

City Light Films
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SCENT OF A WOMAN

Screenplay

by

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1 EXT. THE BAIRD SCHOOL - WILTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE - MORNING 1

A New England prep school straddling the prettiest section of town, a chapel and belfry commanding a grassy quadrangle surrounded by ivy-covered classroom structures and the marble arches of an administration building.

The great black iron bell in the belfry RINGS, the SCRAPING of wooden chairs against wooden floors, doors rocket open and the cream of adolescent America pours forth onto the gravel paths intersecting the lawn: these youths are the future of the nation's banking, law and medicine, perhaps even The White House, all draped in versions of oxford cloth and tweed and gray flannel, tight knots of ties overlapping the thick fuzz of crewnecks.

2 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MORNING 2

The mid-morning crush at the students' mailboxes, a noisy place with combination locks being spun open and slammed shut, the racket blunted by the steady march of delinquent students up worn marble steps leading to the Dean's and Bursar's offices. However, downstairs there is the happy activity of the mid-morning break, clusters of gossipers, the excitement of plans being hatched. Nearby hangs a bulletin board, decorated with plastic turkeys. Standing in front of it, a good-looking kid whose cut-rate haircut and J.C. Penney coat-and-tie don't fit in with the preppie platoons. His name is CHARLIE SIMMS, 17, and he is scanning the sparse entries under "Student Aid, Jobs, Thanksgiving Weekend".

3 EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - MORNING 3

A new maroon Jaguar pulls into the #1 parking spot. Out steps DEAN TRASK, an avuncular man in his 50's, the obligatory schoolmaster's cozy bow tie and blue blazer, however the face bears more the flinty expression of a labor negotiator or baseball front office man.

Observing Trask from in front of the Administration Building, another group of students, HARRY HAVEMEYER, 18, a born-to-the-purple prep school prince, GEORGE WILLIS, 17, Harry's consort, and two aides of Harry's, TRENT and JIMMY.

HARRY

Will you look at this?

GEORGE

I can't believe it, they really gave it to him.

HARRY

Now he's a loser with a Jaguar.

Dean Trask locks the car, gives it a last, cherishing look and heads for the Administration Building. Harry breaks off from his cohorts and angles across the yard to cut him off.

HARRY (contd)

Dean Trask!

TRASK
Good morning, Havemeyer.

HARRY
Good morning, sir. Fabulous.

TRASK
What's fabulous?

HARRY
That's some piece of steel you got.

TRASK
You don't think I deserve it?

Harry holds the door open for Dean Trask as he enters the Administration Building.

4 INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

4

Harry pursues Trask as he moves down the lobby.

HARRY
...No sir, I think it's great. Why should the head of Baird be putt-putting around in some junker? I think the Board of Trustees have had their first stroke of inspiration in some time.

TRASK
Well thank you, Havemeyer, I'll take that at face value.

Leaving Harry behind, Trask enters his office where he is greeted by MRS. HUNSAKER, 55, his no-nonsense, New England secretary. She has four delinquents waiting in chairs in front of her, their pink Dean's slips balled up in sweaty palms. Trask passes by.

TRASK (contd)
Good morning, Mrs. Hunsaker.
(to the boys)
What have we here, Murderers' Row?

He chuckles, delighted by his own turn of phrase, and enters his inner office.

Across the lobby Harry, withdrawing an envelope from his mailbox, meets up with his followers, George, Trent and Jimmy, who have joined him inside. Charlie is still at the bulletin board.

GEORGE
What was all that?

HARRY
Nothing.

GEORGE
C'mon, Harry --

HARRY
Nothing. Just saying hello. I always
enjoy saying hello to Dean Trask.

Harry opens the envelope, smiles.

HARRY (contd)
Sugarbush. Lift tickets and condo
vouchers.

JIMMY
I thought we were going to Stowe.

GEORGE
Sugarbush is Stowe, Jimmy.

A bell RINGS, the lobby starts to clear but Charlie continues
to examine the job opportunities.

HARRY
...We're doing it right, Thanksgiving
in Vermont, Christmas in Switzerland --

JIMMY
Christmas in Guh-staad is going to
cost us --

HARRY
Staad, the 'G' is silent. George?

GEORGE
'Staad.

HARRY
Trent?

TRENT
'Staad.

Behind them, Charlie is having difficulty concentrating on the
listings as the snobbish, but good-natured, dispute continues.
Harry turns back to Jimmy.

HARRY
So what about 'Staad?

JIMMY
The 'G' may be silent but it costs
three G's to get there. I'll have to
talk to my father.

HARRY
Better yet, why doesn't my father talk
to your father.

The bell rings again, the lobby empties as students hurry out
to class.

5 EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Charlie bumps into Harry and George as they all squeeze out the door, Jimmy and Trent following close behind as the group proceeds up a narrow path of the grassy quadrangle.

GEORGE
(to Charlie)
You going home this weekend?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

GEORGE
Going home to fucking Idaho for
Thanksgiving?

CHARLIE
I'm from Oregon.

GEORGE
I meant fucking Oregon.

HARRY
(to Charlie)
How do you feel about skiing? In the
mood for the white-bosomed slopes of
Vermont?

CHARLIE
Umm --

HARRY
We got a deal going, kid. 20% off for
my friends. My dad arranged it.
Christmas in Switzerland --

JIMMY
'Staad --

HARRY
Gstaad. Dropping the 'G' is phony.

JIMMY
You just said everybody says 'Staad.

HARRY
Not if you've been there.
(to Charlie)
Easter in Bermuda. Then, Kentucky
Derby weekend. We could work you in,
son.

CHARLIE
How much are the 'white-bosomed slopes
of Vermont'?

HARRY

Twelve hundred dollars. Included is a nine-course champagne Thanksgiving dinner.

CHARLIE

Twelve hundred dollars is a little rich for my blood, Harry.

HARRY

How short are you?

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

How short, Harry? So short it wouldn't be worth the trouble for you and George to measure. But thanks for asking.

Charlie breaks off, heads for class.

GEORGE

(to Harry)

What'd you do that for? You know he's on Aid --

HARRY

On major holidays, Willis, it is customary for the lord of the manor to offer drippings to the poor.

6 EXT. TOWN OF WILTON - DAY

6

Past the mill, across the river, above the noisy waterworks there is a blue-collar section, frame houses dark with soot. Charlie unfolds the squares of the piece of paper on which he copied down an address from the bulletin board. He checks a number, heads up the sidewalk, rings the bell. KAREN ROSSI, 26, answers, two children squeezed against her legs and pulling at the seams of her jeans, FRANCINE, 4, blonde bangs, a mischievous smile and very dangerous, and WILLIE, 2, who does what Francine tells him.

CHARLIE

Mrs. Rossi..?

Karen looks Charlie up and down, he again checks his slip of paper against the plastic dry wall numbers beside the door, Karen smiles ingratiatingly.

CHARLIE (contd)

16 Water Street -- ? I'm here about the weekend job?

KAREN

Come on in.

7 INT. ROSSI HOUSE - DAY

7

Karen shows Charlie inside, Francine and Willie still clinging to her.

KAREN
Get out of the way, Francie --

FRANCINE
Has he got pimples? He hates pimples.

KAREN
Quiet!

WILLIE
Pimples! Yay!

KAREN
Shush.
(to Charlie)
I'm sorry, the School gave me your name but I've forgotten it.

CHARLIE
Charlie. Charlie Simms.

KAREN
How are you, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Fine, thanks.

KAREN
Right this way...

Charlie follows Karen as she picks her way down a dark hall littered with toys and a stroller, past an adult work bench, through a kitchen in deep activity with pots working on the stove.

KAREN (contd)
You're available for the whole weekend?

CHARLIE
Yes.

KAREN
Not going home for Thanksgiving?

CHARLIE
No.

KAREN
Good.

She opens the back door, tired wooden steps lead down to a yard.

KAREN (contd)

-- They put him in a Veterans' Home
but he hated it. I told my dad we'd
take him --

8 EXT. REAR, ROSSI HOUSE - DAY

8

Karen leads Charlie across the yard towards a small dark
cottage, an unexpected outcropping in this cramped yard.

KAREN

-- Before you go in, do you mind my
telling you a few things? Don't 'sir'
him, don't light his cigars, and if
he staggers a little when he stands
up, don't pay any attention.

Charlie stops now, stares at the cottage's dark windows. Karen
smiles, trying to displace Charlie's sudden caution.

KAREN (contd)

Charlie, I can tell right away you're
the right person for the job. And
Uncle Frank's going to like you, too.

CHARLIE

Where are you going to be this
weekend?

KAREN

We're driving to Albany. Donny -- my
husband -- he's got family there.

Karen reaches down for a cat who bounds out of a pet door at the
bottom of the cottage's entrance, she knocks, then calls inside.

KAREN (contd)

Do you want Tommy in or out?!

The briefest of silences, then a powerful VOICE:

COLONEL SLADE (V.O.)

LEAVE HIM OUT!

Charlie flinches.

COLONEL SLADE (V.O.) (contd)

He's chasing that calico ginch from
the tract houses!

Karen, gently tossing the cat out into the yard, senses
Charlie's hesitation.

KAREN

(to Charlie)

Down deep, the man is a lump of sugar.

Karen gives Charlie a reassuring nod, and the gentlest of pushes. He enters the cottage, the door closes quietly behind him. Through the silence, Charlie hears the burblings of children as Karen, heading back across the yard to her house, is joined by Francine and Willie.

FRANCINE (V.O.)
He's going to hate him.

WILLIE (V.O.)
Pimples!

9 INT. SLADE'S COTTAGE - DAY

9

Semi-darkness but as the eyes become accustomed, objects start to come into view. Charlie taps on the door frame.

CHARLIE
Sir?

SLADE (V.O.)
Don't call me 'sir!'

CHARLIE
Sorry, I mean, mister -- sir --

SLADE (V.O.)
What are you, a moron?

CHARLIE
No, mister, that is --

Charlie unfolds the squares of paper again, pores over it for help, glances back at Karen's house but she has disappeared inside.

