

nerdland

by Andrew Kevin Walker

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3rdDRAFT

EXT. HOLLYWOOD -- OVERVIEW -- MORNING

Sprawled out and spread wide like the whore that she is, Los Angeles welcomes another hazy dawn. And in the northern hills, we find that all-too-familiar landmark...but, wait...

The world-famous "**HOLLYWOOD**" **SIGN** is hidden beneath massive DROP CLOTHS of CANVAS. Entirely shrouded.

CUT TO:

EXT. "LOS FELIZ CONTINENTAL TOWNHOMES" -- MORNING

Two-story-ugly-pink-stucco APARTMENTS. Parking underneath.

INT. TOWNHOUSE, ELLIOT'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

On TV: a video-game KARATE MAN, in bloodied gi, is stuck in fight mode, KICKING and KARATE CHOPPING repeatedly in an exact pattern, slaughtering HUMAN and MONSTER ATTACKERS from both sides -- BURSTING heads and CHOPPING OFF limbs.

In the BED, **ELLIOT**, 29, is asleep, fully dressed, SNORING, with his face pressed against his VIDEO CONTROLLER.

JOHN, 29, comes to the doorway, perturbed. A bit of a dandy, the bespectacled John is nicely dressed in slacks and dress shirt, wearing an ever-present BOW TIE.

JOHN
Wake up! You'll sleep the day away!

Elliot SNORTS awake, sitting up, disheveled. The joystick's BUTTONS have left deep, red indentations in his face.

ELLIOT
Morning, John.

JOHN
Good morning, Elliot.

On TV: KARATE MAN stops defending himself and is violently torn to gory pieces by his ATTACKERS. "GAME OVER."

Elliot lumbers from bed, kicking over empty "BrewMeister" BEER CANS on the CLOTHING and COMIC BOOK strewn floor. He BOWS to Karate Man, then shuffles towards the BATHROOM.

IN THE BATHROOM

Elliot faces his reflection, as always, with resignation.

ELLIOT
Not very handsome, are you? Oh, well. What can you do about it? Absolutely nothing.

CONTINUED

He turns on a MINI (TUBE) TV, goes to fill the TUB, pouring in a frothing helping of "Bubble Queen" BUBBLE BATH. The TV shows NEWS FOOTAGE of the shrouded HOLLYWOOD SIGN...

ANCHORMAN ERIC (V.O.)
(from TV)
...has Tinseltown literally on the edge of its seat. Tonight, at long last, the City of Los Angeles and corporate sponsor, The Fluffy-Time Biscuit Company, will finally unveil the new, improved Hollywood Sign!

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S KITCHENETTE -- MORNING

John pours hot TEA into a dainty TEA CUP.
Elliot pours a CAN of "Guzzle Cola" into a promotional MUG that says, "Pacific Energy Co.; Energy is Your Friend."

John sips, pinkie raised. Elliot swills, bleary-eyed, wears a colorful, polyester "VideoMania" UNIFORM + VISOR-CAP.

ELLIOT
Should we try to meet up with the girls for lunch?

JOHN
Not a bad idea. Oh, and by the way, you might want to wish me luck today.

ELLIOT
Good luck.

Elliot crosses to exit. John frowns, frustrated, follows.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

These two chumps fell for it all: NEON CLOCK, LAVA LAMP, GUMBALL MACHINE. If they could've afforded it, they'd have the refurbished slot machine. Elliot sits, points the REMOTE at the TV, flipping endless CHANNELS, giving a glimpse of a VAST WASTELAND of ERECTION MEDICATION COMMERCIALS, BLOOPERS and violent GAFFES, and GAME SHOWS...

ON ONE CHANNEL: FIVE freaky, rotund, fuzzy COSTUMED CHARACTERS, called THE BLOOPS, (Red Bloop, Blue Bloop, Green Bloop, Orange Bloop and Pink Bloop) DANCE and SING...

THE BLOOPS (from TV)
(singing)
...Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop...!
Bloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop...!

ELLIOT
God, I hate The Bloops! They're everywhere! Freaking Bloops!
(more)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT (CONT.)

(switching)

Hey, don't forget, the Celebrity Jousting Tournament pay-per-view is tonight. Fifty bucks.

JOHN

Don't you want to know *why* you're wishing me luck today?

ELLIOT

Okay, sure. Why?

JOHN

Because... I happen to have a very important meeting this afternoon, with Brett Anderson.

ELLIOT

What? Brett Anderson? The Brett Anderson, the famous actor?! The star of "Murder Games," "Middle Name: Danger," and "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Murder?" Seriously?

JOHN

Could be our ticket to the Big Time.
(looks at his WATCH)
Oh! Better not keep him waiting.

ELLIOT

Alright, you go knock 'em dead, Mr. Fancy Pants. I'm going to get some writing done before my shift...

Elliot flips open his old, thick LAPTOP on the COFFEE TABLE.

JOHN

Ah, slave to a fickle muse, eh? I leave you to it, my friend.

With a wave and a wink, John goes out the FRONT DOOR.
Elliot faces his laptop, wiggles his fingers. He sighs.

ELLIOT

The blank screen. Oh, the agony of spinning yarns from nothing but pure imagination. And for what...? Will anyone ever begin to appreciate my genius?!

(TYPES + reads; actually pronounces the word: "int")
"'INT!' STRIP CLUB! DAY! Naked ladies gyrate. Their huge boobs are bouncing..."

(more)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT (CONT.)

(retyping)

No. No. "Their bosoms..." Yes.
Much better. Classier.

(typing on)

"Their bosoms... bounce like great,
jiggly melons. An angry OLD MAN
enters the club. This is RIP VAN
WINKLE. Van Winkle wears olden-time
clothing and a sleeping cap. His
long white beard reaches to the
floor. He brandishes a large
BLUNDERBUSS. *'What kind of filthy,
sinful, world have I awakened to?'*
Van Winkle opens fire! BOOM! BOOM!"

(sits back, exhausted)

Whew! That's enough for today.
Ladies and gentlemen, the muse has
left the building!

Pleased, Elliot rises and, WHISTLING a tune, crosses to a
CLOSET. He takes out a BIKE PUMP and a deflated, naked
INFLATABLE WOMAN. Elliot unfurls the sex doll, then matter-
of-factly works the plunger up and down...

ELLIOT

Won't... be long... now... Mon Petite
Femme Inflatable...

She fills quickly, with her wide eyes and O-shaped mouth.

ELLIOT

No time for romance today, I'm
afraid, it'll just have to be --

DOORBELL RINGS. Elliot's miffed.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(through the door)

Hello? Elliot? It's Mrs. McCullers,
from next door. John said you're
home. I've baked you a cake.

ELLIOT

(still PUMPING)

You... a cake? Um, I'm a bit...
indisposed at the moment, Mrs.
McCullers. Can you leave it there?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(pause)

Birds will get it.

Exasperated, Elliot quickly shoves the inflated Love Doll in
the closet. He answers the door -- putting the CHAIN on.
MRS McCULLERS is a kindly older lady, holding a CAKE.

CONTINUED

MRS McCULLERS
For my favorite tenants!

ELLIOT
You shouldn't have, really. It's
just... I'm right in the middle of
one of my model kits.

MRS McCULLERS
Another? Goodness gracious, how many
model airplanes can one boy build?

ELLIOT
You'd be surprised.

Elliot glances back to see...
The CLOSET DOOR falls OPEN... Inflatable Woman falls out!

Elliot's alarmed, presses closer to the door, sweating.

ELLIOT
Um, anyhow, I... should probably...

MRS McCULLERS
Of course. Far be it for me to come
between a boy and his enthusiasms.
Here you are...

She offers the cake. Elliot sweats, then... reaches out the
too-narrow opening of the chained door, GRABS and forcibly
PULLS the cake in -- mauling the cake! Mrs. McCullers GASPS.

ELLIOT
Mmmmmmm-mm! Looks scrumptious!
Thank you. Have a nice day.

Elliot KICKS the door closed in her face, drops the cake,
crosses quickly to pick up Inflatable Woman, shaking her.

ELLIOT
Naughty little minx! Trying to
embarrass me! Why, I ought to --
Awwwwwww... what am I saying? I can
never stay mad at you.

There's a KNOCK and the FRONT DOOR OPENS, chain on...

MRS McCULLERS
(peering in)
One more thing, Elliot. I can't
remember if your favorite cookies are
chocolate chip or --

The smile plummets from Mrs. McCuller's wide-eyed face.

Elliot stands looking over, frozen, mouth agape.

CONTINUED

His tightening grip POPS the Inflatable Woman's arm --
PPPPPPPPPTTTT!! -- and she DEFLATES to complete flaccidity!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE, PRESS JUNKET -- MORNING

Ultra-handsome BRETT ANDERSON shakes hands with square-jawed, well-dressed REPORTER JESS.

REPORTER JESS
Thanks for the interview, Brett.
There's no greater actor in the world
than you. I mean that sincerely.

BRETT
Always a pleasure, my friend.

REPORTER JESS
We should grab lunch sometime.

BRETT
Absolutely not.

Reporter's lead away by a P.R. PERSON. Brett goes back to sit in his DIRECTOR'S CHAIR beside the easel-displayed MOVIE POSTER for "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Murder!", which shows a FIST, a flattened HAND, a HAND with TWO FINGERS extended, and a HAND brandishing a GUN. A FEMALE PUBLICIST leads a very nervous John, wearing a PRESS PASS, over to a CHAIR.

PUBLICIST
Uh, Brett...this is John Truman.

BRETT
Nice to meet you.

John shakes hands, SNORTS nervously, acutely aware of his sweaty armpits. Brett's wary, wipes his palm on his pants.

PUBLICIST
Five minutes, Mr. Truman.

The publicist retreats to watch from nearby. John fumbles as he tries to organize CLIPBOARD, PENS and MANILA FOLDER.

JOHN
Let's get down to business then,
shall we... uh, let me see here...
(studies wrinkled paper)
Question One. When you yourself go
to the movies, Mr. Anderson... or,
Brett... may I call you Brett...?

BRETT
I'd prefer you didn't.

CONTINUED

JOHN

I see. Well, as I was saying, when you yourself attend a moving picture, what would you say is your favorite fountain drink?

BRETT

Pardon me?

JOHN

Which beverage do you find most refreshing, as a rule of thumb?

BRETT

I'm... I'm not sure what this has to do with my new movie, "Rock, Paper, Scissors, Murder..."

(glances to publicist)

But if you have any questions about this gripping, psychological thriller, I'll be glad to answer them.

JOHN

Of course. Moving on.

(sweats, refers to NOTES)

Question Two. As both an artist and as an aficionado of the cinema... do you prefer your popcorn with or without butter-flavored topping?

PUBLICIST

Mr. Truman, exactly which publication do you represent?

JOHN

I am employed by "Concessionaire Monthly; The Magazine of the Theatrical Food Service Industry."

PUBLICIST

You'd better come with me...

JOHN

Okay... but if I could have just one more moment, Brett. I've got a screenplay you'd be perfect for...

BRETT

Oh, God...

JOHN

Now, I didn't write it. My roommate Elliot did. It's a real page-turner.

John pulls out a thick SCREENPLAY. Brett looks to Publicist, who speaks urgently into a WALKIE-TALKIE.

CONTINUED

JOHN

A tad long at 400 pages, admittedly,
but dramatic and touching. Laugh-out-
loud funny also; funny yet real.
It's about a U.F.O investigator,
played by you, who -- Spoiler
Alert -- falls in love with the alien
he's chasing after...

PUBLICIST

Mr. Truman, you must leave.

JOHN

Yes, except... Brett, I'm not only a
reporter, I'm a fellow actor...
(loud, SNORTING LAUGH)
I'm sorry. I'm so nervous. You see,
I am passionate about my craft... our
craft! There's a part in the script;
the investigator's sceptical sidekick.

John pulls out 8"by10" HEADSHOTS, dropping many...

JOHN

Oops! I'll get those...

John SQUATS to gather the GLOSSIES which show him costumed;
in a TUXEDO, dressed as a DOCTOR, and a sad CLOWN in make-up.

JOHN

These headshots'll give you an idea
of my range. Listen, I have to ask;
how do you get your teeth so white?

Still it full squat, John SPLITS the SEAT of his PANTS!

JOHN

...oh...

Then, John SPLITS his UNDERPANTS as well!!

JOHN

OH!

2 SECURITY MEN arrive to LIFT John bodily, dragging him off.

JOHN

Okay...thank you, Brett! My number's
in with the materials! Call anytime!

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOUSE, UNDERGROUND GARAGE -- MORNING

John's run-down CAR enters as the GATE creaks open.
Elliot's crappy CAR arrives to follow. They tandem park
between concrete pillars. John gets out, dejected.

CONTINUED

JOHN ELLIOT

I got fired. Me too! I got fired. Me too!

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- MORNING

ELLIOT
Who knows? That sadistic son-of-a-bitch has had me in his cross-hairs since day one! Could've been any of a hundred imagined transgressions...

ELLIOT
LUNCH BREAK!! Ever heard of it?!

FLASHBACK -- INT. VIDEO STORE, ADULT SECTION -- DAY

At the SWINGING DOOR entrance to "ADULT VIDEOS," it's "Over 21 ONLY!" allowed inside. A VOICE is HEARD from OFFSCREEN.

VIDEO STORE BOSS (O.S.)
Elliot! Elliot! Where are you?!

Elliot emerges, a VIDEO in one hand and PRICE GUN in the other, oblivious to the full erection BULGE in his pants.

ELLIOT
Hell-oooo, present and accounted for!

BACK IN JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION

ELLIOT
Dude, I've been fired from a video store, a bowling alley, a comic book shop and an ice cream parlor. I'm running out of dream jobs.

The car stops at a RED LIGHT. John and Elliot look up...

OUTSIDE, a huge BILLBOARD above: **BUY MORE CONSUMER PRODUCTS.**

John and Elliot stare blankly. LIGHT CHANGES. John drives.

JOHN
So, where do you want to eat?

ELLIOT
You decide, because every time I pick it, you don't like the place I pick, so...

JOHN
No, go on. I'll settle for anything.

ELLIOT
OK. Um, how about Hamburger Junction?

JOHN
Seriously?! Hamburger Junction? We always eat at Hamburger Junction! I'm sick to death of Hamburger Junction!

ELLIOT
Alright, alright. Uh... what about... what about Der Noodle?

JOHN
We had German yesterday.

ELLIOT
Pluckey's Chicken?

CONTINUED

JOHN
No.

ELLIOT
SnackWorld?

JOHN
Nah.

ELLIOT
Pancake Brothers?

JOHN
No.

ELLIOT
Just Soup?

JOHN
Negative.

ELLIOT
Finger Food Connection: Where Good
Food is Always at Your Fingertips?

JOHN
No.

ELLIOT
Jim Dandy's?

JOHN
No.

ELLIOT
B.J. O'Williedoodle's?

JOHN
I got diarrhea last time.

ELLIOT
Oh yeah, I forgot. The Jolly Onion?

JOHN
Nope.

ELLIOT
Fondue Hut? Chop Chop Chinese?
Unidentified Flying Pizza?

JOHN
Nope, nope, nope.

ELLIOT
Lasagna Barn? The Italian Goose?
Fiddlesticks?

CONTINUED

JOHN

What was that place... the name of that place we went that one time...?

ELLIOT

The Hail Caesar Salad Bar and MicroBrewery.

JOHN

Awww, come on, it's... it's on the tip of my tongue...

ELLIOT

The Dutch Omelette?

JOHN

Hey, that sounds interesting. Where is that, Burbank? Glendale?

ELLIOT

I... made that one up.

CUT TO:

INT. HAMBURGER JUNCTION FAMILY RESTAURANT -- DAY

An overly made-up WAITRESS in a railway CONDUCTOR'S HAT and OVERALLS comes to John and Elliot's booth.

WAITRESS

Welcome to Hamburger Junction.

JOHN

We'll need another minute, thanks.

