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

Ratfinkovitch, for the first time, displays some genuine emotion. Chung sympathetically studies his grief.

CHUNG

My first novel--it goes without saying--was autobiographical, about me and my closest friends, all writers. Well, the book came out to universal praise--except by my friends. Of all people, they should have understood why I wrote about us, but they felt betrayed. None of them ever spoke to me again. Oh, I'm here to tell you, so lonesome you could die is no mere phrase.

Ratfinkovitch slightly nods, understanding all too well.

CHUNG (CONT.)

I imagine you feel quite the same way right now.

A mournful pause, before Ratfinkovitch flips the palms of his hands over--causing a sudden transformation. He beams a smile of all-consuming happiness.

RATFINKOVITCH

I've never been so happy in all my life.

Startled by this sudden switch, Chung doesn't know how to react. He peers more carefully at his interview subject.

The Selftologist keeps beaming his genuine smile...but a tear escapes from one eye, and trickles down his sunny cheek.

After taking this in, Chung jots down another note: after "Nutball?", he adds an "!".

Chung looks back up at this smiling nutball across from him, and as he returns a smile of his own--

CUT TO CREDITS:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

3 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

3

The apartment's a simple, upper-scale affair, tastefully decorated, except for the stacks of Playboy, which abound. Lounging on a stack, leafing through an issue, is DET. TWOHEY, while DET. GIEBELHOUSE examines Ratfinkovitch, sitting rigor-mortisly at the diner table, his burned, cupped hands extended before him, and his face frozen in a beatific grin...or grimace.

TWOHEY

Well, at least he died happy.

GIEBELHOUSE

Don't let the cadaveric spasm fool ya--electrocution ain't no pleasure cruise.

TWOHEY

But maybe that's the connection with all these Playboy's--Miss November's "Turn Ons": "a guy with a nice smile".

GIEBELHOUSE

Who buys so many copies of the same issue of the same nudie mag, when there's such a rich diversity of highly professional material on the market? A pervert with an obsessive-compulsive disorder, that's who. So imagine...this poor guy's down at his local newsstand--

DISSOLVE TO:

4 EXT. newsstand - DAY

4

Ratfinkovitch, with a stack of Playboys under his arm, paying the stoic, elderly CASHIER.

GIEBELHOUSE (V.O.)

--buying another dozen issues, 'cause he can't help himself. When who's there to witness this gross display of indulgence? An anti-porn feminist lesbian!

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

REVEAL a beautiful, but stern-faced woman, skimming through Ms. Magazine. THE FEMINIST saunters over, and seductively starts up a conversation with the stupefied Ratfinkovitch.

GIEBELHOUSE (V.O.)  
So under false pretenses, she approaches the guy, suggesting she give him a personal lay-out.

CUT TO:

5 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - GIEBELHOUSE'S VERSION

5

GIEBELHOUSE (V.O.)  
Once back here, she immediately gets down to business.

Ratfinkovitch and The Feminist enter the room, and she opens her coat--revealing nothing but lacy undergarments underneath. Ratfinkovitch suddenly signals for a "time-out"--

MATCH CUT TO:

6 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

6

Twohey signaling for the "time-out", while Giebelhouse has his coat opened similar to The Feminist.

TWOHEY  
Time out--I thought you said she was an anti-porn feminist lesbian?

GIEBELHOUSE  
She's one of the sexy, good-looking kind.

TWOHEY  
Yikes!

GIEBELHOUSE  
Exactly, 'cause guess what she's got stashed under her Secrets--?

CUT TO:

7 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - GIEBELHOUSE'S VERSION 7

GIEBELHOUSE (V.O.)  
A cattle prod!

The Feminist magically whips out a cattle prod from behind her back, and starts jabbing Ratfinkovitch, who YELPS after each ZAP. She backs him down into the chair, where he defensively grabs ahold of the prod, causing his whole body to convulse.

GIEBELHOUSE (V.O.)  
She starts zappin' him, and he's screaming, "Stop! Stop!!" but she can't stop, she won't stop--

MATCH CUT TO:

8 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME 8

Giebelhouse assuming The Feminist's position over Ratfinkovitch.

GIEBELHOUSE  
--She'll never stop 'til every pervert is wiped off the face of the scum-sucking planet.

TWOHEY  
What a woman!

FRANK (O.S.)  
To know that profile reveals less about the perp than it does the profiler...scares me.

The detectives turn to see FRANK BLACK entering the room. Giebelhouse shakes his hand as Frank surveys the crime scene.

GIEBELHOUSE  
Hey, Frank. I probably shouldn't have called you, but I got a hunch there's something about this case that's millenniumistic.

FRANK  
(pause)  
This was done by someone the victim was familiar with. A man who'll resemble the victim in many ways: age, education, income, similar make of cars....

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

Frank sits down at the table, and immediately gets Visions:

9 INTERNAL POVS 9

--Ratfinkovitch screaming, as blue sparks shoot out from his head. --A silhouetted man, except for his blazing white smile, making accusatory gestures. --Frank, in a blonde pompadour and powder blue trench coat, opening his arms as if expecting a vaudeville audience's applause.

10 RESUME 10

Frank is momentarily jolted by this last image. Shaking it off--

FRANK (CONT.)

This was a torture session. An attempt to extract information. Maybe a shady business deal--

O.S., a GAME SHOW BUZZER is heard. The detectives turn to see it's being emitted by Jose Chung, standing by the bookshelf.

CHUNG

Anyone else care to try "crime scene scenarios" for five hundred?

(after silence)

Instead of taking pictures of a victim's body, you should photograph their bookshelves. A person's death can say nothing about their life, but their books tell all.

As Giebelhouse marches over--

GIEBELHOUSE

Not mine--I don't got no books.

CHUNG

Exactly.

From the shelf, Chung pulls out a J. Onan Goopta paperback, with a pulp detective cover, entitled Dance On The Blood Dimmed Tide.

GIEBELHOUSE

Don't disturb the crime scene.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

CHUNG

Rocket McGrane! A roving,  
freelance, forensic profiler, of  
all the absurd nonsense.  
Created by the same man who  
created Selftology.

GIEBELHOUSE

I don't care who the guy on the  
book is--who the hell are you?

FRANK

Jose Chung! You're Jose Chung,  
the writer. Back in high  
school, I read your book, A Lap  
Full Of Severed Tongues, about  
ten times. It's what got me  
interested in law enforcement.  
That book...changed my life.

CHUNG

It's the worst thing I ever  
wrote. But thank you.

