

Miller's Crossing

An Original Screenplay By

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and

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**1. FADE IN:  
CLOSE SHOT A WHISKEY TUMBLER**

That sits on an oak side bar under a glowing green bankers lamp, as two ice cubes are dropped in. From elsewhere in the room:

Man (off)

I'm talkin' about friendship. I'm talkin' about character. I'm talkin' about--hell, Leo, I ain't embarrassed to use the word--I'm talkin' about ethics.

Whiskey is poured into the tumbler, filling it almost to the rim, as the offscreen man continues.

. . . You know I'm a sporting man. I like to make the occasional bet. But I ain't that sporting.

**THE SPEAKER**

A balding middle-aged man with a round, open face. He

still wears his overcoat and sits in a leather chair in the dark room, illuminated by the offscreen glow of a desk lamp. This is Johnny Caspar.

Behind him stands another man, harder looking, wearing an overcoat and hat and holding another hat--presumably Caspar's. This is Bluepoint Vance.

Caspar (cont'd)

When I fix a fight, say--if I pay a three-to-one favorite to throw a goddamn fight--I figure I got a right to expect that fight to go off at three-to-one. But every time I lay a bet with this sonofabitch Bernie Bernheim, before I know it the odds is even up--or worse, I'm betting the short money. . .

Behind Caspar we hear the clink of ice in the tumbler and a figure emerges from the shadows, walking away from the glowing bar in the background.

. . . The sheeny knows I like sure things. He's selling the information I fixed the fight. Out-of-town money comes pourin' in. The odds go straight to hell. I don't know who he's sellin' it to, maybe the Los Angeles combine, I don't know. The point is, Bernie ain't satisfied with the honest dollar he can make off the vig. He ain't satisfied with the business I do on his book. He's sellin' tips on how I bet, and that means part of the payoff that should be ridin' on my hip is ridin' on someone else's. So back we go to these questions--friendship, character, ethics.

The man with the whiskey glass has just passed the camera and we cut to the:

#### **REVERSE**

Another well dressed, middle aged man, behind a large polished oak desk, listening intently. This is Leo. He is short but powerfully built, with the face of a man who has seen things.

The man with the whiskey enters frame and passes Leo to lean against the wall behind him, where he listens quietly.

Caspar

. . . So its clear what I'm sayin'?

Leo

Clear as mud.

Caspar purses his lips but continues unfazed.

Caspar

It's a wrong situation. It's gettin' so a businessman can't expect no return from a fixed fight. Now if you can't trust a fix, what can you trust? For a good return you gotta go bettin' on chance, and then you're back with anarchy. Right back inna jungle. On account of the breakdown of ethics. That's why ethics is important. It's the grease makes us get along, what separates us from the animals, beasts a burden, beasts a prey. Ethics. Whereas Bernie Bernheim is a horse of a different color ethics-wise. As in, he ain't got any. He's stealin' from me plain and simple.

Leo leans back in his chair.

The man behind Leo raises the whiskey glass to his lips.

He is trimmer and younger than Leo, perhaps in his thirties, dark-complected, with a pencil mustache and a gaunt intensity that is not entirely healthy-looking. This is Tom.

As he drinks, he studies Caspar and Bluepoint.

Leo

You sure it's Bernie, selling you out?

For the first time the man behind Caspar speaks:

Bluepoint

It ain't elves.

Leo

Nobody else knows about the fix?

Caspar

No one that ain't got ethics.

Leo

What about the fighters you pay to tank out?

Bluepoint

We only pick fighters we can put the fear of God in.

Leo  
Any other bookies know? You play anyone else's  
book?

Caspar  
I lay an occasional bet with Mink Larouie.

Bluepoint  
But it ain't Mink, I'll vouch for that.

Leo  
How do you know?

Caspar shakes his head.

Caspar  
It ain't Mink. Mink is Bluepoint's boy.

Leo  
Mm. And of course, Bluepoint always knows about  
the fix.

Bluepoint  
What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Leo  
Let it drift. All it means is a lot of people  
know.

Caspar  
I guess you ain't been listening. Sure other  
people know. That's why we gotta go to this  
question of character, determine just who exactly  
is chiseling in an my fix. And that's how we  
know it's Bernie Bernheim. The Motzah Kid.  
'Cause ethically, he's kinda shaky.

Leo  
You know Bernie's chiseling you because he's a  
chiseler. And you know he's a chiseler because  
he's chiseling you.

Airily:

Caspar  
Sometimes you just know.

Leo  
. . . So you wanna kill him.

Bluepoint  
For starters.

Leo nods, thinking. He swivels to look interrogatively at Tom.

Tom gives an almost imperceptible shrug. The ice cubes in his glass clink.

Leo turns back to Caspar, pauses.

Leo  
. . . Sorry, Caspar. Bernie pays me for protection.

Tom, peering over his drink, does not entirely conceal his surprise.

Caspar stares at Leo, his mouth open. It is not the response he expected.

Caspar  
. . . Listen, Leo, I ain't askin, for permission. I'm tellin' you as a courtesy. I need to do this thing, so it's gonna get done.

Leo  
Then I'm telling you as a courtesy that you'll have trouble. You came here to see if I'd kick if you killed Bernie. Well there's your answer.

Caspar's voice is harder:

Caspar  
Listen Leo, I pay off to you every month like a greengrocer--a lot more than the Motzah--and I'm sick a gettin' the high hat--

Leo  
You pay off for protection, just like everyone else. Far as I know--and what I don't know in this town ain't worth knowing--the cops haven't closed any of your dives and the O.A. hasn't touched any of your rackets. You haven't bought any license to kill bookies and today I ain't selling any. Now take your flunky and dangle.

Caspar is staring at Leo. He looks at Tom, then rises slowly to his feet. Back at Leo:

Caspar

Ya know I'm tryin'. . . I'm tryin not to raise my voice in anga. I've always gone along to get along. But you make me lay off the Matzoh and you're givin' me the needle. I told you the sheeny was robbin' me blind, I told you I wanna put him in the ground and I'm telling you now I'm sick a the high hat.

He swipes his hat from Bluepoint.

. . . You think I'm some guinea fresh off the boat and you think you can kick me. But I'm too big for that now.

He puts his hands on the desk and leans towards Leo. The cords stand out on his ndck.

I'm sick-of takin' the strap from you, Leo. I'm sick a marchin' down to this goddamn office to kiss your Irish ass and I'M SICK A THE HIGH HAT!

Caspar stops, out of breath. He is red faced and panting. Bluepoint has put a gently restraining hand an his shoulder.

Leo and Tom stare at Caspar impassively.

After a beat Caspar shuts his mouth. His eyes lose some of their glaze. He looks at Bluepoint's hand, turns and strides towards the door.

Caspar

. . . Youse fuckin' fancy-pants, all of ya.

He opens the docr, but Leo's voice stops him.

Leo

(softly)

Johnny. You're exactly as big as I let you be and no bigger and don't forget it. Ever.

Caspar looks at Lea from the open doorway. After a beat he chuckles.

Caspar

Ats right, Leo, you're the big-shot around here.

He dances over at Tom again, then back to Leo:

. . . And I'm just some schnook likes to get slapped around.

He leaves, Bluepoint following, shutting the door.

After a beat Tom crosses in front of the desk and sits down in the chair Caspar has just vacated. Leo chuckles and leans back in his chair.

Leo  
Twist a pig's ear. Watch him squeal.

Tom swallows the last of his drink and stares ruminatively down at his glass.

Tom  
. . . Bad play, Leo.

Leo, unfazed, grins at Tom.

Leo  
Got up on the wrong side, huh?

Tom  
Same side as always.

Leo  
That's what I mean. Still owe money to--who's your bookie? Lazarre?

Tom  
Mm.

Leo  
I could put it right for you.

Tom  
Thanxs Leo, I don't need it.

Leo  
In a pig's eye. You haven't played a winner in six weeks. People'll speak ill of me if I let him break your legs.

Tom grins back, for the first time.

Tom  
People'll say I had it coming.

Leo  
And they'll be right, but that ain't the point. Call me a big-hearted slob, but I'm gonna square it for ya.

He picks up a phone on his desk and starts to dial.

. . . Yeah, I think I'll do that, this very same night. Looking at you moping around takes away all my . . . What did you call it? Joy de veever.

Tom stands and walks over to the desk.

Tom

Joi de vivre.

He takes the receiver from Leo and prongs the phone.

Leo

Well look, if your gonna laugh at me, the hell with you.

Tom walks to the door, putting an his hat.

Tom

And with you. I'll square myself with Lazarre if you don't mind. Thats why God invented cards.

He pauses in the doorway and turns back to Leo.

. . . There is something you can do for me.

Leo

Name it.

Tom

Think about what protecting Bernie gets us. Think about what offending Caspar loses us.

Leo chuckles good-naturedly.

Leo

Come on, Tommy, you know I don't like to think.

Tom has stepped into the hallway and, just as he closes the door:

Tom

Yeah. Well, think about whether you should start.

The door clicks shut.

**CUT TO BLACK**

2. **FADE IN:**  
**THE WOODS CREDIT SEQUENCE**

Although it is day, the tree cover gives an effect of almost cathedral-like darkness. The sun filters down through the leaves in gently shifting patterns.

We hear only the sound of the wind and the creaking and groaning of tree limbs in the breeze.

Head titles are supered over the dissolving series of woods scenes.

In the last woods scene the angle is low--almost ground-level. The sun dapples the floor of the forest, which is carpeted with pine needles.

With a whoosh of rustling leaves the wind gusts a fedora into frame. For a moment it lies still in the foreground, sunlight rippling over it, making it seem almost alive. Then the wind picks up again and the hat tumbles away from us, end over end, in slow motion into the background, impossibly far away until . . . it disappears.

As we fade out, we hear a distant knocking.

**3. FADE IN:**  
**CLOSE SHOT TOM**

Unshaven, eyes closed, motionless.

The head credits continue over this one-shot scene.

The knocking continues, faintly, offscreen. As we hear a door opening we pull back to a looser shot, revealing that Tom is slumped back on a tired green sofa.

A fat hand enters to shake Tom's shoulder.

Voice

Wake up, Tommy.

Without ocening his eyes:

Tom

I'm awake.

Voice

You're eyes were shut.

Tom

Who're you gonna believe?

Tom sits up, though it seems like an effort. He looks sick.

From a small mirror behind the couch we see that we are in the back room of a gambling establishment. The leavings of a card game litter a table in the middle background.

Tom

. . . How'd I do?

Voice

What do you think. You're a millionaire. You gonna remember your friends?

Tom reaches up to feel his head, and looks stupidly about.

Tom

. . . Where's my hat?

Voice

You bet it, ya moron. Good thing the game broke up before you bet your shorts.

After a beat of staring at nothing in particular, Tom abruptly lurches to his feet and staggers out of frame.

The other man sits heavily onto the couch that Tom has just vacated. He is Fat Tony, a big man wearing an apron.

He watches as we hear Tom, offscreen, staggering across the room, bumping into something which scrapes and then clatters over, opening a door, staggering across tile, and then vomiting.

Fat Tony watches with mild interest.

Finally:

Tom's Voice

. . . Who left with my hat?

Tony

Verna. Verna and Mink.

Tom

. . . Who?

Louder:

Tony

Mink and Verna.

Offscreen we hear a tap running.

Tom  
. . . Thunderclap running tonight?

Tony  
Yeah.

Tom  
What's she leave at?

Tony  
Three-to-one, more'n likely. Lay off, Tom. You shouldn't go deeper in the hole.

Tom  
Tell Lazarre I want five hundred on the nose.

Tony shrugs.

Tony  
You would have it.

Tom  
. . . Somebody hit me?

Tony  
Yeah. Mink hit you.

Tom  
. . . Whyzat?

Tony inspects a hangnail on his thumb.

Tony  
You asked him to.

**4. CUT TO:  
A HALLWAY**

A loose shot looking over Tom's shoulder as he knocks on an apartment door. Head credits continue.

The door swings open and Verna, an attractive but hard-looking woman in her late twenties or early thirties looks coldly out at Tom.

Tom  
(still slightly woozy)  
Miss me?

Verna  
You again. What now?

Tom  
I want my hat.

Verna  
. . . Is that all you came for?

Tom  
Yeah. I want my hat.

Verna  
I won it. It's mine.

Tom  
What're you gonna do with it?

Verna  
Drop dead.

She slams the door.

There is a long, motionless beat. Tom raises his hand and knocks again, missing the door completely on his first try.

After a knock or two the door swings open again.

Tom  
I need a drink.

Verna  
Why didn't you say so.

She steps away from the door and Tom enters the apartment. As the door clicks shut we cut to black, and the last of the movie's head credits.

Music clays under the credits, mixed in with the woods sounds we heard earlier. As the last of the credits is fading to black we hear a distant knocking, and from black we:

**5. CUT TO:  
CLOSE SHOT A FEDORA**

Lying on a marble bureau top in a dark room. A gently rippling cookie plays over it--light from a streetlamp thrown through a curtained window. Reflected in the bureau

mirror behind the fedora we see the soft glow of a burning cigarette.