CHARLIE (contd)
Lieutenant, yes sir, Lieutenant -- ?

SLADE (V.O.)
Lieutenant Colonel! Twenty-six years on the line, no one ever busted me four grades before. Get in here, you idiot!

Charlie steps inside, through the crepuscular light the only objects Charlie can discern are some cat food and a bowl of water at the bottom of a bulging bookcase. Coming into view now, a blanket on the wall stitched in black, gray and gold which reads "U.S.M.A. 1965", team and military unit photographs, a picture of the dismissed General MacArthur waving to the crowds on 5th Avenue from the back of an open car.

Through the silence and darkness, a man becomes visible, planted in an armchair in the midst of this dormitory room/Bachelor Officers Quarters. His name is FRANK SLADE, LT. COLONEL (U.S.A. ret.).

SLADE (contd)

Come closer, I want to get a better look at you.

Charlie moves in closer and now, as Slade raises his head to sniff the air, Charlie can make him out better.

Slade is blind, still the man cuts a remarkable figure. In his late-forties, he wears a coat and tie, a pair of jodhpur boots, his chin is chiselled, his posture erect, not an ounce of fat, his neck swiveling slightly as he brings Charlie into his radar, both eyes staring blankly, crow's feet around the corners of them which prove, on closer examination, to be scars.

SLADE (contd)

How is your skin?

CHARLIE

My skin, sir?

SLADE

For chrissake!

CHARLIE

-- I don't know, Mister --

SLADE

'Frank!' Call me Frank! Or Mr. Slade. Or if you must, Colonel!

Slade bangs the oversized silver oak leaf mounted on burnished wood beside him, the plaque slashing into the table. He pinches the end of a cigar, reaches for a Zippo lighter and begins the hit-and-miss business of lighting it. Charlie unconsciously aids him with body English until the flame makes contact, then Slade reaches for a mean bottle of whiskey beside him, splashes the whiskey into a glass with such a vengeance that some of the dark liquid flies up onto his fingers, he waggles them at Charlie and the drops flicker onto Charlie's nose.

SLADE (contd)

Simms, Charles, a Senior. You on Student Aid, Simms?

CHARLIE

Yes, I am.

SLADE

For 'Student Aid' read 'crook.' Your father peddles car telephones at a 300% markup and your mother works on heavy commission in a camera store.

(taps his ashes)

Graduated to it from espresso machines.

Charlie is at a loss.

SLADE (contd)
What are you, dying of some wasting disease?

CHARLIE
I'm right here, sir.

SLADE
I know exactly where your body is.
What I'm looking for is some indication of a brain. Too much football without your helmet?
(cackles)
Lyndon's line on Jerry Ford. Deputy Debriefer, Paris Peace Talks, '68. Shave-tail, snagged a Silver Star, threw me into G-2. How old are you?

CHARLIE
17.

Slade sniffs.

SLADE
Smells more like 18.
(smiles lasciviously)
Get down last night?

The cat pops back through the pet door, crosses to his food. Slade senses him, fondly angles his head towards him.

SLADE (contd)
The old ass man didn't quite get his ashes hauled. You can tell when he comes back hungry. Like a woman whose brains you've just fucked out and she asks you for a cigarette. Where you from?

CHARLIE
Gresham, Oregon.

SLADE
So what does your father do in Gresham, Oregon, count wood chips?

CHARLIE
My stepfather and my mom run a convenience store.

SLADE
7-Eleven, Arco, Allsup's?

CHARLIE
It's an independent.

SLADE
What time they open?

DONNY
Hi, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Hello. I don't know, Mrs. Rossi --
I got the feeling I screwed up.

KAREN
You couldn't have.

CHARLIE
-- It was a bad interview.

KAREN
That was no interview, Charlie, you're
it. You're the only one who showed
up. And you've got to take the job.
He sleeps a lot, you can watch
television, call your girlfriend, I
promise you, an easy three hundred
bucks.

CHARLIE
I don't get an 'easy' feeling.

KAREN
His bark is worse than his bite. The
man grows on you. By Sunday night,
you'll be best friends.

Charlie blinks.

KAREN (contd)
Charlie, please -- I want to get away
with my husband for a few days -- and
Uncle Frank won't come with us. I
could practically leave him alone --
I just feel better having someone
around. Just in case. Please -- ?

Donny turns around now from the bathtub, looks pleadingly at
Charlie. Karen does, too. Together, they wait for his
decision. Finally, Charlie smiles reticently.

CHARLIE
Okay, Mrs. Rossi. Sure.

Karen smiles gratefully at Charlie, turns back to the bathtub,
Francine scoops some suds off her chest, throws them at Charlie
as he backs out.

11 EXT. ROSSI HOUSE - DUSK

11

Charlie exits, shoves his hands into his back pockets, regards
the whole, scruffy Rossi compound, now hurries off into the
twilight and The Baird School.

CHARLIE
Five AM.

SLADE
Close?

CHARLIE
One AM.

SLADE
Hard workers, you got me all
misty-eyed. So, what are you doing
in this sparrow-fart town?

CHARLIE
I attend Baird.

SLADE
'Attend' Baird? I know you go to The
Baird School. The point is how do you
afford it, even with Student Aid plus
the folks back home hustling the Corn
Nuts?

CHARLIE
I won a National Merit Scholarship.

Silence.

SLADE
Hoo-rah.

There is a tapping at a window pane of the door which opens onto
the yard. Francine is there.

SLADE (contd)
Who's that?!

Francine rattles her fingers on the glass, sticks her tongue
out, makes a crazy face at Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
Is that that little piece of tail?!
Get her out of here!

He hurls a rubber mouse at the door, it slams against the
window, falls to the floor, little bells ring gently. Slade
tilts his head in the direction of Karen's house.

SLADE (contd)
I can't believe they're my blood. The
IQ of sloths and the manners of
banshees. A mechanic and a homemaker.
He knows as much about cars as a
beauty queen and she bakes cookies
that taste like wing nuts. As for the
tots, they're twits. Did you say you
had a skin condition, son? I like my
aides to be presentable.

Charlie feels his face.

CHARLIE

I had a few zits, sir.
(into himself)
My roommate lent me his Clinique...
he's from Chestnut Hill and --

SLADE

'The History of My Skin' by Charles
Simms. Are you patronizing me,
Peewee? Giving me the old Prep School
palaver? The Baird School. A bunch
of runny-nosed snots in tweed jackets
studying to be George Bush.

CHARLIE

President Bush, I believe, went to
Andover.

SLADE

Don't sharpshoot me, punk. You'll
give me forty then you'll give me
forty more, then you'll pull K.P. The
grease trap. I'll bury your nose in
Enlisted Man's crud until you don't
know which end is up! What do you
want?!

CHARLIE

A job, Colonel Slade. I'm trying to
make my plane fare home for Christmas.

Slade drains his drink, starts the dangerous ceremony of
lighting a fresh cigar, hits a button and country music PLAYS.
Charlie is in thrall.

After a few moments, Slade shuts the music off.

SLADE

Are you still hanging around,
Poormouth? Convenience store, my ass.
Hustling Jalapeno dips to the
Appleseeds. Dis-missed!

Charlie exits quickly, hurries across the yard to Karen's house.

10 INT. KAREN'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

10

Karen is bathing Francine, washing up Willie is DONNY, her
husband, a blue-collar guy.

CHARLIE

Mrs. Rossi -- ?

Karen eagerly turns around from the tub to Charlie.

KAREN

Charlie, this is Donny.

12 EXT. BAIRD SCHOOL - QUADRANGLE - NIGHT 12

The place quiet at night, a couple of lights burning in the Administration Building, the library, and the science labs.

13 INT. DEAN TRASK'S OFFICE - NIGHT 13

Dean Trask is working overtime, signing letters as Mrs. Hunsaker prepares them in her outer office.

14 INT. BAIRD LIBRARY - NIGHT 14

Charlie is stamping out the books of the last student before closing. The student is George. Charlie pauses over one of the books.

CHARLIE

This can't go out, it's on Reserve.

GEORGE

Here's the thing. I need it for tonight. Thanksgiving quiz with Big Shit Preston in the morning.

CHARLIE

That's why he put it on Reserve. We only got one copy.

GEORGE

So I'll heave it through the slot in the A.M. Chas, I got to do an all night, all frantic. Without this book, I'm dead.

Charlie studies George.

CHARLIE

If it's not back by 7:30, it's my ass --

GEORGE

I promise.

Charlie shrugs, smiles.

CHARLIE

Okay. Sure.

George grabs the book, Charlie reaches for a window pole by the desk.

GEORGE

You headed back, I'll wait for you.

CHARLIE

Give me a minute.

Charlie closes the top of one of the great windows with a pole, starts pulling down shades to half-mast. George stands by, doesn't help.

15 EXT. DEAN TRASK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

15

The Dean's maroon Jaguar is parked outside. Harry approaches it stealthily, bends over the trunk, pops it open with a crowbar. Nearby, a concrete mixer from a small landscaping operation has been resting overnight beside a garden wall. Jimmy jabs a bag of concrete mix with a spade, Trent picks up the bag and heaves the contents into the mixer. Harry switches the mixer on, it THUMPS rhythmically. He picks up the nozzle of the mixer's thick hose and jogs back to the car with it, as the first drops of concrete squeeze out.

16 INT. BAIRD LIBRARY - NIGHT

16

Charlie and George bounce down the marble steps leading to the lobby of the building.

17 INT. DEAN TRASK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

17

Mrs. Hunsaker, all bundled up against the November chill, waves good night to Dean Trask as he finishes signing the day's correspondence.

18 EXT. DEAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

18

The trunk of Dean Trask's Jaguar is open, the concrete mixer is churning, concrete pumping into the hose, Harry shooting the high-pressure stream into the trunk of the car.

19 EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

19

Charlie and George emerge.

CHARLIE

...Hold on, got to get the door.

George waits as Charlie locks up, turns out the last indoor light, sets an outdoor light.

20 EXT. THE BAIRD SCHOOL - NIGHT

20

Mrs. Hunsaker walks placidly across the silent quadrangle. But now her eyebrows knit at the SOUND of the concrete mixer.