FRANK

What's your connection with the  
victim?

CHUNG

I'm responsible for his death.

(pause)

I've been in town researching my  
new book, which examines newly  
arising belief-systems at the  
end of the millennium.

GIEBELHOUSE

Hey, what I tell ya!

CHUNG

Playboy is running an excerpt--a  
short story--that has offended  
the Church of Selftology.

TWOHEY

(leafing mag)

Here it is. Huh, so that's  
what's in these back pages.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

CHUNG

Unable to halt its distribution, the Church sent its members out to buy up all available copies, so the blasphemous story could not be read by any unsuspecting masturbators.

FRANK

But this guy didn't just buy the magazines--he read the story, and liked it. Confessing this lead to his ex-communication. Cast adrift, confused...he contacted you to talk about the Church.

CHUNG

How in the world did you deduce all that?

FRANK

I'm...a roving, freelance, forensic profiler.

GIEBELHOUSE

I still ain't heard how this guy got fried.

CHUNG

Well, after I left, arranging another meeting for tonight, I imagine Mr. Ratfinkovitch received another visitor....

CUT TO:

11 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - CHUNG'S VERSION

11

A resurrected Ratfinkovitch sits down at the table, addressing his visitor--a handsome, charming, confident MR. SMOOTH. A trench coat, black leather gloves, and attache case make his radiant smile oddly threatening.

RATFINKOVITCH

You don't know how happy I am to see you. No one will talk to me since I got kicked--

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

Smooth reaches melodramatically into his coat pocket. Pause, as Ratfinkovitch tenses. But instead of a gun, Smooth pulls out a cassette tape, and tosses it on the table. The cassette case reads: "How to Repent (And Move On)". Ratfinkovitch gulps.

RATFINKOVITCH (CONT.)

Wouldn't it be more productive  
if we talked on a personal lev--

Smooth CLICKS open the attache case, pulls out an Onan-meter, and slides it towards Ratfinkovitch, who is cadaveric again, with a confused Giebelhouse standing over him, signifying we've--

CUT TO:

12 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

12

GIEBELHOUSE

Hold on--what does he pull out  
of the case?

CHUNG

An Onan-meter. Invented by J.  
Onan Goopta, himself.

FRANK

Basically, it's a cassette  
player that registers a user's  
emotional response to questions  
asked on a tape.

GIEBELHOUSE

But...that's a lie detector.

CHUNG

With a cassette player!

FRANK

Selftologists claim its a self-  
therapeutic tool that helps  
modify your emotional states.

CHUNG

It teaches how to lie to  
yourself.

CUT TO:

13 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - CHUNG'S VERSION 13

Smooth watches with an ominous smile, as Ratfinkovitch, shakily holding the Onan-meter's cigar-shaped handles, nervously listens to the cassette's soothing, deep-voiced ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Do you harbor any bitterness  
towards the Church?

RATFINKOVITCH  
No, I understand why they--

The meter's "voltage needle" peaks into the red. The tape automatically REWINDS, then:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Do you harbor any bitterness  
towards the Church?

RATFINKOVITCH  
Well...yes--but only because--

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Take a moment to reflect on your  
current state. Are you feeling  
anxious? Confused? Nervous?

RATFINKOVITCH  
Very much so.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
So obviously, this bitterness is  
not making you feel any better.  
Then doesn't it seem wiser to  
not feel bitter?

RATFINKOVITCH  
(convinced; uplifted)  
Well, yes...I guess it does!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Have you shared this misguided  
bitterness with any non-  
Selftologists?

RATFINKOVITCH  
Of course not, that's against--

The needle peaks. The tape REWINDS. Smooth's smile wanes. Ratfinkovitch's nerves rise.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Have you shared this misguided  
bitterness with any non-  
Selftologists?

RATFINKOVITCH  
Could you repeat the question?

The tape REWINDS. Smooth now scowls. Ratfinkovitch sweats.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Have you shared--

RATFINKOVITCH  
Y-Yes!

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Was this non-Selftologist a  
member of the media?

RATFINKOVITCH  
(to Smooth)  
Roland, you look like you're  
thinking very negative thoughts.  
Don't...don't be dark--

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Was this non-Selftologist--

RATFINKOVITCH  
It was Chung! I talked to Jose  
Chung! I didn't know where to--

Smooth readies to lunge at Ratfinkovitch, but--ZAP!--sparks start flying from the sweat-covered handles, as well as the Onan-meter. As Ratfinkovitch SCREAMS and convulses, Smooth lunges to the wall socket, yanking out the AC cord. As smoke fumes rise above, Ratfinkovitch has already assumed his cadaveric posture. The handles slide from his hands, CLONKING onto the table.

Smooth stares aghast, not knowing what to do. Abruptly, he closes his eyes, while flipping the palms of his hands over.

CUT TO:

14 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

14

Chung, in Smooth's position, holds his palms downward.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

GIEBELHOUSE  
Why's he do that with his hand?

CHUNG  
Whenever thinking a negative  
thought, the gestures reminds  
Selftologists to think the  
complete opposite thought.

GIEBELHOUSE  
So then what'd he do?

As Chung gestures with a "What else--?" shrug--

CUT TO:

15 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - CHUNG'S VERSION

15

A recomposed Smooth finishes the gestures, but now it seems to  
mean, "So what--?" Tossing the meter back into the attache  
case, he exits, patting Ratfinkovitch on the shoulder as he goes.

CUT TO:

16 INT. RATFINKOVITCH'S APT. - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

16

GIEBELHOUSE  
Wait a sec--what proof do have  
that's what happened here?

CHUNG  
Proof? I was just making it up  
as I went along.

GIEBELHOUSE  
(disgusted pause)  
Frank, don't these Selftologists  
got a headquarters downtown?

FRANK  
Yeah. Would you mind if I went  
with you?

CHUNG  
Oh, you gents, be careful--these  
Selftologists can be very  
evasive...and persuasive.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

GIEBELHOUSE

We know how to question someone  
to get what we want out of 'em!

CHUNG

So do they.

Chung nods towards Ratfinkovitch, who keeps smiling, as we--

CUT TO:

17 INT. SELFTOLOGY OFFICE - NIGHT

17

Another smiling Selftologist--a PR Spokesman named ROBBINSKI.  
His office resembles that of a film executives, with framed  
movie posters on the walls. He speaks in the scripted, upbeat  
manner of a motivational speaker/used car salesman. During his  
following speech, whenever he almost takes a pause, Frank and/or  
Giebelhouse attempt to get in a question.