#### **REVERSE**

Tracking in on Tom, sitting in bed, smoking, staring at the bureau. The rippling street light plays over him from the window. We hear a distant knocking.

#### **WIDER**

The bedroom, as Tom swings his legs around and gets out of bed.

Tom throws on a dressing gown and leaves the bedroom through its double oak pocket doors, closing the doors behind him.

### **6. LIVING ROOM**

Also dark, lit only by streetlight filtering in.

The knocking is louder here. Tom crosses the room, silhouetted against the windows, to the apartment's front door. Light fans in as he opens it.

Shifting uncomfortably in the hallway is Leo, in an overcoat and fedora.

Leo  
'Lo, Tommy. Sorry about the hour.

Tom  
I'll live. What's the rumpus?

Leo  
Can i come in?

Tom thinks about this for the slightest beat.

Tom  
Sure.

He lets Leo precede him into the living room.

Tom turns on a lamp that sits on a rolling bar.

. . . Drink?

Leo  
I wouldn't mind. . . I tried calling earlier.

Tom  
I got home late.

As Tom sits down facing Leo with two drinks:

Leo  
Well. . . Sorry about the hour.

Tom  
Uh-huh.

He waits, with no apparent impatience.

The older man is uncomfortable; he is having trouble finding the words. Finally he lifts his glass and swallows it in one gulp.

Leo  
. . . Not bad. . .

Tom  
Better than the paint we sell at the club.

Leo  
That it is. . . That it is. . .

Tom  
Thought about cutting Bernie loose?

Leo is shuffling his hat nervously from hand to hand.

Leo  
Can't do it, Tommy, can't do it. . . That's sort of why I'm. . . Tommy. . . I don't know where Verna is.

Tom fixes him with a level stare, then takes a sip of his drink.

Tom  
Uh-huh.

Leo  
I know what you're thinking: What else is new? But the situation now, I'm worried. . .

Tom blows out air.

Tom

Verna can take care of herself. Maybe better than you can.

Leo  
What does that mean?

Tom stands up, takes Leo's glass and walks back over to the bar.

Tom  
Want another?

Leo  
No. What does that mean?

Tom turns to look at Leo, pauses, then decides to speak:

Tom  
How far has she got her hooks into you?

Leo  
That's a hell of a question.

Tom  
It's a grift, Leo. If she didn't need you to protect her brother from Johnny Caspar, d'you think she'd still go with you on slow carriage rides through the park? That is the deal, isn't it? You keep Bernie under wraps 'till Caspar cools down?

Leo  
Jesus but you're a prickly pear. What's wrong with her wanting her brother taken care of?

Tom  
Not a thing. I don't blame her. She sees the angle--which is you--and she plays it. She's a grifter, just like her brother. They probably had grifter parents and grifter grandparents and someday they'll each spawn little grifter kids--

Leo  
Stop it, Tommy. I don't like to hear my friends run down. Even by other friends.

Tom shrugs.

Tom  
Friendship's got nothing to do with it.

Leo

The hell you say. You do anything to help your friends. Just like you do anything to kick your enemies.

Tom

Wrong, Leo. You do things for a reason.

Leo

Okay, Tom, you know the angles--Christ, better than anybody. But you're wrong about this. You don't know what's in Verna's heart. . .

Tom stares down into his drink. There is an awkward pause. Then finally, without looking up:

Tom

Leo, throw her down. And her brother, too. Dump her.

Leo looks like he has just been stepped on.

Leo

Jesus, Tom. . . Verna's okay. . .

He nods to himself.

She's a little wild, but she's okay. I like her.

Tom smiles.

Tom

Yeah, you like her. Like the Kaiser likes cabbage. You're dizzy for her.

Leo scowls at Tom.

Leo

What of it? Jesus, Tom, ain't you ever been bit by that bug?

Tom

Leo, if she's such an angel, why are you looking for her at four in the morning?

Leo digs his hands into his pockets and slouches back, profoundly embarrassed.

Leo

I put a tail on her this afternoon.

Tom

Hah!

Leo

Yeah, I asked Rug Daniels to follow her around-- just, you know, just to keep her out of trouble.

Tom

And to tell you what trouble she was managing to whip up herself.

Leo

It wasn't to spy, Tom; I was worried. After that meeting with Caspar, well--you can't be too careful.

Tom

Uh-huh. And what did Rug tell you that has you scurrying over here?

Leo

That's just it. Nothing. He's disappeared.

Tom laughs humorlessly.

Tom

So you've lost your ladyfriend and the tail you put an her.

Leo

I guess it does sound pretty sorry at that. . .

He looks from his empty glass up to Tom.

. . . Help me out, Tom. I wouldn't know where to start looking. You know Rug's crowd, you know the people Verna runs with. I'm just worried now, with things the way they are between me and Caspar--

Tom gives a wave of disgust.

Tom

You shouldn't be confronting Johnny Caspar, it's what I've been trying to tell you. You can't trade body blows with him. He's gotten too strong.

For the first time Leo displays some testiness:

Leo

I reckon I can still trade body blows with any man in this town. . .

He sighs, looks back down at his drink.

. . . Except you, Tom.

Tom

And Verna.

Leo smiles good-naturedly.

Leo

Okay, give me the needle. I am a sap, I deserve it. . .

He stands and walks to the door.

Tom doesn't move. His eyes remain fixed on the chair Leo has just vacated.

Leo pauses in the open doorway.

. . . Thanks for the drink. Let me know if you hear anything. . .

The door closes and he is gone.

Tom grimaces and stands up. Sunlight is just starting to come in through the windows, defining for the first time the corners of the large semi-circular room as Tom walks across it to the bedroom. Distant early-morning traffic noise is filtering up from the street.

## **7. INT BEDROOM**

As Tom opens the double oak doors and enters, leaving them open.

He crosses to the bed and sits on its edge, hunched forward, thinking. Behind him, a woman stirs.

Woman  
(sleepily)

Who was that?

Tom

Leo. . .

He takes a cigarette from the nightstand and lights it.

. . . He's looking for you.

Verna stiffens.

Verna  
Did you tell him I was here?

Tom  
No.

Verna relaxes.

Verna  
Did you put in a good word for my brother?

Tom  
No.

Verna  
You said you would.

Tom  
. . . I said I'd think about it.

Verna  
What did you tell him?

Tom is lost in thought. He exhales smoke.

Tom  
. . . Did you see Rug Daniels last night?

Verna  
No. What did you tell Leo?

Tom finally turns to face her. After looking at her for a beat:

Tom  
. . . I told him you were a tramp and he should dump you.

A shoe flies past his head and hits the wall behind him.

Verna  
You're a son of a bitch, Tom.

7.    **EXT ALLEYWAY    EARLY MORNING**

We are on an extreme close shot of a small dog. Behind him, in the distance, we can see the mouth of the alley.

The dog is on point, perfectly still, one front leg crooked and raised off the ground, his ears pointed straight up, his eyes in a fixed stare.

#### **A MAN**

is slouched, half-sitting, against the wall of the alley. He is motionless. His mouth is agape. His eyes are rolled up in a lifeless stare.

He is wearing an overcoat but it is unbuttoned and reveals a blood stain in the middle of his chest. His fedora lies on the ground near one of his splayed hands.

There is something subtly odd about his hair.

#### **CLOSE SHOT A LITTLE BOY**

Perhaps five years old. He stares down at the dead man in front of him.

#### **CLOSE SHOT THE MAN**

Staring vacantly.

#### **THE BOY**

After a moment, he reaches forward.

#### **THE MAN**

As the boy's hand enters frame. The boy pokes once at the man's shoulder.

There is no reaction.

The boy touches the top of the man's head.

The man's hair slips forward a couple of inches over over his forehead.

#### **THE BOY**

Staring.

**THE MAN**

Also staring, his skewed hairpiece ill becoming his stunned expression.

The boy reaches forward and takes the hairpiece off the man's head. Now a bald man stares off into space, still looking stunned, still quite dead.

**WIDE SHOT     THE ALLEY**

The dead man and the little boy face each other in profile in the middle foreground. In the background, between them, the little boy's dog faces us, still on point, still whining.

The little boy is fascinated by the hairpiece he holds. He turns it over and around, and looks from it to the dead man.

Suddenly the boy turns and runs, away from us, towards the mouth of the alley, still clutching the hairpiece.

As he passes the dog it turns and runs after him, wagging its tail, happy to be leaving.

**FADE OUT****9.    FADE IN:  
INT     DINER EVENING**

A man sits facing us at the counter in the foreground. His face is hidden by the newspaper he is reading.

The page of the newspaper being presented to the camera bears a story headlined: GANGSTER SLAIN. The subhead: Politician's "Aide" Found Dead in Alley.

After a beat the diner drops the paper to the counter, and we see that it is Tom, wearing overcoat and hat. He is grimacing at whatever he was reading. He stands and digs into his pocket.

**REVERSE**

Looking down at the newspaper on the counter, next to a steaming cup of coffee. Tom's hand enters to put some change on the counter, leaves, and we hear his receding footsteps.

The headlined story on the page Tom was reading is:  
**THUNDERCLAP INJURED IN RACING MISHAP.**

**10. CUT TO:  
TRACKING IN TO CLOSE SHOT PLAQUE**

Set into the brick of a building's exterior, it reads:  
SHENANDOAH CLUB. In script underneath: Members Only.

**11. INT THE CLUB NIGHT**

Tracking towards the front door as Tom enters. He puts his  
coat and hat on the check counter.

Tom

Hello, Beryl--

Her arm sweeps across frame to slap Tom hard.

Check Girl (off)

Ain't you got a conscience?

Tom stares dumbly.

**ON BERYL**

A diminutive woman in a french maid's uniform with a pill  
box hat. She rocks her weight on one leg with her hands  
proceed defiantly on her hips.

. . . It's a little voice inside that tells you  
when you been a heel!

Tom

Mine's been mum lately--what'd I do?

Beryl

Stood me up is all. Made me wait an hour and a  
half is all? Or maybe you don't remember sayin'  
you'd pick me up after work last night. I seen  
heels in my time, sure, plenty of 'em! But none  
so low as couldn't tell me to my face when they  
was sick of me! . . .

She throws a check number at him.

. . . You know where you can stick it!

12. **CUT TO:**  
**TRACKING SHOT**

Pulling Tom as he walks across the gambling floor. He is joined by a nervous young man in a tuxedo.

Mink  
'Lo Tom. What's the rumpus?

Tom  
Mink.

Mink throws a glance back in the direction of the coat check.

Mink  
. . . I see you got your hat back.

Tom  
Yeah, what of it.

Mink  
Not a thing, Tommy. I got not a thing to say. Listen, Bernie wants to see you. It's important.

Tom  
Well I'm right here, and I'm not made of glass.

Mink  
Yeah, but he's nervous walkin' around in public. He's a right guy, but he's nervous, Tommy! He's very nervous! Who wouldn't be?!

Tom looks at Mink for the first time.

Tom  
Mink--

Mink  
The spot he's in, who wouldn't be! He asked me to ask you to ask Leo to take care of him. You know, put in a good word with Leo. Leo listens to you. Not that Leo wouldn't help the Motzoh anyway! A guy like Bernie? A square gee like the Motzah! A straight shooter like him?

Tom  
I don't get it, Mink--

Mink  
What's to get?! It's as plain as the nose--

Tom  
I thought you were Bluepoint's sycophant.

Mink  
Yeah Tom, that's right. But a guy can have more than one friend, can't he? Not that I'd want Bluepoint to know about it, but a square gee like the Motzah? He's a right guy, Tom! He's a straight shooter! I know he's got a mixed reputation, but for a sheeny he's got a lot a good qualities!

Tom has reached the foot of a large staircase. He turns to look at Mink with mild curiosity.

Tom  
Why should I care what happens to Bernie?

Mink  
C'mon Tom, you like Bernie dontcha?

Tom  
I don't like anybody, Mink, you know that.

Mink  
Well, you like his sister.

Tom  
What's that supposed to mean?

Mink  
Nothing, Tom. If it ain't my business I got not a thing to say.

Tom studies Mink for a beat.

Tom  
What's going an between you and Bernie?

Mink  
Nothin, Tom! We're just friends--you know, amigos?

He sics on his cigarette and looks nervously around the floor, then back at Tom, who stares coolly back.

Tom  
You're a fickle boy, Mink. If Bluepoint found

out you had another "amigo"--well, I don't peg  
him for the understanding type.

Mink is startled. In a high shrill voice, as Tom walks up  
the stairs, clutching his drink:

Mink  
Find out!? How would he find out?! Damn it Tom,  
me and you ain't even been talking! Jesus Tom,  
damn it, Jesus!

**13. INT LEO'S OFFICE**

Pulling Tom as he enters the office.

Leo (off)  
'Lo, Tom. You know O'Gar. . .

**REVERSE**

Leo faces us from behind his desk.

Seated in two chairs facing the desk, twisting around to  
greet Tom, are two men. O'Gar is a large man wearing a  
police uniform. Dale Levander wears a suit; a florid man  
with a shock of white hair, in his mid-sixties.