21 EXT. THE BAIRD SCHOOL - CHAPEL - NIGHT

21

George and Charlie heading along a path to the dormitories.

GEORGE

...God, can you wait to get out of this dump?

CHARLIE

Where you going skiing again? Sugar Loaf?

GEORGE

Bush, Chas, Bush, Sugarbush --

George laughs, but now the SOUND of the concrete mixer gets his attention. He and Charlie glance down towards the Dean's house, see Harry, Trent and Jimmy busy around the concrete mixer.

22 EXT. DEAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

22

Something makes the busy Harry look up, he sees the figure of Mrs. Hunsaker approaching. Harry drops the hose, Jimmy slams the car trunk, Trent switches off the mixer and the three of them take off. Sudden silence.

From a distance, George and Charlie are observing the scene, when Mrs. Hunsaker appears behind them.

MRS. HUNSAKER

Who was that?

George looks at Charlie, Charlie looks at George.

MRS. HUNSAKER (contd)

Who were those boys? What were they doing?

GEORGE

I don't know, ma'am.

MRS. HUNSAKER

Charles?

CHARLIE

Ummm --

Mrs. Hunsaker now scrutinizes the exterior of the Dean's house, but all is absolutely quiet. The silence is interrupted by a 1970 Plymouth Valiant, in mint condition, pulling up at the curb at the end of the quadrangle path.

GEORGE

Isn't that your husband, Mrs. Hunsaker?

Mrs. Hunsaker glances at her watch, checks around again but all is still and she crosses the "yard" to her car.

23 EXT. DEAN TRASK'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

23

Trask heads out into the brisk morning air, his pipe at a jaunty angle, is about to climb into his Jaguar, glances down, notices it has a flat rear tire. He sighs, opens the door on the driver side, reaches in to pop the trunk release, then walks around to the back to get out the jack. But the trunk is filled with solid concrete and now with a CRACK, the other rear tire gives way and the entire car tilts skywards as it settles back on its rear axles.

A hysterical, contemptuous ROAR from the hill overlooking the Dean's house, Trask looks up, half the student body has assembled to observe him.

24 INT. DINING HALL - MORNING

24

Piled high outside the door is weekend luggage, laundry bags, backpacks, hockey sticks taped to overnight valises. In the crowded dining hall, Harry chats casually with George, Trent and Jimmy.

GEORGE

...It's the timing that I love. The morning of Thanksgiving weekend. What the hell's he going to do now --

HARRY

(to George)

...You didn't hear anything, you didn't see anything.

GEORGE

And dammit, I didn't get to do anything.

HARRY

You were too busy grinding for Preston's quiz. If you're not careful, George, you're going to end up an Achiever.

GEORGE

I almost shat when the old bag --

HARRY

She doesn't know a thing.

Trent motions to Harry. They all fall silent as Charlie darts through the dining hall doors just before they close, takes the closest seat available -- at Harry's table.

HARRY (contd)

What about you, Oregon?

CHARLIE

Huh?

HARRY

Did you see anything?

Charlie glances casually at Harry, now at George, he is very aware of what is in the air. He reaches down the table for a serving bowl swimming with poached eggs.

GEORGE

You get a Dean's slip, Chas?

George and Harry are studying Charlie, he chooses not to respond to George, but his eyes are on Harry as he answers.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I got one.

Charlie dips into the bowl, Harry stares with a mixture of wonder and contempt as Charlie slides a pair of watery eggs onto a cold piece of toast.

25 INT. DEAN TRASK'S OFFICE - MORNING

25

Dean Trask is at his window, looking down at the "yard" and the maelstrom of students streaming out for the Thanksgiving holiday as vans, buses and a few fancy private cars await them in the street.

Trask turns back from the window to George and Charlie who are seated in chairs in front of his desk. He closes his door.

TRASK

Mr. Simms -- Mr. Willis --

Charlie comes to semi-attention in his chair, but George is very relaxed.

TRASK (contd)

Mrs. Hunsaker says both of you gentlemen were at a vantage point last night to observe who was responsible for this -- ah -- stunt.

Silence.

TRASK (contd)

Who was it?

GEORGE

I really couldn't tell you, sir. I thought it was weird the mixer was working at night but by the time I pulled focus, they were gone.

TRASK

Mr. Simms?

CHARLIE

I couldn't say for sure.

TRASK

Okay, for not sure?

CHARLIE

Uh -- I don't know -- uh...

Dean Trask surveys Charlie and George, he takes his time before he resumes.

TRASK

That automobile is not just a possession of mine. That automobile was presented to me by the Board of Trustees.

(MORE)

TRASK (contd)
It is a symbol of the standard of
excellence for which this school is
known. And I will not have it
tarnished.

GEORGE
The automobile?

A cold smile from Trask.

TRASK
The standard, Mr. Willis.

He glances from George to Charlie.

TRASK (contd)
What is your position, Mr. Simms?

CHARLIE
On what, sir?

TRASK
On preserving the reputation of Baird?

CHARLIE
I'm for Baird.

TRASK
Then who did it?

CHARLIE
I couldn't say for sure.

TRASK
Do you know what a Class B felony is,
Mr. Willis?

George shakes his head "no."

TRASK (contd)
Mr. Simms?

CHARLIE
No, sir.

TRASK
It's a crime punishable by up to seven
years in the State Penitentiary in
Concord. Ever visited our prison in
Concord?

No response.

TRASK (contd)

It is not a pleasant place. That is where I am sending the instigators of this event and, unless you tell me fully and completely what happened, I'm going to see to it you end up there as well on whatever charges I can muster for not reporting the commission of the crime. Do I make myself clear?

GEORGE

Yes, sir.

CHARLIE

Yes, sir.

TRASK

Then what have you gentlemen got to say?

Silence.

TRASK (contd)

Very well. First thing Monday morning, when we're all over our big Thanksgiving weekend, I'm convening a special session of the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee. As this is a matter which concerns the whole school, the entire student body will be present. There will be no classes, no activities, nothing will transpire at this institution until that proceeding is concluded. And if at that time we are no further along than we are now, I will expel you both and turn this matter over to Andrew Runkle, the Attorney General of this state. We were in the same class at Dartmouth. Andy is a very good friend of mine.

He waits for Charlie and George to speak, but they remain silent.

TRASK (contd)

Mr. Willis, would you excuse us?

GEORGE

Pardon, sir?

TRASK

Wait outside with Mrs. Hunsaker.

George nods anxiously, hurries out. Trask, silent for a moment, regards Charlie.

TRASK (contd)
One of the few perks of this office
is that I am empowered to handle
certain matters on my own, as I see
fit. Do you understand?

CHARLIE
Yes, sir.

TRASK
Good. The Dean of Admissions at
Harvard and I have an arrangement.
Along with the usual sheaf of
applicants submitted by Baird of which
virtually two thirds are guaranteed
admittance, I add one name, somebody
who is a standout and yet
underprivileged. A student who cannot
afford to pay the board and tuition
in Cambridge. Do you know on whose
behalf I'd drafted a memo this year?

CHARLIE
No, sir.

TRASK
You. You, Mr. Simms.

After a moment.

TRASK (contd)
Now can you tell me who did it?

After another moment.

CHARLIE
No, sir, I can't.

TRASK
You are aware of what's at stake,
aren't you?

CHARLIE
Harvard or jail.

Trask studies him.

TRASK
Take the weekend to think about it,
Mr. Simms. Good morning.

Charlie gets up and goes.

26 EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

26

George hurries down the steps with a shaken Charlie, and out of
the Administration Building.

GEORGE
What'd he say?

CHARLIE
Nothing.

GEORGE
What do you mean, 'nothing'?

CHARLIE
The same thing he said to both of us,
he just said it over to me.

GEORGE
He's good-cop, bad-copping us. He
knows I'm Old Guard, you're fringe.
He's going to bear down on me, soft
soap you. Did he try to soft soap
you?

CHARLIE
Uhh -- no.

GEORGE
I'm getting a slight panic pulse from
you, Charlie. Are you panicking?

CHARLIE
A little.

GEORGE
You're on scholarship, right?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

GEORGE
On scholarship from Oregon at Baird.
You're a long way from home, Chas.

CHARLIE
What's that got to do with anything?

GEORGE
Well, I don't know how they do it out
there but this is how we do it here.
We stick together. It's us against
them, no matter what. We don't tell
our parents and we don't cover our
ass. Stonewall everybody and above
all never, never, leave any of us
twisting in the wind.

CHARLIE
What's that got to do with my being
on scholarship?

GEORGE
Just trying to bring you up to speed.

CHARLIE

Thanks.

GEORGE

Tell you what. Give me a few hours to figure out the moves. Call me tonight in Vermont. We'll be at the Sugarbush Lodge.

CHARLIE

All right.

GEORGE

You okay?

CHARLIE

Yeah, I guess so.

Charlie eases away, heads for one of the classroom buildings. George keeps an eye on him until he disappears.

27 INT. ROSSI HOUSE - WATER STREET - AFTERNOON

27

Chaos as Karen and Donny and the children get ready to depart, K-Mart luggage and shopping bags, the kids running sprints in the kitchen on their tricycles as Donny tries to bundle them up while Karen gives Charlie last-minute instructions.

KAREN

-- Try to keep him down to four drinks a day.

DONNY

If you can keep him down to forty, you're doing good.

KAREN

We try to water them down a little. Do you know how to do that -- ?

DONNY

(remonstrating)
Honey --

KAREN

Okay, okay. All his food is in the freezer. Vegetable soup, a nice fish casserole. There's more than enough for both of you -- he's not much of an eater.

DONNY

It's a long drive, honey --

KAREN

Get the kids ready, I'll be right out.

Donny squeezes Charlie's shoulder, gives him a smile of reassurance, goes to get the kids' coats.

FRANCINE

Mommy, Mommy, don't forget Uncle
Frank's walk --

WILLIE

Yay, yay, his walk -- !