ROBBINSKI

That's a very perceptive point,  
Detective, but our confidential  
church tenets are copyrighted  
just for that reason. If a  
disgruntled ex-member tries to  
make them public, we would sue  
that person to such an extent--  
but in full accordance with the  
law--they may wish we had killed  
them, but we would not actually  
kill them.

(false chuckle)

Furthermore, just because your  
suspect might coincidentally be  
a Selftologist, I don't think  
it's fair to place the entire  
church under suspicion. After  
all, just because one misguided  
Nazi murdered six million  
people, it doesn't follow that  
Nazism itself should be  
condemned, does it? Besides, by  
very definition, a Selftologist  
is incapable of murder.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

ROBBINSKI (cont'd)

Selftology teaches how to rid oneself of thoughts concerning others, and focus on what's really important--yourself. For example, are you familiar with the films of Bobby Wingood?

(re: movie posters)

Bobby used to be an out-of-work actor, high on drugs, beating up paparazzi because they wouldn't take his picture. Then he found Selftology, learned how to reject rage and anger, and focus on more meaningful emotions. Now he's rich and famous, and dating high-priced fashion models. In fact, many of Hollywood's elite are Selftologists, so I ask you--how could a religious order with ties to Hollywood be involved in anything immoral? But don't worry, Detectives, I think I do have something that will prove useful to you.

Robbinski hands them each a copy of Neurobotics.

ROBBINSKI (CONT.)

Detective, you obviously possess many unique skills, but I sense your negativity is holding you back. Are you aware how often you use negatively-associated words?

GIEBELHOUSE

Aw, no, I don't neither.

ROBBINSKI

And Mr. Black, your profound solemnity is a sure sign of a noble nature, but people are reluctant to open up to dark, gloomy, brooders.

FRANK

(broodingly)

They are?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

ROBBINSKI

Gentlemen, I can tell you'd do anything to find this killer of yours, but what are you willing to do...to find your selves?

Frank examines the book. Is he willing?

CUT TO:

18 INT. OFFICE - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

18

Apparently not--Neurobotics lays unopened on his desk, while Frank peruses the new Playboy. REVEAL he is reading Chung's short story, entitled "It Never Fails".

CHUNG (V.O.)

"Every unhappy person is unhappy in their own way; happy people are all alike, especially Selftologists, whose positive-thinking therapies make every day...a beautiful day...."

DISSOLVE TO:

19 INT. SMOOTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

19

The alarm clock goes off at 6:00 A.M., playing upbeat music. In bed, Smooth first opens his mouth--to smile, then his eyes--to wake. He yawn/stretch like he's in a cereal commercial, then shuts off the alarm clock, as if giving it a high-five.

CUT TO:

20 INT. SMOOTH'S BATHROOM - DAY

20

Smilingly brushing his teeth.

SMOOTH

This is the 27,466th time I've had to brush me teeth--and I never get tired of it!

CUT TO:

21 INT. SMOOTH'S CAR - DAY 21

Stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, smiling behind the wheel.

SMOOTH  
Oh, boy--a traffic jam!  
(looking o.s.)  
And road construction, to boot!

As he happily HONKS his horn--

CUT TO:

22 EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY 22

Reading the Sports page, Smooth reacts with momentary disappointment.

SMOOTH  
It's not whether my team won or  
lost, it's how they played the  
game!

The Cashier, studying his Daily Racing Form, regards Smooth stoically. Smooth picks up the infamous copy of Playboy, and starts reading.

CHUNG (V.O.)  
Nevertheless, even a positive-  
thinking, goal-oriented  
entrepreneur like Napoleon had  
his Waterloo.

SMOOTH  
"...happy people are all alike,  
especially Selftologists...."  
(reads a bit more)  
Sometimes it's good to laugh at  
yourself. Keeps you humble.

Smiling he returns to reading the story. A beat...before he RIPS the magazine in half. Grabbing another issue, he RIPS that in half. The Cashier is about to yell at him, but instead RINGS up the price on his cash register. As Smooth keeps ripping, the Cashier keeps ringing.

CUT TO:

23 INT. SMOOTH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

23

Sitting at a vanity table, Smooth uses his Onan-meter. The tape cassette reads: "How to Subdue Your Homicidal Rage".

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Since you can't control others,  
isn't it more productive to  
control your feelings towards  
them?

SMOOTH

Chung ridiculed everything I  
hold sacred. And with the  
Church so close to  
respectability, the damage--

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Isn't it more productive to  
control your feelings towards  
them?

SMOOTH

He makes fun of using the Onan-  
meter.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Wh--

(composes itself)

Negative feelings directed at  
others is never constructive.  
Instead of giving out hatred,  
why not give...a gift? Even if  
it's unappreciated, you'll feel  
better about yourself, won't you?

Smooth looks to his bookshelf. No books, but lots of sports trophies, and a few oddball personal belongings, including a stuffed (happy) clown doll, bearing the motto: "Thank You For Being You". Smooth grabs the doll.

SMOOTH

Yeah--I'll send this writer a  
gift, just to show him we can  
take a joke, even if that joke  
is a sad, spiteful, stupid piece  
of sh--

An O.S. PHONE RING cues us to abruptly--

CUT TO:

24 INT. OFFICE - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

24

Putting down the story, Frank answers his RINGING phone.

FRANK

Frank Black.

INTERCUT WITH:

25 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

25

Not the Sutton Place, though not a dive either, the single bedroom contains a table Chung is utilizing as a desk.

CHUNG

Mr. Black, this is Jose Chung.  
I hope you don't mind, Det.  
Giebelhouse gave me your number.

FRANK

Not at all--in fact, I was just  
reading your story.  
It's...amusing. Although I'm  
not sure I'm comfortable with  
the tone.

CHUNG

I'll take that as an unqualified  
rave! The reason I'm calling  
is...I received something in the  
mail that...I think you might  
find of some interest.

REVEAL an opened package on Chung's table. It's the "Thank You For Being You" clown doll, except it now has been thoroughly impaled by a wide assortment of knives.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

26 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

26

As Frank examines the knife-impaled clown and its packaging--

CHUNG

Yet another pretty example of  
life imitating the very art it  
condemns.

FRANK

You don't seem too disturbed by  
this.

CHUNG

A writer wants his work to  
affect people. You'd prefer the  
affects not be expressed by  
death threats--but beggars can't  
be choosers! Besides, the  
antagonist in my story sends  
many such threats before acting  
upon them.

FRANK

Just because this person copy-  
catted one element, doesn't mean  
he'll follow the entire story.