Leo  
. . . and the mayor.

Tom  
I ought to. I voted for him six times last May.

Levander chuckles.

Levander  
And that ain't the record, either.

Tom is crossing to the bar.

Leo  
Verna turned up. She's downstairs.

Tom, his back to Leo as he pours a drink, stiffens.

Tom  
. . . She say where she'd been?

Leo

No, I uh. . . didn't want to press her. Hear  
about Rug?

Drink in hand, Tom turns and crosses to perch on a corner  
of Leo's desk.

Tom  
Yeah, R.I.P.

Leo  
They took his hair, Tommy. Jesus that's strange.  
Why would they do that?

Tom  
Maybe it was Injuns.

Leo  
Eye-ties, more like it. Giovanni Casparro.

Tom  
So you figure it was Caspar bumped Rug?

Leo, with a puzzled smile, glances at O'Gar and the mayor,  
and then back at Tom.

Leo  
. . . Well it's pretty obvious ain't it?

Tom  
Mm. . . So what's the plan?

Leo  
Jump on the guinea hard. With both feet.

He looks at the mayor who shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

. . . Give him the low-down, Dale.

Mayor  
Yes, well. . . Leo here has just reminded us that  
Mr. Caspar operates several clubs in our city  
wherein the patrons imbibe of rum and play at  
games of chance.

Morosely:

O'Gar  
And we're sunnosed to stop the party.

Tom  
Uh-huh. . .

Looking at Leo, he jerks his head towards the two men.

. . . They don't seem too happy about it, Leo.

O'Gar

Naw, it ain't that, Tom.

Mayor

Jesus, Tom! We do as we're told!

Tom ignores them.

Tom

Maybe they're right not to like it. Stirring up this hornets' nest won't be good for anyone. And it'll mean killing.

Leo

Well I'm not thrilled about it either, but I can't just lay down to Caspar.

Tom

You could do worse. You might not like it, but giving up Bernie Bernheim is a pretty small price to pay for peace. Business is business and a war's going to hurt everybody. Bernie plays with fire, he's got to deal with the consequences-- even if that means he gets bumped off.

Leo

Sweet Jesus, Tom, that ain't even the point anymore. Caspar pooped Rug. The day I back down from a fight, Caspar is welcome to the rackets, this town, and my place at the table. I didn't start this thing, but--

Tom's voice is sharp:

Tom

You did start it--you and Verna--

The mayor has risen to his feet. Uncomfortably:

Mayor

We can dangle, Leo, if you'd prefer.

Leo

Siddown Dale, we're all friends here.

Tom

--and Caspar hasn't broken the rules, Bernie has-- and you too, by helping him. And if that isn't

enough, consider that if you make it a war, you have more to lose than Caspar.

Leo is getting up from behind the desk and walking over to stare out the window.

Leo

Okay, but more to beat him with. Jesus, Tom, the two of us've faced worse odds.

Tom

But never without reason. It helps to have one.

Leo doesn't reply. Tom is irritated, but shrugs indifference.

. . . Well, it's your call.

He gets to his feet and starts for the door.

. . . My opinion use to count for something around here, but it's always yours to take or leave.

Leo has turned from the window and is striding after Tom, gesturing appologetically.

Leo

Aw, c'mon Tommy. Its not like that. . .

The door clicks shut.

. . . Goddamnit. Goddamn kid is just like a twist.

**14. CUT TO:  
FAT TONY**

Tending the downstairs bar as Tom stalks over.

Tom

Gimme a stiff one.

Tony

No small talk, huh? They shoot vour nag?

Tony has finished pouring a shot of whiskey which Tom immediately knocks back.

Tom

If there's any justice. Verna around?

Tony

She stepped into the ladies, room. You got Lazarre's five hundred?

Tom

He'll have to carry me for a few days.

Tom is pouring himself another drink.

Tony

He ain't gonna like that. Couldn't, you get it from Leo?

Tom is irritated:

Tom

It's not Leo's debt. I'll pay my own way.

Tony

I admire a man of principle. Does this go on the tab?

Drink in hand, Tom is already walking away.

**15. INT LADIES' LOUNGE**

As Tom bangs through the door, still carelessly holding his tumbler of whiskey. A rogue lock of hair hangs down over his forehead.

Tom

Close your eyes, ladies, I'm coming through.

**REVERSE**

The hubbub of female voices evaporates as all turn to look at the male intruder.

The lounge's decor is done in various shades of pink. Some of the women apply make-up facing the large bulb-encircled mirrors on overstuffed seashell shaped pink chairs. Other women sit, smoking, in the banquettes that line the other wall.

All react to Tom's entrance with surprise mixed with various degrees of outrage, and they hurry to gather their things and leave. The one exception is Verna, who looks at

Tom with unperturbed distaste.

As he crosses to her seashell chair:

Tom  
Who's the warpaint for?

Verna  
Go home and dry out.

Tom  
You don't need it for Leo, believe me. He  
already thinks you're the original Miss Jesus.

She glances hurriedly around the lounge, but the last of  
the women are already leaving.

Verna  
. . . What the hell's the matter with you?

Tom  
What's the matter with you? Afraid people might  
get the right idea?

Verna studies him for a beat.

Verna  
Leo's got the right idea. I like him, he's  
honest and he's got a heart.

Tom weaves a couple of steps closer to her.

Tom  
Then its true what they say. Opposites attract.

Verna  
Do me a favor and mind your own business.

She turns back to the mirror and starts applying her  
lipstick. Tom drops down to face her in the mirror.

Tom  
This is my business. Intimidating helpless women is  
part of what I do.

Verna  
Then find one and intimidate her.

Tom swallows the rest of his drink in one gulp.

Tom  
Leo's upstairs getting ready to shoot himself in

the foot on your account.

Verna

I don't know what you're talking about.

Tom

He's gonna go to the mat for your brother. And it's gonna hurt him.

Verna

I don't know Leo's business, but he's a big boy.

Tom

He used to be.

Verna causes with the lipstick. She looks at Tom intently but her tone softens.

Verna

Look. What do you want, Tom? You want me to pretend I don't care what happens to Bernie? Well I do. He's my brother and I don't want him to get hurt. If Leo wants to help him out I'll step out with him, show him a good time in return. There's no harm in that.

Tom

There's a name for that kind of business arrangement.

Verna

I'll do what I have to for Bernie and there's no reason for you to try and queer that. Regardless of what you think of me, Bernie's a decent guy.

Tom

A straight shooter, huh? A square gee?

Verna

Yeah, sneer at him like everyone else. Just because he's different. People think he's a degenerate. People think he's scum. Well he's not.

Tom

Poor misunderstood Bernie.

Verna swivels around to stare quizzically at Tom.

Verna

. . . What is this about? You want me to stop seeing Leo . . . Why don't you just say so?

Tom

I want you to quit spinning Leo in circles and pointing him where to go.

Verna

I forgot--that's your job, isn't it?

Tom

I'll do what I have to to protect Leo. I'm asking you--politely, for me--to leave him alone. I don't have to ask. If I told him about our little dance last night, your pull would dry up pretty fast.

Now Verna is irritated:

Verna

So would yours. I don't like being threatened.

Tom

I don't like being played for a sucker. That game might work with Leo but it won't work with me.

Verna

You think last night was just more campaigning for my brother?

Tom

I can see the angles. . .

He grabs her by the arm and drags her roughly to her feet.

. . . And I know if there was a market for little old ladies, you'd have Grandma Bernheim first on line.

Verna

(struggling to get out of his grasp)

You're a pathetic rumhead.

Tom

And I love you, Angel.

Tom takes her hat off, tosses it onto the chair, and kisses her roughly on the lips.

Verna breaks away and socks him on the jaw. Tom staggers back, upsetting a table of toiletries and landing against a banquette.

He throws his empty whiskey glass at Verna.

She ducks and it smashes into the mirror.

They stand staring at each other for a beat, breathing hard. Tom has a smear of lipstick near one side of his mouth.

Finally:

Verna.

. . . I suppose you think you've raised hell.

She picks up her stole and heads for the door.

Tom stands staring at her back, swaying, ever so slightly.

Tom

Sister, when T've raised hell you'll know it.

**16. CUT TO:**

**INT TOM'S APARTMENT**

A wide shot, facing the semi-circular windows, the door of the apartment behind us. A large easy chair in the middle foreground faces away from us: a smaller chair is at the window end of the room, facing us.

At the cut we hear the ringing of the telephone.

Offscreen we can hear the unhurried scrape of a key in the lock, then the door opening, then the door closing.

Tom's back enters frame as he strolls into the room and then disappears briefly through an open doorway to the right. We hear an icebox door opening and closing, and then Tom reenters again, still not reacting to the insistently ringing phone. He is now holding a balled-up towel.

He walks over to the facing chair at the window end of the room, shrugs off his overcoat, drapes it on the chair, sits, crosses his legs, takes off his hat, tosses it onto the upraised toes of his crossed leg, tilts his head back, and presses the towel against his forehead--apparently it is an icepack.

We are beginning to track slowly towards him.

After a beat he takes out a cigarette, lights it, and reaches back for the phone that refuses to stop ringing.

Tom

Yeah. . .

He casually looks forward, just off to one side, at a specific point in space. He does not react to whatever he is hearing.

. . . I need a couple days. . . Because I don't have it now. . .

We are almost in close shot now. His gaze is still fixed and emotionless.

. . . Because I say so. . . What would be good enough? . . . Well, if it'll make him feel any better, tell Lazarre he can send someone by to break my legs. I won't squawk.

He prongs the earpiece, still looking off. The track has stopped in close shot. He exhales a stream of smoke, then after a beat:

. . . 'Lo, Bernie.

**REVERSE**

Slouched in a chair, in the corner of the room, facing Tom, is Bernie Bernheim. He is about thirty and wears his overcoat and hat and a good-natured smile. He holds an apple in one hand and a paring knife in the other. The long peel of the apple corkscrews down off the knife.

Bernie

'Lo, Tom. What's the rumpus?

Tom

C'mon in, make yourself at home.

Bernie

Yeah, you weren't here so I thought I'd do that. Didn't wanna answer the phone, though. Figured it wasn't for me.

Tom

Uh-huh.

After a silent beat, Bernie chuckles.

Bernie

. . . I get it, get to the point, huh? Okay.

The point is: I'm a good guy.

Tom

I've heard that from a lot of people today.

Bernie slices off an apple section and holds it out to Tom, who shakes his head.

Bernie

Good guy, lot of friends--that's the way it works. Maybe if you appreciated me a little more, you wouldn't be making waves with Leo.

He pops the slice in his mouth.

It's a bad time to be doing that. I mean, right now we're both in a jam. I hear you're on a bad streak, short of funds, and I've got that psychotic guinea mad at me. Don't ask me why; I'm just a small-timer trying to get by, like everyone else. I need help from my friends. Like Leo. And you.

Tom

Leo gets your sister, what're you selling me?

Bernie

C'mon Tom, its not like that at all. Wasn't my idea. She'll sleep with anyone, you know that. She's even tried to teach me a thing or two about bed artistry. Can you believe that--my own sister! Some crackpot idea about saving me from my friends. . .

Bernie laughs pleasantly.

She's a sick twist all right. I guess some guys like that.

Tom

She speaks highly of you.

Bernie shrugs.

Bernie

Yeah, well, you stick by your family. The point is, I can help you with your debts if that would make us friends. My motto is, a guy can't have too many. Big payday Saturday, Tom. You could be in on it.

For the first time, Tom is interested.

Tom  
Another fix? Which fight?

Bernie  
Well that's confidential at the moment. But it  
doesn't have to stay that way.

Tom gives Bernie a speculative eye.

Tom  
How d'you know about it? Caspar isn't laying any  
more bets with you.

Bernie  
Mm.

Tom gives a humorless smile.

Tom  
. . . You must really have Mink jumping through  
hoops.

Bernie is getting to his feet wiping the knife blade on his  
coat.

Bernie  
Like I say, you can't have too many.

He pauses at the open door, looks up and down the hall and  
turns to look at Tom.

. . . We got a deal?

Tom  
. . . I'll think about it.

On his way out:

Bernie  
I wouldn't want it any other way.

On the click of the door latch we cut to:

**17. STREET DAY**

Pulling Tom along the sidewalk.

Tom  
Cud. . .

He is calling out to a short rail-like man lounging against a building who joins him as he walks. Cud has small sharp features except for one cheek, which is hugely distended by a wad of chewing tobacco.

. . . My credit still good with you?

Cud gives a so-so flutter of his hand.

. . . Give me a hundred across on Tailor Maid in the third tonight.

Cud shakes his head.

Cud  
Lazarre won't like it.

Tom  
Try fifty across.

Cud shrugs.

Cud  
I'll try. That'll make another one-fifty you owe him.

Tom  
Only if I lose, Cud.

Cud  
Tommy, the way you're goin'--horses got knees?

Tom  
I dunno. Fetlocks.

Cud  
Well the way you're goin', if I was a horse I'd be down on my fetlocks prayin' you don't bet on me.

Another man, a huge man, has walked up to flank Tom's other side. This is Frankie.