Francine and Willie ditch their trikes and launch into their version of a drunk -- Ben Blue/W.C. Fields/Foster Brooks rolled into one, as rendered by two toddlers.

KAREN

Oh yeah, you got to air him out a
little every day.

Charlie observes the kids' performance anxiously.

KAREN (contd)

Why don't you go back there and get
oriented? I'll be out in a minute and
give you telephone numbers and stuff.

She turns back to button up the children, and Donny gathers their belongings as Charlie heads across the backyard to the cottage.

28 INT. SLADE'S COTTAGE - AFTERNOON

28

The SOUND of Slade on the telephone as Charlie enters. Charlie glances around, the place is in transition, drawers open, various clothing items slung over chairs. Near a small refrigerator in an alcove, a huge mound of cat food and a large bowl of water.

Charlie pokes his head in the bedroom. Slade, aware of Charlie immediately, waves him inside.

SLADE

(into phone)

Is that you, Beautiful?...Yeah, we
spoke yesterday. Did you have a glass
of wine with lunch, you sound a little
dusky?

(chuckles dirtily)

Hmmh...

Charlie clears his throat politely.

SLADE (contd)

(irritated)

Just a minute, Sweetheart...

(to Charlie)

My dress blues, get them out, they're
in a garment bag in the closet. Check
the top dresser drawer, take out the
shoulder boards and affix them
shoulders right and left ASAP.

Slade carries the phone into the sitting room as a bewildered Charlie crosses into the bedroom.

SLADE (contd)

(phone)

You know I'm not the kind of guy that likes to rush things but I am catching a 4 o'clock at Logan and I'm looking out my window and there's no taxi in sight...Has Chet invested in a radio yet?...Well, get your driver on it and tell him to get a move on...

(a seductive whisper)

Some kind of body must go with that bedroom voice. One day I'm going to swing by and get a look at it.

Charlie looks around the bedroom, the bed is stripped military-style, a pillow without a case rests on a blanket at the foot of a sheetless mattress. Charlie blinks at the bed, the sudden WHACK of a cane against the door jamb.

SLADE (contd)

My Val-Pak's underneath, put the boards on the blues and fold them in.

CHARLIE

We going someplace?

SLADE

What business is it of yours?

Charlie shrugs innocently.

SLADE (contd)

Don't shrug, you imbecile. I'm blind. Save your body language for the bimbi. Now get out my gear!

Slade sniffs the air.

SLADE (contd)

What time is it, it's got to be about three and the goddamn Flintstones haven't left yet.

Charlie glances out the window.

CHARLIE

Here comes Mrs. Rossi now.

Slade reaches out and grabs Charlie.

SLADE

I said good-bye to her twice, what has she got, separation anxiety? Cut her off at the door!

He pushes Charlie towards the door, keeping a hand on him to stay oriented. Karen knocks gently, Charlie opens it. Slade calls to her over Charlie's shoulder.

SLADE (contd)
Hi, honey! 'Bye, honey!

Karen reaches out, hands Charlie a folded piece of paper, provoking a wary Slade to crowd into the doorway.

KAREN
(to Charlie)
This is where we'll be --

In her rush, Karen takes a moment now. Purposefully, she leans up to kiss Slade and he, in return, searches her face with his hand. Charlie watches, entranced by the movement of Slade's head which swivels like a performing seal as he scans Karen's presence.

KAREN (contd)
I wish you were coming with us.

SLADE
Thanks. Maybe next time.

Now Karen hurries away, Slade ducking back in the house as a slightly forlorn Charlie remains in the doorway watching her go.

29 EXT. REAR, ROSSI HOUSE - DAY

29

Karen strides quickly across the yard towards the car, where Donny and the children are waiting.

KAREN
Good luck, Charlie. Don't let him drink too much!

She climbs in the car, leans out the window.

KAREN (contd)
And no 900 numbers! He loves to talk dirty!

The Rossis and their children drive away. Through the rear window a disappearing Francine reprises her staggering drunk routine for Charlie.

SLADE (V.O.)
Get to work!

30 INT. SLADE'S COTTAGE - DAY

30

Charlie hurries back inside, Slade is struggling with a piece of luggage under his bed, Charlie bends to help him, pulls out a military bag, it is real pro, all polished leather and khaki. Slade straightens up and busies himself attending to his clothes as, behind him, the straps on the bag confound Charlie.

SLADE
What is it, the L-Buckles? Never in
the Boy Scouts, sluggo?

CHARLIE
Made tenderfoot.

SLADE
Tenderfoot, my foot! A convenience
store Mama's boy! Give it to me.

In order to guide Slade back to the bag on the bed, Charlie
takes Slade's arm, but Slade slaps Charlie's hand away
violently.

SLADE (contd)
Touch me again and I'll kill you, you
little son-of-a-bitch.

Charlie does a "hands off!" as if he'd touched a burning
skillet.

SLADE (contd)
I touch you! Now go get my
shoulder-boards.

A chastened Charlie slides the bag over to Slade, in an instant
Slade has unfastened the buckles as Charlie reaches into the top
of the Colonel's bureau; medals, ribbons, a ceremonial dagger, a
trove of military honors in dusty disarray.

SLADE (contd)
The epaulets with the silver oak leaf!

Charlie locates the Lt. Colonel insignia, lifts the garment bag
out of the closet, Slade zips it open, affixes the shoulder
boards, expertly folds the dress uniform into the Val-Pak, zips
it shut.

SLADE (contd)
We're all set.

CHARLIE
For what?

SLADE
See if the cab is here.

CHARLIE
Where are we going?

SLADE
Freak Show Central.

CHARLIE
Where's that?

SLADE
New York City.

Charlie blinks.

SLADE (contd)
That's located in New York State, son.

CHARLIE
Mrs. Rossi didn't say anything about
going anywhere.

SLADE
She forgot.

Charlie measures him.

CHARLIE
Well -- maybe we should wait and call
her. She gave me her number --

SLADE
They just hit the road. Between piss
calls for those kids and that
Hupmobile he drives, by the time they
get to Albany it'll be opening day at
Saratoga.

CHARLIE
I can't go to New York.

SLADE
Why not?

CHARLIE
It's too much responsibility.

SLADE
No, it isn't. I had a lot of
seventeen year olds in my first
platoon.

Slade reaches into his rear trouser pocket.

SLADE (contd)
Tickets --
 (right trouser
 pocket)
Money --
 (inside suit coat
 pocket)
Speech.

He smiles devilishly at Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
An old Washington joke.
 (runs his tongue over
 his teeth)
From my days with Lyndon.

The HONK of a horn.

SLADE (contd)
I knew I could count on
Transportation. Are you ready?

Charlie, fighting for time, remains silent.

SLADE (contd)
Hello! This is not Panmunjom, a
simple 'yes' will do.

CHARLIE
Umm --

SLADE
That's what I like to hear! Get my
bag.

Slade crouches and Tommy, the cat, leaps into his arms.

SLADE (contd)
(nuzzling the cat)
When in doubt, Tomster, fuck.

The horn HONKS again, he dumps Tommy, reaches for Charlie's arm
and they head out.

SLADE (contd)
Don't rush. They always hold the
plane for field grade officers.

31 EXT. LOGAN AIRPORT - BOSTON - AFTERNOON

31

A taxi pulls up to the curb, its door flies open and a cane
probes the air as curbside, a SKYCAP hustles to greet the
arriving passengers. Charlie, emerging from the other door,
hurries around to the trunk for the bag as Slade hands the
Skycap the tickets.

SKYCAP
Yes sir, two for the shuttle to New
York --

SLADE
We're not shuttling anywhere, we're
riding First Class!

The Skycap checks the tickets.

SKYCAP
Yes sir, Mr. Simms and Colonel Slade.
First Class.

As the Skycap takes the bag, Charlie turns to Slade.

CHARLIE
You bought a ticket for me? What made
you think I'd go to New York?

SLADE

Are you some chicken-shit who sticks
to the job description?

The Skycap staples a baggage check to the tickets. Charlie reaches for them but Slade bashes his hand away, takes them himself. Slade extends a ten-spot to the Skycap who happily accepts it.

SLADE (contd)

(to the Skycap)

As you were, Sarge --

The Skycap salutes as Slade strides off holding his arm out, Charlie running to catch up to it.

SLADE (contd)

Are you blind?

CHARLIE

Of course not --

SLADE

Then what are you taking my goddamn
arm for, I take your arm.

CHARLIE

Sorry --

SLADE

Don't be sorry, how would you know?
You've been watching MTV all your
life.

CHARLIE

Colonel, I can't go to New York, hey
look, I'm --

SLADE

Don't 'hey, look' me! This is New
York we're talking about. This is an
opportunity, squirt. Now listen up.
There are two kinds of people in this
world. Working Stiffs who stick to
the lesson plan, and Wild Talents who
go for the brass ring. Which are you
going to be?

Before Charlie can answer --

SLADE (contd)

Never mind, I'll take care of you.

Slade takes Charlie by the arm, squeezes his bicep, Charlie grimaces.

SLADE (contd)
 Two oysters wrapped in rags.
 (to Charlie)
 Half step ahead. Guide on, soldier.

Charlie leads the way, the Colonel striding on, swinging his cane as he goes, his head tilted at a sharp angle that seems to slash through the outside world.

SLADE (contd)
 And stay on the right side, there are
 women on the left.

They switch sides, a salacious smile on the Colonel's lips as he aims his nose at every female passerby.

32 INT. BOSTON - NEW YORK 737 - AFTERNOON

32

An uncrowded plane, Slade's seat is on the aisle, he tunes his radar to the approach of a shapely Flight Attendant.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Can I get you gentlemen anything to
 drink?

SLADE
 Triple Jack Daniels, water back.

Charlie winces, makes a narrow gesture to the Flight Attendant with his thumb and forefinger, "water it." She nods conspiratorially.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 (to Charlie)
 And for you, sir?

CHARLIE
 Nothing.

SLADE
 It's First Class, Peewee, it comes
 with the fare.

CHARLIE
 No, thanks.

SLADE
 What are you, a Temperance Union?