CHUNG

Well, let's hope he doesn't  
follow the ending.

(pause)

You didn't read the whole story,  
did you?

FRANK

Uhm...you called before I could  
finish...but...I plan to.

CHUNG

(disgusted sigh)

The Selftologist Psycho finally  
confronts the writer, killing  
him. The Police give chase, but  
because he keeps a positive  
attitude--"I'll get away if I  
think I can get away"--he gets  
away.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

FRANK

That seems kinda downbeat.

CHUNG

Life is downbeat, Monsieur Noir.  
The uplifting appeal of  
retribution only exists in  
fiction--fiction other than mine.  
(sudden dawning)  
My dwindling book sales are all  
starting to make sense now!

Frank checks his pager, which reads "2000".

FRANK

I have another case, Mr. Chung,  
so all I can really advise is--

CHUNG

You know, I find your work  
utterly fascinating. Could I  
possibly tag along, just as an  
observer?

FRANK

Well, I...you're interest in me  
wouldn't have to do with my  
involvement with....

CHUNG

The Millennium Group? Oh, I've  
become aware of that mysterious  
little group of yours, but I  
have no intention to include  
them in my millennium book. You  
have my word as a writer.

CUT TO:

27 INT. PROFESSOR RANDI'S OFFICE - NIGHT

27

The college office of PROFESSOR RANDI, who's slumped over dead  
on his desk. While POLICE do b.g. forensic work, Giebelhouse  
and PETER WATTS look at the blood-speckled books on the shelves.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

GIEBELHOUSE

You can learn a lot about a person from the books on their shelves. Campus security told me this guy taught Comparative Religions, but it wasn't until I saw these Nostradamus books that I realized this case was millenniumistic.

Watts regards him with the blankest of blank stares. Relief arrives as Frank enters the room. Darting away from Giebelhouse, Watts, shaking hands, herds Frank to the body.

WATTS

Frank, thank God you're here. It's Professor Amos Randi, the Nostradamus scholar.

FRANK

I consulted him a few times.

WATTS

So did the Group. The police are thinking disgruntled student, but we think otherwise.

As Frank dons rubber gloves to examine Randi's bloody head--

FRANK

It may have been a student, but this wasn't over grades. Randi didn't believe Nostradamus' writings were meant as prophecies. They were critiques of the Catholic Church, written ambiguously to avoid being burned as a heretic. It appears the attacker thought the Professor's views heretical.

Opening the prof's mouth, Frank dislodges a crumpled up piece of paper. Unraveling it reveals a frontispiece drawing of Nostradamus on one side, and handwritten verses on the back.

FRANK

"Blood rains upon First ignorant tyrant/Second falls with Voice in Saturn's cycle/Third Anti-Christ destroyed to serve man".

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

WATTS

Lines from Nostradamus?

FRANK

Phrases from different  
quatrains, jumbled together.  
Looks like he's targeted victims  
he considers to be Nostradamus'  
Three Anti-Christ.

WATTS

"The First ignorant tyrant"  
probably meant the Professor.

FRANK

The book this page was torn  
from...it's still in this room  
somewhere.

The Police search for it. Giebelhouse quickly finds it under  
the desk. He hands it to Frank, who quickly skims through it.

FRANK

There's no name in it, but it  
definitely belonged to the  
attacker.

CHUNG

Then the killer can't be a  
student.

Everyone looks up to see Chung inexplicable standing there.

FRANK

How do you know that?

CHUNG

Dog-eared pages, highlighted  
passages, margin notations--this  
book has actually been read! It  
can't be a student's.

WATTS

Frank...can I consult with you  
for a moment?

Watts escorts Frank over to a corner of the room.

WATTS (CONT.)

Who is that rather peculiar man?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (3)

27

FRANK

It's the writer, Jose Chung.  
He's doing research for a book  
about the millennium--

WATTS

Whoa, Frank--the Millennium  
Group is not interested in  
"publicity".

FRANK

He's not writing about us. In  
fact, he's involved in a case  
that might interest the Group.  
A Selftologist was found--

WATTS

Whoa, Whoa--Selftology?!  
Frank...no.

FRANK

Peter, we've never backed down  
from anything before. Why,  
we've opposed...evil incarnate--

WATTS

Evil incarnate can't sue.  
Look...all I'm saying is be  
careful what you say around your  
writer friend.

And it's now that Frank and Watts notice the "writer friend",  
sitting on the edge of the desk, has the forensic police  
enraptured, as if telling a campfire story.

CHUNG

...so imagine the girlfriend  
going off to college, introduced  
to all these new ideas, and  
brilliant professors. The blue-  
collar boyfriend tries to read  
some of her books, you know, to  
show he's interested in her  
interests--

GIEBELHOUSE

Ah, that never works.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (4)

27

CHUNG

No--so the girl breaks up the relationship. The boy's world is shattered--his own personal apocalypse. But in his madness--oh, this is good!--he finds an explanation for his unhappiness. Nostradamus, you see, wasn't predicting world events, he was predicting the cataclysmic events of this boy's own sad life. So fulfilling the prophecies as he's interpreted them...he kills his ex-girlfriend's teacher with a pick ax.

GIEBELHOUSE

Oh, no--a pick ax is too big for this wound. Maybe an ice pick.

CHUNG

Too much Bolshevik symbolism.

FRANK

What the hell's going on here?

CHUNG

I'm profiling.

FRANK

Based on what?

CHUNG

The coded message--which I've cracked. You see, "The Voice in Saturn's cycle" refers to the Saturn movie theater, currently having an Orson Welles festival. Orson Welles was the voice-over narrator of a film called The Man Who Could See Tomorrow...a documentary about--Nostradamus!

The forensic police "Aah" as if it all makes sense now.

FRANK

Mr. Chung, can I speak with you a moment?

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (5)

27

Frank escorts Chung over to the corner.

FRANK (CONT.)

You promised me you'd only be an  
observer here.

CHUNG

But I hadn't realized how  
similar our jobs are. Based on  
some vague notions and details,  
you try to sketch out a person's  
past, in order to imagine their  
future actions. Detection--  
dramaturgy. It's the same thing!

FRANK

(pause)

You can't erase blood.

"Touche," thinks Chung, as Frank returns to the desk, re-  
inspecting the dead body and letter. Observing this, Chung  
opens his notepad, and starts to scribble..

CHUNG (V.O.)