Frankie  
Drift, small guy.

Cud  
Drop dead, ape.

Frankie  
C'mon Tom, my boss wants to see you. He didn't

have time to engrave nothin' formal.

Cud starts to fade away.

Cud

I'll see you later, Tommy. I gotta go spit.

18. INT ROOM

It is a large room with a couple of card tables, straight-backed chairs, a ratty sofa--a sparsely furnished card room off the main floor of a club.

At the cut we are tracking behind Tom into the room as Frankie and Tic-Tac, a small ferret-faced-man, escort him in. We hear a woman's voice speaking rapid-fire Italian.

Bluepoint is sitting on the couch, wearing his overcoat and his hat pushed back on his forehead.

Sitting at one of the card tables is Caspar. With him is his wife, a short, very round Italian woman, and his son, Johnny Jr. Johnny Jr., about five years old, is also very round. He wears a suit with short pants that reveal dimpled knees.

Bluepoint, on the couch, is watching the domestic scene without any particular warmth.

Caspar

Whaddya mean he's eatin' too much? Whadduz the goddamn doctor know?

He turns to the little boy.

. . . What you eat for lunch?

Johnny Jr.

A hot dog.

Caspar

Just a hot dog?

The boy shakes his head.

Johnny Jr.

A hot dog and mustard.

Caspar throws his head back and roars with laughter.

Caspar  
A hot dog with mustard! A hot dog with mustard!  
You hear that, Bluepoint! The kids as smart as a  
whip! Even Uncle Bluepoint thinks that's funny.

Bluepoint's face is a solem mask.

. . . Whadduz the goddamn doctor know!

Caspar wipes away tears of mirth and digs in his pocket  
with his left hand. Extending two closed fists towards the  
boy:

. . . G'head, which hand is the penny in?

The boy touches his right fist.

. . . Choose again.

The boy just looks at him.

. . . Okay, here ya go. Take the penny. Shiny  
new penny.

To his wife.

. . . Take the kid. Wait in the car. Give'm  
a penny, boys.

Tic-Tac and Frankie dig in their pockets for change as the  
boy and his mother cross to the door.

Frankie  
I ain't got a penny, boss.

Caspar has turned his attention to a check book that lies  
on the table in front of him. As he writes:

Caspar  
Ah, well, that's a penny ya owe him. 'Lo Tom,  
what's the rumpus? You like kids?

Tom  
No.

Absently:

Caspar  
Uh-huh. Have a seat. G'ahead.

He tears out the check.

. . . Well, you're missin' out on a complete life. I know, kids, big deal, but still, I'm tellin' ya.

He blows on the check.

. . . Anyway. . . Thanks for comin' by. I just wrote this check out to your bookmaker, Lazarre. It's for an even fifteen hundred, which is more than I hear you owe him but I figure you can always use some money on the cuff, a high roller such as yaself whaddya say?

Tom

. . . Thanks.

Caspar laughs.

Caspar

Always the yapper, huh? Well, you're welcome. You wanna know why I'm putting you square with Lazarre?

Tom

Not particularly.

Caspar

Bad feeling. It ain't a good thing. It's a poison, kid. I want everybody to be friends. I do this, you're friends with Lazarre, he's friends with you, and you're friends with me. And all you gotta do, show you're a friend, is to give me Bernie Bernheim. You know it's the right thing anyway; I can't keep any discipline if I can't punish the people I need to punish. The Motzah steals from me, I can't have Leo givin' him a shiny new penny. . . You find some way to make Leo understand that.

Tom

So the deal is, I give you the Motzah, smooth it over with Leo, and you bail me out with Lazarre.

Caspar

Yeah, then we're all friends again: You, me, Leo, Bluepoint.

Bluepoint sneers from the couch:

Bluepoint

We can maybe have tea sometime.

Caspar  
C'mon, Bluepoint. Friends is a mental state.  
Wuddya say, kid?

Tom  
. . . I'll think about it.

Caspar  
He'll think about it. Hear that, Bluepoint?  
That's terrific. The kid's a thinker.

Bluepoint  
Does he want a pillow for his head?

Caspar  
Okay kid, think about it. It's a mental state.  
But make it quick, my family's waitin'.

Tom  
I'll think about it and tell you later.

Bluepoint  
He needs to think in the thinking room.

Caspar shakes his head sadly.

Caspar  
Kid, if it'll help you think, you should know  
that if you don't do this you won't be in any  
shape to walk outa here.

Tom considers this.

Tom  
. . . Would that be physically, or just a mental  
state?

Caspar stares at him for a beat, then slowly starts to tear  
up the check.

Caspar  
. . . That ain't friendly, kid. I make you a  
nice offer, I get the high hat.

He gets up and walks over to the door. Tic-Tac opens it  
for him and precedes him out.

Before following Caspar out the door, Bluepoint grins at  
Tom.

Bluepoint  
Too bad for you, smart guy.

He leaves, shutting the door.

The room is quiet.

Tom looks at Frankie, the large man, who looks back.

Frankie stands, takes off his suit coat, and hangs it carefully on a rack by the door.

He approaches Tom.

Tom

Hold it.

Frankie complies. Tom is standing and shrugging off his coat. He folds it neatly and turns to lay it on the chair he was in.

When he turns around again he is holding the chair and he smashes it into Frankie's face.

Frankie staggers back but doesn't drop. He reaches up to his nose and his hand comes away bloody.

Frankie

. . . Jesus, Tom.

Tom still holds the chair.

Frankie looks at him for a moment, then walks over to the door, opens it, and leaves, shutting it behind him.

The room is very quiet. Tom stands facing the door, still holding the chair. After a beat or two, he starts to put it down.

The door opens and he quickly raises the chair again.

Tic-Tac, the little man with the hawk nose, is striding into the room, briskly approaching Tom. Frankie, the gorilla, follows cautiously.

Tic-Tac blocks Tom's swing of the chair with his forearm, wraps both arms around it and pulls it away from Tom. As Frankie circles Tom, Tic-Tac tosses the chair across the room.

Frankie, now behind Tom, wallops him in the small of the back. The blow sends him staggering towards Tic-Tac, who cracks him in the jaw.

Frankie grabs Tom's hair and yanks his head back as Tic-Tac works on his midsection. Tom's hands are reaching back to grope for Frankie.

Still holding his hair with one hand, Frankie cuffs Tom awkwardly on the side of the head. Tom staggers around and Tic-Tac, now behind him, also hits him on the side of the head.

Tom goes down. His head hits the floor with a thunk.

We are on a low angle an the floor. Behind Tom's head, in the background, we see the door to the room.

The door splinters in with a loud crash.

Frankie's feet are walking up alongside Tom's head, as blue uniforms stream into the room.

Frankie  
Just in the nick of time, huh?

He brings his foot back to deliver a walloping kick to the back of Tom's head. On the impact we cut to:

**BLACK**

Over black we hear the sound of running water.

**19. FADE IN:  
TOM**

Gasping for air as his head is pulled out from under a running faucet.

The uniformed policeman who was holding him there and is now pulling him back up, grins at him.

Cop  
No harm done. Unless your friend broke his foot.

Tom is still woozy.

Tom  
. . . Wuzzit. . . How long. . . What day is it?

Cop  
Friday, 12th of September, 1929. Same as when  
you left us, about ten seconds ago. . .

He is leading Tom by the arm out of the cramped bathroom, back into the card room where he was beat up. Another cop has Frankie cuffed in a straightbacked chair and is taking roundhouse swings at him. He pauses, breathing heavily.

                        Second Cop  
    . . . 'Lo, Tom. Care to skin a knuckle an your  
playmate here?

                        Tom  
    No. . . thanks, Delahanty. . .

As Tom and the first cop leave the card room:

                        Second Cop  
    Well if you change your mind, we'll be inter-  
rogatin' for a while. . .

Tom and his escort are emerging onto the casino floor.

                        First Cop  
    What was that party about, anyway?

                        Tom  
    We do this every weekend.

Blue uniforms are everywhere. Some are escorting tuxedoed patrons and employees to the exit; some wield axes on the gaming equipment; others are using nightsticks to smash the bottles behind the bar. Tom winces at this and lights a cigarette.

                        Tom  
    Jesus. . .

He takes a battle and glass from a table as they walk by.

    . . . What the hell is the matter with you  
people?

                        First Cop  
    Well, they said make it hurt. . . So we make it  
hurt.

**22. EXT THE BUILDING**

We see that the building's facade claims to be **SABBATINI'S ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES.**

Tom weaves across the street with his battle and glass towards O'Gar, the police chief, leaning against a squad car, chewing a toothpick. He is watching morosely as his

men load other men into paddywagons; the street is clogged with police vehicles.

Tom

Drink, O'Gar?

O'Gar does not bother to look at Tom as they talk; he is unhappily watching the spectacle.

O'Gar

I'm an duty.

Tom pours himself a glass.

Tom

To Volstead. . .

He tosses back a shot.

. . . Any news on Rug?

O'Gar

Still dead, far as I know.

Tom

Get a slug out of him?

O'Gar

Yeah, a .22. Listen, Tom, I'm just the chief around here, so don't bother telling me if you don't happen to feel like it, but what the hell is Leo doing?

Tom

Ours is not to reason why, friend.

O'Gar

Balls. Look at this mess. Make him listen to you, Tom. It ain't right, all this fuss over one sheeny. Let Caspar have Bernie--Jesus, what's one Hebrew more or less?

He nods at the building.

. . . We're burning our mealticket here.

Tom

Leo'll do what suits him, and you'll do what he tells you. Last I heard Leo's still running this town.

O'Gar

He won't be for long if this keeps up. It's no good for anyone--you said as much yourself.

Tom

First off, O'Gar, I can say what I please to Leo and about him. . . .

He taps him on the chest.

. . . You can't. Second, once Leo decides-- that's that. And if that sticks going down, there are plenty of other coppers wouldn't mind being chief, and could swallow it clean.

O'Gar looks chastened.

O'Gar

Jesus, Tom, I was just speculatin' about a hypothesis. I know I don't know nothin'. It's just a damn mess is all--

He is interrupted by gunfire from an upper story of the facing building.

O'Gar's men react, finding cover, returning the fire.

O'Gar unholsters his gun as he and Tom scramble for cover.

. . . a goddamn mess.

### **23. HALLWAY**

We are shooting over Tom's shoulder as he knocks at the door to Verna's apartment.

After a beat, Verna opens the door.

On seeing who it is she starts to swing the door shut.

Tom puts his toe in the doorway and leans into the door.

As he pushes his way in:

Tom

Thanks, don't mind if I do.

### **24. INT APARTMENT**

As Verna gives up and Tom enters.

Verna walks over to the phone. As she dials, Tom tosses his hat onto a chair and checks the apartment to see if they're alone.

Verna  
Hello, officer, I'd like to report an intruder at  
346 West--

Tom grabs the phone away from her.

Tom  
Who's this? . . . 'Lo, Shad, Tom Duchaisne here.  
We won't be needing any today. . . That's right,  
my mother. She didn't recognize me. Lemme talk  
to Mulvaney.

He takes a flask out of his packet and looks across the room towards Verna.

. . . Miss me?

Verna  
Drop dead.

We hear a voice barking through the line and Tom turns back to the phone.

Tom  
. . . 'Lo Sean, tell O'Car to send a car over to  
Leo's tonight. If we're going to be banging away  
at Caspar we ought to be ready for him to bang  
back. . . Yeah.

He hangs up the phone and tips the flask back, draining the last drop.

Verna  
What do you want?

Tom is crossing to the bar.

Tom  
I was in the neighborhood, feeling a little  
daffy. Thought I'd drop in for an apperitif.

He pours himself a drink.

. . . Rug Daniels is dead.

Verna  
Gee, that's tough.

Tom  
Don't get hysterical. I've had enough excitement  
for one night without a dame going all weepy on  
me.

Verna  
I barely knew the gentleman.

Tom  
Rug? Bit of a shakedown artist. Not above the  
occasional grift, but you'd understand that. All  
in all not a bad guy, if looks, brains and  
personality don't count.

Verna  
You better hope they don't.

He gives her a sick grin.

Tom  
. . . Yeah well, we're none of us the saint I  
hear your brother is.

Verna  
Who killed him?

Tom  
Leo thinks Caspar did.

Verna  
But you know better.

Tom  
I do now. Caspar just tried to buy me into  
settling his tiff with Leo, which held hardly do  
if he was waging war. So I figure you killed  
him, Angel. You or Saint Bernard.

Verna  
Why would I--or my brother--kill Rug Daniels or  
anybody else?

Tom  
Rug was following you. He knew about you and me.  
That wouldn't help your play with Leo, would it?

He looks at her. She holds his gaze.

Verna  
You think I murdered someone. Come on, Tom, you  
know me a little.

















Whose? Tom

Leo's. Terry

He is opening the door to admit Tom. In a low, gravelly voice:

. . . The old man's still an artist with a thompson.

**32. INT LEO'S OFFICE**

As Tom enters.

Leo is bellowing into the phone:

Leo  
--well find him, goddamnit! Go see if he fell in the john! And get him, over here!