Elliot pulls "Help Wanted" from the LOS ANGELES CHRONICLE. John takes the rest of the paper. (There's a FRONT PAGE PHOTO of the veiled HOLLYWOOD SIGN.)

JOHN

You realize, we're both 30 in the next few months. Do you know how old 30 is in Hollywood? Eight years out of film school, we're still chasing the same ridiculous pipe-dreams.

ELLIOT

You can't give up. You... you just have to believe in yourself.

JOHN

Please. That's something your parents tell you, because if you think you can become the President one day, maybe you won't be a drug-dealer or pimp.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

Every time there's the slightest setback, you get like this. Didn't your acting instructor say that there was absolutely nothing he could teach you... isn't that so... ?

(off John's dubious nod)

Damn right he did! And didn't he practically throw you out of class that day? It was his way of saying: "Go! Get out! Get out there and start acting!"

John again reluctantly nods, breaking a smile.

JOHN

Yeah. And your screenwriting teacher... he did call you his greatest student. He spent those all those long hours working with you... nights at his condo, on his own time.

ELLIOT

Yep.

JOHN

He'd still be mentoring you to this very day, if he hadn't been jailed for providing alcohol to minors.

ELLIOT

Exactly. Talent is not the problem. We've got assloads of talent.

JOHN

Again, your inimitable way with words.

ELLIOT

What we need is opportunity. We're here; here we are! Someone's just got to discover us, is all.

JOHN

Easier said than done.

(sighs, reads NEWSPAPER)

Hmm. Says... according to scientific projections, by the year 2025, all of the United States' fresh water will have to be imported from China.

ELLIOT

Hey, look at this...

(reading NEWSPAPER)

Remember that lumberjack, last year, who accidentally cut off his leg with a chain saw?

CONTINUED

JOHN

Sure. He carried it 5 miles back to the logging camp so doctors could reattach it. Used his own severed limb to fight off a mountain lion.

ELLIOT

He's on a sold-out, 30-city motivational-speaking tour...

JOHN

Yeah, I heard. What's it called again...?

ELLIOT

"Hopping Up the Road to Success."

JOHN

Right. He's made a fortune. Kind of makes you think, doesn't it?

ELLIOT

Not really. What do you mean?

JOHN

What will it really take for us to get a little face time with America? I mean, nowadays, everyone's posting videos online of their... their dog farting, or their kid burping...

ELLIOT

I love the one where the burping kid's riding the farting dog.

JOHN

Millions of folk around the world are on the internet watching all those infantile videos, on **LOLWTFtube** and **Whoopseedoopsee.com**. They'll watch anything, so long as it's set to a catchy song...

QUICK INSERT -- JOHN AND ELLIOT INTERNET VIDEO SHORT

INTERNET FOOTAGE shows John and Elliot, in YELLOW JUMP-SUITS, hopping on POGO-STICKS to Hot Butter's "POPCORN."

BACK TO SCENE -- IN HAMBURGER JUNCTION

ELLIOT

Well, almost anything.

JOHN

Okay, sure we've uploaded our fair share of performance pieces...

QUICK INSERTS -- JOHN AND ELLIOT INTERNET SHORTS

More glimpses of their less-than-viral VIDEOS...

-John stands dramatically lit, in cobbled together HAMLET COSTUME, earnestly acting under a super-imposed TITLE CARD: "Truman St. Johns, ACTOR. 323-555-2131."

JOHN
Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him,
Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest...

He holds up Yorick's "SKULL," which is a MELON with a poorly drawn SKULL FACE scrawled onto it.

-In ANOTHER CLIP, John and Elliot wear baggy TRACK SUITS and sideways BALL CAPS, making painful attempts to BREAK DANCE.

-Lastly, John, in rented HAMBURGER COSTUME, engages in an exaggerated FIST-FIGHT with Elliot in a HOT DOG COSTUME.

BACK TO SCENE -- IN HAMBURGER JUNCTION

ELLIOT
More than our fair share maybe...
judging by the cease-and-desist
letter LOLWTFtube sent us.

JOHN
What's been the missing element in
everything we've attempted so far?

ELLIOT
Success?

JOHN
Newsworthiness.
(holds up NEWSPAPER)
TV and movie stars aren't enough
anymore. People love this kind of
stuff because they think, "Maybe I'm
next." Maybe I'll fend off a
criminal, or win the lottery, or have
a single engine plane crash in my
backyard.

ELLIOT
Okay, so... how do we get a piece of
the action?

JOHN
If we were to give the celebrity-
obsessed masses something really
worth watching, we'd also be
launching our careers, wouldn't we?
So, why not? Why not us? And I mean
today, not tomorrow.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

Today, yeah.

JOHN

Let's become common men in uncommon circumstances. Let's go be heroes.

John offers his hand...

JOHN

What do you say; are you with me...?

Elliot smiles, reaches to firmly CLASP John's hand!

ELLIOT

Count me in!

JOHN

Today we make our own opportunities!

ELLIOT

It's a new beginning!

JOHN

A bold adventure!

The glum WAITRESS returns.

WAITRESS

Ready to order?

John and Elliot look up, hands still dramatically clasped.

JOHN

I'll have the Caboose Burger with cheese and the Wagon Wheel Fries!

ELLIOT

I'll have the same! No pickles!

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET ALLEYWAY -- DAY

THROUGH A VIDEO CAMERA:

Elliot steps INTO FRAME, against a brick wall background, neatening his hair as he addresses the CAMERA...

ELLIOT

(nervous, to camera)

Hello, America. Here we are behind Hinkley's Shop-O-Mart. My name is Elliot Alexander, and this...

Elliot steps away, then returns INTO FRAME, pulling a dirty, bleary, scraggle-haired HOMELESS MAN with him.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
...is Archie.

ARCHIE
Hellooo America!

Archie's unsteady, seems volatile, clutches fortified WINE.

IN THE ALLEY

John watches through a rather outdatedly LARGE VIDEO CAMERA on its TRIPOD, videotaping Elliot and Archie...

ELLIOT
And, if I may ask, what is your last name, Archie?

ARCHIE
Good question.

Elliot waits, then realizes that's Archie's full answer.

ELLIOT
Oooo-kay. Terrific. And how long have you been a hobo?

ARCHIE
What's that?

John quickly steps from behind the camera, motioning...

JOHN
Elliot!
(pig Latin)
Icks-nay on the obo-hey!

Elliot just looks confused, so John steps forward...

THROUGH THE VIDEO CAMERA:

John ENTERS FRAME, grinning.

JOHN
(to camera)
Yes, greetings, Internet Enthusiasts. John Truman here. Elliot and I are proud to announce that this is Archie's lucky day! Because, no longer will Archie have to search in these nearby dumpsters for his next meal...

ARCHIE
Won't I?

CONTINUED

JOHN

No longer will Archie have to sleep
in the gutter, like a common animal.

ARCHIE

What are you saying? Who are you
guys, anyway?

JOHN

Pardon me, if you'd let me finish...

ARCHIE

What the devil's going on here?

IN THE ALLEY

Archie sways. John supports him. Elliot moves to pick up
a giant, sweepstakes-sized CASHIER'S CHECK propped against
the tripod. As he goes back, Elliot does not notice that...

The VIDEO CAMERA slowly TILTS DOWN, pointing to the ground.

Elliot rejoins John and Archie, brandishing the huge CHECK.

ELLIOT

Archie... we'd like to present you
with this cashier's check we've had
specially prepared. It's for...
one-hundred forty-four dollars and
fifty-seven cents. Our gift to you.

Elliot hands the check over to Archie.

ARCHIE

Really...?

JOHN

That's correct. Cash this check,
Archie, and before you know it,
you'll be pulling yourself up by your
boot straps...

(glances at Archie's feet)
Or your...plastic bags, whichever the
case may be.

ARCHIE

This is really mine? Whooo! That's
awful nice of you two boys. You're
not such bad fellows.

ELLIOT

No, we're not bad, Archie. We're
good. Because, you see...

(addressing VIDEO CAMERA)
John and I feel we were put on this
earth to help those less fortunate,
and...HEY! Hey, what the hell...!?

CONTINUED

Elliot steps to the CAMERA, which is pointing downwards.

ELLIOT
The damn tripod's screwed up.

JOHN
Was it like that while we were
awarding the check?

ELLIOT
This whole thing's ruined!

JOHN
Calm down. We'll do it over.

ELLIOT
(fixing TRIPOD)
Okay... you're right. I'm letting it
run. Let's take it from the top...

JOHN
Alrighty, Archie, here we go. Just
like before. If you could give me
the check, we'll...

Archie's gripping the giant check.

ARCHIE
The check? But, you gave it to me!

ELLIOT
Yes, and now we're going to give it
to you all over again...

ARCHIE
I already have it.

JOHN
Yes, yes, but we must have our
altruistic act of charity captured on
video, you understand?

ARCHIE
What I understand is you're trying to
take my check, but it's mine. You
and your ugly friend said so!

ELLIOT
Who's ugly?

JOHN
Look, enough of this!

John grabs the CHECK, but Archie won't let it go...

JOHN
Let go, you filthy vagrant...!

CONTINUED

ARCHIE

You let go! Let go, I say...!

ELLIOT

Damn it, Archie...!

JOHN

Don't just stand there, Elliot, help me! He's surprisingly powerful!

Archie swings his wine BOTTLE, keeping a grip on the check.

ARCHIE

One step closer, Ugly-Man, and I'll brain you...!

ELLIOT

This is crazy! We're you're friends!

ARCHIE

You're some kinda thieving tricksters, is what! Goddarned con-men and carpetbaggers...!

Archie brings his foot up, KICKING John hard in the groin -- sends John doubled-over to his knees.

Archie lurches forward, grabs up the CAMERA and TRIPOD with the CHECK still held under his other arm as he flees, heading into SCREECHING TRAFFIC...

ARCHIE

Nerts to you! Nobody takes my check!
NOBODY! Con-men and carpetbaggers!
Con-men and carpetbaggers...!

CUT TO:

EXT. COMICS/COLLECTABLES SHOP -- DAY

John's car arrives in front of "KOLLECTABLES KINGDOM," where there's another SIGN affixed below in the effort to keep the place afloat: "OFFICE SUPPLIES + PHOTOKOPIES."

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- PARKED -- DAY

John and Elliot take an unhappy moment.

JOHN (V.O.)

Gosh, that was one ungrateful tramp.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Who'd've thought a man could run that fast with plastic bags for shoes?

INT. KOLLECTABLES KINGDOM -- DAY

COMICS, COLLECTABLES and OFFICE SUPPLIES. John and Elliot enter. An unshaven NEBBISH, 40, with an EYE PATCH is at the REGISTER. This is "**THE KING**," so named perhaps because of the cardboard and aluminum foil CROWN he sports. A YOUNG BUSINESS WOMAN's dealing with him.

BUSINESS WOMAN

It's important because it's my job application and resume, so...

THE KING

Your fax went through, Ma'am, I promise you. Eight dollars, please.

BUSINESS WOMAN

Didn't seem like you even dialed enough numbers for an international call.

THE KING

I assure you I did, Ma'am.

BUSINESS WOMAN

You keep saying "Ma'am," and I'm pretty sure I'm a lot younger than you. Fine, just...

(offering money)

I need the originals back.

THE KING

Our fax machine shreds the pages automatically while they're being transmitted, to protect your privacy. Can't be too careful about identity theft. You're welcome.

With a deep sigh, Business Woman turns on her heel and goes to exit. John and Elliot arrive in her stead.

ELLIOT

How's it going, Edward?

The King fixes Elliot and John with a look, eyebrow raised.

ELLIOT

I mean... how is "The King" today?

THE KING

The King grows weary, for his subjects are imbeciles. And unappreciative. No one seems to grasp just what kind of Herculean effort it takes to keep a brick-and-mortar collectables emporium afloat in this day and age.

CONTINUED

A YOUNGSTER, in a BLOOPS (those five fuzzy, ROTUND CHARACTERS; Red, Blue, Green, Orange and Pink Bloop) T-SHIRT, comes to the counter.

YOUNGSTER
(up to The King)
Do you have "The Bloops Funtime Digest?"

THE KING
I don't know, do you have money? Why are you unaccompanied, Little Man?

YOUNGSTER
My dad's next door, at the --

THE KING
This is no library. I can't have you browsing hither and yon, handling the merchandise with your dirty, little, chocolate-sticky fingers.

YOUNGSTER
(looks at his hands)
OK, but... I'm just looking for...

With a flourish, The King pulls out and points a LASER POINTER across the store -- pinpointing the COMIC on a shelf.

THE KING
"The Bloops Funtime Digest." Volume One. Issue Three. Bagged and boarded, which is how it should remain until after it's purchased.

Youngster follows the beam. The King shouts after him.

THE KING
(points at his good eye)
I'll be keeping an eye... on you!

With a flourish, he puts the pointer into his breast pocket.

THE KING
(to John and Elliot)
Exhausting.

ELLIOT
We need your help.

THE KING
Of course you do. Come with me.
(rising)
Mind the store, Becky.

BECKY, a bored Asian girl shelving GRAPHIC NOVELS, nods.

CONTINUED

BECKY
Yes, your Majesty.

IN THE BACK OFFICE

Elliot and John follow, entering The King's inner sanctum. PIN-UPS line the walls. The King sits in a plush CHAIR.

THE KING
And what is it exactly you require, gentlemen? European triple-X cartoons? She-male face-sitting short subjects? Paul Lynde's Halloween Special on VHS? What's your pleasure?

The King motions to SHELVES of VCRS, COMPUTERS and CD and DVD BURNERS, all interconnected for duplicating.

THE KING
I've gotten ahold of a few enema videos from the mid-80's that will knock your socks off. What else, what else... there's a hair-raising collection of industrial accident surveillance videos, and any day now my source should be dropping off a brand new compilation of celebrity 911 calls.

JOHN
Um, actually, Ed, we were kind of wondering if we could borrow your little, digital video camera.

ELLIOT
Our camera got... misplaced.

THE KING
Why don't you use your phone, like every other person in the entire human race?

ELLIOT
Well, it's a bit of an older model...

Elliot takes out and flips open his flip-phone CELL PHONE.

THE KING
What is that?

ELLIOT
(sheepish)
A... phone. My phone. Doesn't have a camera.

CONTINUED

THE KING
Or a keyboard. Unbelievable.
(to John)
What about yours?

JOHN
Yeah, um... we share that one, you
know, to economize.

THE KING
How thrifty. When you say you'd like
to "borrow" my mini-camera... I
assume what you really meant to say
is "rent."

JOHN
Oh, of course. Certainly.

THE KING
And when you say "Ed," what you meant
to say is...?

ELLIOT
(reluctantly)
King... I mean, *The King*.

THE KING
Fine. It's yours for the day.
However, you absolutely must return
it by tomorrow afternoon...
(rises, looking in CABINET)
I'll be driving up the coast this
weekend to begin shooting my latest,
voyeuristic, hidden-camera epic...
"The Girls of Peek-A-Boo Beach!"

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- DAY

John drives. Elliot rides, examining the small VIDEO CAMERA
they've borrowed from The King.

JOHN
We need to be courageous, Elliot.
More prototypically heroic.

ELLIOT
I'm up for that.

JOHN
This can't be about us. That was our
mistake.

ELLIOT
We're being selfish.

CONTINUED

JOHN

Exactly. We need to be touching
other people's lives meaningfully.

ELLIOT

Making a difference.

JOHN

We've got to be selfless.

ELLIOT

Boy, you said it there. Yessir.

They drive a moment, pleased, pondering.

ELLIOT

Hey, maybe we should go tell the
girls we're going to be selfless.

John immediately jerks the wheel to U-TURN, TIRES SCREECHING.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLERIA -- DAY

MUZAK plays. John and Elliot trudge along. The mall is
busy with SHOPPERS overburdened by BAGS of purchases.

ELLIOT

How can this many people be shopping
in the middle of the week? What are
they; all welfare cheats and
screenwriters?