CHARLIE
 I don't want anything --

SLADE
 (to Flight Attendant)
 To complete the order, Daphne, give
 Andy Hardy here a Diet Slice, water
 back.

The Flight Attendant moves off.

CHARLIE
How did you know her name?

SLADE
She's wearing Floris. That's English.
But her voice is pure California
chickie. California chickie bucking
for English lady. So I call her
Daphne.

(pokes an elbow)
Big things may happen to that little
thing of yours.

CHARLIE
Look, Colonel, I'll get you to New
York but then I'm going to have to
turn right around and come back.

SLADE
Of course you will.

The Flight Attendant returns with Slade's drink, hurries away.
He takes a sip, makes a face.

SLADE (contd)
Who's mixing the drinks here, The
Flintstones?

He swallows a big gulp anyway.

SLADE (contd)
Try that again, you're getting out at
Hartford.

CHARLIE
The flight is non-stop.

SLADE
You'll get out at Hartford anyway.

CHARLIE
Wish I could. I don't belong on this
plane. I don't belong in New York.

SLADE
Don't worry about 'belonging,' sonny,
there's only one club to belong to.
That's your own. Make your own rules,
be your own Board of Governors. Pay
your own dues.

Slade drains his drink, reaches into his vest pocket for a
flask, splashes more dark liquid over the watery rocks, filling
it to the edge. Charlie watches in horror.

CHARLIE
Why are we going to New York?

SLADE

All information will be given on a need-to-know basis.

(craning his head)

Where's Daphne? Let's get her down here.

CHARLIE

She's way in the back.

Slade sighs.

SLADE

The tail's in the tail.

He sniffs again.

SLADE (contd)

I can still smell her. Women. Who made them? God was a fucking genius. What a mind the guy must've had. The hair -- they say the hair is everything. Have you ever buried your nose in a mountain of curls and just wanted to go to sleep forever? And lips that when they touch yours are that first swallow of wine after you've just crossed the desert?

Slade is deep into a reverie.

SLADE (contd)

Tits. Big ones, little ones, bury your face in them and nipples that stare at you like secret searchlights. Legs, I don't care if they're Greek columns or second-hand Steinways, between them is a passport to heaven. Don't think I can't see women because I can't see women. I'm a Female Traffic Controller, Charlie, I can bring them in. With my nose, with my ears. What is it about them? "What do they want?" Who cares what they want. They're wonderful. Yes, Mr. Simms, there are only two syllables in this whole wide world worth hearing -- Pussy!

Charlie, struck dumb by Slade's passion, remains silent.

SLADE (contd)

Are you listening to me? I'm giving you pearls here.

CHARLIE

I guess you really like women.

SLADE
Above all things.

Slade refills his drink, there is no ice left, so he downs it straight. A helpless Charlie can only watch.

SLADE (contd)
-- A very, very distant second is a Ferrari.
(a moment)
This air jockey's not bad. 450 knots, about 10,000 feet.

CHARLIE
How do you know?

SLADE
Charles, this is just the start of your education.

33 EXT. WALDORF-ASTORIA HOTEL - NIGHT

33

A taxi pulls into the line of unloading limos, unloading taxis, the main entrance redolent with the hustle and bustle of well-coiffed women and sharp men, expensive luggage waiting by shiny-brass hydrants to be sent upstairs, a burly Doorman with huge epaulets and rows of gold buttons, blowing the hell out of a silver whistle.

Charlie is seated in the taxi next to the Colonel. Peering out the window at the swanky sights, Charlie seems overcome. The Doorman swings their door open.

CHARLIE
(to Slade)
Where are we?

SLADE
(Nirvana)
The Waldorf-Astoria.

34 INT. WALDORF LOBBY - NIGHT

34

Slade and Charlie follow JAIME, their bellman, up the steps and into the giant lobby, floor-to-ceiling murals, chamber music issuing from public rooms.

SLADE
...It's the last of the great lobbies.
Relax in an easy chair, smoke a Havana. Watch the women go by and when you've found the right one, an urn of sand to douse your cigar.

Jaime waits patiently until Charlie and Slade catch up.

SLADE (contd)
 ...Last time I was here was with two
 of Madame Nhu's generals. Couldn't
 shoot an azimuth, but could they find
 the coordinates for a hooker? Talk
 about ass-men. Those little
 Vietnamese bandits were not lacking
 for testosterone. No sir!

They arrive at the desk.

SLADE (contd)
 Yes sir, my kind of inn.

JAIME
 (to Clerk)
 Colonel Slade and Mr. Simms.

CLERK
 We have your reservation right here,
 Colonel --

SLADE
 (intimately)
 Mr. Gilbert around -- or is he back
 on days?

The Clerk is momentarily puzzled.

SLADE (contd)
 (impatient)
 You know, the honcho -- what have they
 done, booted him upstairs?

CLERK
 Oh yes...Mr. Gilbert. He's not been
 with us for a number of years.

Slade sniffs, Charlie remains all bewildered by the
 surroundings.

CLERK (contd)
 ...We've got a nice junior executive
 for you, Colonel.

SLADE
 Delete the 'junior.'

CLERK
 Very good, sir.

The Clerk gives a different set of keys to Jaime.

JAIME
 Right this way, gentlemen. 2203.
 Beautiful corner suite.

Slade seems appeased, he makes an abrupt right turn.

JAIME (contd)
 (to Slade)
 No sir, this way.

SLADE
 The elevators are over here!

JAIME
 I'm sorry, Colonel, the doors were
 changed to the other side of the
 shaft.

SLADE
 When?

JAIME
 I think about five years ago.

Slade takes a deep intake of breath.

SLADE
 They're putting too much Lysol in the
 heads.
 (to Charlie)
 Follow him.

Charlie follows Jaime, Slade on Charlie's arm as they approach
 the elevators.

SLADE (contd)
 (to Charlie)
 ...First time I came here was with the
 G-2 from Brussels. He had a Ferrari.
 I had to hold the door every day for
 the fucker, never even offered me a
 ride...

35 INT. ELEVATOR - WALDORF - NIGHT

35

Slade and Charlie are side-by-side behind Jaime who presides
 over the luggage. Behind them in a corner of the elevator, an
 elderly Racquet Club-type in a Trilby hat.

SLADE
 (to Jaime)
 What's your name?

JAIME
 Jaime.

SLADE
 Okay, Hyman, should I want some of --
 (an indefinable
 gesture)
 ...this...I call for you? Or, who's
 working the street, the doorman?

JAIME
 Sir -- sir, I --

Jaime at a loss, turns to Charlie for help.

SLADE
Whose department is it, Hyman?

Jaime gestures helplessly to Charlie.

CHARLIE
(to Slade, gently)
Colonel, I think he's trying to tell
you he doesn't really know --

SLADE
Hey! Don't translate for me! I know
how to talk to a man in uniform!

The sudden tension in the elevator subsides as Slade peers over his shoulder at the man in the corner, smiles, turns back to Jaime, knowingly.

SLADE (contd)
I'm with you, Hyman. Classified.
Later.

36 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NIGHT

36

Jaime waits discreetly as Slade riffles through a sheaf of bills.

SLADE
Spread the word --

Slade hands Jaime a generous tip.

SLADE (contd)
And the intelligence will be
forthcoming?

JAIME
Sir?

SLADE
On the escort scene!

JAIME
Uhh -- yes, sir. And welcome to the
Waldorf.

Jaime goes.

SLADE
Puerto Ricans always made the best
infantrymen.

Slade taps his way around the room, orienting himself to the area. He comes to a dead end against a wall, turns and stumbles into the mini-bar. He discerns the shape of it with his cane.

SLADE (contd)
Give me an inventory.

Charlie opens the mini-bar as Slade locates the telephone nearby.

SLADE (contd)
(phone)
Get me '21'.

Charlie squats by the mini-bar, searching through the contents.

SLADE (contd)
(phone)
Is Sheldon or Mac there?

While Slade waits, Charlie reports to him on the contents of the mini-bar.

CHARLIE
Early Times, Jim Beam. Lots of little bottles...

Slade makes a face.

SLADE
Quartermaster's on the take again.
(into phone)
...This is Colonel Frank Slade, one of your old regulars. Used to come in with General Garbisch...
(smiles)
Well, that's probably because he's at Arlington, six feet under. Now listen up, I want a table for two, and I'm talking the fireplace up front. 8:15.

He taps the phone cradle, disconnecting his phone call.

SLADE (contd)
(to Charlie)
Clear them little bottles out. Call Hyman when I get off, tell him I want it wall-to-wall with John Daniels.

CHARLIE
You mean Jack Daniels?

SLADE
He may be Jack to you but when you know him as well as I do --
(into phone)
Colonel Slade...get me a limo for 8 o'clock.

Slade hangs up, takes a swig from his flask, a deep, satisfied intake of breath through his nose.

SLADE (contd)
 (to Charlie)
 What are you drinking?

Charlie, to avoid an answer, keeps rearranging the contents of the mini-bar. Impatient, Slade holds out his flask to Charlie.

CHARLIE
 No thanks, I don't use it.

SLADE
 What's useful about it?!

CHARLIE
 I dunno. Hey look, Colonel, I gotta go.

SLADE
 Where're you going?

CHARLIE
 I have to get back to school, I got some real important stuff I got to take care of.

SLADE
 Very well. But I never let my aides leave on an empty stomach. You'll dine with me, and then my driver will transport you to the airport for the Boston shuttle departing at 2200 hours. Unpack my bag, I'm going to christen the latrine.

Slade gets up, breaks into a little two-step as he heads for the bathroom.

SLADE (contd)
 ...Feels like morning of the Notre Dame game.
 (sings)
 'Sons of Mars and Thunder
 Rip that line asunder
 Carry on to victory -- '

He shuts the bathroom door. Charlie opens Slade's bag, starts to unpack for him.

37 INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Slade looks dazzling in an expensive suit. Charlie, still in his rumpled sweater, slumped in the rear seat next to Slade, seems a thousand miles away. Slade pushes a button, his window rolls down, Slade turning his head this way and that.