He slams down the phone.

. . . Sonofabitch! No chief! Who's running the goddamned store?

Tom goes to the bar to pour himself a drink.

Tom  
Can't raise O'Gar?

Leo  
No, nor the mayor either.

Tom  
Hmm.

He takes a sip.

. . . That's not good. They're running.

Leo  
They wouldn't dare.

Tom  
I don't know, Leo. I warned you not to hit Caspar's club--

Leo



Tom

I did.

Leo chuckles.

Leo

Mother hen, huh? What's the matter, Tommy, you think I can't take care of myself?

Tom

I know you can't. Here's the smart play, Leo: you lay back, give up Bernie, let Caspar think he's made his point. Wait for him to show you a weakness--

Leo

Please, Tom. . .

Tom stares at him.

Tom

You're sticking on Bernie. Sticking your neck out for a guy who'd chop you off at the heels if there was two bits in it.

Leo leans back in his chair, puts his feet up, and gazes out the window.

Leo

. . . Tom, it ain't all as clear-cut as you make it. . . Bernie's--Well hell, you know about me and Verna. . . Things now are--not that I haven't been a gentleman, but. . . I, uh. . . I plan to ask her to marry me, Tom.

There is a long, awkward silence. Leo avoids Tom's look but finally responds to the silence:

. . . I guess you think that's a bonehead play.

Tom

Do you think she wants you to?

Leo

How the hell do I know, Tom?. . . I think she does. . . Yeah, 'course she does. I know, I know, you think different but--well, we just differ on that.

Tom

Leo.













He takes a drag an the cigarette.

. . . Nothing more foolish than a man chasing his hat.

Tom rouses himself, rises, and we pan to follow as he picks up a shirt and starts buttoning it in the bureau mirror.

Verna  
Where're you going?

Tom  
Out.

Verna stares at him.

Verna  
. . . Don't let on more than you have to.

Tom shrugs.

Tom  
Just have to do a few things.

Verna  
You and Leo might still be able to patch things up.

Tom grimaces into the mirror.

Tom  
Me and Leo are finished. Nothing's going to change that.

Verna  
You never know. He's got a big heart.

Tom  
We're quits--as far as I'm concerned, never mind him. And if Leo did want me back he's an even bigger sap than I thought.

Verna  
. . . Then why don't we just pick up and leave town? There's nothing keeping you here. I know there's nothing keeping me.

Tom is starting to knot a tie.

Tom  
What about Bernie?















Huh? I don't. . .

Tic-Tac

Yeah, that's right, the boss wants you to do it.  
Make sure you're with the good guys.

Tom stares dumbly at the gun. Tic-Tac holds it, grip  
towards Tom, motionless.

After a beat he takes the gun.

Tic-Tac

You know how to do this, right? You gotta  
remember to put one in his brain. Your first  
shot puts him down, then you put one in his  
brain. Then he's dead, then we go home.

Tom opens his door.

**WIDE EXT**

Bernie is still on the ground, sobbing, not responding to  
Frankie who prods him with his foot.

Frankie

Get up.

Bernie

I can't get up! I can't get up!

Frankie drags him to his feet.

Frankie

Get up and walk, you chiselin' little yid.

He pushes him towards the woods and reaches for the whiskey  
flask.

Bernie stumbles off; Tom follows him.

#### 40. TRACK

Through the woods, pulling the two men, Bernie in the  
foreground. Tree limbs groan in the wind.

Bernie is stumbling, his clothes rumpled and dirty, his  
face stained by tears and blood from the gun blow. His  
shaking voice strains for a tone of reasonableness:

Bernie













































Bernie

'Course you know about it. . . its . . . It's a painful memory. And I can't help remembering that you put the finger on me, and you took me out there to whack me. . . I know you didn't. . . I know you didn't shoot me. . . but. . . but--

Tom

But what have I done for you lately?

Bernie

Don't smart me.

He stares hard at Tom for a moment.

. . . See, I wanna watch you squirm. I wanna see you sweat a little. And when you smart me, it ruins it.

Bernie gets to his feet, keeping the gun trained on Tom.

. . . There's one other thing I want. I wanna see Johnny Caspar cold and stiff. That's what you'll do for your friend Bernie. . .

He has opened the door to the flat.

. . . In the meantime I'll stay outa sight. But if Caspar ain't stiff in a couple of days I start eating in restaurants.

The door shuts behind him.

Tom, heretofore very still, springs from the chair, goes to the bedroom and reemerges with a gun.

He bolts for the door, instinctively grabbing his hat off a hook. He is wearing only his boxer shorts, a sleeveless tee-shirt, and the hat jammed onto his head.

He throws open the door.

## 52. HALLWAY

Empty.

Tom runs to the bannister and looks down.

### HIS POV

A flight down, a hand slides down along the railing.

Bernie's trotting footsteps echo in the stairwell.

**TOM**

He runs back to his apartment.

**53. APARTMENT**

Tom runs across to the open window and clambers out.

**54. FIRE ESCAPE**

Tom trots down. His bare feet ring dully against the steel of the fire escape.

He reaches the bottom landing, swings over the railing, hangs by his hands for one brief moment and then drops.

**THE ALLEY**

As his bare feet hit the pavement. Tom is a silhouette in the lamplight from the end of the alley.

He straightens from his crouch and runs.

**BACK DOOR**

Of his apartment building--over Tom's shoulder as he enters frame. The empty, brightly lit hall inside runs straight the length of the building to the front door, which is just closing.

Tom throws open the back door.

**55. HALLWAY**

As Tom runs through toward the front.

Before reaching the door, he falls violently forward.

His gun skates away from him across the floor.

He starts to roll over to look behind him and a crunching blow catches him on the chin, snapping his head the rest of the way around and sending him flat onto his back.

Bernie, who has emerged from under the staircase, towers over him.

Bernie

You make me laugh, Tommy. You're gonna catch cold, then you're no good to me. . .

He is walking over to Tom's gun, which he picks up and unloads into his hand.

. . . What were you gonna do if you caught me, I'd just squirt a few and then you'd let me go again.

He tosses Tom the empty gun and walks out.

Tom, white-faced and shivering, pulls himself up to sit leaning against the wall.

A first-floor apartment door opens and a sixty-year-old woman emerges, pulling a housecoat tight. She goggles at Tom.

Woman

Why Mr. Duchaisne! What on earth. . .

Tom tries a smile that looks idiotic.

Tom

They took everything. . .

**LONG SHOT THE HALL**

Clucking sympathetically, the old woman is leaning down to help Tom up. As he drapes an arm over her shoulder:

Tom

. . . I fought like hell but there were too many of 'em . . .

**FADE OUT**

**56. CUT TO:  
CLOSE SHOT PLAQUE**

Set into an exterior wall, identifying the SHENANDOAH CLUB.

**57. INT CLUB**

Tom, in his overcoat and hat, is walking up to the bar.

Tom

'Lo, Tony. How's the club holding up?

Behind the bar, Tony looks sour.

Tony

We're managing to squeak by without you. Got Lazarre's money?

Tom

No.

Tony

Well, you're not supposed to be here since you turned rat.

Tom

Relax, Tony, Leo's not around, is he?

Tony

Maybe Leo's not the only one doesn't care for you here.

Tom works to keep his smile.

Tom

. . . Fickle, huh Tony? You could almost be a dame.

Tony

Pal, you read my mind, you sneak my thoughts. Jesus, I hope you know what you're doing.

Tom

No more than usual. The last couple days, you booked any heavy bets on a long shot at Saturday's fights?

Tony

Why the hell should I tell you?

Tom shrugs.

Tom

The truth is Tony, there's no reason on earth.

Staring at Tom, Tony blows air through his teeth. He sets up a drink for Tom.

Tony  
. . . Saturday's fights. Yeah. Drop Johnson  
parked two yards on one yesterday. On Sailor  
Reese, an undercard bum.

Tom downs the drink in a gulp.

Tom  
Drop Johnson? He play your book much?

Tony  
You kidding? I didn't even know he could count.

From offscreen there is a loud CRASH and, with that, many  
of the club patrons start screaming. Tony looks off and  
Tom swivels to look.

Tony  
Oh Jesus. . . You bring them with you?

As he shoves off from the bar:

Tom  
No.

Uniformed policemen are pouring into the club, wielding  
axes. They destroy everything in their path, sweeping the  
elegantly dressed patrons before them.

Tom wades into the sea of blue and nods at Delahanty, the  
policeman we know from the raid on Caspar's.

Tom  
'Lo, Brian. Still fighting the good fight?

Delahanty  
'Lo, Tom. Neither wind nor rain nor snow. . .

Tom  
That's just the mailmen. Is O'Gar here?

Delahanty  
Just look for the long face.

## 58. EXT THE CLUB

It is just cracking dawn.

O'Gar is leaning against a car, facing the club, taking in  
the scene as he glumly chews on a toothpick. The street is  
clogged with police vehicles.

Tom approaches.

Tom

'Lo, O'Gar. You don't look happy.

O'Gar

Look at this mess. Gutting the golden calf again.

He shakes his head.

. . . I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

Tom

Yeah, it's awful confusing. You know a yegg named Drop Johnson?

O'Gar

We've spanked him a couple times.

Tom

Where does he flop?

O'Gar

The Terminal Hotel on Bay Street, whenever he's broke--which is one hundred percent of always. Jesus . . .

He reacts to gunfire from the second story of the club.

. . . Don't nobody ask me, since I'm only the chief around here, but I'll tell you my opinion: Caspar's just as crazy as Leo. And an eye-tie into the bargain.

As he heads off:

Tom

What's the matter, O'Gar, doesn't anything ever suit you?

## 59. PULLING TOM

As he walks along a nearby street; we can still faintly hear the sirens and police activity back at the club.

A black touring car is tooling up alongside of him. Tic-Tac leans out the driver's window. He has welts around his mouth and looks like he has been a little roughed up.

Tic-Tac  
Hop in, Tom, we been lookin' for you.

Still briskly walking:

Tom  
I'm busy.

Tic-Tac  
Hop in anyway, as in you ain't got no choice.

Tom  
You can't hijack me, Tic-Tac, we're on the same side now--or didn't you get that far in school?

The car screeches over to put a wheel on the sidewalk and block Tom's way. The back door swings open and Frankie emerges to help Tom in. Like Tic-Tac, Frankie looks a little worked over.

Tom quickly sizes up the situation and decides to comply.

**60. INT CAR**

As Tom sits into the back, next to Bluepoint. Frankie slides in after him.

Bluepoint  
How'd you get the fat lip?

The car starts moving.

Tom  
Old war wound. Acts up around morons.

Bluepoint  
Very smart. What were you doing at the club?  
Talking things over with Leo?

Tom  
Don't think so hard, Bluepoint, you might sprain something.

Bluepoint  
You're so goddamn smart. Except you ain't. I get you, smart guy, I know what you are. Straight as a corkscrew. Mr. Inside-Outsky. Like a goddamn bolshevik, picking up your orders from Yegg Central. You think you're so goddamn smart.

He sneers:

You joined up with Caspar. You bumped Bernie Bernheim. Down is up. Black is white. Well I think you're half-smart. I think you were straight with your frail and queer with Johnny Caspar. And I think you'd sooner join the Ladies' League than gun a guy down.

His eyes narrow at Tom.

. . . Then I hear that these two geniuses never even saw this rub-out take place.

Defensively:

Tic-Tac

The boss just said have him do it, he didn't say nothing about--

Bluepoint

Shutup, or maybe you still got too many teeth.

Tic-Tac sulks. Bluepoint turns and gazes out the window of the car.

. . . Everyone's so goddamn smart. Well, we'll go to Miller's Crossing. And we'll see who's smart.

## 61. EXT WOODS

It is morning; the sun is now fully up. Bluepoint and Tom walk side-by-side through the woods. Frankie and Tic-Tac walk several steps ahead of them, each off to one side, searching. Frankie is singing an old Neapolitan song.

Bluepoint

Y'understand if we don't find a stiff out here, we leave a fresh one.

Tom walks a little unsteadily. His shoulders are hunched and his hands are jammed into his overcoat pockets. He stares woodenly forward. Bluepoint laughs softly.

. . . Where're your friends when you need 'em, huh? Where's Leo now?

Tom tramps mechanically on. His eyes drift up.

**HIS POV**

Tracking. A canopy of leaves, sprinkled by sunlight.  
The boughs of the trees sough quietly in the wind.

We hear the unearthly groaning of the tree limbs.

**TOM**

Looks forward.

Bluepoint calls out:

Bluepoint  
Hey Tic-Tac, ever notice how the snappy dialogue  
dries up once a guy starts soiling his union  
suit?

Tom tramps on.

**HIS POV**

The backs of Frankie and Tic-Tac as they walk on ahead.

Frankie is still singing.

**TOM**

He looks stupidly at Bluepoint. He looks ahead.

He stops abruptly.

Bluepoint  
What?

Tom is still for a moment, then with jerky movements gets  
down on his knees, hugs a tree with one arm for support,  
and vomits.

Bluepoint watches him, then calls out to Frankie and Tic-  
Tac:

. . . Okay, there's nothing out here.