JOHN

Thought the economy's supposed to in
the toilet.

ELLIOT

(LOUDLY, to be overheard)
Doesn't anyone have a job anymore?

INT. GALLERIA, CLOTHING STORE -- DAY

SIGNS in the display WINDOW of "FASHION URGE" announce:
"UNITARDS are NOW!" Near the front of the store, TWO hyper-
pretty chicks, **LINDA** and **SALLY**, fold day-glo T-SHIRTS.

SALLY

I heard we might discontinue the all-
cotton knee highs.

LINDA

Not seriously? Who said?

CONTINUED

SALLY

Keep it under your hat. Mr. Kelley
told me in the strictest confidence.

Both take out SMART-PHONES, rapidly thumb-type TEXTING.

LINDA

What do we want to do tonight?

SALLY

Is Celebrity Jousting tonight?

LINDA

We're DVRing it.

SALLY

Good. You want to makeover our
busty, lesbian avatars, go virtual-
clubbing, and watch the pervert
feeding-frenzy?

LINDA

A.K.A.: Wednesday. Genius.

SALLY

Uh oh... geeks ahoy.

Linda glances up to see John and Elliot heading this way.

LINDA

Oh, God.

JOHN

(WAVES as they near)
Afternoon, ladies. Hello.

SALLY

Um, yeah... hi.

ELLIOT

Hello, Linda. You girls working
hard, or hardly working?

Elliot laughs, forced. The girls are mortified. The salt-
and-pepper haired **MR. KELLEY** arrives, wearing a UNITARD.

MR. KELLEY

You're on register, Linda.

LINDA

Right away, Mr. Kelley.

Mr. Kelley regards John and Elliot with a withering look
through his bifocals, turns and struts back into the store.

AT THE REGISTERS

Linda arrives, starts ringing up CUSTOMERS. Elliot follows.

ELLIOT
Didn't see you here yesterday.

LINDA
I wasn't here.

ELLIOT
Yeah. Maybe you should make me a copy of your schedule.

LINDA
I'm helping customers right now, so I can't stand around talking.

ELLIOT
No problem, I'll just... do some shopping...

Elliot pretends to shop a "1/2 OFF CLEARANCE" of T-SHIRTS, doesn't notice he's already wearing the exact same shirt.

AT THE FRONT OF THE STORE

Sally folds SHIRTS. John leans on a FEMALE MANNEQUIN.

JOHN
Met with Brett Anderson today.

SALLY
Good for you.

JOHN
Nice guy. A little full of himself. He's shorter than he looks in the movies. Stands about four and a half feet tall. Anyway, he and I are considering taking a project into active development together.

SALLY
Terrific. I have to get back to work.

JOHN
Okay. Uh, listen...I was wondering...

John adjusts his bow tie, nervous. He stares at his feet, not noticing as Sally picks up the mannequin and walks away.

JOHN
Gosh, I'm not good at this. I'm no ladies man, that's for sure...

CONTINUED

A WOMAN arrives where the mannequin was, looks through day-glo TEES. John leans, draping his arm on the woman's shoulder, his hand resting on her breast. The woman freezes!

JOHN

Don't get me wrong, I've had plenty of experience... in the love department, that is. Look... what I'm trying to say is...

John finally looks up, first noticing that Sally is gone, then slowly turning...to see his hand on the woman's breast!

JOHN

How did... I didn't... your...??!

The woman SLAPS John's face, knocking him down!

AT THE REGISTERS

Linda hands a customer their BAG. Elliot's next, presenting RAINBOW COLORED UNDERPANTS. Irritated, Linda rings them up.

ELLIOT

Started writing that horror script I told you about. "Van Winkle." It's a present day retelling of Rip Van Winkle, except when he wakes up this time, he finds modern society so objectionable he starts killing everyone.

LINDA

Fifteen dollars, thirty-two cents.

ELLIOT

Oh? OK.

(paying)

Hey, when are we all going to get together for another double date?

LINDA

Not really a date. You followed us to the movies and sat behind us.

ELLIOT

(sad sincerity)

Listen, Linda, I...I realize I'm no prize. I mean; look at me. But I want you to know, just maybe... one of these days, John and I are going to do something special. We're going to make a name for ourselves.

LINDA

Next customer, please!

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
(sadly)
Anyhow. Nice seeing you. Bye.

Linda watches him amble away, frowns, gives a pitying groan.

CUT TO:

INT. GALLERIA -- DAY

John and Elliot walk, hands in pockets, miserable.

JOHN
So, my friend, the question remains...
Whose lives should we touch first?

Elliot looks over, spirits lifting. They share a smile.

ELLIOT
It's like, what's the quote from that
classic movie I can never quite make
it though because it's in black-and-
white...? The one where that dirty,
bedraggled farmer says: "Wherever
there's hungry people who can't
eat...wherever there's a cop hassling
a guy... wherever there's somebody
who needs help, I'll be there."

JOHN
And I'll be there too... capturing it
all with a video camera!

ELLIOT
Fuck yeah. Look out, world; here
come the Good Samaritans!

JOHN
Right on! Whoop whoop!

They STRIDE ON, laughing, buoyed by purpose, fists raised...
We STOP at a "GLASS TEAT HOME THEATERS" SHOP WINDOW: where
flat screen TVs show FOOTAGE of the veiled HOLLYWOOD SIGN.

CUT TO:

EXT. "TITAN ELECTRONICS" MEGA-STORE, PARKING LOT -- DAY

SIGN shows mythological ATLAS struggling under the weight of
a WASHING MACHINE. John and Elliot exit, SHOPPING BAG held.

IN JOHN'S CAR (IN PARKING LOT)

As John and Elliot climb in, John opens the bag...
Takes out a brand new POLICE SCANNER in BOX. Elliot grins.

CONTINUED

JOHN
Sometimes, being a hero... simply
means being in the right place at the
right time.

ELLIOT
Ten-four, Good Buddy.

CUT TO:

EXT. GLENDALE-HYPERION BRIDGE -- DAY

John's car ZOOMS uphill, STATIC and oscillating BEEPS HEARD.

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- DAY

The POLICE SCANNER'S on the dash, BEEPING. John drives.
Elliot's busy using an ACE BANDAGE to strap The King's small
VIDEO CAMERA to the side of his head, in a feeble attempt to
capture his own "P.O.V."

ELLIOT
(turns head, aims CAMERA)
Here we go. Testing... testing. 1,
2, 3. I think the camera's working...

ELLIOT'S "POV" -- THROUGH VIDEO CAMERA

Looking at John, the VIEW THROUGH THE CAMERA strapped to
Elliot's head is crooked, poorly framed and a bit GLITCHY.

JOHN
Great. Now we just need to be first
on scene at some quick, horrible
emergency where we can be saviors.

IN JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION

ELLIOT
Like maybe a traffic accident where
we pull the victims free.

JOHN
Or a suicide jumper we talk down.

ELLIOT
And let's keep our eyes peeled,
because people abandon babies in Los
Angeles all the time, and if we were
to luck into one of those... man,
that'd be sweet!

The SCANNER SQUAWKS: letting out CODE TONES...

CONTINUED

DISPATCHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
(from SCANNER, staticy)
...All units, all units, be
advised... the fifty-five-hundred
block Vermont Avenue...

JOHN
Hey, whatever that is, it's right
near here.

ELLIOT
Let's roll!

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- MOMENTS LATER -- DAY

Distant SIRENS are HEARD. John's car arrives with a SCREECH
at an old, four-story APARTMENT COMPLEX.

ELLIOT'S "POV" -- THROUGH VIDEO CAMERA

SMOKE BILLOWS out several WINDOWS. TENANTS and NEIGHBORS
have gathered on the sidewalk, pointing.

BACK TO SCENE -- ON THE SIDEWALK

John and Elliot scramble from their car.

ELLIOT
It's a fire!

JOHN
No kidding? What gave it away?

Someone SHOUTS that firefighters are on the way.
At the FRONT DOORS, a few more TENANTS rush out, COUGHING.
SMOKE wafts behind them! NEIGHBORS hurry to give aid.

JOHN
Is everyone out?!

CONFUSED GUY
I... I don't know!
(to Elliot, of ace bandage)
Are you alright? What happened to
your head?

Someone SCREAMS. Everyone looks up...
SMOKE comes from a THIRD FLOOR WINDOW, where a frail OLD
WOMAN sticks her head out, waving her frail hands!

OLDER WOMAN
Help... someone help me...!

CONFUSED GUY
Oh my Lord!

CONTINUED

PEOPLE start SHOUTING. SIRENS are getting CLOSER.

FRANTIC MAN
Somebody do something!

PLUMP NEIGHBOR
Too dangerous! Wait for the firemen!

The OLD WOMAN ducks back inside, gone from sight.

CONFUSED GUY
Where'd she go?!

CONFUSED WOMAN
I think she's supposed to Stop, Drop
and Roll! I'm not certain!

JOHN
This is our chance!

ELLIOT
Let's do some good!

John and Elliot share a look of determination, then they run toward the SMOKE SHROUDED ENTRANCE, John taking the lead...

CONFUSED GUY
What do they think they're doing?!

Without hesitation, John and Elliot disappear inside!

FIRE TRUCKS arrive. FIREMEN and FIREWOMEN leap to action with an assured nonchalance. PLUMP NEIGHBOR runs up to the stout, square-jawed, AXE-wielding FIRE CHIEF.

PLUMP NEIGHBOR
Hey, there's an old lady up there!
Two guys went in to try and save her!

FIRE CHIEF
We'll take it from here, sir. Let's
move, people!

Fire Chief runs, with TWO FIREMEN falling behind...
The three of them charge in through the FRONT DOORS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, ENTRANCE -- TIME CUT -- DAY

IN SLOW MOTION: we hold on those front doors, waiting...
From the SMOKE pouring forth... a FIGURE EMERGES...
IN SLO-MO: the FIRE CHIEF strides out carrying John,
unconscious and soot-covered, in his arms. Then...

IN SLO-MO: another FIGURE EMERGES...
The Old Woman struggles as she carries Elliot's limp body.

CONTINUED

Elliot's out-cold, video camera still strapped to his head.
EVERYONE is HEARD CHEERING.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- MOMENTS LATER -- DAY

NEWS VANS on scene. FIREFIGHTERS CLEAN UP. CAMERA CREWS and REPORTERS crowd the Old Woman, who's wrapped in a BLANKET, happily answering questions.

The sooty, humiliated John and Elliot sit on the curb, also in BLANKETS. Firemen pass by, disparage them, LAUGHING.

ELLIOT
(of Old Woman)
Look at her.
(shouts toward her)
Showboat!

JOHN
She did save your life.

ELLIOT
Whatever. I was doing fine till I
breathed all that smoke and took a
header down the stairwell.

JOHN
Look, we might not be the heroes, but
we'll still get the publicity.
Here's an old acting tip for when
they interview us: rub a little dirt
in your eyes. The more we cry, the
more newsworthy we are.
(points)
Here they come, get ready!

The gaggle of REPORTERS and CAMERA MEN around Old Woman is
breaking up, but they're rushing to their vans, PACKING UP.

ELLIOT
Hey, they're leaving...!

John and Elliot get up, hurrying over. One news van pulls
away, TIRES SQUEALING. John approaches REPORTER SASSY.

JOHN
Excuse me... my friend and I were
pulled from the inferno...

REPORTER SASSY
No time, guys. We're outta here.

JOHN
But...you don't understand, Miss...
(more)

CONTINUED

JOHN (CONT.)
(rubs eyes, fake CRYING)
We... we almost died in there! It
was like we were standing at the
Gates of Hades!

REPORTER SASSY
Sorry fellas, but there's a hostage
situation at Dinkle's Donuts. 13
people are being held by a
disgruntled pieman.

She jumps in, slams her door. Both remaining NEWS VANS PEEL
OUT, leaving John and Elliot coughing in a cloud of EXHAUST.

JOHN
What the hell?

ELLIOT
Total rip-off.

ARCHIE'S VOICE (O.S.)
Con-men and carpetbaggers...!

Archie (still carrying his BIG CHECK) suddenly runs by at
full speed -- SLAMS Elliot to the sidewalk as he goes...!

JOHN
Archie?! What... what the...?
(goes to Elliot)
Elliot... you alright... ?

John's trying to help Elliot to his feet when Archie
backtracks -- returns to KICK John in the groin! John
doubles over. Archie flees, leaving the boys in a heap.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

ON TV: NEWS FOOTAGE shows a MAN in a puffy BAKER'S HAT and
APRON chased down the street and TACKLED by POLICEMEN...

ANCHORMAN JIMBO (V.O.)
...latest in a series of rampages by
gun-toting bakery employees.

John sits staring at the TV, still covered head-to-toe in
soot, holding a MAGAZINE in his hand.

ON TV: the handsome CABLE NEWS ANCHORMAN, amidst GRAPHICS
and NEWS CRAWL, is shown beside the "Breaking News" GRAPHIC
"BAKER'S DOZEN," which features a GUN and a DONUT.

CONTINUED

ANCHORMAN JIMBO

Many wonder if these acts of violence
aren't a reaction to the high
pressure demands of the baking
profession, with it's Sisyphean
workload and taxing, pre-dawn hours.

John hits "MUTE." Elliot trots downstairs, in fresh slacker-
wear and "Granny Grump's Root Beer" T-SHIRT.

ELLIOT

Aren't you scrubbed-up yet?

JOHN

They sure taught us a lesson.

John stares. ON TV: FOOTAGE of the veiled Hollywood Sign.

ELLIOT

What are you talking about?

JOHN

We've been going about it all wrong.
You want attention? Press coverage?
You don't get that by doing good
works. Nope. Take a look...
(shows a MAGAZINE cover)
"Exclusive Interview with the Mad
Bomber." What would we have to do to
get on the cover of NewsTime magazine?

John leans forward to further illustrate by showing what's
on Elliot's LAPTOP on the COFFEE TABLE in front of him.

JOHN

(of laptop SCREEN)
Look anywhere... TVPeeper Online;
"Confessions of a Congressional
Masseuse." InfoWeek; "The Seattle
Panty Bandit Tells His Side of the
Story." Even the New York Times.
Their Top Story? "Pervert Rapes
Self."
(stands, THROWS magazine)
What does the depraved, American
citizenry want? All things lurid and
unexpurgated. Prison diaries. Tell-
alls. Fully-illustrated erotic
cookbooks. Can't get enough Reality
Programming and daytime TV talk-show
scandals. We've been so naive.

ELLIOT

Whoa, Johnny, slow down.

CONTINUED

JOHN

It's not fame we need, Elliot -- it's infamy. That's what gets rewarded.

ON TV: aerial FOOTAGE of a HIGH SPEED CHASE.

JOHN

(points to TV)

Look at them, right there. Look at all the attention they're getting.

ELLIOT

However, you are overlooking one small detail, which is we do not want to go...

(quotes with fingers)

"...up the river," as they say in the criminal parlance, because that is where unwelcome things often go...

(quotes with fingers)

"...up a person's rearend."

JOHN

Granted. We shouldn't risk more jail time than's necessary. Maybe a night or two, at most.

ELLIOT

How's that again?

JOHN

You do still want to hit the Big Time, don't you?

ELLIOT

Well, sure, except...

JOHN

Wouldn't you spend a night behind bars, if that's what it took to change your luck... ?

ELLIOT

I... I suppose.

JOHN

...to change your life?

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S ROOM -- DAY

POSTERS for films "That Fateful Day," "We The People..." and "The Scandinavian Suitcase" reflect John's more highbrow tastes. John sits at his old-school DESKTOP COMPUTER with TOWER and tube MONITOR, cracks his knuckles, begins typing. Elliot comes to watch. The SCREEN GLOWS on their faces.

CONTINUED

JOHN

This is the Cyber-Century, friend.
We'll make a name for ourselves
without even setting foot into the
real world.

ELLIOT

How are we gonna manage that?

JOHN

Computer hacking.

ON THE COMPUTER: the impressive HOME PAGE for "M.S.C.,"
the "MegaSoft Software Corporation," appears.