SLADE
New York, New York -- smells good.
(a moment)
What have we got, a red light?
Nothing like a red light on Park
Avenue. All those tits hurrying to
cross the street -- Paradise! What's
the matter with you?

CHARLIE
With me?

SLADE
The car feels heavy, you know why?
Because you've got the fucking weight
of the world on your shoulders.

CHARLIE
I have a little problem at school --

SLADE
Spit it out.

CHARLIE
No big deal. Where're we going again?
Twenty-what?

SLADE
So it's no big deal? Then why is it
'real important stuff'?

CHARLIE
Why is what?

SLADE
The 'little problem'. Been banging
the headmaster's daughter?

Charlie, giving in to the interrogation, sighs.

CHARLIE
I'm in a little trouble --

SLADE
What kind of trouble?

CHARLIE
I saw some guys doing something --

SLADE
Doing what?

Charlie falls silent.

SLADE (contd)
To tell or not to tell -- or it's your
ass.

CHARLIE
How did you know that?

SLADE
I didn't run S-2 for nothing.

CHARLIE
'S-2?'

SLADE
Intelligence! Give me the details.

Charlie hesitates under Slade's glare.

CHARLIE
Well, you see there's this guy, Harry,
he's this real rich kid and he kind
of runs things, and --

SLADE
Who else -- ?

CHARLIE
This other guy, George. He didn't do
anything. But he and I saw Harry and
his guys do something.

SLADE
George a friend of yours?

CHARLIE
He's not my friend but he's okay.

SLADE
You trust him?

CHARLIE
Yeah. Well, I guess so.

SLADE
Is he on scholarship, too?

CHARLIE
No. Why?

Slade leans forward.

SLADE
What's your name, driver?

MANNY
Manny, sir.

SLADE
Manny, do you know Hyman?

MANNY
Hyman?

SLADE
Hyman, the baggage-smasher at the
Waldorf.

CHARLIE
(to Slade)
I think his name is Jaime.

SLADE
That's him. Jaime.

MANNY
Oh, Jaime Esperanza-Chavez?

SLADE
I didn't ask for his lineage, I asked
whether you knew him.

MANNY
Yes sir, I do.

SLADE
Jaime any good at getting escorts?

MANNY
I wouldn't know.

SLADE
What would you know?

MANNY
About what?

SLADE
About you-know-what!

Manny, in troubled bewilderment, squints.

SLADE (contd)
Well -- ?

MANNY
Maybe I could manage something.

SLADE
You mean for a fee?

MANNY
Let me think about this, sir --

SLADE
I'm talking top-of-the-line.

Slade turns to Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
Okay, we got Harry, we got George.
And we got trouble. They're rich,
you're poor.
(MORE)

SLADE (contd)
But you want to get rich. You want
to graduate from Baird and become
a rich bigshot. Like them, right?

CHARLIE
No, it's not that way at all --

Manny pulls up to the curb.

MANNY
Here we are, '21'.

38 EXT. "21" - NIGHT

38

The "21" Doorman opens Slade's door, Slade emerges followed by
Charlie.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
Lighten up. When we get into dinner,
I'll tell you what to do. Meanwhile,
let go of it, for Christ's sake...

39 INT. "21" - NIGHT

39

The MAITRE D' leads Slade and Charlie into the dining room.

SLADE
Where are you taking us?

MAITRE D'
We have a nice table for you in our
new East Room.

Slade, his hand on Charlie's arm, stops. The Maitre d',
unaware, continues on.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
-- By the fireplace.

Charlie heads for the fireplace, there is a vacant table nearby,
Slade feels the chairs, takes a seat as if he owned the place.

SLADE (contd)
This'll do.

The Maitre d' reappears.

MAITRE D'
This table is reserved, sir.

SLADE
I appreciate your holding it for us.
Menus, please, and a double Jack
Daniels on the rocks.

A Cloakroom Attendant hands the resigned Maitre d' an all-purpose blazer.

MAITRE D'
(to Charlie)
Perhaps you'll be more comfortable in this, sir.

He helps Charlie on with the jacket, the sleeves a bit long, the shoulders too tight.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
You look great.

The Maitre d' gives Slade and Charlie menus, tenderly folds down the collar on Charlie's blazer, and heads back to the front.

SLADE (contd)
(to Charlie)
'21,' a table by the fireplace, and you got a brand new jacket -- Kid, we're cooking. Now read me the Bill of Fare.

Charlie opens the menu as Slade drinks in the atmosphere.

CHARLIE
'21' Burger with fries -- twenty-four dollars --

SLADE
Where's the booze, it's flowing like mud around here?

CHARLIE
Twenty-four-dollar hamburger. What's the story?

SLADE
What story?

CHARLIE
Are you a rich miser or something?

SLADE
I'm just your average blind man.

CHARLIE
Yeah, average blind man. How are you going to pay for all of this?

SLADE
Crisp, clean dollars -- American. I saved up my disability checks.

CHARLIE

For the twenty-four-dollar burger or
the chicken and mashed at twenty-nine?
And how much did you save? First
Class on the plane, the
Waldorf-Astoria Hotel --

SLADE

It's all part of a plan, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Well, could you let me in on it?

SLADE

Why do you give a shit? You're taking
the last shuttle out of La Guardia.

Slade suddenly jerks his wrist to his eyes as if he were
checking a watch.

SLADE (contd)

Oops, you got fifteen minutes. I
don't think you can make it. Unless
'21' keeps a complimentary helicopter
on the roof.

Slade studies his "watch" again.

SLADE (contd)

Nope, you're stuck here until
tomorrow.

CHARLIE

Wait a minute, you said the last
shuttle was 2200 hours. That's 10
o'clock, right?

SLADE

Last I heard.

CHARLIE

It's only 8:30.

Slade's drink arrives, he takes a swallow.

SLADE

I lied. It leaves at 9.

CHARLIE

It leaves at 9?!

SLADE

Yes, it does.

A moment, Slade sensing Charlie's anger.

SLADE (contd)

The truth is, Charlie, I need a guide
dog to help me execute my plan.

CHARLIE

What plan?

Slade smiles.

SLADE

You have a right to know. It's not really a plan, Charlie. More like a tour. A little tour of pleasures. Stay in a first-class hotel, eat an agreeable meal, drink a nice glass of wine, see my big brother -- there's nothing like family, you know -- and then make love to a terrific woman. After that --

CHARLIE

Yes?

SLADE

I'm going to lie down on my beautiful bed at the Waldorf and blow my brains out.

The Waiter appears.

WAITER

Can I tell you our specials?

SLADE

By all means.

Charlie is staring at Slade.

WAITER

Tonight we have Charred Venison with Buckwheat Spaetzle and Green Peppercorns. Grilled Veal Paillard with Tomato Tapenade and Roasted Eggplant --

Slade's head is pleasantly tilted at the Waiter, but Charlie is riveted on Slade, trying to ascertain what he said.

WAITER (contd)

And if you would like our Crepes Souffle for dessert, it would be a good idea to order it now.

SLADE

Yes on the Souffle, give us half a minute on the rest.

WAITER

Very good, sir.

SLADE

That means, Alphonse, don't go too far.

WAITER
(indicating next
table)
I'll just pour some wine over here,
sir.

The Waiter moves away, Slade turns to Charlie conspiratorially.

SLADE
I'm leaning towards the Spaetzle.

Slade falls pleasantly silent, gazes around the room in his blind way, Charlie can't take his eyes off him.

CHARLIE
Colonel Slade?

SLADE
Yes?

CHARLIE
Did you say you were going to blow
your brains out?

SLADE
Did I say that?

The Waiter returns from the adjacent table.

WAITER
Have you decided, sir?

SLADE
(to Charlie)
Going for the burger?
(to the Waiter)
Give him the '21' Hamburger medium
rare, and I'll take the Chicken Hash
on a Waffle. Also, save us some bread
pudding.

WAITER
Yes sir, thank you.

Charlie doesn't know which way to turn. He starts to say one thing, ends up saying another.

CHARLIE
'Chicken Hash on a Waffle?'

SLADE
Twenty-four dollars. Delicious. And
only the insiders know about the bread
pudding. Big Ed always put away three
helpings.

Slade reaches across the table, locates the bread tray.

SLADE (contd)

Try one of these rolls. I used to dream of these rolls when I was at Fort Huachuca. The bread's no good west of the Colorado. The water's too alkaline.

CHARLIE

Colonel Slade, did I hear you right? You said you were going to kill yourself?

SLADE

No, I said I was going to blow my brains out. Eat this roll, Charlie, I buttered it for you.

CHARLIE

I don't want a roll.

SLADE

Okay, have a radish. Where were we? Oh yes, the agenda. We're also going to need to buy you some clothes. Is Rogers Peet still around? They cut a helluva mess jacket.

Slade grabs a passing Waiter.

SLADE (contd)

Get me a double Jack Daniels on the rocks.

WAITER

Yes sir, right away.

Charlie makes a gesture to the Waiter with his thumb and forefinger, a "weak drink," the Waiter nods, hurries away.

SLADE

(to Charlie)

Please don't do that.

Directly behind Slade, the Maitre d' seats an elegant, young couple. Slade drinks in the beautiful woman's scent, intoxicated by her presence, as a very sober Charlie tracks his every move.

SLADE (contd)

What a marvelous place.

40 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NIGHT

40

Charlie stands by as Slade moves tentatively around the room again, re-orienting himself with his cane, tapping objects, then moving on. He slaps a couch, reaches underneath the pillows, feels a handle.

SLADE
Your billet's here. In the morning,
the area will be returned to sitting
room mode no later than 0700 hours.

Charlie salutes, Slade flinches. An ominous silence.

SLADE (contd)
What was that?

CHARLIE
Nothing!

SLADE
Next time, snap it out, thumb to palm,
index through little digit aligned
smartly, sharp to the hairline and
down!

Slade lets Charlie stew through another anxious silence.

SLADE (contd)
Too many men far better than you have
executed that courtesy and if you know
what's good for you, don't try it
again...

Charlie holds himself very still.

SLADE (contd)
This bat's got sharper radar than the
Nautilus. Don't fuck with me,
Charlie.