He grabs Tom's hat off his head and flings it away. Then  
he plants a foot against Tom's side and shoves him to the

ground.

**CLOSE ON TOM**

As his face hits the ground.

Bluepoint's foot enters; he plants it an the side of Tom's neck to keep him pinned.

**TOM'S POV**

Skewed angle, from the ground.

Frankie is ambling back, singing.

**BLUEPOINT**

Checking the open chamber of his gun. He snaps it shut.

As he levels the gun at Tom:

Bluepoint  
Think about this, smart guy.

**TOM**

Closing his eyes.

From offscreen:

Tic-Tac  
Uh-oh, hankie time!

**FRANKIE**

He stops singing and turns to look.

**TOM**

The foot comes off his neck.

**BLUEPOINT**

Looking towards Tic-Tac.

## **TIC-TAC**

Taking a handkerchief out of his breast pocket and bringing it to his face as he looks at something on the ground in front of him.

## **BLUEPOINT**

He hauls Tom to his feet and pushes him towards Tic-Tac.

We track behind the two men as they approach Tic-Tac and Frankie enters from the side.

We cannot yet see what is on the ground in front of him.

Tic-Tac  
Birds been at him.

Frankie is taking out his hankie as he draws near.

Frankie  
Jesus Christ. . .

He looks up at Tom as Tom approaches.

Over Tom and Bluepoint's shoulders, stretching away from us, face-up, is a body. We cannot see much of its face; what we do see is pulp.

Tic-Tac is laughing, incredulously.

Tic-Tac  
. . . I said put one in his brain, not in his  
stinking face. . .

## **EXTREME LONG SHOT**

Four very small men in overcoats and fedoras, looking down at the ground; they are dwarfed by the surrounding trees.

Very faintly we can hear:

Frankie  
I told you, Bluepoint, we heard two shots. . .

## **QUICK FADE OUT**

### **APARTMENT BUILDING DOOR BUZZER**

A beat-up panel in the building's entryway, listing tenants' names and apartments opposite a row of buttons.

A hand coasts along the names and stops at CLARENCE JOHNSON/4C, then moves away and presses two other buzzers on the fifth floor.

After a beat, we hear the front door buzz open.

### **63. FOURTH-FLOOR HALLWAY**

Tom walks up to 4C, unpocketing a gun. He gently tries the knob, which turns, and enters.

### **64. DROP'S APARTMENT**

As Tom enters.

Drop Johnson is sitting at a table in the living room, which also serves as kitchen and dining room. He is a large man with a thick neck, a low forehead, and rather vacant eyes.

He is looking up at Tom, a spoonful of cereal frozen halfway to his mouth, a folded-back newspaper in his other hand, opened to the funnies.

Tom

'Lo, Drop. How're the Katzenjammers?

Uncomfortably:

Drop

'Lo, Tom. What's the rumpus?

As he talks, Tom walks casually around the apartment, bumping open doors, sticking his head in each room.

Tom

Had any visitors?

Drop's head swivels to follow Tom around the room; aside from that he does not move. He speaks cautiously:

Drop

No.

Tom

Not ever, Drop?

Drop

. . . Not lately.

Tom nods.

Tom

Then you must be happy to see me.

Drop doesn't respond.

. . . So you didn't see Bernie Bernheim, before  
he was shown across?

Drop

No.

Tom

. . . Seen him since?

Drop maintains a sullen silence.

Tom is picking up a hat from a clutter on top of a bureau.

Tom

One last question, Drop. I hear you've got a lot  
of money on tomorrow's fight. Is that your bet,  
or did you place it for a friend?

Drop

No, uh. . . it's my bet. I just. . . I have a  
good feeling about that fight. . .

Tom's stroll through the apartment has brought him behind  
where Drop sits.

Tom

A good feeling, huh. When did the feeling return  
to your head?

Drop

. . . Huh?

Tom puts the hat on top of Drop's head. Drop's eyes roll  
up to look at it, but otherwise he still doesn't move.

The hat, too small, sits ludicrously atop his head.

Tom starts toward the door.

Tom

You've outgrown that one. Must be all the thinking you've been doing. . .

He pauses with his hand on the knob.

. . . Tell Bernie something's come up. He has to get in touch. There'll be nothing stirring til I talk to him.

He slams the door.

**65. CUT TO:  
A LARGE WINDOW**

We are looking at the ground-floor window from the street. Letters stencilled on the glass identify the **SONS OF ERIN SOCIAL CLUB**.

A topcoated man scurries into frame, knocks out a pane with the grip of a gun, and tosses a small pipelike device inside. He scurries away and we pan with him across the street to reveal a line of cars, police and civilian, parked along the far curb. No men are visible except the scurrying man, who takes cover behind one of the parked cars.

**SOCIAL CLUB**

A beat. From inside we hear a pair of trotting footsteps--

BOOM! The window blows out, spitting glass into the street, along with a large dark form.

**THE STREET**

Glass showers the pavement and a charred rag-doll of a body hits hard, face down, and skids a couple feet. Smoke wisps from it.

**THE CLUB**

A lick of flame from the bomb is already dying and heavy grey smoke is billowing out.

**THE STREET**

Men start cautiously rising from behind the cars. A lot of men. Some wear police uniforms; some are civilians. All are armed.

#### **THE CLUB**

Billowing smoke.

#### **THE STREET**

The men have straightened up. A policeman calls through a bullhorn:

Policeman  
All right. Anyone left in there, come on out,  
grabbing air. You know the drill.

#### **THE CLUB**

After a beat, the front door swings open. A man emerges, one hand in the air, one holding a handkerchief over his mouth.

He walks into the middle of the street.

One of the civilians behind the cars fires.

The man takes the bullet in the chest and drops to the ground, where he twitches.

The man who fired, in the foreground, grins. A ripple of laughter runs down the line of men.

#### **THE CLUB WINDOW**

Smoke still pouring out.

With a RAT-A-TAT-TAT muzzle flashes from inside illuminate the smoke.

#### **THE STREET**

Bullet hits chew up the cars and a few of the men; the others drop back down behind the cars and start returning fire.

**THE WINDOW**

A forbidding black hole in the exterior wall. A second tommy has joined the first to pour lead out into the street.

**66. CUT TO:  
RECEPTION AREA**

Tracking in an a youngish secretary in a severe dress, sitting behind a desk.

Faintly, from a distance, we can still hear gunfire.

Secretary  
'Lo, Tom, where've you been hiding?

**REVERSE**

On Tom.

Tom  
Hither and yon. The mayor in?

Secretary  
With Mr. Caspar.

Tom is already heading for the door.

Tom  
That's who I'm looking for. Scare up some hootch, will you honey?

Secretary  
Surely. I'll announce you.

As he opens the door:

Tom  
Don't bother, I'm well liked.

**67. INT MAYOR'S OFFICE**

A grand, high-ceilinged place. Mayor Levander sits behind his desk sputtering, his face turning purple. Caspar, sitting across from him, is also turning purple. Sitting to one side are two identical thirty-year-old men, apparently twins, mustachiced, silent, respectful, mournful,

their hands clasped over the hats in their laps, wearing stiff new-looking suits with old-fashioned collars.

Mayor

I can't do it, Johnny! I'll look ridiculous! Why, it simply isn't done! Assistants, maybe--

Caspar

For a mayor, you don't hear so hot! I said head! Head of the assessor's office!

Mayor

But there's two of 'em!

Caspar

I can count! Co-heads!

Mayor

Johnny, needless to say, this office will do anything in its power to assist you and your cousins. We did it for Leo, of course, on countless occasions--

Caspar

Damn right--had every potato eater from County Cork an the public tit--

Mayor

But there's a way we do things, hallowed by usage and consecrated by time! When we put people on the pad, when Leo was running things, we--

Caspar is furious:

Caspar

Leo ain't running things! I ain't innarested in ancient history! I'm running things now!

Mayor

Johnny, no one appreciates that more than I! I can give them jobs! I can give them good jobs! I can even give them jobs where they won't have to perform any work, where their lack of English will be no impediment! But I cant--

Caspar

What is this, the high hat?!

The mayor mops his face with a handkerchief and looks beseechingly at Tom.

Mayor

Tom, can you explain it to him? I can put them in public works but I can't--

Tom

You can do whatever the hell Caspar tells you. I don't remember all this double-talk when Leo gave you an order.

The mayor looks flabbergasted.

Mayor

Tom! Jesus!

Tom

Stop whimpering and do as you're told.

Caspar

You can start by gettin' outta here.

Mayor

But Johnny, it's my office!

Caspar

Get outta here! Take it on the heel and toe, before I whack you one!. . .

The mayor retreats and Caspar stares at the two men sitting to the side.

. . . You too, beat it!

The two men look at each other, then back at Caspar.

First Man

. . . Partiamo?

Caspar

Yeah, go keep the mayor company. I'll take care of ya's later.

The immigrants rise and leave the room. Caspar takes out a handkerchief and wipes his brow.

. . . Runnin' things. It ain't all gravy.

The secretary enters the office with a bottle of whiskey, a soda siphon and ice. She places it on the mayor's desk and leaves.

We can still hear faint gunfire and an occasional booming explosion that rattles the windows of the office.

Tom  
What's the fireworks?

Caspar  
Knockin' over one of Leo's clubs. Sonofabitch  
just won't go belly-up. . . I'm sorry, kid. I  
heard about your little ride this morning.

Tom is walking over to pour himself a drink.

Tom  
Yeah, well sorry don't fix things. We could just  
as easily've missed Bernie's corpse as stumbled  
over it, and I'd be dead now.

Caspar  
I know, I know. But it don't mean Bluepoint's up  
to anything. So he heard some rumor Bernie ain't  
dead, those stories pop up, people seen Dillinger  
in eight states last week. So he hears a story,  
and he don't like you much anyway, so he decides  
to check it out--

Tom  
Any stories about Bernie being alive, Bluepoint's  
made up himself.

Caspar  
Aw, you don't know that. It don't even make  
sense--why would he?

Tom stares at Caspar for a beat.

Tom  
. . . There could be a damn good reason. . .

Caspar squints at Tom.

. . . If you've got a fixed fight coming up. Do  
you?

Caspar  
. . . Maybe. Okay, yeah, sure. Tomorrow night,  
the fix is in. What of it?

Tom  
Bluepoint knows about it?

Caspar  
Yeah. . .

He gazes off.

. . . Okay, I get it.

Tom

If Bluepoint's been selling you out on these fights, and means to again, he'll have to be able to point the finger at someone else--

Uncomfortably:

Caspar

Yeah, yeah, I get it.

Tom

--but with Bernie dead there ain't a hell of a lot of people he can point to.

Caspar

Yeah. Bluepoint sells me out. Makes pretend Bernie's still doin' it. Ats real pretty. Bernie leaked the fix, and you take the fall for supposedly not killing him. . . .

He leans back in the mayor's chair and gazes off, sucking his lips in and out as he thinks. Finally:

. . . But I dunno, why would Bluepoint cross me like that? Money, okay, everybody likes money. But somehow it don't seem like him. And I know the Bluepoint.

Tom

Nobody knows anybody. Not that well.

Caspar shakes his head.

Caspar

Money don't mean that much to him.

Tom shrugs.

Tom

Then it's not just money he's after. He's got a wart on his fanny.

Caspar

. . . Huh?

Tom

A wart. On his fanny. Giving him the fidgets. Maybe he's sick of sitting on the couch and maybe behind your desk don't look like a bad place to

move to. Maybe he figures the money can help  
move him there.

Caspar studies Tom.

Caspar  
. . . Kid, you got a lip on ya.

He looks off again.

. . . I don't generally care for it. But you're  
honest, and that's something we can't get enough  
of in this business. . . I'll admit, since last  
we jawed, my stomach's been seizin' up on me.  
Bluepoint saying we should double-cross you; you  
double-cross once, where's it all end? An  
innaresting ethical question. I'll find Blue-  
point, talk to him, straighten it out--

Tom laughs bitterly.

Tom  
Sure, talk to him. Have a chat. Ask him whether  
he's selling you out. Don't take care of him  
before he makes his next move, just sit back and  
let him make it. You're swimmin' in it.

Caspars eyes flash. Tom's tone softens:

. . . Johnny, my chin's hanging out right along  
side yours.

Caspar goes slack.

Caspar  
Yeah.

Tom stands up.

Tom  
. . . I'd worry a lot less if I thought you were  
worrying enough.

Caspar, miserable, rubs his face. From the distant street,  
we hear another booming explosion.

Caspar  
. . . But I am, kid. . . Christ. . . running  
things. . .

68. **CUT TO:**  
**TOM'S APARTMENT**

The phone is ringing at the cut.

We are looking at the window sill upon which the phone sits, with an empty chair facing.

Footsteps approach and Tom sits into frame and takes the phone.

Tom

Yeah?

Through the phone:

Voice

I got your message.

Tom

'Lo, Bernie, I had a dream about you the other day.

We hear Bernie laugh.

Bernie

. . . Yeah? A nightmare?

Tom

On the contrary; very sweet. I dreamt you were lying out at Miller's Crossing with your face blown off.