ELLIOT

What do you know about hacking?

JOHN

I dabble mostly, but there's plenty
of D.I.Y. advice on all my favorite
conspiracy sites.

ON THE COMPUTER: a smaller WINDOW POPS UP, in DOS MODE, and
John TYPES in all kinds of gobbledygook CODE...

JOHN

What do you think I'm doing in here
all the time... role-playing and
masturbating?

ELLIOT

No. Not role-playing.

JOHN

It's the sport of geeks; secretly
cracking into corporate and
government networks. Peering back
through the chemtrail haze. Watching
the Watchers.

ON THE COMPUTER: "M.S.C. CLEARANCE CODE REQUIRED" appears.

JOHN

I never dared leave my calling
card... until today. God, this...
this is exhilarating...

John TYPES intently, hits ENTER...

ON THE COMPUTER: incredibly complex LINES of CODE scroll by.

ELLIOT

MegaSoft, though? Shouldn't we maybe
be cutting our teeth on something a
little... not quite so gigantically
huge?

CONTINUED

JOHN
(TYPING the whole time)
It's precisely because MegaSoft's the
largest corporate empire on the face
of the earth that they deserve to
feel the sting of the Everyman's
lash. First...we merely insert a
protest message on their home page.

ON THE COMPUTER: "ACCESS GRANTED."

JOHN
We're in! Now, the merciless missive.
(reads, TYPING)
Let's see, how about...
"MegaSoft fat cats,
Anything to make a buck,
Gentlemen, you suck!"

ELLIOT
Hey, not bad.

JOHN
Nothing hits the mark quite like a
satirical haiku. Millions worldwide
will see it. And once we've come
forward to claim responsibility, you
and I will be hailed as 21st Century
Robin Hoods. What screen name do you
want? I'm using "DeadlyJester."

ELLIOT
Whoa. Okay, right. Put me down
as... "BoobMaster." "B O O B M A S
T E R."

JOHN
Yeah, I figured that's how it's
spelled, but it's... it's not
menacing enough. What's it even
supposed to mean?

ELLIOT
Fine. "Fist of Satan." All one word.

JOHN
Now you're talking. And here we go;
moment of truth... no turning back...

John TYPES, waves his index finger dramatically upwards,
holds it aloft a moment, wide-eyed... then presses ENTER.

EXT. MEGASOFT ESTATE -- DAY

INSERT TITLE: **Meanwhile**

HELICOPTER SHOT: over a huge, rolling ESTATE.

CONTINUED

The main HOUSE is gigantic. "M.S.C." is writ in TOPIARY. Beyond the SWIMMING POOL, we see PLAYERS on the TENNIS COURT...

ON THE TENNIS COURT

An angry, knobby-kneed man-nerd, MARVIN MASTERSON, in brown cargo shorts, short-sleeved work shirt and PITH HELMET, brandishes a TENNIS RACKET. His doubles partner is a FRENCH MAID in full, frilly, French Maid UNIFORM.

MARVIN
(across the net)
No, no, that's all wrong! Try again!

Their opponents are TWO fully-uniformed ENGLISH BUTLERS.

FIRST BUTLER
As you wish, sir.

First Butler throws a TENNIS BALL up, hits a lofting SERVE...

SECOND BUTLER
Good show...!

Over the net, Marvin readies, watching as the BALL... BOUNCES just outside the service box.

MARVIN
OUT! Goddamn it, DuPont, can't you do anything right? Tippy-toes, like I showed you! Tippy-toes!

FIRST BUTLER
Sincerest apologies, sir.

MARVIN
(to French Maid)
Can you believe these losers?

FRENCH MAID
Je ne vous comprends pas.

MARVIN
Jesus wept!

PHONE RINGS. Marvin THROWS his racket across the court.

MARVIN
(to French Maid, points)
Go get that.

He angrily digs out his PHONE.

MARVIN
(into cellular)
What is it?

CONTINUED

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
(from cellular)
Mr. Masterson, this is Daniels in
Security. Someone's trying to hack
through the MegaSoft firewall.

MARVIN
Holy shit. You must be joking.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)
We'll take care of it, sir.

MARVIN
No, no, wait. I've been wanting to
test a new counter-measure. This is
the perfect opportunity.

Marvin hangs up, utilizes the phone's TOUCH SCREEN, logging
in, begins quickly pressing BEEPING "KEYS."

MARVIN
(studies touch SCREEN)
HMMMMMM. All right, "DeadlyJester"
and "FistofSatan," you little pricks,
allow me to introduce you to...
Reverse-Corkscrew Virus 1.0. Enjoy.

Marvin grins, PRESSES one last BEEPING "BUTTON."

INT. JOHN'S ROOM -- DAY

John and Elliot hover over the COMPUTER SCREEN, leering, as
more unintelligible LANGUAGE RACES BY...

JOHN
The haiku's uploading as we speak...

ELLIOT
I admit, it is exciting.

JOHN
Exciting? We're revolutionaries.
We're storming the Cyber-Bastille!

ELLIOT
The Emperor has no clothes!

JOHN
Not only is he nude, he's about to
receive a swift kick to the -- !

BLEEEEEEEEEEEEEPP!! The COMPUTER lets out a piercing ALARM!

ELLIOT
W-what was that?!

CONTINUED

JOHN
I...I don't know. It's never made a
sound like that before.

ON THE COMPUTER: a "M.S.C." WINDOW slams OPEN.
.JPG FILE NAMES begin flying past, "UPLOADING..."

JOHN
Good Lord, no! No, no, no!

ELLIOT
What? What's happening?

ON THE COMPUTER: FLASH FRAMES of all manner of NUDITY zip by!

JOHN
(TYPING frantically)
It's siphoning off my pornography!
All my meticulously alphabetized
pornography!

ON THE COMPUTER: another WINDOW OPENS, filling the screen,
featuring the evil visage of a glowing SKULL and CROSSBONES.

JOHN
(dread)
Uh oh. Bad news. Bad news.

A hypnotic PATTERN SWIRLS behind the SKULL as the SKULL
opens its maw, lets out a SCREECH which grows SHRILLER...!
The COMPUTER TOWER and MONITOR begin to VIBRATE violently.
John and Elliot hold each other, backing fearfully away.

The COMPUTER JUMPS, JERKS -- spits SMOKE and SPARKS! The
monitor goes SUPER-NOVA; unleashing an impossible brightness.

John and Elliot's hair blows back. Their pupils pin-prick.

Then, suddenly the SHUTTERING ceases. The monitor goes
dark, except for a tiny, central dot of light. It's quiet.

JOHN
I... think it's over.

John's computer literally MELTS DOWN, SMOKE SPUTTERING out
as it begins drooping inwards. The SCREEN and TOWER
collapse into amorphous blobs. Now, it's over.

John and Elliot still hold each other, mind's blown.

ELLIOT
They, uh, sort of...turned the tables
on us, huh? F-flipped the script.

CONTINUED

JOHN
Yes. Yes, indeed they did.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIOT'S ROOM -- DAY

The closed DOOR, featuring a POSTER of a huge-boobed SUPER HEROINE, is thrown open as Elliot enters. He stops, thinks, then crosses to open his CLOSET's FOLDING DOORS...

INT. ELLIOT'S WALK-IN CLOSET -- DAY

A whole other world in here. CLOTHING'S overflowing a HAMPER and piled two feet deep. SHELVES are jam-packed with COMICS, BOARD GAMES, DVDs and CDs. Elliot searches...

ELLIOT
(SHOUTING to O.S.)
Alright. Alright! You want infamy,
Mr. John Q. Public, you perverted
bastard? We'll give you infamy!

He reaches high to yank down a medium-sized SHOEBOX... RECORDS, VIDEOS and COMIC BOOKS TOPPLE -- knocking Elliot to the floor in a Pop Cultural AVALANCHE.

INT. JOHN'S ROOM -- DAY

John is finally soot-free, in clean clothing and polka-dot BOW TIE. He tries in vain to insert a "RECOVERY DISK" FLOPPY into the slot-less, malformed slag that was once his computer. Elliot enters, places the SHOEBOX before John, nods, pleased. The BOX bears a label-maker LABEL, "HALLOWEEN." John looks to Elliot, doesn't understand.

ELLIOT
Go ahead... open it.

John opens it... takes out a long, straight BLONDE WIG and bright TIE-DYE T-SHIRT, now even more confused.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET, PIZZA PARLOR -- DAY

Elliot peers from AROUND A CORNER, in the BLONDE WIG, psychedelic T-SHIRT, GRANNY GLASSES and LOVE BEADS. John appears beside him, in a long black WIG, rose-colored GLASSES, PEACE-SIGN T-SHIRT and groovy-fringed SUEDE JACKET.

HIPPY-JOHN
This is madness. They'll hurt you.

John and Elliot are peering... ACROSS a SIDE STREET, where TWO POLICE CARS are parked near the "Leaning-Tower-of-Pizza Parlor." THREE COPS chat.

CONTINUED

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Sure, once I've badgered them into attacking me. It'll be a cinch. There's nothing cops hate more than stinkin', free-lovin' hippies.

HIPPY-JOHN

What world are you living in?

Elliot hands over the VIDEO CAMERA.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

You said, "whatever it takes." People absolutely love police-brutality videos. They get very worked-up over easily digestible injustices. The news'll replay this like a million times.

HIPPY-JOHN

If you want a proper beating, you should be portraying a graffiti artist or a rapper.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Let's just focus, alright? When the bludgeoning begins, I'll play possum. Once they think I've lost consciousness, they'll lose interest and move on. That's when you drag me to the hospital.

HIPPY-JOHN

(sarcastic)

Well, so long as there's a blueprint.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Just get the golden footage, man. I'm going in.

Elliot heads for the COPS. John hunkers, VIDEO-TAPING...

ACROSS THE SIDE STREET

As Hippy-Elliot approaches the TWO POLICEMEN and ONE POLICEWOMAN, he sways and shimmies, HUMMING loudly. He TWIRLS mid-street, SKIPPING along, bell-bottoms flapping.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Whooooop-dee-doo! Glorious day!

Elliot pulls FLOWER PEDALS from his pocket, sprinkling them as he DANCES and PRANCES about.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

I'm flying, Man-child... flyin' high as a kite! Freedom!

CONTINUED

The THREE COPS glance over, continue chatting.
Elliot DANCES right up to them.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Hello, Piggies! How are my Three
Little Piggies today?

ON THE CORNER

John is aghast, but keeps FILMING...

ACROSS THE STREET

The THREE COPS sternly turn their attention to Elliot.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Wait, wait... let me put that in a
language you can understand -- oink
oink oinky-oink!

The OFFICERS remain remarkably calm.

POLICEMAN ONE
Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to
move along.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Don't try to stifle my Free Speech,
Mister Bummer-Man... Mister
Authority! Power to the people!

Elliot begins showering the COPS with FLOWERS PETALS.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Make Love, not War! Repent, Valley
People! Peace, Love and Flowers!

POLICEWOMAN
Sir... please cease and desist.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
What?! What are you gonna do? Gonna
beat my brains in with your big
batons; or should I say, your big,
surrogate penises?!

POLICEMAN ONE
Alright, that's enough of this...

Elliot recoils, but Policeman One merely takes out his
TICKET BOOK and begins writing.

POLICEMAN ONE
I'm writing you up for littering.
That's a \$25 citation, young man.

CONTINUED

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Hey, screw off! I'm stoned! Stoned
out of my gourd, I tell you! I
dropped acid, that's right...!

He scrambles up onto the hood of one SQUAD CAR, TWIRLING and
LEAPING and CLICKING his HEELS.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Wow! The sky's a cotton-candy
rainbow! The sun's a bowl of lemonade!

POLICEWOMAN
Get down from there, sir.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
(SINGING from Godspell)
*"Preeee-eee-eee-pare ye the Way of
the Lord...!"*

AT THE CORNER

As John keeps filming, a FOURTH POLICE OFFICER, carrying a
cardboard TRAY of take-out COFFEES, strolls up behind him.

FRIENDLY OFFICER
That's a heckofa nice camera, son.

John spins, nervous.

HIPPY-JOHN
P-pardon me...this...? I, uh...

FRIENDLY OFFICER
(smiles)
Can I take a look? Do you mind?

HIPPY-JOHN
Huh? Oh, sure, I guess...

John obligingly hands over the CAMERA, distracted as...
In the BACKGROUND: Elliot SQUATS, FLAPPING his ARMS...

HIPPY-ELLIOT
I can fly, man... I can fly!!
Hoopitie-hoot!!

In the FOREGROUND: Friendly Officer admires the camera.

FRIENDLY OFFICER
Fine piece of equipment. Digital, huh?

HIPPY-JOHN
That's right.

CONTINUED

In the B.G., Policeman One pulls out his BATON and SWINGS --
knocks Elliot's legs out from under him! Elliot CRASHES
onto the car's hood, flat on his back!

FRIENDLY OFFICER
Yep. The wife and I are thinking of
buying one. This little baby'd be
perfect for the family vacation.

HIPPY-JOHN
Sure. Real easy to use too.

In the B.G., the THREE OFFICERS pull Elliot down to the
asphalt! They encircle him, KICKING and SWINGING!

FRIENDLY OFFICER
Heading to Florida to see the in-
laws, and every damned amusement
park, for the kids, you know.

HIPPY-JOHN
Sounds like fun.

FRIENDLY OFFICER
No fun for my wallet though, right?

John laughs, nodding, while in the B.G.: the THREE COPS
finish the beating, moving to their SQUAD CARS.

FRIENDLY OFFICER
(handing CAMERA back)
Well, thanks, son. Terrific camera.

HIPPY-JOHN
No problem, Officer. Have a great day.

Friendly Officer walks on. John turns, momentarily
confusion as he watches Friendly Officer climb into one
SQUAD CAR. Then, as both CARS PULL AWAY, John sees...

Elliot lies motionless in the middle of the street.

HIPPY-JOHN
What... ?
(looks down at CAMERA,
looks up to Elliot)
Oh, boy. Elliot!

He rushes to Elliot's side... kneels, hand to his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. EXTREME-SHOP, CONVENIENCE STORE -- DAY

John and Elliot, still in full HIPPIE REGALIA, enter.

CONTINUED

HIPPY-ELLIOT
It's okay, really. Between kicks,
they were mostly slapping with open
hands.

HIPPY-JOHN
I can't apologize enough.

They cross through the CANDY AISLE to the SODA FOUNTAIN.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
It was more about humiliation than
anything else. My abject humiliation.

Elliot starts filling a GIANT "Extreme-Shop" CUP with ICE.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
It's nothing 97 ounces of highly-
caffeinated soda-beverage can't put
right.

Elliot holds the cup under the "Treacle-Blast" DISPENSER,
which unleashes a bubbly, fluorescent RED stream. Elliot
waits as the cup fills... and fills... and fills...

Elliot WHISTLES, looks to John, leans to peer into the cup.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
Half-way there.

Still, the red liquid spews. Elliot rocks back and forth on
his heels. He looks at his WATCH, stifles a yawn.

EXT. EXTREME-SHOP -- DAY

John and Elliot (hippies) exit. Elliot must carry his "94-
oz'er" with both hands, sipping from its straw.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
It's your turn to brainstorm.

HIPPY-JOHN
My brain's empty.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
We've got to come up with something.

HIPPY-JOHN
I know, I know. We need a real,
solid scheme.

HIPPY-ELLIOT
A plan of action. An Instant Fame
Plan.

CONTINUED

HIPPY-JOHN

Yes. What will it take to hurtle us
headlong into the zeitgeist?

A wide-shouldered MAN in a dark suit SHOVES past on his way
into the store, BUMPING Elliot, who shields his DRINK...

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Watch out, half-wit! You nearly
spilled my Treacle!

The brutish MAN stops in the doorway, glaring. He's
incredibly, unnaturally TAN, with a horrid SCAR down his
left cheek, and a shock of RED HAIR.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

I...I mean to say, please excuse me,
sir! My fault entirely!
(out the side of his mouth)
...help me out here, Johnny, the
man's a lunatic...