Slade lifts his cane, taps his way into his bedroom.

SLADE (contd)
See that you get a good night's sleep.

Slade closes his door, Charlie stares at it for a moment. He sits down on the couch, he glances around the fancy hotel sitting room; damask drapes, directoire chairs, a fake French antique desk. An air of bewilderment in Charlie gives way to resignation. He stands up, removes the cushions from the couch and pulls out the bed.

41 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NEXT MORNING

41

Charlie awakens with a start. A room service cart rests along the wall. Charlie finds Slade standing on a footstool in front of a three-paneled mirror. A female tailor, SOFIA, 24, is fitting him with a pair of trousers. Slade hears the rustle of Charlie's covers as he arises.

SLADE
Good morning.

CHARLIE
Good morning.

SLADE

This is Sofia, Charlie. Descended from a long line of Florentine pants makers, she is a magician with a needle. Sofia's working me up a little gabardine number and I've already picked you out a blazer and flannels. Juice, coffee and assorted goodies on the trolley. Why don't you get up and get yourself together.

Sofia smiles brightly at Charlie. He gets up, in his underwear, pulls on his pants, pours some coffee in a cup, surveys Slade carefully.

CHARLIE

How're you feeling today, Colonel?

SLADE

Super! You know Sofia here's working Thanksgiving because she is putting herself through college. I told her my friend, Charlie, here was also headed for college.

The word "college" jolts Charlie wide awake, he crosses to Slade's bedroom.

SLADE (contd)

Where're you going?

CHARLIE

To make a phone call.

SLADE

What's wrong with this phone?

CHARLIE

I don't want to disturb you.

SLADE

You're not disturbing me. Make your call.

CHARLIE

I'd like to be private...

SLADE

Stay out of my room, this is as private as you're going to get.

Charlie reluctantly sits down at the desk, dials the operator.

CHARLIE

(phone)

Vermont information, please.

At the mirror, Sofia is pinning Slade's new trousers. He smiles at her, she smiles back.

SLADE
How I'd love to fit you sometime.

CHARLIE
(phone)
I don't know exactly, it's the
Sugarbush Lodge.

SLADE
Sugar --
(smiles)
Bush.

Charlie dials a number as Sofia continues to work on Slade.

CHARLIE
(phone)
George Willis, please.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Hello.

CHARLIE
Hi George, it's Charlie.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Hey, how're you doing, why didn't you
call last night?

CHARLIE
I'm sorry, I didn't get a chance
until --

GEORGE (V.O.)
(interrupting)
You okay? You sound funny.

CHARLIE
No, I'm fine.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Next year, you've got to come up with
us. White powder on a base of snow
bunnies.

Charlie doesn't answer.

GEORGE (V.O.) (contd)
Are you there?

CHARLIE
Yeah, I'm here. You asked me to call
you about the moves --

GEORGE (V.O.)
For now, the move is no move. Status
quo. Everything's the way we left it.

CHARLIE
How did we leave it?

After a moment.

GEORGE (V.O.)
See no evil, hear no evil, you know
what I mean, Chas?

CHARLIE
Yeah. See no evil, hear no evil.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Ease out, everything's going to be all
right. You hear me?

CHARLIE
I hear you.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Okay, then. Walk like you talk.

The phone clicks off.

CHARLIE
'Bye.

Charlie stares at the phone. Sofia is busy measuring Slade's leg. Slade's head tilts towards Charlie.

SLADE
What's George's last name?

CHARLIE
Willis.

SLADE
George Willis. That makes his father
George Willis, Senior. Charlie, how
do you think Big George is going to
feel about Little George 'seeing no
evil' and 'hearing no evil'?

CHARLIE
No one is telling their parents.
We're keeping it between us.

SLADE
Oh, you think George isn't going to
talk to his father about this? Damn
decent of him. What does George's
father do?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

SLADE

Well, I'll tell you. When George Willis, Sr. is not busy as a million-dollar man for Aetna Casualty or is it New England distributor for the Chrysler Corporation -- he concerns himself with George Willis, Jr. That's what he does.

CHARLIE

George isn't going to talk to his father.

SLADE

Of course not.

(to Sofia)

Oops --

SOFIA

'Scusi, Colonello.

SLADE

Prego, I love it when you hurt me.

(whispers, to
Charlie)

Is she -- ?

Slade makes a pumping motion with his fist towards Sofia.

CHARLIE

Ummm -- uhh --

SLADE

Okay, got it. Where was I? Oh yeah, Big George didn't get to be President of Massachusetts Gear and Electric for nothing. He'll wind Little George up and Little George will sing like a canary. Good-bye Harry, hello Ivy League and if you're hip, Kid, you'll hop to, too.

CHARLIE

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

SLADE

Listen up, it don't take no National Merit Scholarship to figure this one out. You had a little life, Charlie. So you came to Baird to put yourself in the market for a big one. If you want to stay in the running, you're going to have to tell them what they want to know.

CHARLIE

You think so?

SLADE

If you don't sing, Charlie, you'll end up shelving biscuits in a convenience store in the Oregon 'burbs.

(to Sofia)

That's enough, Compari, now run something up for Charlie here pronto, we've got a date for Thanksgiving.

CHARLIE

A date?

SLADE

My brother's place, W.R. Slade, White Plains, New York. The Plains, of course, are neither white nor plains, nevertheless located in fashionable Westchester County.

CHARLIE

I can't go to your brother's place. I should be getting back to school.

SLADE

C'mon, Charlie, you've got to have Thanksgiving Dinner somewhere. Eats 'n treats. And I could use the company.

This registers on Charlie.

CHARLIE

Does he know I'm coming?

SLADE

He doesn't know I'm coming. But wait till you see the look on his face when I walk through the door.

Slade beams.

SLADE (contd)

He adores me.

Slade steps off the footstool, extends an open palm, Charlie fits Slade's cane into it. Slade motions Charlie on to the footstool.

SLADE (contd)

There are two kinds of people in this world, Charlie. Those who stand up and face the music. And those who run for cover.

He taps his way towards his bedroom.

SLADE (contd)

Cover is better.

42 INT. LIMO - MANHATTAN - DAY

42

Manny driving, Slade and Charlie seated in the back, they look great in their new clothes.

Slade picks up the intercom phone.

SLADE
(into phone)
Any progress on the 'action'?

MANNY
What 'action'?

SLADE
What 'action' do you think I'm talking about?

MANNY
Oh, that 'action'. Yes sir, yes sir, the action is progressing.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
What are you looking at?

Charlie is startled by Slade's "antennae".

CHARLIE
Your shoes.

SLADE
You like these shoes?

CHARLIE
Well --

SLADE
You know how much these shoes cost?

CHARLIE
No --

SLADE
Eleven hundred dollars. Lobb's of London. Six months. A shoe architect measures your feet, carves the last out of solid maple, then the 'clicker', he's the hide man, cuts eight pieces of leather exactly to specifications, a 'closer' sews them, sixteen stitches to the inch, the 'maker' cuts heel and sole, and finally the 'polisher', he gives them that dull, expensive look. Eleven hundred dollars, Charlie, and worth every penny of it. Nineteen years, these babies.

Charlie, staring at the shoes, whistles.

CHARLIE
They still seem brand new.

SLADE
I'm leaving them to you.

CHARLIE
What do you mean?

SLADE
You're about my size. Next week when I'm secured, drop by the house and pick them up.

CHARLIE
What do you mean, 'secured'?

SLADE
Dead. Tell Karen I said they were yours.

CHARLIE
I don't like it when you kid around like this, Colonel.

SLADE
I couldn't be more serious.

CHARLIE
Then I'm going to have to go back to school.

SLADE
Good idea.

Manny honks, swerves past some pedestrians.

CHARLIE
Suicide, Colonel Slade, is a crime.

SLADE
That's your opinion and, of course, the conventional wisdom. Look at the Eskimos, you know the squaws, check right out when they get old.

CHARLIE
Who says?

SLADE
Squaws chew leather. Chew the skins 'til they're soft enough to sew them into clothing with bones they've whittled down. When those ladies' teeth are too far gone to soften leather, they take a walk.

CHARLIE
'Take a walk?'

SLADE
Out of the igloo. Into the tundra.
Goom-bye.

CHARLIE
I studied Eskimos in Anthropology.
That's bullshit.

A moment.

SLADE
Yes, it is. But, Charlie, what should
the old bags do when they can't pull
their weight? No one's too eager to
tear a herring with them anymore.

Slade is smiling slyly. He crosses and uncrosses his shoes.

SLADE (contd)
I always liked a good pair of shoes.
When you're making love to a beautiful
woman, who's looking at you but your
shoes?

Charlie turns away, stares out the window moodily.

CHARLIE
...There's a Ferrari dealer.

Slade picks up the phone.

SLADE
(to Manny)
Pull over.

43 INT. FERRARI DEALERSHIP, PARK AVENUE - DAY

43

A salesman, FRED BISCO, looks up from his desk, through the showroom window he sees Manny scurry around the limousine, hold the door for Slade. Charlie leads Slade across the sidewalk to the showroom, but the door is locked. Fred gets up, goes to the door, unlocks it, holds it ajar.

FRED
We're closed.

SLADE
Then what are you doing here?

FRED
It's Thanksgiving. I was just
catching up on my paperwork while the
wife took the kids to the parade.

SLADE
Interested in selling a car or not?

Fred looks at Manny standing at attention beside his shiny limo, observes the neat cut of Slade's suit and that of his companion's, Charlie.

FRED

Come in.

He opens the door wide, and Charlie leads Slade inside, he is getting practiced "orienting" him. Slade stops in front of a gleaming, red Ferrari, hooks his cane over his elbow and feels the shape of the car with his fingers.

SLADE

Testarossa...Mondial?

FRED

Testarossa.

SLADE

Did they get the horses up to 350?

FRED

380.

SLADE

(to Charlie)

The D.O.T. wouldn't let them bring it in, in '85.

Slade opens the door of the Ferrari, closes it, opens it again, salutes some unseen figure, closes it.