"Don't be dark," say  
Selftologists, but how can you  
not be, when your job is to--

A CRUMPLING PAPER NOISE abruptly cues us to--

CUT TO:

28 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

28

Sitting at the table, Chung finishes CRUMPLING the paper, and  
tosses it on the empty floor. Grabbing a fresh sheet, he  
writes--

CHUNG (V.O.)

The agony and humiliation of  
being a human is in every line  
I've ever written, and it's  
written in every line on the  
face of "Frederick Blorck"....

DISSOLVE TO:

29 INT. OFFICE - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

29

At his desk, Frank, studying the Nostradamus note and crime scene photos, jots down some occasional notes.

CHUNG (V.O.)

God, I love his face. Not in "that" way--no one could love his face that way--it's hideous!--but Beauty is not always found in the beautiful, just as sanity is not always found in the insane....

FRANK (V.O.)

...so the killer will attack two additional authority figures, representing his three Anti-Christ, because...he's crazy.  
(stops writing)  
What did Chung call him..."The Nostradamus Nutball".

Frank almost laughs to himself. Thinking of Chung re-routes his thoughts, and pushing aside the Nostradamus stuff, he examines the Selftology material--Ratfinkovitch's crime scene photos, Neurobotics, the Playboy story, etc.

FRANK (V.O.)

There's nothing to connect Ratfinkovitch's assailant with Chung's threatener, and yet.... And such a frustrated reaction to the story suggests someone unaccustomed to insubordination. His profession might be dictatorial in nature--

DISSOLVE TO:

30 EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

30

FRANK (V.O.)

Complete control over his underlings. A management executive, or a foreman, or...or maybe..a writer.

Sitting at a little table, amongst a throng of chatting coffee drinkers, Smooth cheerfully types away on his laptop. REVEAL what he is typing is in...(gulp)...screenplay format.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

SMOOTH (V.O.)

Newton: "Mr. Chong is writing.  
He's not to be disturbed by  
anybody." McGrane: "I ain't  
anybody--I'm Rocket McGrane!"  
McGrane punches Newton right in  
the balls, knocking him out.

(sipping cappuccino)

Boy, my writing's really  
improved since I got this new  
software!

(resumes typing)

Dissolve to:--

DISSOLVE TO:

31 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

31

SMOOTH (V.O.)

Interior--Rico Chong's Office--  
Night. In his palatial office,  
the cocky hack cranks out more  
venomous fiction, cackling with  
snotty glee....

Crumpling more paper, Chung tosses it on the floor, now covered  
with such crumplings. He holds his despondent head awhile,  
before pouring a shot of whiskey--the shot glass just big enough  
to accommodate the two Alka-Seltzer tablets he then plops in.

CHUNG (V.O.)

This book will be the death of  
me. I...just can't write  
anymore. What possessed me to  
want to be a writer, anyway?  
What kind of life is this? But  
what else can I do now, with no  
other skills or abilities? Only  
two options left: suicide...or  
become a television weatherman.

Chung grabs his pen, and quickly begins writing.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

CHUNG (V.O.)

Like television weathermen,  
giving information one could  
gather simply by looking out the  
window, forensic profilers  
provide little of practical  
value.

DISSOLVE TO:

32 INT. OFFICE - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

32

CHUNG (V.O.)

"Mr. Blork", however, not only  
intuits specific details, but to  
better comprehend a particular  
pathology, he's willing to  
submit himself to that very  
madness....

Holding the handles of an Onan-meter, Frank listens to the  
announcer. The cassette case reads: "How to Not Be Dark".

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...and utilizing these  
copyrighted techniques will help  
clear the darkness of your mind.  
Let us now try an easy  
visualization therapy. Are you  
ready?

FRANK

Yeah.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Good. Picture in your mind  
something you've seen recently,  
that disturbed you. It can be  
a stain on your favorite shirt,  
or a scratch on your new car.  
Just close your eyes, and try to  
picture an unpleasant image.

Frank closes his eyes. Thus begins the FRANK BLACK DISTURBING  
IMAGE MONTAGE: all the horrific flashes Frank has received in  
the 30 previous episodes rolled up into one! Eye-sutured  
zombies, decapitated heads, severed tongues, winged-demons,  
Michael Beebee, and lots of blood-drenched victims, accompanied  
by the usual BANSHEE WAIL CACOPHONY. This continues, until--

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Frank opens his eyes, looking a bit startled. It's as if he's never objectively considered these images outside the realm of his forensic work. A dark thought crosses his mind: "Having seen all this shit has really fucked me up good."

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Have you pictured an image?  
Good. Now picture this image  
turning into a beach ball.  
Visualize this beach ball.

Frank incredulously looks down at the Onan-meter.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Now picture yourself pushing  
this beach ball away from you.  
Just push that ball, and watch  
it float away from your mind.  
That's it, keep pushing that  
unpleasantness away....

Frank is pushing all right--pushing the Onan-meter. Slowly, he pushes it right over the back of his desk, where it CRASHES, O.s.

As Frank rubs his brow, the PHONE RINGS. Checking caller i.d., Frank answers.

FRANK  
What is it Giebelhouse?

CUT TO:

33 EXT. GIEBELHOUSE'S PARKED CAR - NIGHT

33

In the opened-door driver's seat, Giebelhouse holds a paperback in his latex-gloved hand, while talking on his cell phone.

GIEBELHOUSE  
Frank, I don't mean to be too  
downbeat here, but...we got  
another dead body.

REVEAL the book's back cover--an author photo of Jose Chung, splattered with blood.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

34 EXT. SATURN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

34

The marquee reads: "The Third Man". Police cars at the curb, police taping off the crime scene, questioning bystanders, etc.

In the box-office, the TICKET GIRL slumps forward, her blood trailing through the circular "voice slot" and down the plexi-glass window. With Frank holding Chung's book, Giebelhouse explains:

GIEBELHOUSE

The ushers say it was her ex-boyfriend. They tried to stop him, but he escaped by slippin' down the sewage drainage ditch.

FRANK

And she was a student of Dr. Randi's?

GIEBELHOUSE

Yeah, but she was an English Lit major, which is why she was reading Chung's book, I guess.

Frank opens the book, finding the bookmark--a laminated photobooth strip, showing the Ticket Girl posed four times with the NOSTRADAMUS NUTBALL, a stereotypical-looking psycho killer.

GIEBELHOUSE (CONT.)

That's the guy there.

FRANK

They look so happy together.

GIEBELHOUSE

Just goes to show--happiness is not a given. You have to strive to maintain your upbeatness. No pain--no gaiety.

FRANK

(pause; peeved)  
Have you been reading that Neurobotics book?