John bends to pick up what is clearly a SKI MASK with red-
rimmed eye and mouth holes, but John is not so observant...

HIPPY-JOHN

You dropped your little wool hat,
mister.

The RED-HEADED BRUTE grabs it back with a GRUNT, heads in.
Elliot and John step lively, sharing a fearful look.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Freeeeeak! Yikes.

HIPPY-JOHN

Let's get out of here. I'd hate to
cross paths with him again.

HIPPY-ELLIOT

Thankfully, that'll never happen. No
sir, it's safe to say that's the last
we'll see of him.

HIPPY-JOHN

And good riddance.

CUT TO:

EXT. VIDEO STORE -- DAY

In front of "VideoMania," where POSTERS advertise "3-D: THE
MOVIE" and "Sparkie and the Brat," an EMPLOYEE in a raggedy
GREEN BLOOP COSTUME does an awkward DANCE poorly. He holds
up a SIGN which reads, "Bloop-tastic Journey NOW ON VIDEO!"
A BOOM BOX on a TV TRAY PLAYS the familiar TUNE...

CONTINUED

THE BLOOPS (V.O.)
(from BOOM BOX, singing)
...Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop...!
Bloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop...!

John's car passes, but SLOWS as...
Elliot's arm (he and John are in regular clothes from here;
hippies no longer) LAUNCHES his huge, half-full SODA CUP...

KNOCKS over the TV TRAY in an explosion of RED SODA, sending
the BOOM BOX down, BATTERIES flying. MUSIC STOPS.

John DRIVES ON. Green Bloop turns awkwardly as the man
inside tries to look out the eye holes to see what happened.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS FELIZ STREETS -- DAY

John's car putters by.
Passengerside, Elliot double-takes, looks back at...

ON THE SIDEWALK

With some HIPSTERS strolling by, ARCHIE sits curbside in a
discarded SOFA beside TRASH CANS. Archie is shirtless, eyes
closed, TANNING himself with the huge CASHIER'S CHECK held
bent under his chin as a make-shift SUN REFLECTOR.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- DAY

John PACES, thinking. Elliot's on the COUCH. Elliot wears
a "FleetFoot Sneakertorium" TEE. TV's on, MUTED, showing
various, unsuspecting PEOPLE getting PIES in their faces.

JOHN
Desperation.

ELLIOT
Wha...?
(looks up from TV)
What'd you say?

John sits in a CHAIR, sweaty, intense, facing Elliot.

JOHN
Desperation. I've known desperation
for as long as I can remember. I
always thought it was a bad thing.

ELLIOT
Isn't it?

CONTINUED

JOHN

I've got the solution to all of our problems...

(TAPPING his forehead)

Right...up...here...

Elliot sits forward, eagerly expectant.

JOHN

Plenty of great men built their lives on foundations of courage and noble intentions. But how many more success stories...truly American success stories, grew out of pure, blind desperation?

ELLIOT

What are you getting at?

JOHN

What I'm getting at requires we stop thinking small time.

ELLIOT

Yeah? Sounds good. So...?

JOHN

You do know what I'm getting at, don't u you...?

ELLIOT

Well, um...

JOHN

(smiles)

You're way ahead of me. You know exactly what I'm going to say...

ELLIOT

(smiling, laughs, clueless)

Okay, yeah, I... I think so...

JOHN

You and I, come on, buddy, say it with me: We...

ELLIOT

(excitement growing)

We...

JOHN

Go on...

ELLIOT

Go on a... yes...?

CONTINUED

JOHN
We go on a...

ELLIOT
We go on a...

JOHN
Murder spree!

Elliot's happy face falls slack.

ELLIOT
W-what?

JOHN
A murder spree.

ELLIOT
What did you say?

JOHN
A killing rampage. Now, listen, I
know that it sounds fairly extreme...

ELLIOT
Fairly extreme?

JOHN
Hear me out. The idea would be, what
we'd do is; we'd kill a couple of
people. A handful, at most. Not
many. Preferably strangers. And the
toughest part will be us surrendering
alive.

ELLIOT
Ummmmm...

JOHN
No suicide pact either. That's just
plain short-sighted.

ELLIOT
I... I don't know, Johnny. For one
thing, whatever happened to us
avoiding significant jail time,
remember?

JOHN
We'd end up instantly famous, across
the board. I'm talking guaranteed,
worldwide fame. Fame like we haven't
even begun to imagine.

ELLIOT
However...

JOHN
This is our chance.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

It's just...

JOHN

Our only chance.

ELLIOT

I'm not quite sure you're thinking
this all-the-way through.

John stands, fire-and-brimstone determined.

JOHN

We made a pact that we were going to
get famous today, didn't we? Didn't
we?!

ELLIOT

Did we?

JOHN

And for once in my stupid, miserable,
losing life, I'm not waiting till
tomorrow. That's what I'd normally
do, but not this time. No.

(looks to Elliot)

This'll put us on all the Evening
News programs. There'll be books...
even movies about our lives. Our
names will be household words. We'll
finally be somebodies. So, come on...

(offers his HAND)

You're with me, aren't you...?!

Elliot rises, looks down at John's outstretched hand.

JOHN

Don't leave me hanging, Elliot. You
and me; through thick and thin! Our
handshake is our bond!

ELLIOT

I... I'm sorry, buddy. I... I don't
think so.

John's surprised, slowly withdraws his hand.

ELLIOT

I can't, it's just... I don't know if
I've got the... the killer instinct.

JOHN

No, I... I understand.

ELLIOT

I wish I did.

CONTINUED

JOHN
It's fine, actually. No problem.
(swallowing hard)
Well, I, maybe... I should... should
probably go get started.

ELLIOT
Sure. Probably.

John slowly walks to the door, uncomfortable, uncertain.

ELLIOT
Good luck... with the murdering and
everything. You know, be careful.

JOHN
Thanks. I'll... I'll be seeing you.

Elliot nods. John exits. Elliot frowns.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOUSE, UNDERGROUND GARAGE --- DAY

John crosses to his car. He gets in, grips the wheel, hangs his head. He snuffles, seems like he might start to cry.

IN THE APARTMENT

Elliot sits on the couch, likewise deflated, puppy-dog-sad.
ON TV: a CIRCUS ELEPHANT brutally attacks his hapless
TRAINER. Elliot laughs at this, but it doesn't last long as
he reflexively looks to the chair beside him to share the
laugh... sees the chair's empty. He lets out a deep sigh.

IN THE GARAGE

John pulls up to wait as the GARAGE DOOR is CREAKING OPEN.
Then, just as John pulls forward...

ELLIOT'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hold up! John... John, wait...!

John looks around, looks in his REARVIEW MIRROR.
Behind, Elliot runs from across the garage...

ELLIOT
Wait for me!

John climbs from his car, overjoyed. Elliot arrives, arms
outstretched, and they EMBRACE, nearing tears of relief!

ELLIOT
I can't do it, buddy! I can't let
you go on a killing spree all alone.

CONTINUED

JOHN

I knew I could count on you! It
would've been meaningless without you.

They release. Elliot's sheepish.

ELLIOT

It's just... I'm afraid I'll screw it
up. I don't know if I can do it. I
don't know if I've got it in me.

JOHN

Hey, you don't think I'm scared too?
Look at me. I'm as scared as you are.

ELLIOT

Really?

JOHN

Of course I am! What am I, a
professional? Come on! The
murdering's not going to be easy, but
we'll figure it out; together.

Elliot's relieved. John thrusts his HANDS UP in the air.

JOHN

We can do this, I know we can.

Elliot gives a poorly executed double HIGH FIVE.

CUT TO:

INT. "CIRCUS OF DRUGS" PHARMACY -- LATE DAY

MUZAK PLAYS. Elliot arrives at the DRUGGIST WINDOW, a
little nervous. A gregarious, balding PHARMACIST looks up.

PHARMACIST

How may I help you, young man?

Elliot glances down one AISLE...

Where John gives a big THUMBS-UP and signals "OKAY."

ELLIOT

Uh...yes. I need some chloroform.

PHARMACIST

Chloroform?

ELLIOT

Yes.

PHARMACIST

Chloroform is a very powerful
anesthetic.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

I'll also need heavy, gauze pads...
A little larger than my hand, I'd say.

PHARMACIST

Um...I must tell you, there is a
mandatory 5 day waiting period and
background check for the purchase of
chloroform.

ELLIOT

Seriously? Is there?

PHARMACIST

Afraid so.

ELLIOT

Damn it. I was kind of counting on
getting it now. See, we really,
really need it today.

PHARMACIST

(can't help LAUGHING)
I'm sorry...I was pulling your leg.
I do apologize. There's no waiting
period or background check.

ELLIOT

Oh...so, great then.

PHARMACIST

Would you like the half or full
gallon jug?

CUT TO:

INT. KOLLECTABLES KINGDOM -- LATE DAY

Elliot enters, leading. John follows.

JOHN

What are we back here for?

ELLIOT

Follow me. You'll see.

Becky's at the REGISTER, ringing up FANBOYS. She looks up.

BECKY

The "Royal We" is in his office.

IN THE KING'S OFFICE

Elliot and John enter, stopping in their tracks...
The King stands before a FULL LENGTH MIRROR, wearing a home-
made, spandex SUPERHERO COSTUME with long CAPE. He makes
heroic poses, admiring his reflection, flutters the cape.

CONTINUED

John CLEARS HIS THROAT. The King YELPS, startled.
He faces them, vulnerable in the skin-tight outfit.

THE KING

I... forgot to lock the door. Again.

John and Elliot nod. With a SHRUG of resignation, the King
sits at his desk, takes off his CROWN, TWIRLING it.

THE KING

I'm not surprised you're back.
Couldn't resist the enema video, eh?

ELLIOT

There's no time, so I'll come right
out with it: John and I need to get
ahold of a copy of Video X-V.

The King is horrified, his crown SAILING off his finger...

THE KING

What...what do you think you're
doing? I forbade you from ever
speaking of that particular item!

ELLIOT

I'm sorry. For your own safety, I
can't really explain why, but it's
very important...

THE KING

Important? You were sworn to
secrecy, you... you filthy
motherfucker!

JOHN

I don't understand.

ELLIOT

(to The King)
Let me tell him.

The King holds his head in his hands, aggravated, agitated.

ELLIOT

Please... it's just us three. You
know that John can be trusted.

The King hesitates, then begrudgingly nods his consent.

ELLIOT

Video X-V is the Holy Grail of
underground videos. The Sistine
Chapel ceiling of bootlegs. Those
few who've heard rumor of it speak of
it only in whispers.
(more)

CONTINUED

ELLIOT (CONT.)

It's The King's magnum opus, although
he's the only one who's ever seen
it...

THE KING

Because it's not ready.

ELLIOT

You've been editing it for 8 years.

THE KING

It's incomplete! Flawed! A work in
progress.

ELLIOT

And you're a perfectionist. We
understand that, but maybe... just
maybe, it's time for you to let go.

THE KING

No.

JOHN

I still have no idea what you're
talking about.

ELLIOT

(to The King)

What could it hurt... if we were to
borrow a copy... just for tonight...?

The King stands, facing away, WRINGING the tail of his cape
in his fists. Elliot cajoles...

ELLIOT

Please. If there's anyone who could
truly appreciate your masterwork, oh
King-of-the-Nebbishes...

(of himself and John)

It's us fellow nincompoops.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- LATE DAY

CLOSE-UP: as ELLIOT'S HANDS ENTER FRAME, holding a red DVD
BOX like a religious relic. It's hand-labeled, "X-V."
ELLIOT'S HANDS open the box, revealing a red DVD.

ELLIOT'S VOICE (O.S.)

X-V. "Extreme Violence." Pure
genius, but surprisingly simple...

CLOSE: as ELLIOT'S HANDS insert the DISK into a DVD PLAYER.

CONTINUED

Elliot turns to face John, who sits on the COUCH, which has been pulled to within three feet of the TELEVISION.

ELLIOT

A collection of any and all of the most violent, R and NC-17 rated movie moments -- not scenes, mind you, moments -- edited together non-stop. Nothing else. Only the best parts; shootings, stabbings, gougings, dismemberments, crocodile and zombie attacks...you name it, if it's reprehensible, it's here. 4 and 1/2 hours straight.

JOHN

Holy fuck. Watching it would be like exposing yourself to years and years of most gratuitous violence Hollywood has to offer, all in one sitting.

Elliot takes a seat beside John.

ELLIOT

Exactly. For the aspiring murderer, it's just what the doctor ordered.

(holds up REMOTE CONTROL)

Are we ready for this?

JOHN

Could we ever truly be ready?

John and Elliot face the TV. Elliot hits PLAY...

ON TV: there's STATIC...till MUSIC is HEARD, "The Flight of the Bumble Bee," and IMAGES COME QUICKLY -- a SCREAMING MAN flails, engulfed in FLAMES... a WOMAN STABS her HUSBAND in the back... a MOBSTER does a DANCE of DEATH in a HAIL of GUN FIRE... a GUILLOTINE falls, CUTS OFF a MAN'S HEAD...and in a rapid-fire MONTAGE of DISMEMBERMENT, various edged WEAPONS LOP various BODY PARTS -- FINGERS, HANDS, ARMS, LEGS, FEET...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. "CONTINENTAL TOWNHOMES" -- LATE DAY TO NIGHT

Looking upon the lowly TOWNHOUSE APARTMENTS, we SLOWLY TIME DISSOLVE... as DUSK transforms... into NIGHT.

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The TV GLOW is the only illumination. John and Elliot still face the IMAGES, now accompanied by RAGTIME MUSIC...

ON TV: a PIRATE runs another PIRATE through... a ZOMBIE takes a gory BITE... a MAN'S HEAD is SPLIT by an AXE... a WOMAN VOMITS a gusher of BLOOD...

CONTINUED

John and Elliot watch blankly, bloodshot eyes unblinking.

ON TV: finally a sustained snippet of FOOTAGE shows a MAN in a SWEATSUIT jogging, and he jogs peacefully for a long moment, until, his HEAD simply EXPLODES! COLOR BARS appear, accompanied by a HIGH PITCHED TONE over the following:

John and Elliot stare trance-like into the COLOR BARS for an uncomfortably long time; sustained-for-as-long-as-it's-sustainable, perhaps intercut with...

...the COLOR BARS they're starting into, but...

...John and Elliot, benumbed, keep gaping wide-eyed into the abyss... beyond our patience, then a even a tiny bit beyond that, until finally, at long last we...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWNHOUSE, MRS. MCCULLER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

"DING DONG." DOOR BELL is HEARD RINGING.
Mrs. McCullers arrives, OPENS her apartment DOOR to...

John and Elliot, who greet her with nervous smiles.

MRS MCCULLERS
Hello, boys! What brings you here?

INT. MRS MCCULLER'S KITCHEN -- TIME CUT -- NIGHT

In the quaint kitchen, Mrs. McCullers, in APRON, sets MILK and COOKIES on the TABLE where John and Elliot sit.

MRS MCCULLERS
Help yourselves. Make yourselves at home.

Mrs. McCullers goes into the next room. John and Elliot begin GOBBLING cookies, ill at ease, WHISPERING...

JOHN
Right. This is good. We'll be so much more comfortable starting with someone we know.

ELLIOT
I'm feeling pretty confident.

JOHN
After her, we'll ease into the spree... branching out into random, motiveless killings that'll leave the authorities baffled.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
(still munching COOKIES)
You're the boss.

Mrs. McCullers returns, carrying an antique TEAPOT. She washes it in the SINK, with her back to John and Elliot.

MRS McCULLERS
It certainly is a delightful diversion, having company for a change.

JOHN
Thought we'd drop by.

ELLIOT
Just being neighborly.

MRS McCULLERS
I admit, it can be lonely, ever since Charles died.

John and Elliot look to the PICTURE of elderly CHARLES hanging beside the CAT CLOCK with wagging tail pendulum.