More laughter.

Bernie

. . . You get a kick out of that?

Tom

I was in stitches. It's Mink, isn't it?

Bernie

I came back and he wasn't happy to see me. Can you beat that, Tom? All he could talk about was how he had to skip, and how much trouble he'd be in if anyone found me at his place.

Tom

Some friend.

Bernie

Yeah. And you know what a nervous boy he was. I

figured, hell, you're a friend. Maybe you could use some insurance.

Tom

That's you to the gills, Bernie: thoughtful. You didn't happen to keep his gun, did you?

After a moment's hesitation:

. . . Didn't Mink have a .22?

Bernie

Held already ditched it. Why?

Another hesitation:

Tom

. . . After Rug?

Bernie

Yeah. . . How did you know?

Down to business:

Tom

Doesn't matter. Listen, Bernie, I've been thinking about our little deal and I've decided you can stick it in your ear.

Bernie

. . . Huh?

Tom

I figure you don't have anything on me that I don't have on you. As a matter of fact, less, since I've decided to leave town. So I'm calling your bluff.

Bernie

Wait a minute--

Tom

Shutup and let me talk. I'm pulling out of here, tomorrow morning. The only thing for you to decide is whether or not I leave behind a message for Caspar that you're still around. If you want me to keep my mouth shut, it'll cost you some dough.

Bernie

You can't--

Tom  
I figure a thousand bucks is reasonable. So I  
want two thousand.

Bernie  
In a pig's eye--

Tom  
This isn't a debate, it's instructions. I'm  
going out for a while; I'll be back here at four  
this morning. Bring me the money. If you're not  
at my place, four o'clock, with the dough,  
Caspar'll be looking for you tomorrow.

He hangs up.

**69. CUT TO:  
HALLWAY**

We are close on Tom as, in overcoat and hat, he emerges  
from his apartment and looks down at the keys in his hand.

WHAP--A fist swings into frame to connect with Tom's cheek.  
He falls back.

Three topcoated men loom over him.

First Man  
Got any money?

Tom is massaging his face.

Tom  
. . . No.

The first man nods at the other two.

First Man  
Okay.

The two men pick Tom off the floor and start to work him  
over. He doesn't resist.

The first man watches dispassionately.

. . . Third race tonight. By the finish, Tailor  
Maid had a view of the field.

He lights himself a cigarette.

. . . You oughta lay off the ponies, Tom.

The two men work in silence for a while. Tom too is silent.

Finally:

. . . Okay.

The two men back away from Tom, breathing heavily. He slides down the wall to the floor.

. . . Lazarre said he's sorry about this. It's just getting out of hand.

Tom speaks thickly, his head propped against the baseboard:

Tom

. . . Yeah.

First Man

He likes you, Tom. He said we didn't have to break anything.

Tom

Yeah. Okay. . . Tell him no hard feelings.

First Man

Christ, Tom, he knows that.

With a jerk of the head the first man signals the other two and the trio turns to leave.

First Man

. . . Take care now.

**70. CUT TO:  
DOORWAY: NIGHT**

We are looking over Tom's shoulder as he waits in the rain in front of a large oak doorway with wrought-iron fretwork. At the cut we hear chimes dying, and the door swings open.

There is a grand foyer with a parquet floor, unsittable furniture and a large chandelier. A liveried butler looks inquiringly out at Tom.

Tom

Tom Duchaisne.

Butler

Yes sir . . .

He steps back.

. . . Mr. Caspar is in the great room.

Tom is handing the butler his hat.

Tom

Swell. Can you take this?

**INT Foyer**

As Tom starts to shrug out of his coat, Caspar is crossing towards him.

Caspar

Kid, what's the rumpus?

Caspar seems as unhappy as last time we saw him.

Tom

I got news.

Caspar

Yeah, news at this end too. My stomach's been seazin' up on me.

Tom

Mink just told me that he--

This has woken Caspar up:

Caspar

You talked to Mink?!

Tom

Yeah, on the phone. Bluepoint wants you to think he's disappeared, so you can't talk to him, but he's been right here in town.

Caspar

You're sure it was Mink?

Tom shrugs.

Tom

See for yourself; he's coming to my place, four o'clock this morning.

Having handed the butler his coat and hat, Tom lets Caspar lead him towards a pair of double doors.

. . . He's afraid of a cross from Bluepoint. He told me about the fix. Says he'll sing for a couple grand skip money, tell us everyone involved. . .

71. Caspar opens one of the double doors, and we continue tracking behind the two men as they enter the trophy room. The room has the low warm light of a men's club. Outside the dark windows the rain sheets down.

Caspar sits in behind his desk and swivels away to poke morosely with a fire shovel at the blaze in the fireplace. In the foreground, back to us, Tom rests his knuckles on the desk to lean towards Caspar.

. . . But you better take care of Bluepoint right away. Mink says if he comes after us its going to be tonight.

As he looks into the fire:

Caspar  
Leo's holed up at Whiskey Nick's dump.

Tom is momentarily taken aback.

Tom  
. . . How d'you know?

A chuckle comes from behind

### **REVERSE**

On Tom. In the background, Bluepoint is walking over to the door to the room to close it.

Bluepoint  
That ain't all we know, smart guy.

He points with a nod towards the couch.

. . . Recognize your playmate?

On the couch sits Drop Johnson. Drop's face looks worked on, and is beaded over with sweat.

Having shut the door, Bluepoint is sauntering over to Tom.

. . . Yeah. You thought I'd quit.

He shakes his head.

Huh-uh. I followed you this afternoon. And I wondered why Einstein would want to talk to a gorilla. . .

He is nose to nose with Tom, smiling at him.

. . . So I grabbed the gorilla. . . And I beat it out of him.

He shrugs.

. . . Give me a big guy, every time. They crack easy. Not like you.

Tom holds Bluepoint's look.

Tom

Is there a point? Or are you just brushing up on your small talk?

Bluepoint

I like that. Cool under fire. I'm impressed.

Very quickly he delivers two slaps--forehand and backhand. Tom's head rocks but he recovers to stare back at Bluepoint.

. . . The gorilla didn't know whose stiff we found, but I can fill that in. You killed Mink, you sonofabitch.

He grabs Tom by the lapels, swings him away from the desk, and lands a punch on his chin.

Tom stumbles back.

Caspar has turned from the fireplace, watching the doings across the room.

Bluepoint moves towards Tom, breathing hard with anticipated pleasure.

. . . Come here, bum. I'm gonna send you to a deep dark place. And I'm gonna have fun doing it.

Bluepoint's hand snakes out and grabs Tom by the front of the coat, hauling him close. He slaps him savagely.

. . . It was Mink, and by God I'll hear you say it!

Tom

Is this how you taught Drop his story?

In one motion Bluepoint's hands wrap around Tom's throat choking him off. As the pressure increases, Tom, purpling, sinks to his knees.

Bluepoint

I like the way you think. Maybe when you're dead I'll cut your head off, put it on my mantle--

WHANG--a shovel blade swings into frame to smash Bluepoint in the face.

He drops.

From somewhere in the room, a scream.

Bluepoint is on his hands and knees, one hand pressed over his ruined face, blood pouring from between the fingers.

Caspar

Sonofabitch. . .

He stands over Bluepoint with the fireplace shovel.

. . . If there's one thing I can't stand, it's a double-cross artist. I had a feeling 'bout this sonofabitch--

He swings the shovel back and delivers an overhand blow to the top of Bluepoint's head.

Bluepoint drops to the floor, instantly motionless.

The scream, however, continues.

Drop Johnson, on the couch, his eyes wide, his hands spastically squeezing his knees, is looking down at Bluepoint. Drop's mouth is stretched wide. He is screaming.

Tom gets slowly to his feet.

Cascar looks at Drop.

. . . Shut it, you sonofabitch!

He is striding over to him with the shovel.

. . . I'll give you something to holler about!

Tom intercepts him.

Tom

Johnny. It's okay. Bluepoint made him. It's okay. It's not important.

Caspar is panting.

Caspar

Then have him shut it!

Drop does.

There is a beat.

Incongruously, Caspar's bellow breaks the silence:

. . . And we do the same to Mink! This very same night!

Another silence. The rain. The crackle of the fire.

Tom's tone is soothing:

Tom

. . . Johnny. We can't double-cross him. He wants to spill the whole set-up--

Caspar stares at him through glazed eyes.

Caspar

I've never let a sonofabitch walk!

Tom

You've never crossed anyone . . .

Caspar is staring at him. His eyes have lost some of their glaze.

Tom

. . . Four o'clock, my place. Mink's coming in on his own hook so I promised him the money. Don't make me out a liar--

Drop is suddenly screaming again.

Caspar looks where Drop is looking:

Bluepoint is raising his head, moaning. His face is a mask of blood. One hand gropes in his overcoat pocket for his gun.

Caspar shouts over Drop's howl as he pulls something from his desk drawer:

Caspar  
. . . Lookit this, kid.

He strides over to Bluepoint.

. . . Something I try and teach all my boys. . .

With the gun point blank against the back of Bluepoint's head, he fires.

Tom recoils.

. . . Always put one inna brain!

## 72. A CLOCK

A large wall clock. It is 3:30.

We are pulling back and down to reveal that we are inside a diner; we are isolating on a section of counter on which sits a half-empty cup of coffee and an ashtray half-filled with butts. A hand puts some change on the counter and leaves frame.

## 73. EXT DINER

As Tom pushes the door open and exits. He tucks his overcoat collar up as he walks; it is pouring rain.

Tom turns at the sound of approaching heels and recognizes Verna with some surprise. He glances up and down the street, but it is deserted. Verna doesn't seem to much notice the rain.

Tom  
'Lo, Verna. What's the rumpus.

Coldly, as they walk on together:

Verna  
I was just in the neighborhood, feeling a little daffy. What're you doing?

Tom

. . . Walking.

Verna

Don't let on more than you have to.

Tom

In the rain.

Tom glances at her.

. . . What're you doing out?

Verna

Bernie's dead, isn't he?

They walk on for a beat, Tom looking down at the sidewalk.  
Finally:

Tom

. . . What makes you think that?

Verna

That's no answer.

Tom again glances around, and escorts Verna into a dark doorway alcove. It is very small; they have to crowd into each other to stay out of the rain. Water drops from the brim of Tom's fedora. He studies her for a beat.

Tom

I can't tell you anything yet.

Verna

Nobody cares, do they? His friends didn't really like him.

Tom shrugs.

Tom

He didn't like his friends.

Verna

You're a sonofabitch, Tom. You're someone to talk. You got me to tell you where he was and then you killed him.

She is raising a gun into frame: She presses it into his stomach.

Tom stiffens but continues to stare at her calmly.

. . . Tell me why. What was in it for you?

Tom

Nothing for me.

Verna

Then why?

Tom

. . . Giving up Bernie was the only way I could see to straighten things out for Leo.

Verna

You said you didn't care about Leo.

Tom

I said we were through. It's not the same thing.

Verna looks at him.

Verna

I don't understand. I don't care. I don't care what reason you had or thought you had.

She raises the gun and presses its barrel into the underside of Tom's chin. Tom stiffens but remains calm.

Tom

. . . He's still alive.

Verna stares at him.

Verna

You expect me to believe you?

Tom

. . . No.

Verna

That's you all over, Tom. A lie and no heart.

Verna pulls back the hammer. There is a long beat.

Verna's eyes widen, locked on Tom's.

Tom returns her look; his is sympathetic.

Verna starts trembling.

Tom's tone is soft, understanding. It's the first time we have ever seen compassion from him.

Tom

. . . It isn't easy, is it Verna?

She abruptly lurches away and staggers a couple of paces onto the sidewalk in the rain. She hugs a lamppost for support. She is staring down at the street, still trembling.

Tom walks up behind her and rests a hand on her shoulder.

. . . Are you all right?

She doesn't look around. After a moment:

Verna

. . . I don't know how you did it.

She shrugs off his hand and stumbles off down the street.

Tom watches her disappear into the rain.

**74. CUT TO:  
TREE LIMBS**

Night, but sometime later--it has stopped raining. The branches groan in the wind. As they sway, streetlight glitters off the leaves, still wet with rain..

We are booming down to reveal that we are in front of Tom's building, its windows dark. During the boom we hear the rumble of an approaching car and the hiss of its tires on wet asphalt.

The boom down ends as the car pulls into frame to stop at the curb with the camera framed on the driver's window. The driver has a small bandage on his left cheek. We hear Caspar's voice as we hear him getting out the back:

Caspar

Ya put the razor in cold water, not hot--'cause metal does what in cold?

Driver

I dunno, Johnny.

We hear the back door slam and Caspar appears in the front passenger window.

. . . 'Ats what I'm tellin' ya. It contracts.

'At way you get a first class shave.

Driver

Okay, Johnny.

As Caspar walks off the driver slouches back, pulls his fedora over his eyes and folds his arms across his chest. A back enters frame in the foreground.

Tom's Voice:

'Lo, Sal. You can dangle.

The driver looks up, startled.

Driver

'Lo, Tom. You sure? You don't look so hot.