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

GIEBELHOUSE

It's investigative research.  
Don't be so dark.

Giebelhouse takes the book, and exits, as Watts enters from the other side.

WATTS

Well, we've positively I.D.'ed  
this guy, now we just--. What's  
the matter, Frank?

FRANK

It's this Selftology thing.

WATTS

I thought we discussed this?

FRANK

I can't help it, Peter. Whenever  
I see someone smiling now, I  
wonder, "Is that person really  
happy, or are they a  
Selftologist?"

WATTS

Frank, the Group has previously  
looked into it. The majority of  
Selftologist are successful,  
productive, well-adjusted  
members of society. If it's a  
cult, it's certainly not a  
typical one.

FRANK

No--it's also a fascist pyramid  
scheme.

Watts gestures, "Keep it down--someone might hear."

WATTS

Frank, focus on your priorities.  
We've still got to track down  
this killer, before he attacks  
his targeted Third Anti-Christ,  
like your profile predicted.

FRANK

It was Chung's profile that  
predicted this murder.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

WATTS

I hope you're not suggesting we recruit Jose Chung to be in the Millennium Group?

CUT TO:

35 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

35

CHUNG

I've come up with a new profile!  
My secret admirer is a writer.

FRANK

That...conforms to my profile.  
How did you come up with that?

CHUNG

He sent me another gift today.

Chung hands him another McGrane potboiler: The Hacked-Up Hack.

FRANK

At least there's no knife  
through it.

CHUNG

No, there was--  
(displays knife)  
I used it to spread my peanut  
butter. Read the inscription.

FRANK

"Here's what a real writer does--  
enlightens while he entertains.  
Plus, the murder victim is a  
famous author--hint, hint."

CHUNG

Only the writer would send that.  
A writer wants everyone to read  
and love his work--even people  
he wants to kill.

FRANK

This says written by J. Onan  
Gopta. Ghost-written?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

CHUNG

Ghost-written and ghost-bought  
by Selftologists. On a regular  
basis, they go into stores  
buying multiple copies of  
Goopta's books just to ensure  
they land on best-seller lists.  
Oh, what I wouldn't give to have  
my very own cult like that. In  
fact, maybe he'll be there  
tonight.

FRANK

Be where tonight?

CHUNG

I'm doing a signing at Bartleby  
Books.

FRANK

Mr. Chung, you're already  
courting disaster by staying  
here, but to make a public  
appearance at an assigned time  
and place--.

CHUNG

Monsieur Noir, unlike serial  
killer profiling, writing is a  
depressing, lonely profession.  
Any chance I get to make contact  
with my readers, I must take.  
It gives me the will to go on.

CUT TO:

36 INT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

36

A typically spacious book store--lots of books, no people.  
Well, a couple BROWSERS, and a SNOOZER asleep in an overstuffed  
chair.

Sitting behind a table, stacked with his books, a dejected Chung  
stares out at the vast human loneliness. Frank sits nearby,  
skimming the McGrane book.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

CHUNG

This is how it will all end.  
Not with floods, earthquakes,  
falling comets, or giant crabs  
roaming the Earth. No, Domsday  
will start...simply out of  
indifference. The world won't  
end with a bang, or even a  
whimper...but with an incoherent  
mumble.

(pause)

Or maybe I'm just bitter because  
no one wants me to sign my  
freaking books?!

Chung rises, and depressingly staggers off. Frank follows after  
him, and as they walk down the book aisles--

FRANK

If you don't mind my asking:  
you're writing a book about the  
Millennium, yet you don't  
believe in any of its prophecies?

Chung stops by the Science section.

CHUNG (CONT.)

At the start of the '90's, many  
predicted major breakthroughs in  
the neurosciences. "The Decade  
of the Brain!" it was to be.  
Instead--it's "The Decade of  
Body Piercing". Why should  
Millennium predictions be any  
more accurate?

FRANK

Well, there's a religious  
component. Do you not believe  
in God, either?

CHUNG

There've been times I've been a  
devout believer, other times a  
staunch atheist, and sometimes  
I've been both during the course  
of the same sexual act.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

FRANK

(holding up hands)

Don't be dark.

(pause)

Personally, I think we're living in a very significant time in mankind's history.

CHUNG

But that's what every man throughout history has thought of his time. Look at all these books...so much significance. But how many will still exist a thousand years from now? One-- maybe two writers will still be read. Guess which two?

FRANK

Well...Shakespeare...and...  
Shakespeare and...Chung?

A pause, before Chung gives Frank a thankful little hug.

CHUNG

No. Shakespeare and Goopta! Selftologists have spent millions etching his work into stainless steel plates, and entombing them underground in nuclear blast-resistant vaults. They may not be read at the end of the next millennium, but Goopta's works will still exist.

FRANK

His self-help books, or his detective novels?

CHUNG

Which would depress you less?

Frank can't answer, he's too depressed. Chung puts a friendly arm around him, escorting him down the aisle. As they recede into the b.g.--

FRANK

I'm sorry I haven't read more of your books.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

CHUNG

And I'm sorry I cut you and your  
Group out of my new book.

FRANK

You said you weren't going to  
write about--you cut us out?

CHUNG

You just didn't seem  
millenniumistic enough.

Reaching the end of the aisle, Frank and Chung wander O.S.  
Suddenly, Smooth steps into frame in a big, ominous C.U. With  
eyes shifting about, he peers around, obviously in search of  
something. Chung? Trouble? No--the Self-Help section.  
Spotting it, he quickly grabs a bundle of Goopta's books, and--  
holding the top book down with his chin--saunters off.

CUT TO:

37 INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

37

A pile of Chung books rest on the nightstand, but Frank's in bed  
reading some investigation research: The Hacked-Up Hack.

FRANK (V.O.)

It was the 37th murder by the  
same serial killer, but no one  
knew who he was or why he  
killed. One thing's for sure:  
he had tons of unresolved  
personal problems....

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

38

Chung is slumped over dead on the table. Giebelhouse, Twohey,  
and Police mill about looking despondent. The Feminist is a  
crime scene photographer--snapping the dead body.

FRANK (V.O.)

The victim was a famous writer,  
but the cops didn't have a clue  
why he'd been targeted. The  
mood was very bleak...until--

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

The door flies open, and there stands Rocket McGrane (Lance Henrikson)! Blonde haired, powder blue trench coat, and not a worry line on his face, beaming an upbeat smile as he saunter in.

MCGRANE

Boys, boys, boys--lighten up!  
This is a homicide, not a  
funeral.