ELLIOT
There must be...like, times when you get so lonesome, sometimes you might even wish you were...with him, right?

MRS McCULLERS
Heavens. Don't be morbid.

JOHN
What he means is, it must be comforting to imagine, that when you finally do...pass on... your husband will be waiting to greet you at the Pearly Gates.

MRS McCULLERS
Well, please don't misunderstand. I did care dearly for my Charles, and kept my vow, but he was an angry and spiteful man, and I'm fairly certain he's in Hell.

John and Elliot exchange a bewildered look.
Mrs. McCullers brings a CAKE, puts down a BUTCHER'S KNIFE.

John and Elliot eye the KNIFE apprehensively.

MRS McCULLERS
Will you cut the cake, Elliot?

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

I...think maybe John should cut this cake...

Elliot slides the KNIFE to John.

John slides the KNIFE back to Elliot.

JOHN

She asked you to do it.

ELLIOT

(pointedly)

Yeah... but you're the one with the sweet tooth, so you go right ahead, and I'll cut the next cake.

JOHN

Fine then, I'll show you how to cut the damn cake. I'll show you it's no big deal, especially if you do it quickly and get it over with!

John picks up the knife. He stands. Mrs. McCullers continues washing with her back turned.

MRS MCCULLERS

Who wants elderberry tea?

Elliot makes exaggerated STABBING MOTIONS with one hand, pointing to Mrs. McCullers with the other. John tries to ignore, approaches Mrs. McCullers...

John grits his teeth, raises the knife, hand trembling...

John suddenly turns away. He STABS the knife into the cake and hurries out of the room through a SWINGING DOOR.

INT. MRS MCCULLER'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

John slams the door behind, breathing hard. He goes to the SINK, splashes WATER on his face, GASPING. He stares at his fearful, ashamed face in the MIRROR, points at himself.

JOHN

(psyching himself up; Joe Buck in "Midnight Cowboy")

You know what you gotta do, Cowboy.

IN THE HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

John exits the BATHROOM, unsteady. He starts down the hallway, but Elliot comes out through the SWINGING DOOR...

ELLIOT

Hey, uh...

CONTINUED

JOHN

This is crazy. We can't do this.
We're not murderers.

ELLIOT

I... yeah, I guess not...

JOHN

No matter how much we try to psych
ourselves up, we haven't got the
instinct. We know right from
wrong... we know what guilt is, and
remorse and the worth of a human life.

ELLIOT

You're right...absolutely. What were
we thinking?

JOHN

I blame myself. I'm the one who
talked you into this...

ELLIOT

No...no...

JOHN

Yes, I did. Your heart wasn't in it
from the start, but I wouldn't listen.

ELLIOT

You're too hard on yourself. All
that counts is you realize you were
wrong, so let's get out of here...

Elliot tries to lead John back up the hallway.

JOHN

Right. Let's thank Mrs. McCullers,
and we'll be on our way...

John heads down the hall, but Elliot blocks him, anxious.

ELLIOT

But, why bother her any further...?

JOHN

We can't leave without saying
goodbye. That would be rude.

ELLIOT

A minute ago, we were going to kill
her, so letting her live seems like
a huge leap up the politeness scale.

JOHN

All the same...

CONTINUED

John heads for the SWINGING DOOR, much to Elliot's chagrin.

ELLIOT
John...John, wait...!!

IN THE KITCHEN

John enters, stunned by what he sees...
Mrs. McCullers lies face down on the kitchen floor!

JOHN
Oh...my...God!

ELLIOT
Now look, let me explain...

JOHN
What have you done?!

ELLIOT
I only wanted you to be proud of me...

JOHN
Proud?!

ELLIOT
It was the peer pressure.

JOHN
You murderer!

ELLIOT
No.

JOHN
You murdered her!

ELLIOT
Please, listen...

JOHN
(backing fearfully)
You...you keep away from me.

ELLIOT
John...!

JOHN
Think of the good times we've had,
buddy... all the laughs! You don't
have to kill me. Your secret's safe,
I swear to you...

ELLIOT
I didn't kill her. I knocked her
out, is all. I...I used one of our
pre-moistened, chloroform pads...

CONTINUED

Elliot pulls a PLASTIC BAGGIE from his pocket, holds it up to show the chloroform soaked GAUZE PADS inside.

ELLIOT
I wanted so badly to impress you...
to show you I could get things
started. I got a little overeager.

JOHN
She's alive?

ELLIOT
Yeah. She's just... she's resting.
It's like she's taking a nap.

John studies Elliot, uncertain. He edges towards Mrs. McCullers, nudges her with his foot, keeps an eye on Elliot.

JOHN
Mrs. McCullers?

John gives her a firm KICK. Mrs. McCullers stirs, GRUMBLING.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. MCCULLER'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

John DRAGS the unconscious Mrs. McCullers. He struggles to sit her in an EASY CHAIR. TV's ON, SOUND LOW: showing more FOOTAGE of the cloaked HOLLYWOOD SIGN, SPOTLIT at night.

IN THE KITCHEN

Elliot pours out a BOTTLE of PEACH SCHNAPPS into the SINK.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Elliot enters, carrying the nearly empty bottle.

ELLIOT
How's it coming?

At the COFFEE TABLE, John finishes a note on a "World's Greatest Grandma" NOTEPAD. He READS what he's written...

JOHN
"Dear Mrs. McCullers. Thank you for
your hospitality. I hope you weren't
offended when we refused to play your
drinking game."

As Elliot listens, he splashes a little schnapps on Mrs. McCuller's cheeks, places the bottle in her limp hand.

CONTINUED

JOHN

"Once you passed out, we placed you upright in this chair, so as to prevent you from choking on your own vomit. Sincerely, John and Elliot."

ELLIOT

Perfect.

JOHN

Yes. It only requires she somehow have no recollection of you smothering her into unconsciousness. Other than that... perfect.

John places the NOTE on Mrs. McCuller's lap. With a sad sigh, he studies her, regretful.

JOHN

Look what we're reduced to. Are we willing to go to any lengths to fulfill our selfish desires?

ELLIOT

It certainly appears so.

JOHN

Look how we've treated this kind, good-hearted woman.

ELLIOT

She lavishes baked goods upon us, and how do we repay her?

JOHN

We're lucky. This is a wake-up call. Because, maybe getting what you want, at any cost...maybe that doesn't make you a success. Maybe just the opposite.

But Elliot's distracted now, noticing something on the TV.

JOHN

I mean, is there really any worth to something, if you don't earn it? If it doesn't require any effort...?

ELLIOT

John...

JOHN

If it means you'll treat other people like dirt to be trampled underfoot...?

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
(points at TV)
John, look! We're on TV!

JOHN
Say what now?!

John turns, looking...

ON TV: SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE shows HIPPY-JOHN and HIPPY-ELLIOT (carrying 94oz. SODA) approaching the doors as they're exiting the Extreme-Mart, from earlier today.

ELLIOT
That's... us!

JOHN
Turn it up!

Elliot goes to TURN UP the VOLUME...

ANCHORMAN ERIC (V.O.)
(from TV)
...two Mystery Witnesses exiting the Los Feliz convenience store. Moments later, the same camera captured this image of the alleged criminal...

ON TV: the next SECURITY FOOTAGE shows a MAN in a dark SUIT and SKI-MASK entering. It's obviously the brutish, RED-HEADED MAN who nearly spilled Elliot's soda.

As John watches, enthralled, he sits on Mrs. McCullers.

ON TV: the grainy, FREEZE-FRAME of Hippy-John and Hippy-Elliot is shown again, with a PHONE NUMBER SUPERIMPOSED.

ANCHORMAN ERIC (V.O.)
Anyone with any information is asked to contact the L.A.P.D. immediately.

ON TV: the local ANCHORS, ERIC and DONNA are shown.

ANCHORMAN ERIC (from TV)
And so, the question on everybody's lips -- Who are the Mystery Witnesses?

ANCHORWOMAN DONNA (from TV)
We'll be right back, with the local scientist who claims the Loch Ness Monster is here in America.

John and Elliot look to each other... realization slowly sinking in. They LEAP for JOY!

CONTINUED

JOHN
We're the mystery
witnesses! We're the
mystery witnesses!

ELLIOT
We're the mystery
witnesses! We're the
mystery witnesses!

INT. TOWNHOUSE, UNDERGROUND GARAGE -- NIGHT

John and Elliot RUN to JOHN'S CAR...

JOHN AND ELLIOT
(chanting, elated)
We're the Mystery Witnesses! We're
the Mystery Witnesses...!

They leap into the car, BACKING with a screech as the GARAGE
DOOR creaks OPEN, then they DRIVE AWAY, out into the night...

JOHN AND ELLIOT
We're the Mystery Witnesses! We're
the Mystery Witnesses! We're the
Mystery Witnesses!

CUT TO:

INT. FASHION URGE, BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

In the receiving area, amongst RACKS of CLOTHING, a coffee
klatch is gathered around the unitard-clad MR. KELLEY.
Sally, Linda and **TIMMY**, a thin glam-teen with bowl-cut hair,
are seated on folding CHAIRS, pricing BLOUSES.

MR KELLEY
Well, I told the tubby fellow...
"You exit my store, or I'll have Mall
Security drag you out by your love
handles!"

SALLY
You didn't, did you?

LINDA
Mr. Kelley, you're wicked!

MR KELLEY
Dear, a proper receipt is all that
separates us from the animals.

TIMMY
Haw, that's a good one, Mr. Kelley.
(looking O.S.)
Hey, what's going on...?

They all look to a TV mounted in the corner...
ON TV: DRAMATIC MUSIC introduces a "**SPECIAL REPORT.**"
The grinning ghoul Anchorman Eric announces...

CONTINUED

ANCHORMAN ERIC (from TV)
Good evening. We're interrupting our
7 o'clock news hour to bring you even
bigger news. Cathy...

ON TV: REPORTER CATHY stands with the over-excited John and
Elliot. They're outside, in front of "KNCN: CHANNEL 8."

REPORTER CATHY (from TV)
Yes, Greg. I'm standing here with
two men who have come to the station
claiming they are the Mystery
Witnesses...

JOHN (from TV)
We are the Mystery Witnesses, Cathy,
believe you me. I'm John Truman and
this is Elliot Alexander...

ELLIOT (from TV)
You may not recognize us, because we
were in disguise earlier...

ON TV: they hold up their HIPPY WIGS and TIE-DYE SHIRTS.

JOHN (from TV)
But we're the witnesses, alright!

Linda and Sally share a look of absolute astonishment.

LINDA
Elliot said they were going to get
some attention today.

SALLY
He wasn't kidding.

INT. HOLLYWOOD POLICE STATION, BREAK ROOM -- MEANWHILE

A weary female officer, DETECTIVE CASSIDY sips SOUP.
On top of a VENDING MACHINE, there's a BLACK+WHITE TV...

REPORTER CATHY (from TV)
Can you explain for our viewers why
were you disguised as hippies?

ELLIOT (from TV)
It's a long story...

JOHN (from TV)
I realize this is the news and all,
but we'd rather not go into that.

Cassidy calls towards the DOORWAY.

DETECTIVE CASSIDY
Donohue... better get in here!

CONTINUED

REPORTER CATHY (from TV)
Can you walk us through the incident?

ELLIOT (from TV)
Well, we were leaving the store...and
this big, red-headed jerk pushes past
and nearly spills my 94'ouncer. So
I say, "Pardon me, you big ape, but
I believe you owe me an apology!"

At the DOOR, the tall, stern DETECTIVE DONOHUE looks in.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
What?

Cassidy gives a disinterested gesture towards the TV...

CASSIDY
It's the Mystery Witnesses.

ELLIOT (from TV)
We're really on TV now, right? Hey,
hello, everybody out there in TV Land!

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
(watching TV, stunned)
Sweet Fanny Adams.

INT. FASHION URGE, BACK ROOM -- NIGHT

Everyone's still watching TV...

JOHN (from TV)
By the way, we never did hear... what
exactly did we witness?

ELLIOT (from TV)
Yeah, what'd the guy do? Was it a
murder or something?

REPORTER CATHY (from TV)
The suspect in police custody is
accused of armed robbery.

ON TV: John and Elliot share a satisfied nod.

JOHN (from TV)
Armed robbery.

ELLIOT (from TV)
Not too shabby.

JOHN (from TV)
By the way, Cathy, did I mention that
I'm an actor?

CONTINUED

ELLIOT (from TV)
Oh, I'm a screenwriter!

REPORTER CATHY (from TV)
Um, we'll be back with more of our
exclusive interview with the Mystery
Witnesses after this...

ON TV: a riotous COMMERCIAL for "Cheeze Weenies" begins; hot
dogs with "The cheeze is already inside, Dude!"

Linda and Sally are still a bit amazed, even enamored.
Mr. Kelley and Timmy seem impressed, looking to the girls.

MR KELLEY
Say, Linda...Sally, don't you two
know those two boys?

TIMMY
Weren't they in the store earlier?

SALLY
Oh, yeah.

LINDA
Yeah, we know them. Elliot and Jim.

SALLY
Of course we know them. They're..
they're our boyfriends.

TIMMY
Whoa, cool!

LINDA
Yeah. Our boyfriends.

CUT TO:

EXT. KNCN: CHANNEL 8, GATE -- NIGHT

At the TV STUDIO'S GUARD BOOTH, the GATE rises...
A POLICE CAR pulls out, followed by JOHN'S CAR.

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- IN MOTION -- NIGHT

John drives. Donohue's up front. Elliot's in back.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
(referring to NOTEBOOK)
As near as we can figure, at 4:47pm
this afternoon, Mickey "The Redhead"
Barnes entered the Extreme-Shop on
Franklin Avenue, ate a soft pretzel,
shot the clerk in the foot, and
emptied the cash register.
Although... not in that order.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT
That's terrible.

JOHN
Is the clerk alright?

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
He's recovering.

JOHN
Well, I sure hope he...
(distracted, points)
Say, do you think they could turn on
their siren?

ELLIOT
Yeah, and the spinning lights? I
always wanted to be in a police
escort.

Donohue's irked. Elliot leans forward from the back.

ELLIOT
You have a gun, right? Can I hold
it? Just for a second. Please??

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD POLICE STATION, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Donohue leads John and Elliot down the busy HALLWAY...

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
I'm not certain you two grasp the
seriousness of this situation.

JOHN
No, we grasp it, sir. We couldn't be
grasping it anymore than we already
are.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
Mickey Barnes is the third cousin of
Charlie O'Petrovich, the head of
Cleveland's iron-fisted Russian/Irish
syndicate...

JOHN
Cleveland?

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
They might not get the kind of
publicity the larger, more popular
crime syndicates do, but the
O'Petrovich family is nothing to
sneeze at.

(more)

CONTINUED

DETECTIVE DONOHUE (CONT.)
Anyone who's ever crossed them has
been found beheaded, if they've been
found at all.

ELLIOT
Really? That's... not good, because
once the head's off, even for a split
second, it's almost always fatal.

Donohue leads John and Elliot through a DOOR...

INT. POLICE STATION, OBSERVATION ROOM -- NIGHT

The room is dark. Donohue SHUTS the DOOR. John and Elliot
step forward, approaching a wide, HORIZONTAL WINDOW that
looks into an INTERROGATION ROOM where...

Detective Cassidy sits across from the abnormally-tan, red-
headed, scar-faced brute, MICKEY BARNES.

ELLIOT
(hushed)
Oh, yeah... that's him.

JOHN
He looks like... a mean clown.

Donohue joins John and Elliot, looking in on Barnes.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
Authorities have been after him since
the old days...for extortion, drugs,
even murder. Except for small
collars, he's always slipped free.

JOHN
What's he doing in Los Angeles?

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
He rose slowly within the family
hierarchy, but he gave it up years
ago and came to Hollywood to pursue
his life-long dream of becoming a
human cannonball.

John and Elliot look to Donohue.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
He's quite completely insane, in case
you can't tell by looking at him.