We still don't see Tom's face.

Tom

I'm okay. Go ahead, I'll drive him home.

The driver shrugs.

## **REVERSE**

Wider, from the other side of the car, as the car pulls away.

Tom walks into the foreground, toward his house; we tilt up to hold him.

The low-angle shows us the tree behind Tom, its branches still creaking in the wind.

Crack crack--we hear two gunshots from inside the house.

Tom stops momentarily in close shot, looking up, and then continues on out of frame.

## **75. OVER TOM'S SHOULDER**

We follow him as he walks into the building and slowly down the first-floor hall.

The hallway is quiet except for a light moaning wind.

Beyond Tom we see the door to the first-floor apartment crack open a slit. Hissing:

Voice

Mr. Duchaisne. . .

The door opens wider. Mrs. Zarpmas, wearing a housecoat, her gray hair down in braids, sticks her head out.

. . . There were shots.

Tom looks up towards the staircase, then back at Mrs. Zarpas.

Tom

Go down to the drugstore. Call the police.

She stares at him, nods. As she drapes on a raincoat:

Mrs. Zarpas

Yes, Mr. Duchaisne.

Tom

You better stay there til the officers arrive.

Mrs. Zarpas

Yes . . .

She pauses.

. . . Will the cats be all right here?

Tom stares at her.

Finally, he nods.

Tom

. . . They'll be fine.

Mrs. Zarpas returns his dazed nod, and shuffles away.

So far, upstairs, all is quiet.

#### **PULLING TOM**

As he starts slowly towards the staircase.

#### **TOM'S POV TRACKING FORWARD**

A small black object on the staircase--an upside-down fedora. Blood drips with a hollow rattle down onto a step, a couple steps above the hat.

**PULLING TOM**

He looks up.

**POV**

A head sticks through the balusters of the second story landing return. The body is on its back; the head lolls back over the tip of the landing down towards the staircase.

Our climbing low angle shows us mostly the back of the head. The body's far shoulder has knocked out a baluster whose splintered bottom juts down towards the stairs.

**PULLING TOM**

Still climbing, looking at the body.

**HIS POV**

Climbing and panning as we draw even with the head.

It is Caspar. Blood has been expelled through his nostrils over his mouth and chin. His face is deep red. His eyes stare glassily at Tom.

**PULLING TOM**

As he reaches the top of the stairs and swings around to face along the landing. We hear a chuckle, close by. Wind is groaning through the hallway.

**POV**

In the middle foreground Caspar lies on the floor; beyond him, Bernie leans against the doorframe in Tom's open doorway, smiling, his arms folded over his chest.

The balusters stretch away in a regular line, throwing vertical shadows upwards against the opposite wall.

Bernie

I get it. You set me up.

Tom leans against the wall and looks morosely down at

Caspar.

Bernie

. . . Anything to avoid a little dirty work  
yourself, huh?

Tom doesn't answer.

. . . How'd you know held get it and not me? Or  
didn't you care?

Tom shrugs, still staring down at Caspar.

Tom

I figured you'd come early, and be looking for  
blood. He wouldn't, so you'd likely have the  
drop on him.

Bernie takes his gun out of his overcoat packet and  
saunters over.

Bernie

You're a sonofabitch, Tom. I like the way you  
think. You're right, the bonehead never knew  
what hit him.

He looks down at Caspar, unable to suppress a smile.

. . . But if you knew I'd come looking to kill  
you, how do you know I won't still?

Tom shrugs again.

Tom

Nothing in it for you, now. With him dead we got  
nothing on each other. Let me have the gun.

Bernie

Why?

Tom jerks his head towards Caspar.

Tom

Pin this on Bluepoint. Neither of us wants him  
walking around after this.

Bernie shakes his head.

Bernie

The cops'll be Leo's now. They won't care what  
they hang Bluepoint for.

Tom shrugs again.

Tom

I guess that's so. If you don't mind keeping the gun that killed Caspar. And Mink.

He stoops down over Caspar's body and starts feeling through Caspar's pockets, looking for something.

. . . Why did Mink shoot Rug, anyway?

Bernie is walking towards him, emptying the bullets from his gun.

Bernie

I dunno, it was just a mix-up. Here.

Tom looks back over his shoulder. Bernie hands him the gun, which Tom slips into his overcoat pocket.

. . . So you're gonna say Bluepoint did this?

As he goes back to the body:

Tom

Mink thought Rug was tailing him?

He finds Caspar's gun and sets it on the floor, but keeps looking.

Bernie

Yeah yeah, you know Mink. Hysterical. Skin full of hop, head full of bogeymen. Comes home crying one day, said he had to pop a guy, one of Bluepoint's spies.

Tom

Rug was following Verna, not Mink. Mink just happened to be with her.

He has found a wallet and is thumbing through it.

Bernie

Yeah. Funny, ain't it? But you know, Mink was terrified Bluepoint'd find out me and him were jungled up together.

Tom has taken out the money, rifles it, and replaces the wallet.

Tom

And I'll bet you'd kept him plenty worried about

that, to keep him under your thumb.

Bernie

Yeah, so what . . .

Bernie is peering over Tom's shoulder at the money.

. . . Scratch, huh? A little bonus?

Tom straightens up, Caspar's gun in hand.

Tom

Why did Mink take Rug's hair?

Bernie shrugs.

Bernie

Beats me, the kid was dizzy. Fifty-fifty on the dough? Or maybe I should get a little more, since I did the deed.

Tom is stuffing the money into his pocket.

. . . Okay, you keep it. I want you to have it.

Tom

Bernie. . .

He nods towards Caspar's body.

. . . We can't hang this on Bluepoint.

Bernie

Huh? Why not?

Tom

Bluepoint's already dead, halfway 'cross town.

Bernie's smile is fading.

Bernie

What the hell are you talking about?

Tom

Bluepoint's dead. It's gotta be you. I mean hell, it's your gun.

Alarm is beginning to rise:

Bernie

What is this! What the hell are you talking about! . . .

He looks down at Caspar and then back at Tom.

. . . You took my gun! Just your word against mine!

Tom pops the chamber of Caspar's gun, glances in, and snaps it shut.

Tom  
Not necessarily.

Bernie's eyes widen.

Bernie  
Are you crazy! We're square! You said it yourself! We got nothing on each other!

Tom  
Yup.

Bernie fights against hysteria:

Bernie  
So what's in it for you?! There's no angle! You can't just shoot me, like that!

He sinks to his knees, his voice rising.

. . . Jesus Christ! It don't make sense! Tommy! Look in your heart!

Tom  
What heart.

BANG--Bernie splays backwards from the knees, a bullet drilled neatly through his forehead.

Tom drops the gun by Caspar's body.

Unpocketing Bernie's gun, Tom goes over to his corpse and drops it there.

We pan with Tom's legs to bring his doorway into view as he walks into his apartment, to the window chair in the background, and sits with his back to us.

The windows show daylight breaking. Far away a clock strikes the quarter hour.

Tom is picking up the phone and dialing. Waiting for an answer, he reaches over to turn off the feeble yellow lamp

burning chairside.

As we start to FADE OUT, we can hear Tom talking into the phone:

Tom  
. . . Tony? Tom. Tell Lazarre I've got his money. . . Yeah, all of it. And I want to place a bet on tonight's fight. . .

**A BEAT OF BLACK**

**76. CUT TO:  
THE HALLWAY**

Of Leo's club, leading to his office.

We are tracking over Tom's shoulder as he walks down the hall, led by Dead Terry.

Terry  
They set you up downstairs?

Tom  
How's that?

Terry  
Hootch? Whatever?

Tom gestures with the drink he is carrying. Its ice cubes clink.

. . . Well thanks for coming, Tom. Leo's real anxious to see you. . .

Tom  
Yeah. I happened to be near.

We can hear muffled bellowing coming from Leo's office, growing louder as we approach.

Terry seems embarrassed:

Terry  
Actually. . . this might not be the best time. . .

They have pulled up in front of the closed door to Leo's office.

Leo's bellowing, inside, abates for a moment. We can hear

another voice, muffled so that we don't hear words, but only the voice's plaintive quality.

Leo's bellowing cuts it short.

Tom  
. . . Who's he got in there?

Terry  
O'Gar and the mayor.

As he leaves frame:

Tom  
I'll try again.

Terry calls after him:

Terry  
I'll tell him you stopped by.

## 77. DOWNSTATRS

Pulling Tom as he walks across the gambling floor, drink still in hand.

Behind him we can see workmen busily repairing the damage done to the club in the police raid.

Halfway across the floor Tom stiffens and slows, seeing something.

Verna is entering the club.

The two meet.

Tom  
'Lo, Verna.

Verna  
See Leo?

They both lean against a counterstop and look out at the floor.

Tom  
He was busy.

Verna  
You should see him. He has something to tell

you.

Tom  
Maybe I'll run into him.

Verna  
Bernie's funeral is tomorrow. You could stop by.

Tom  
Maybe.

Verna  
. . . Leo has something to tell you.

Tom  
So you said.

There is a silent beat. Verna scowls.

Verna  
. . . Tell me something, Tom. Why didn't you tell me what was going on? I thought he was dead, and you never--

Tom  
There was no point in telling you. It could only have queered things if it had gotten out--

Verna  
Jesus, Tom! You don't just talk to people for the play it gives you or doesn't give you! I suffered, you no-heart son of a bitch!

Tom lets this drift.

Verna tries to compose herself.

. . . I'm sorry. It's just that things might've been different. With us. If I'd known that you hadn't. . . done anything to him. . .

Tom  
You know now.

Verna looks at him intently.

Verna  
What happened that night?

Tom still looks at her evenly.

Tom

I went to a bar. Passed out. When I got back to my place they were both dead.

Verna studies him.

Verna  
. . . Passed out, huh?

Tom  
Yeah.

She looks at him a beat more, then out at the floor.

Verna  
It's funny. . . I've never even seen you sleep--  
though you told me once about a dream you had.

Tom  
Maybe I lied.

WHAP! Verna slaps him hard. His head rocks under the blow.

Verna  
You've never been straight with me about anything! You are a sonofabitch!

She stalks off.

Tom watches her go.

He raises the drink and rolls it across his slapped cheek.

The ice cubes clink.

## 78. CEMETARY

An small old marble orchard set on a hilltop cleared against the woods. Stars of David adorn the headstones; in the foreground Bernie's funeral is ending. Present is a rabbi, just finishing the chanting of the liturgy, Verna, and Leo.

In the background, on the road at the foot of the hill, Tom is emerging from a taxi. It rolls away as he starts up the hill.

Just as he arrives, Leo and Verna turn to leave.

Tom takes in the scene.

Tom

Big turnout.

Verna

Drop dead.

She stalks off, leaving Leo and Tom alone. Leo takes off his yarmulke and fiddles with it uncomfortably. The two men start walking.

Leo

. . . She's under a lot of strain.

Tom

Well, at least she didn't hit me.

Leo chuckles.

They walk on.

Leo

Tommy, I'm glad you came. . .

Tom

She's taking the car.

Leo

Huh?

Leo looks up.

Verna is getting into the elegant black touring-car that waits at the bottom of the hill. It pulls away.

Leo looks at Tom.

. . . I guess we're walking.

Tom

I guess we are.

They walk in silence for a beat.

Leo

. . . We're getting married.

Tom stiffens. He brings out:

Tom

. . . Congratulations, Leo.

Leo too is uncomfortable.

Leo

The funny thing is. . . She asked me. To tie the knot. I guess you're not supposed to say that.

Tom

It doesn't matter. Congratulations.

Leo

Thanks. . . Hell, Tom! Why didn't you tell me what you were up to?! I thought you'd really gone over--not that I didn't deserve it. But you could have told me.

Tom

Telling you could only've queered things if it had. . .

Tom cuts himself off and walks in silence for a moment.

. . . There just wasn't any point.

Leo wants to be encouraging. He nods.

Leo

I can see that. Well. It was a smart play, all around. I guess you know I'm grateful.

Tom

No need.

Leo is grinning again.

Leo

I guess you picked that fight with me just to tuck yourself in with Caspar.

Tom

I dunno. Do you always know why you do things, Leo?

Leo greets this with a puzzled Smile.

Leo

Course I do.

He nods to himself.

. . . It was a smart play.

They walk on.

Tom

You'll do fine.

Leo stops, grabs Tom's arm, and the words come cut in a rush:

Leo

. . . Jesus, Tom! I'd give anything if you'd work for me again! I know I've made some bonehead plays! I know I can be pig-headed but, damnit, so can you! I need your help, and things can be like they were, I know it! I just know it! As for you and Verna--well I understand, you're both young, and--well, damnit, Tom, I forgive you!

Tom instantly bristles. For the first time, his tone is sharp:

Tom

I didn't ask for that and I don't want it.

The two men stare at each other--Tom's look angry; Leo's, distraught.

Tom's look softens.

. . . Goodbye, Leo.

Leo still stares at him, waiting for something else.

When nothing is forthcoming he turns and walks away.

Tom watches him go. He unpockets a flask and raises it to his lips.

Behind him a tree sighs in the wind.

**FADE OUT**