GIEBELHOUSE

McGrane! Thank god you're here.  
We got a real ugly case.

MCGRANE

Ugly is frame of mind, Kleiger--  
that's why your wife agreed to  
marry you.

TWOHEY

Do you want to view the body?

Twohey is about to lift the body, but McGrane stops his hand.

MCGRANE

Is there...blood?

TWOHEY

His trachea was ripped out--  
'Course there's blood!

MCGRANE

Then thanks but no thanks!  
Every image your eyes see gets  
engraved into your neurobiology.  
(to Fem-photographer)  
That's why I only look at pretty  
things. Say, why don't you come  
over later and take my portrait.  
Bring your wide-angle lens.

TWOHEY

But you just can't close your  
eyes to the darkness, to the  
bleak side of life.

McGrane punches him in the balls, and he crumples to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

MCGRANE

I'm Rocket McGrane! I'll do whatever I want if it maintains my upbeatness.

GIEBELHOUSE

That's all well and good, but we got a murder to solve.

MCGRANE

This case is a piece of cake, with ice cream on the side.

GIEBELHOUSE

You gonna use your special profilin' powers?

MCGRANE

Don't need to. I know what killed this writer--his own writing. He wrote downbeat tales of depressing people doing dark things. Who wants that? People don't want to be told what's wrong with mankind, they want to be entertained while being enlightened. That's what a real writer does to serve man.

CUT TO:

39 INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

39

Suddenly Frank stops reading. Thinks. Re-reads--

CUT TO:

40 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

40

A reprise of the end of the McGrane scene:

MCGRANE

That's what a real writer does to serve man.

CUT TO:

41 INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT 41

Looking dumbstruck, Frank lets the book fall from his hands. Grabbing a Chung book on the nightstand, he leaps out of bed.

CUT TO:

42 INT. OFFICE - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT 42

Rapidly dialing his phone, then looking over his investigation material.

FRANK

Why didn't I see it--it was a piece of cake with ice cream on the side.

WATTS (O.S.)

Watts.

FRANK

Peter, call Giebelhouse and meet me over over at Jose Chung's hotel room--now. One of his books is titled, To Serve Man.

WATTS (O.S.)

I...hope you're not going to tell me it's a cookbook.

FRANK

It was the book the girl at the theater was reading. Chung is the killer's third Anti-Christ!

Frank slams down the phone, exiting. On the desk, Chung's book lies open, so both author photo and title, To Serve Man, can be seen, beside the Nostradamus note: "The Third Anti-Christ destroyed to serve man".

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

43 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

43

Chung busily types a manuscript. The phone RINGS. Chung keeps typing. RINGING again, Chung flubs up. Yanking the paper from the carriage, he crumples it, and tosses it on the floor. Then he unplugs the RINGING phone and tosses it on the floor as well.

Inserting a new sheet, he hears an O.S. noise. Glancing towards the door, he sees nothing. He's about to hit his first key, when--BAM--the door is kicked in, revealing the smiling Mr. Smooth framed in the doorway.

CHUNG

Rocket McGrane, I presume?

Chung returns to typing, throwing Smooth off a bit. He slams the door shut, and saunters up to Chung's desk.

SMOOTH

Writing more blasphemy about the Church of Selftology?

CHUNG

(still typing)

I'm trying to, but it's awfully noisy in here.

SMOOTH

You're exactly how I imagined you.

CHUNG

As are you. Though I didn't expect such a flair for the dramatics. Waiting all this time, then confronting me on the very night I finish my book--or am trying to finish.

SMOOTH

Cranky, miserable, sarcastically bitter--

CHUNG

I apologize, but my book is long overdue. I'm always grouchy when facing deadlines.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

SMOOTH

Maybe because you call them "deadlines". You might react to them more positively if you called them "livelines" or "birthlines".

CHUNG

If you're here to kill me--fine, but please refrain from murdering the English language.

SMOOTH

Oh, I'm pretty handy with the language myself. In fact, maybe I'll create a new definition for "deadline".

Smooth pulls out his gun, pointing it at Chung, who doesn't even look up--just keeps typing. Smooth CLICKS back the trigger, hoping to get some attention. Chung just types, until suddenly, he yanks the paper from the carriage. The sudden movement makes Smooth flinch, but Chung simply raises the paper triumphantly.

CHUNG

Too late--I'm done!

Like a child, Chung exultantly spins around in his chair, before placing the last page atop a stack of pages.

SMOOTH

As if I'd allow you to publish the secrets of our church. To ridicule all our beliefs!

Grabbing the manuscript, Smooth chucks it into the air. While Chung undauntedly watches the loose pages float down from above--

CHUNG

Oh, not just your's--I ridicule a whole bunch of other beliefs.

SMOOTH

Why? Why bring pain to people trying to wipe away their pain and find true happiness?

Chung crosses to a dresser, and opening a drawer, pulls out a pipe and tobacco. Sitting back down--

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

43

CHUNG

You know, if I used your therapies to wipe away my pain-- I'd disappear! And if my right to find amusement wherever I so chose is also wiped away, I'd die.

SMOOTH

Oh, you'll die all right!

CHUNG

You're suppose to say that more out of the side of your mouth--  
(tough guy)  
"You'll die all right".

SMOOTH

This is all just a lark to you, isn't it?

CHUNG

Of course not, but I've developed some therapies of my own. During distress, I'm able to find some absurd little detail that...well, it's as if God were winking--letting you in on the joke.

SMOOTH

My God doesn't wink.

CHUNG

Oh, really? You know, I once knew your God. Not very well. At least, not as well as he wanted me to know him.

Chung winks at Smooth, who loses a little of his smile.

CHUNG (CONT.)

I've often wondered if the depression that made him write his first self-help book was caused by my rejection of his sexual advances.

Smooth, smile gone, quickly does a "hand-flip" therapy, apparently to no good effect.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (3)

43

CHUNG (CONT.)

So, you see, in a direct--albeit  
loopy--way, you're here to kill  
me, because I didn't let "God"  
sodomize me. And if that  
doesn't sum up my life in the  
proverbial nutshell--I don't  
know what does!

Smooth is crushed. Sitting on the bed, he slumps forward,  
holding his dazed head in his hands.

SMOOTH

How...how am I suppose to wipe  
that from my mind? Every time  
I think of Goopta, I'll see him  
groping you.

CHUNG

If it helps--I was much better  
looking back then.