Barnes stands, stretching his legs. His hands are CUFFED.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE
He's an adrenaline junkie.
(more)

CONTINUED

DETECTIVE DONOHUE (CONT.)

Couldn't keep his hand out of the cookie jar, as it were -- graft and petty larceny, armed robbery, the occasional burglary. This'll be three strikes for him, thanks to you.

ELLIOT

Sure is one ugly son-of-a-bitch.

JOHN

A face only a mother could love.

DONOHUE

Who do you think gave him that scar?

JOHN

Eww.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GLASS: Barnes comes to stand in front of John and Elliot, seems to be staring at his own reflection. John and Elliot share a nervous glance.

Elliot sticks out his tongue. No reaction from Barnes. John joins in, making a mocking face.

Buoyed by impunity, John and Elliot make more exaggerated faces, LAUGHING and DANCING, thumbing their noses and imitating gorillas, mocking Barnes in earnest...

ELLIOT

It's almost like he can see us!

JOHN

These one-way mirrors are incredible!

DONOHUE

That's not a one-way mirror. That's a window.

John and Elliot FREEZE mid-mockery, flabbergasted. Through the window, Barnes GLOWERS angrily, baring his teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, SQUAD ROOM -- NIGHT

In the busy SQUAD ROOM, Donohue leads the unnerved John and Elliot into his cramped, cluttered CUBICLE.

JOHN

What were you thinking?! Why would you let him see us?

DONOHUE

See you?

(more)

CONTINUED

DONOHUE (CONT.)

You were just on television in front of tens of thousands of viewers. Hell, there's a TV in the holding area, so Barnes was probably one of them.

ELLIOT

OK, Big whoop. Let's just get this over with, right? What's next...? You interview us, we fill out some paperwork, and...

(WHISTLES, jerks his thumb)

...we're outta here.

DONOHUE

Haven't you heard a word I've said? It doesn't matter that Barnes is a distant relative; his family will demand your heads on silver platters. I mean that literally.

John and Elliot look pie-eyed to each other, then to Donohue.

DONOHUE

You're going into the Witness Protection Program.

ELLIOT

Oh, no. No, no, no...

JOHN

Wait a minute. You mean, you want us to move away, and change our names...?

ELLIOT

And never see our family and friends ever again?

DONOHUE

Never see them...never contact them. I'm sorry, boys, but you must live the remainder of your lives in total anonymity. There's no other way.

ELLIOT

Thanks all the same, but that's not going to work for us.

JOHN

See, I'm sure you'll understand, we've got our movie careers to consider...

CONTINUED

DONOHUE

If you had come in with our cooperation, we could have shielded you. But the moment you went on TV, Witness Protection became your only option.

It's beginning to sink in in for John and Elliot.

DONOHUE

This man is an unrepentantly violent felon. He was captured fleeing the scene, but we can't hold him without further evidence. Only your eyewitness testimony will keep him off the streets. You two seem awfully anxious to be heroes. Here's your opportunity.

JOHN

No...you're right. We have a responsibility... to the community. A solemn responsibility.

ELLIOT

I...I don't know...

JOHN

But, you do know, Elliot. If we don't testify...

(WINKS at Elliot)

How could we live with ourselves...?

Elliot's uncertain, but begins to understand.

JOHN

We'd be haunted by guilt and shame.

ELLIOT

Okay... I'm with you. Right.

JOHN

We're at your disposal, detective.

Donohue nods, satisfied, sits at his TYPEWRITER.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE

Take a seat. We'll begin.

JOHN

Great. Oh, but...were those vending machines I saw down the hall?

DETECTIVE DONOHUE

That's right.

CONTINUED

JOHN

You don't mind if we get some refreshments, do you? We're bound to get thirsty giving our lengthy, incredibly detailed statements.

ELLIOT

I'm hypoglycemic. Seriously.

DETECTIVE DONOHUE

Make it snappy.

JOHN

We'll be right back.

John and Elliot duck out of the cubicle.
Donohue TYPES on his typewriter, slowly, hunt-and-peck.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD POLICE PRECINCT -- NIGHT

John and Elliot hurry out of the POLICE STATION, run-walking past POLICE OFFICERS, trying desperately not to look like they're doing what they're doing, which is FLEEING...

Down the sidewalk, John and Elliot look all directions, then they break into a full-out sprint...

Further on, they run right past John's car. They realize, halting. They run back... scrambling into the car.
John PEELS OUT, HONKS through oncoming TRAFFIC as they go.

CUT TO:

INT. LINDA AND SALLY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Linda and Sally both sit watching the CABLE NEWS while they're texting on their PHONES. On the TELEVISION... A PICTURE of John and Elliot is shown under the graphic: "MYSTERY WITNESSES MISSING!"

REPORTER SASSY (V.O.)

(from TV)

...that the Mystery Witnesses, John Truman and Elliot Alexander, are still wanted for further questioning. The authorities ask that anyone with any information as to the whereabouts of the Mystery Witnesses, please alert your local precinct. Back to you in the studio, Jimbo...

ANCHORMAN JIMBO (V.O.)

(from TV)

Thanks, Sassy. The moment everyone in the world, and in Entertainment Capital of the World, has been waiting for is now only hours away...

CONTINUED

Sally points the REMOTE, flips CHANNELS: a GAME SHOW CONTESTANT shrieks with joy... animated GRAPHICS show bloodflow filling an increasingly erect PENIS... more FOOTAGE of the angry ELEPHANT brutalizing his TRAINER. The DOORBELL RINGS. Linda crosses to answer, texting all the way there, then OPENS the DOOR to find...

John and Elliot, looking squirrely and desperate.

LINDA

Oh my gosh!

JOHN

Sorry for the intrusion, ladies.
May we come in...?

LINDA

Yes.. yes, come in...!

ELLIOT

Hello, Linda...hello.

John and Elliot enter, grateful. Linda shuts the door. Sally leaps up from the couch, excited.

SALLY

It's you!

JOHN

Hello, Sally.

SALLY

You... the Mystery Witnesses! Can you believe this, Linda, the Mystery Witnesses are here in our living room!

JOHN

Could you maybe... not be shouting that so much at the top of your voice?

LINDA

They say you're on the run. Everyone's looking for you. Everyone.

ELLIOT

We know.

JOHN

Listen, ladies... we realize we're not welcome here, but...

ELLIOT

We don't have anywhere else to go.

LINDA

Not welcome? What are you talking about? You're always welcome.

CONTINUED

SALLY

Yes, please... come. Make yourselves at home. You must be exhausted.

John and Elliot are a bit taken aback by the hospitality, as Linda and Sally PULL them over to the COUCH.

LINDA

How did you know where we live?

ELLIOT

(nervously)

Um, yeah...funny thing is, I happened to be in the neighborhood once, driving by, just once, and I glanced up, you know, and happened to see you in your bedroom window, Linda...

SALLY

Sit down. Put your feet up. Relax.

The girls SHOVE them to seated positions, then sit close on either side; Linda with Elliot, Sally with John.

JOHN

We just need to lay low, till we can collect our thoughts.

SALLY

Of course you do.

ELLIOT

The police are watching our apartment building.

LINDA

A stake-out?

SALLY

How thrilling. But, you managed to slip through the dragnet, didn't you?

The girls are enticingly close, fawning.

LINDA

You really were on TV, just like you said you'd be.

ELLIOT

Yeah... but, that's not been all it's cracked up to be, just yet.

SALLY

You looked good, John... so, ruggedly handsome.

CONTINUED

JOHN

You...you think so?

John and Elliot could get used to this.

SALLY

Is there anything we can do to help?

LINDA

Anything at all?

ELLIOT

Well... I don't know about you, John,
but I'm... a little hungry.

JOHN

I could eat. If it's not too much
trouble... I mean...

SALLY

No trouble at all. Wait right here.

LINDA

We'll be back with a delicious and
nutritious snack for our desperate,
perspiring fugitives.

Sally and Linda get up, giggling their way to the KITCHEN.
John and Elliot are fairly astonished.

ELLIOT

We sure got one thing right... this
fame is a freakin' aphrodisiac.

JOHN

A musky pheromone.

ELLIOT

For all the good it does us now.

Elliot points the REMOTE...

ON TV: several CHANNELS show IMAGES of JOHN and ELLIOT, with
V.O. about "...mystery of the missing Mystery Witnesses...",
"...Truman and Alexander...", and "...two shameless cowards."

ELLIOT

How do we get out of this mess, John?
My life may suck, but I'm not ready
to flush it straight down the crapper.

JOHN

I agree, if not with your exact
choice of words. Anyway, there's
only one thing for it. We have to
devise and execute our greatest, most
elaborate and ingenious scheme ever...
(more)

CONTINUED

JOHN (CONT.)
(looks to Elliot)
We have to kill the Mystery Witnesses.

ELLIOT
Fuck yeah.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINDA AND SALLY'S APARTMENT, FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

John and Elliot come out from the apartment.
Linda and Sally linger in the doorway.

JOHN
Thank you, ladies, for the bountiful
feast of plain yogurt, saltines and
celery sticks.

LINDA
You're not still hungry, are you?

ELLIOT
How could we be? Yummy!

JOHN
We'll be back as soon as we can.

SALLY
Won't you tell us your plan?

JOHN
No, it's for your own good. We're
giving you the gift of plausible
deniability.

LINDA
Be careful out there.

Linda gives Elliot a KISS, much to Elliot's surprise.

LINDA
We'll be waiting.

Sally comes to KISS John.

SALLY
Good luck.

John and Elliot stand blissfully stunned. Linda and Sally
go in, smiling, giving a wave as they SHUT the DOOR.

JOHN
Well.

ELLIOT
Well well.

CONTINUED

They turn and step -- TUMBLING head-over-heels down the STAIRS that lead up to the girls' 2nd FLOOR APARTMENT.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN AND ELLIOT'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

In the darkened living room, HORIZONTAL BLINDS are knocked askew as Elliot CLIMBS awkwardly IN through an open WINDOW. He helps John climb through behind him.

INT. TOWNHOUSE, KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Darkness. John comes to peer out through VERTICAL BLINDS...

JOHN'S P.O.V. -- THROUGH WINDOW

There's a SQUAD CAR, with TWO COPS inside, on the STREET.

IN THE KITCHEN

As John turns from the window -- Elliot rises up, close in the darkness, holding a FLASHLIGHT directly under his chin so that it GLARES up onto his twisted, ghoulish FEATURES! John lets out a long, loud, high-pitched SHRIEK!

JOHN
(furious whisper)
Don't do that!

ELLIOT
Dude...sorry.

JOHN
The cops are out front! They'll hear!

As they're crossing, crouched, to exit the kitchen...

ELLIOT
Yeah, they'll call in an urgent
10-42. "Female in Distress."

JOHN
Shut up, ass.

INT. ELLIOT'S ROOM, WALK-IN CLOSET -- NIGHT

By the LIGHT of the FLASHLIGHT, Elliot and John are on their hands and knees, digging through the PILES of ELLIOT'S DIRTY CLOTHING and scattered BELONGINGS, searching...

Elliot holds a rainbow colored TOE SOCK into the light.

ELLIOT
(scolding the sock)
Where were you when your partner and
I were looking for you on Saturday?

CONTINUED

John pulls a metal LOCK BOX from the mess. It's a little larger than a lunch box, with a handle and COMBINATION DIAL.

JOHN

Is this it?

ELLIOT

Bingo. The answer to our prayers.
Let's get outta here.

CUT TO:

INT. KOLLECTABLES KINGDOM -- NIGHT

Apparently, The King lives here, because he's settling under the covers of his FOLD-OUT COUCH BED. He's got POPCORN and a 94-oz'er, aims a REMOTE CONTROL...

On a SHELF, a VCR PLAYS...PORNO MUSIC is HEARD as the title of the duped FILM appears ON TV: "Spank You Very Much."

All is right in the Kingdom, until, a KNOCKING at the DOOR upsets The King's reverie. He grumbles. Again...KNOCKING.

The King throws off his blankets. Wearing only his t-shirt and tidy-whities, he crosses to the front of the store... On the way, he gets his CROWN off the REGISTER.

EXT. KOLLECTABLES KINGDOM -- NIGHT

John (carrying the LOCK BOX) and Elliot KNOCK again on the glass doors. The King appears inside, quite a sight in underwear, eye patch and crown. He gives the FINGER.

ELLIOT

It's an emergency.

The King sneeringly points to the "CLOSED" sign.

JOHN

(hands together)
We're begging you.

INT. THE KING'S OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER -- NIGHT

The King, now in a grubby ROBE, plops down in his chair.

THE KING

Impossible. Absolutely, positively,
phantasmagorically impossible!

JOHN

We're in dire straits. We've got
nowhere else to turn.

CONTINUED

THE KING

Even if I could procure what you need, and I'm not saying that I could, it would take weeks to arrange... possibly months.

ELLIOT

We're willing to pay you handsomely.

The King LAUGHS an incredibly annoying, fake, MOCKING LAUGH.

THE KING

What with?! You've never seen the kind of money it would take for me to scrounge something of this nature.

Elliot holds out his hand. John hands over the LOCK BOX. Elliot SLAMS the LOCK BOX on the desk, startles The King.

THE KING

You have my attention.

Elliot crouches, licks his fingers, proceeds to work the COMBINATION DIAL, nimbly... throws the BOX OPEN...

The King leans to look... his jaw goes slack as... Elliot takes out an old, 3" "ROBO-WIZARD" ACTION FIGURE in packaging; a ROBOT in wizard HAT and ROBES, encased in clear plastic against colorful, illustrated backing BOARD.

THE KING

Dear God, does my eye deceive me...?

The King reaches out. Elliot places the TOY in his hands.

THE KING

(in awe)

Robo-Wizard.

(looks to Elliot)

Do... do you realize what this is worth?

ELLIOT

A lot more than I paid the guy at the garage sale who didn't know.

THE KING

(examines FIGURE closely)

Unopened... unblemished packaging... perfect corners. Mint On Card.

(dreamily)

"Accidentally transformed when his magical time machine was stuck by lightning, he is now half-robot, half-wizard! He is Robo-Wizard!" Oh...

(more)

CONTINUED

THE KING (CONT.)

how you take me back to the heady days of my youth! Those Saturday mornings, when I could depend upon the sound of your inappropriately violent exploits to drown out the sounds of Mother berating Father in the next room. Oh, and all those summer nights I spent entwined in a stifling tangle of bedsheets, dreaming of the day when I too might ride my faithful pterodactyl on a quest to rescue the fair maiden.

ELLIOT

So? Is it a deal, then?

The wipes a tear from his good eye, nods, looks up.

THE KING

You'll have what you need within the hour.

CUT TO:

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE, SCENIC OVERLOOK -- NIGHT

John's CAR is parked near a precarious DROP OFF. The VIEW beyond, of the endless sparkling CITY LIGHTS, is quite stunning. John and Elliot look out.

JOHN

There she lay. Our wanton mistress.

ELLIOT

Beautiful though, you have to admit.

They stare down upon the glittering CITY for a long moment.

JOHN

She sure had her way with us.

ELLIOT

Raped us six ways from Sunday.

As a VEHICLE is HEARD APPROACHING, John and Elliot turn... A CUSTOMIZED VAN comes down the DIRT ROAD, stealthily switching HEADLIGHTS OFF.

The van, with an air-brushed MURAL depicting THE KING as a buffed-out, Frazetta-esque BARBARIAN, parks. The King climbs out, all business. John and Elliot follow. At the rear of the van, The King OPENS the DOORS...

THE KING

As promised. Meet John Truman and Elliot Alexander...

CONTINUED

Inside: TWO BODY BAGS are revealed by the dim INTERIOR LIGHT. John and Elliot are unnerved by this grim sight.

THE KING

Don't worry. I got them from a buddy who works at the med-school morgue. Compared to what was in store for these two, this is a picnic.

The King reaches to UNZIP the BAGS, so the pale FACES of the TWO CORPSES are revealed -- they're both VERY OLD MEN.

JOHN

Hey. They're older than Methuselah!

ELLIOT

How is anyone ever going to believe they're us?

THE KING

Gee whiz...surprisingly, these are the only dead bodies I could scare up at a moment's notice! Take 'em or leave 'em. It's no skin off my rosy-red hindquarters.

CUT TO:

IN JOHN'S PARKED CAR

ENGINE'S RUNNING. The TWO OLD MAN CORPSES, in JOHN and ELLIOT'S ill-fitting CLOTHING, are seated in the FRONT SEAT.

ON THE SCENIC OVERLOOK

John and Elliot, now NAKED except for their UNDERPANTS, nervously adjust the positions of the corpses. They SHUT the CAR DOORS, backing away. The car faces the precipice, HEADLIGHTS SHINING out into nothingness.

JOHN

Having just dressed a naked corpse... I can now place that very high on my list of least favorite things.

ELLIOT

I really wish there was somewhere we could wash our hands.

The King, eating a SUBMARINE SANDWICH, walks up between John and Elliot. They stand looking to the car.

ELLIOT

Think this'll work?

CONTINUED

JOHN

I don't know. They do it at the end
of like every third movie and TV
program, so why not?

ELLIOT

Maybe we should... say a few words?

JOHN

Yeah, probably. Alright.
(bows his head)
Dear Lord... um, we hope that you
will welcome these two unfortunate...

ELLIOT

Damn it! I just remembered... we're
missing the C.J.T.

JOHN

What?

ELLIOT

Celebrity Jousting Tournament. I
forgot to record it.

JOHN

Right. Shit.

THE KING

Let's get this show on the road.

The King rushes forward and SHOVES against the car! It
lurches. Elliot and John join, PUSHING the car FORWARD...

OVER THE EDGE

John's CAR slowly CREEPS AHEAD...
Till it upends... CRASHING downward, TUMBLING end-over-end...
FALLING hundreds of yards...SMASHING to a halt at the bottom!

ABOVE: John, Elliot and The King peer over the cliff side.

JOHN

It... it didn't explode.

ELLIOT

Hooboy.

JOHN

This is really, very bad.

THE KING

Didn't you fill the tank?

ELLIOT

We did. We filled the tank.

CONTINUED

JOHN

Alright, quick: we'd better get our story straight. Elliot, you and I where driving along. Two old men car-jacked us and they... they took our clothing. They seemed suicidal...

BELOW: JOHN'S CAR EXPLODES with a tremendous BOOM!
A gigantic FIREBALL rises up!

The King, Elliot and John are awed.

CUT TO:

EXT. LINDA AND SALLY'S APARTMENT COMPLEX, LOT -- NIGHT

The King's VAN tools across the PARKING LOT...
The van stops. John and Elliot climb out (still only in undies), coming to the driver's window to see The King.

ELLIOT

Thanks for all your help.

JOHN

Yes, you've been a good friend, tonight. Granted, in the most callous, opportunistic way, but a friend none the less.

THE KING

Please, no need to kiss the ring.

ELLIOT

Listen, I'm not good with sentimental good-byes, but we may never...

The King isn't paying attention, hits the gas...
DRIVING AWAY quickly without a backwards glance.

ELLIOT

...see you again, so...

Elliot's flummoxed. All he and John can do is watch as The King's van ROARS down the street, SCREECHES around a corner.

EXT. LINDA AND SALLY'S APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

John and Elliot climb the STAIRS to the girls' apartment...

JOHN

This actually could be our chance to reinvent ourselves. To become better people.

CONTINUED

ELLIOT

Let's win the girls' hearts, for one thing... for real this time. And I'll tell you what else -- no more fame for me, thank you very much.

JOHN

Agreed. I've learned my lesson.

ELLIOT

I never imagined we'd be so desperate to become un-famous.

JOHN

The irony is not lost on me.

They reach the PORCH, just outside the girls' FRONT DOOR.

JOHN

We'll hide out with the ladies, for however long it takes, and then we'll start rebuilding our lives, on our own terms.

(pause)

Of course, if we ever did want to reconsider showbiz, there's always massive, reconstructive plastic surgery.

ELLIOT

Might not be a bad idea either way. Right now, though, what I'd like is a simple job for a change. Working with my hands. Maybe on a farm.

JOHN

Yes. Nothing could appeal to me more. Wholesome, honest work. Like, I don't know... washing things.

ELLIOT

Picking apples.

JOHN

Washing apples.

ELLIOT

Here's to being dead.

JOHN

Reborn.

ELLIOT

A new, new beginning.

John and Elliot are all smiles as they ENTER...

INT. LINDA AND SALLY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

John and Elliot's happiness turns to horror as they're caught in the brilliant, blinding GLARE of CAMERA LIGHTS... The apartment bustles with activity...THREE NEWS CAMERAMEN move forward, training their VIDEO CAMERAS upon the boys... STILL PHOTOGRAPHERS jockey for position, FLASHBULBS FLASHING!

John and Elliot sheepishly try to cover their semi-nakedness as wide-eyed REPORTERS converge with MICROPHONES...

REPORTER MATT
(holding out MIC)
John and Elliot... where were you hiding?! Why did you run from the police...?!

REPORTER JESS
(addressing NEWS CAMERA)
We're broadcasting live... the Mystery Witnesses have returned...!!

REPORTER SASSY
Where's your clothing?!

EVERYONE'S SHOUTING. John and Elliot are trapped, disoriented, SQUINTING ahead as they both see...

NEAR THE COUCH, the TV's ON: showing LINDA and SALLY being interviewed "LIVE" on "WNCN," in a crowded room somewhere.

John and Elliot are momentarily confused, until they shift their focus, searching the room...seeing...

ACROSS THE ROOM, Reporter Cathy conducts the ON CAMERA INTERVIEW with Linda and Sally, who chatter eagerly.

JOHN
Sally!

ELLIOT
Linda!

JOHN
What have you done!?

As John and Elliot try to PUSH past REPORTERS... Detective Donohue SHOVES through from the other side, accompanied by UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

DONOHUE
Alright, boys... we're taking you into custody, for your own protection.

TWO OFFICERS begin HANDCUFFING John and Elliot.

CONTINUED

JOHN

Wait a minute...

REPORTER MATT

(to NEWS CAMERA)

Ladies and Gentlemen, in a shocking twist of fate, the Mystery Witnesses are being arrested!

JOHN

(to Donohue)

You thought we ran away?! No, no... we were just out getting a breath of fresh air... clearing our heads!

ELLIOT

We were on our way back to the police station, but we were lost...

JOHN

We got hopelessly turned around!

ACROSS THE ROOM

Linda and Sally speak a mile-a-minute into the MICROPHONE, checking their hair, smiling for the NEWS CAMERA.

LINDA

When the Mystery Witnesses left, well, we just looked at each other...

SALLY

We called the TV stations...

LINDA

The newspapers...

SALLY

The police.

LINDA

What else could we do? It was the only responsible thing.

SALLY

Our civic duty.

REPORTER CATHY

Is it true that you two girls are professional models?

LINDA

How flattering. No, but we do work at Fashion Urge, in the Galleria...

CONTINUED

SALLY
(waves to CAMERA)
Hello, Mister Kelley!

LINDA
Hello, Timmy! And we are hoping to
become actresses very soon...

SALLY
I did a little modeling once. For a
seed catalog.

Behind, MORE UNIFORMED COPS, some we recognize as the ones
who beat Hippy-Elliott, pour in from the KITCHEN, their
RADIO'S SQUAWKING. It's getting awfully CROWDED in here.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Donohue and his OFFICERS are trying to escort John and
Elliot out past REPORTERS...

DONOHUE
Let's go! Keep moving...!

REPORTER MATT
What will happen to them, detective?!

DONOHUE
You're stepping on my foot!

REPORTER JESS
Is it true they're going into the
Witness Protection Program?! And if
so, can you give us some idea of
where they'll be relocated to?!

John and Elliot struggle, desperately looking back...

JOHN
Sally!

ELLIOT
Linda!

JOHN
Wait, please... at least let us say
goodbye to our ladies!

Donohue stops, looking to John and Elliot.

ELLIOT
Have a heart, detective.

ACROSS THE ROOM

Reporter Cathy's wrapping up, addressing the CAMERA with
Linda and Sally wide-eyed and grinning behind her.

CONTINUED

REPORTER CATHY

...exclusive first interview with the
Fashion Model Informants who laid the
honey-trap that captured the Mystery
Witness Fugitives! Hold on...

(looking off camera)

Here come John and Elliot now!

REPORTERS and CAMERAMEN follow Donohue as he leads John and
Elliot back across the room.

Encircled by PRESS and POLICE, FILMED and PHOTOGRAPHED from
every angle: the semi-nude and handcuffed John and Elliot
arrive to face the uncomfortable Sally and Linda.

SALLY

Oh, hi guys.

ELLIOT

Hey.

JOHN

Hi. Uh, listen...

LINDA

Look, we're sorry.

JOHN

No, we get it...

ELLIOT

We don't blame you.

LINDA

We feel kind of bad about how this
worked out for you.

JOHN

Here's the thing, girls. We'll most
likely end up testifying, us being
good citizens and all. And frankly,
that's going to mean a heck of a lot
of changes in our lives...

ELLIOT

Ooooh, yeah.

JOHN

Elliot and I, we'll have to
disappear; get whole new names and
new identities.

ELLIOT

We're needles starting at zero and
going the other way.

CONTINUED

JOHN

And what we were hoping was, well...

(pause)

What if you two came with us? We wouldn't need anything else. I mean, nothing would matter... it would all be worthwhile in the end, so long as we were together; you and us. What do you say?

Linda and Sally are speechless, looking to each other. Seems like they're considering it, about to speak, when...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(shouting)

Everybody, look! It's happening...!

By the couch, REPORTER JESS points at the TELEVISION...

REPORTER JESS

They're unveiling the Hollywood sign! Hurry, or you'll miss it!

Without hesitation -- EVERYONE starts MOVING towards the TELEVISION. They jockey for position, TALKING EXCITEDLY.

DONOHUE

Somebody turn up the damned volume!

EVERYONE GATHERS around the TV...pushing and shoving, trying to see, including John and Elliot and Sally and Linda.

ON TV: SPOTLIGHTS criss-cross the sky over the SHROUDED HOLLYWOOD SIGN, still hidden beneath DROP CLOTHS, while a COUNTDOWN ticks off... 15... 14... 13...

ANCHORMAN ERIC (from TV)

(breathlessly)

...of our lifetimes! After countless man hours and millions of taxpayer dollars, the moment has finally arrived! Ladies and gentlemen, The Fluffy Time Biscuit Company is proud to present, the one and only... new and improved... Hollywood Sign...!

ON TV: a DRUM ROLL is HEARD, and the COUNTDOWN'S at 6...

EVERYONE IN THE ROOM

(all together)

...5! ...4! ...3! ...2! ...1...!!

EVERYONE CHEERS, crowded cheek by jowl, expectation running very high; a smile on every face and twinkle in every eye. Here too, are John and Elliot, side-by-side, with all their troubles and worries momentarily forgotten, as...

CONTINUED

ON TV: to the BLARING STRAINS of "Hooray for Hollywood," and with a FLASH of PYROTECHNICS, the DROP CLOTHS fall...

At long last REVEALING: with LASERS shooting up to create "fireworks" and multi-colored patterns from behind and between each letter -- filling the skies above with the LASERIUM SHOW to end all laserium shows -- the "HOLLYWOOD" SIGN is COVERED in LED BULBS so the letters are now like synchronized JUMBO-TRONS which display eye-searingly bright PATTERNS: waves of RED, WHITE AND BLUE... glittery RAINBOW... spinning, psychedelic KALEIDOSCOPE, etc....

In the living room, EVERYONE'S expression slowly CHANGES... as a HUSH FALLS...and SMILES FADE from EACH and EVERY FACE, to be replaced by disappointment...confusion...disgust.

John and Elliot just stare in a kind of numb, disbelief.

JOHN
That's... that's just...

ELLIOT
...awful.

ON TV: the new HOLLYWOOD SIGN keeps LASER-BLASTING and FLASHING... garishly, desperately, sickeningly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER -- DAY

Amidst a rain-swept, far-flung, forest WILDERNESS, off a lonely HIGHWAY where a huge LUMBER TRUCK rumbles by, there's a run-down DINER and GAS STATION. SIGN reads "TRUCK STOP."

INT. "TRUCK STOP" RESTAURANT -- DAY

A few LOCALS and TRUCKERS sit in BOOTHS and at the FRONT COUNTER, eating, drinking coffee. The WAITRESS behind the counter takes an ORDER TICKET to the KITCHEN PASS-THROUGH.

John appears on the other side of the PASS-THROUGH, in COOK'S APRON and HAT, takes the TICKET...

IN THE KITCHEN

John returns to the GRILL, using a SPATULA to tend the many HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS and EGGS sizzling there. His NAMETAG reads "HANK."

Across the kitchen, Elliot enters through the BACK DOOR, lugging a MOP and a wheeled MOP BUCKET. He also wears a COOK'S APRON and HAT. His NAMETAG reads "JEFF." He starts MOPPING the floor.

John looks over at Elliot. Elliot looks to John.

CONTINUED

John forces a smile, SHRUGS his shoulders.

Elliot gives a smile in return, SHRUGS.

John flips burgers.

Elliot mops.

THE END

UNDER-CREDITS CODA:

CHANNELS FLIP BY on a FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION:

...NEWS offers "LIVE" coverage of a death row INMATE being strapped to an ELECTRIC CHAIR, WARDEN and a PRIEST chatting nearby, COUNTDOWN in the corner; "13:23... 13:22... 13:21..."

...deep-sea FOOTAGE shows an oblivious SCUBA DIVER swimming. A GREAT WHITE SHARK comes to bite both the man's legs off...

...next, THE KING appears on an Antiques-Roadshow-type offering on "APPRAISAL TV," where the well-dressed FEMALE HOST dubiously considers the M.O.C. ROBO-WIZARD FIGURE:

FEMALE HOST

I'm... not certain exactly what it is
you *think* you've got here...

THE KING

In that case, Ma'am, I'm happy to
educate you.

The King whips out his LASER POINTER, points at the figure.

THE KING

"Robo-Wizard" is an incredibly rare
and valuable piece of collectable
Americana, of nearly inestimable
historical significance, the likes of
which you're unlikely to have the
privilege of laying eyes on again in
your lifetime...

...next, the "CJT 2" shows a blood-thirsty CROWD, an O.S. TRUMPET FANFARE HEARD, as TWO ARMOR-CLAD MEN on horseback ride full-gallop towards each other, pointy LANCES aimed...

...glammed-up SALLY and LINDA are shown on their REALITY SHOW, working at FASHION URGE, chewing gum and texting:

LINDA

What should we do tonight, Sal?

CONTINUED

SALLY

Don't know, Lind. Could go to the fashion show, or the movie premiere... but I'm feeling like maybe we should rent cow costumes and crash the grand opening of celebrity chef Zechariah's new vegan restaurant.

LINDA

Hilarious.

Without looking, Linda offers medium-high five. Sally reciprocates, then they continue texting. Mr. Kelley arrives, his face is PIXILATED; he didn't sign the release.

MR. KELLEY

Excuse me, girls. Do you think you could get back to work?

SALLY

Um, we are working, Mr. Kelley.

Linda points directly INTO THE CAMERA filming them.

LINDA

See.

SALLY

Oh and, Mr. Kelley, unfortunately you'll need to switch to our schedules to part time.

MR. KELLEY

Hmm.

LINDA

Yeah, thanks, because next season we're supposed to have babies, or marry conjoined twins, or something.

...FLIP: the ubiquitous BLOOPS are shown dancing joyfully:

THE BLOOPS

(singing)

Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop! Bloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop. Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop! Bloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop. Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloopBloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop. Bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop...! Bloopity-bloop-bloop-bloop-bloop-bloop-bloop-bloopity-bloop!!