SMOOTH

No. No, it can't be. It's just  
more of your blasphemy. You son-  
of-a--

Readying his gun, Smooth looks back up at Chung. Chung now  
holds a small revolver, pointed at Smooth.

CHUNG

I believe McGrane would call  
that a "diversionary tactic".

Suddenly, Frank bursts into the room. Just as suddenly, he  
stops. This is not quite the scene he had imagined barging in  
on.

FRANK

Who the hell is that?

CHUNG

The Selftology Psycho.

Frank "Ah"s--it all making sense now. But Smooth suddenly aims  
and FIRES at Chung, who ducks below the table. As Smooth  
sprints out the room, Frank rushes to see if Chung is hurt.

FRANK

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (4) 43

After Chung's nod, Frank bolts for the door.

CUT TO:

44 INT. ENTRANCE INTO STAIRWELL - NIGHT 44

On the exit door into the stairwell. Smooth runs in, smashing through the door. As the door starts closing, Smooth is seen heading upstairs. A beat, before Frank flies in, smashes through door, heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

45 INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT 45

The chase ensues up two flights of stairs, with Smooth rounding the corner above just after Frank rounds the one below.

FRANK'S POV - STAIRWAY

Coming around a corner, Smooth suddenly appears at a stand still--pointing his gun right at Frank (camera).

STAIRS

Frank brakes, but it's too late to dive back around the corner.

SMOOTH

Die, you dark bastard!

Smooth pulls the trigger. Frank winces. Pause. Smooth regards his gun. Then, in as upbeat a manner as possible--

SMOOTH (CONT.)

All right--my gun jammed!

Smooth chucks the gun at Frank, who ducks out of the way. As the chase resumes upward--

CUT TO:

46 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 46

Chung, on all fours, gathers from the floor the disheveled pages of his manuscript.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

CHUNG  
Maybe it'll read better all  
jumbled up like this.

Chung stops, noticing a page tread underneath a pair of workboots, speckled with dried blood. He looks up to find in his room, holding a pick axe and looking extremely insane, The Nostradamus Nutball. As he points the axe at Chung--

NUTBALL  
The third Anti-Christ destroyed  
to serve man!

CHUNG  
Hell's bells....

CUT TO:

47 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT 47

Smooth bursts through the roof access door, and runs straight ahead--to the ledge of the building. Searching for an escape route, he sees none. He looks across to the roof of the neighboring building. It would take a major league leap. He looks down into the alleyway.

48 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT - SMOOTH'S POV 48

He better make it across, as a fall will surely kill him.

49 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT 49

As Smooth retreats to get a running start, Frank emerges through the access door. Spotting Smooth, he quickly realizes the Selftologist's intentions.

FRANK  
Don't! Don't try it! You'll  
never make it across!

SMOOTH  
Not with that negative attitude,  
I won't!

Beaming a confident smile, Smooth starts his long jump jog. Picking up speed, right at the ledge, he takes his leap of faith.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

He floats majestically through the air, ever upwards like Jonathan Livingston Seagull...before plummeting like an anvil. He drops out of sight, down into the alleyway. He didn't even come close.

Frank is frozen in disbelief over what he just saw. Suddenly, an O.S. GARBAGE CAN CRASH is heard, followed shortly by the SCREECHING OF CAR TIRES. After wincing, he jogs to the ledge, and looks down.

50 EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT - FRANK'S POV

50

Smooth's body is partially seen lying underneath Giebelhouse's car's front tires. The detective is out of his car, inspecting the damage.

INTERCUT WITH:

51 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

51

FRANK  
(calling down)  
Giebelhouse!

GIEBELHOUSE  
(looking up)  
IS THAT YOU, FRANK?

FRANK  
YEAH!

GIEBELHOUSE  
DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS WAS I JUST  
RAN OVER?

FRANK  
THE SELFTOLOGY PSYCHO!

GIEBELHOUSE  
OH, WHAT A RELIEF! I THOUGHT I  
HAD DONE SOMETHING DOWNBEAT!  
AND FRANK--THANKS FOR THE TIP!  
THE BOYS JUST CAUGHT THE GUY  
COMING OUT THE FRONT!

FRANK  
WHAT GUY?!

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

GIEBELHOUSE  
THE NOSTRADAMUS NUTBALL!

Frank needs a second to take this in, but when he does, he darts towards the access door.

CUT TO:

52 INT. CHUNG'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 52

Watts stands in the room, obviously upset. As Frank appears in the doorway, Watts regards him consolingly.

WATTS  
Frank....

Frank enters to find Chung, on the floor, leaning listlessly against the side of the bed, bleeding from the head. Frank kneels down, grabbing Chung's shoulder, and Chung slides lifelessly into the crook of Frank's arm. Distraught, Frank closes his eyes, unwittingly causing himself to have a Vision Flash:

53 INTERNAL POV 53

--Chung holding up his hands in defense.--The Nutball swinging his pick axe.--Chung falling against the bed, bleeding from the head.

54 RESUME 54

Frank opens his eyes, his face registering the horror he didn't want to see. He covers his eyes with his free hand. Then--

CHUNG  
Frank--

Frank uncovers his eyes to find Chung conscious, and though in pain, with an amused smile. Chung nods towards Watts, who is huddled over the two. Frank looks at Watts, not understanding.

FRANK  
What?

CHUNG  
Don't you just love that  
mustache!

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

Frank looks back at Watts, who self-consciously avoids his look. Frank, perhaps for the first time, notices the facial hair masterpiece, and smiles.

FRANK

Yeah, I guess it is a pretty  
great mus--

Frank abruptly stops as he looks back at Chung. The writer has written his last line. Frank, with sadness--but not torment, regards the peculiar dead man. Over the dark, downbeat image of Chung's bloody face--

CHUNG (V.O.)

Well...all's well that ends  
well!--

DISSOLVE TO:

55 INT. BEDROOM - FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

55

A photo of a smiling Jose Chung. PULL BACK TO REVEAL it's the dust jacket's author photo for a book entitled, Doomsday Defense. PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL Frank in bed reading it.

CHUNG (V.O.)

--though that's easy for  
Shakespeare to say--he'll be  
around for another millennium.  
But what of our own millennium?  
Will it all end well? No one,  
of course, can know, but that,  
of course, doesn't stop anyone  
from guessing. And the nature  
of these predictions always  
revolve around the usual  
suspects: salvation and/or self-  
satisfaction. With that in  
mind, I humbly add my own  
prophecy of what the dawn of the  
new millennium shall bring  
forth: One thousand more years  
of the same old crap.

As Frank closes the book--

FADE OUT:

THE END