FRED

(a whisper, to
Charlie)

Could you watch the cane?

SLADE

(to Fred)

What's your name?

FRED

Fred.

SLADE

Fred what?

FRED

Fred Bisco.

SLADE

Fred, never mind the cane, you're looking at a live one here.

Fred watches in horror as Slade's cane now comes close to the glimmering finish of the Testarossa, he starts to reach out for Slade but Charlie politely restrains Fred's arm. Slade moves to another car, runs his hands over it gently.

SLADE (contd)

348?

FRED

You got it.

SLADE

'tb' or 'ts'? Feels like a 'ts'.

FRED

On the money, sir.

SLADE

(chuckling)

On the money is right.

Slade caresses this car, touches the shape of the open roof, feels the leather-embossed wheel through the window, he is full of tender love for this machine.

SLADE (contd)

G-2 needed a big Testarossa for his little dick. I prefer the open air, the flowing coed hair, of the 'ts'.

(to Fred)

Where are these located now, one hundred and a quarter?

FRED

For you sir, a hundred thirteen eight.

SLADE

Is that list?

FRED

Yes, sir.

SLADE

Then why is it for me?

Fred can't answer.

SLADE (contd)

It's your list, not mine. Shame on you, Freddie Bisco.

Slade reaches for Charlie's arm, they turn to walk out.

SLADE (contd)

(to Fred)

I'll compare prices with your colleagues in Jersey and Connecticut and who knows -- we could be back.

44 EXT. HOUSE, WHITE PLAINS, WESTCHESTER COUNTY - DAY

44

The limo pulls up to an upscale house in a development, fieldstone ground floors with white frame second stories. Manny hurries around to the rear door, holds it open, helps Slade out.

Charlie steps out behind Slade, takes his arm, leads him up to the house. Manny settles back into the limousine as Charlie rings the bell.

Curtains part at a window. At the window is RANDY, early 30's, Slade's nephew, he looks out with pained surprise, the curtains close. Randy opens the door, he surveys Slade, Charlie propping him up.

RANDY

Yes?

SLADE

Who's that?

RANDY

Randy.

SLADE

'Randy.' You new?

Randy looks from Charlie to Slade and back again.

RANDY

I'm your nephew.

SLADE

Oh yes, Randy. Here we are. Your sister's been hoarding me long enough. Time to spread the riches around.

Randy calls into the house:

RANDY

Dad --

But before Randy gets a response, GAIL, 27, his attractive wife, appears.

GAIL

Uncle Frank!

SLADE

(to Gail)

Gloria --

GAIL

Gail --

SLADE

Of course. Say hello to the potluck party from New York. Your Uncle Frank and this is Charlie Simms, star halfback on The Baird School football team. They not only beat Exeter and Groton, Aquinas High School, too.

(MORE)

SLADE (contd)
 (to Randy)
 Where's your miserable father, no,
 let's surprise him. See if we can
 give that fat heart of his an attack.
 (calling out)
 Willie!

45 INT. W.R. SLADES'S HOUSE - DAY

45

In the living room, two men are watching the NFL game on television, W.R., mid-50's, a messy overweight sort in a rumpled 3-piece suit, with him his younger son, GARRY, 25.

W.R.
 Do you hear what I hear?

GARRY
 I hear it.

W.R. heads for the front door, GRETCHEN, W.R.'s wife emerges from the kitchen, Garry gets up and joins them, the family is now gathered at the front door in stricken wonderment.

W.R.
 (a deathly whisper)
 Hello, Frank.

SLADE
 Willie, there you are! Home for Thanksgiving for a change. Charlie, meet W.R. Slade, the original bulging briefcase man. Went from Lading Clerk on the Lackawanna Railroad to bankruptcy referee in 12 easy jumps. God breaks 'em and Willie busts 'em. Gretch! I smell those prunes! Are we talking Turkey Marbella?!

He opens his arms in the direction of the kitchen, falls into Gretchen, nuzzles her.

SLADE (contd)
 Give us a whiff, you know I've always had a sneaker for you.

In the confusion W.R., beet-red, turns to Charlie.

W.R.
 Who are you?

CHARLIE
 I'm just here at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel with -- is it your brother?

Slade, who has had Gretchen backed against the wall, releases her with mock romantic reluctance.

SLADE
Garry, where's my drink, it's flowing
like mud around here?

He takes a swallow from his flask.

W.R.
(to Charlie)
Yes, he's my brother. Who the hell
are you?

CHARLIE
I'm kind of his companion for a few
days -- umm -- to tell you the truth,
the Colonel is not well.

W.R.
'Not well?!'

CHARLIE
He seems kind of lonely.

W.R.
Why don't you take him to your
family's for dinner?

Slade starts poking his way towards the living room, the family
parting at the wave of his cane.

SLADE
(to W.R.)
I meant to pick up some vino on the
way up, but I blew it. I'll send you
the Rothschild again for Christmas --
but let's see how Thanksgiving goes.

Gretchen opens the dining room doors.

GRETCHEN
'Dinner is served'.

Randy presses a drink in Slade's hand.

RANDY
Here you are, Frank.

SLADE
Still with Domino Sugar?

RANDY
Jack Frost. Why do you always get it
wrong?

SLADE
Because it's not important to me to
get it right. What are you now?

RANDY
Vice-President for Marketing.

SLADE

Congratulations. Sugar's shit. I told General Abrams to install honey in the commissaries. If the K-50's didn't blow your brains out, the sugar would. Randy, may I tell you your bosses killed more men than the Gooks?
(sniffs)

The olives are heating up, you knew I was coming didn't you, Gretch?

(to Charlie)

She stuffs the bird with olives and prunes. Stays up all night to cook it for me.

GAIL

Could we sit down?

Slade sniffs Gail.

SLADE

Mitsouki.

(sniffs her again,
to Randy)

Rhymes with nookie. Watch out. When the wife gets restless, the wife gets racy.

W.R.

Let's eat!

RANDY

(to Slade)

Where do you want to sit, Frank, or are you going to arrange yourself at the head again?

SLADE

Oh, any old card table will do.

Slade's cane hits the head of the table.

SLADE (contd)

This is fine.

He sits himself down.

SLADE (contd)

Charlie! Next to me!

46 INT. DINING ROOM - LATER - NIGHT

46

Empty dishes, half-filled coffee cups, everybody in a stultified glaze as Slade holds forth.

SLADE

...So what am I going to do, I've got this Asian flower on the one hand, and this Navy nurse on the other, we're three across the bed, not a stitch of clothes on and it comes to me. Let East meet West and we'll build The Golden Bridge.

Gail looks as if she were about to throw up.

SLADE (contd)

I felt like I'd just joined the Corps of Engineers.

Slade howls, his head darts about looking for approval, there is none forthcoming. The only affect is Charlie dying of embarrassment.

RANDY

Did you always enjoy shocking people, Uncle Frank?

GAIL

(cautioning)

Honey --

RANDY

Dad, remember the day you persuaded Frank to go to the kennel?

SLADE

(to Randy)

What about it?

RANDY

(chuckling)

He almost put the seeing eye dog business out of business.

W.R.

Randy, cool it.

He glances at Slade.

W.R. (contd)

(to Randy)

Water over the dam, son.

GARRY

Yes, over and done with.

SLADE

Indeed it is, Garry. And so is dinner. What time is it, we've got to be getting back?

RANDY

Ever given any thought to a Braille watch, Frank? Stevie Wonder wears one or do you rank on him, too?

GAIL

Honey, please --

SLADE

That's all right, Gloria, I enjoy Randy's observations. I've always found him a very amusing guy.

RANDY

My wife's name is Gail.

SLADE

Excuse me. Gail -- strikes me as a very beautiful young woman but there's a little tension in her voice. That can mean one of two things -- Gail is either nervous or unsatisfied.

RANDY

What's your point, Uncle Frank?

SLADE

You ought to go down on her.

W.R.

Jee-zus.

SLADE

(to Randy)

You've gotten so wrapped up with the sugar business, you've forgotten the taste of honey.

GAIL

Frank, for god's sakes!

SLADE

(to Gail)

Grace, I've always been crazy about you.

RANDY

(to Slade)

Why don't you get out of here? Take that limousine down to the Bowery. Get with the other luses where you belong.

CHARLIE

Hey, wait a minute --

RANDY

What for, Chuckie, you think he's special because he's blind?

SLADE
My friend's name is Charles.

CHARLIE
(to Randy)
Yes, he's special and he's blind.

RANDY
Another sucker who thinks this
shitheel is a war hero.

W.R.
Randy, that's enough --

RANDY
(to Charlie)
He blew himself up.

GRETCHEN
Stop it, Randy.

RANDY
Our Colonel here had this grenade-
juggling act at Fort Bragg --

SLADE
Fort Benning.

RANDY
He was teaching hand-to-hand combat
to Second Lieutenants at the Infantry
School --

SLADE
Look at me, Randy, when you're talking
to me.

RANDY
His partner in the act was some
Captain --

SLADE
Major Vincent Squires.

RANDY
Whoever he was, before going on,
they'd have themselves a lo-cal
breakfast. Screwdriver for Frank,
Bloody Mary for his partner.

SLADE
Vinnie drank Sea Breezes.

RANDY
The Judge-Advocate at Benning says
Colonel Slade had four to his
partner's one.

(MORE)

RANDY (contd)

He was really flying at class, he got excited and started pulling the pins. One grenade got away from him. The pin was in, he claims. In or out, what's the difference, what kind of showboating lunatic juggles grenades?

SLADE

Vinnie came out okay --

RANDY

And all Frank lost was his eyesight.

(to Charlie)

Well, he was an asshole before. Now all he is, is a blind asshole. But nothing could make me happier. Some people don't deserve to see. You get the picture, Chuckie?

Suddenly Slade is up, jams Randy against the wall, he wraps his arm terrifyingly around Randy's neck.

SLADE

His name is Charles. You can say that, can't you? 'Charles'.

Randy is choking, Gail and Gretchen screaming, W.R. and Garry tear at Slade but he is too powerful for them.

SLADE (contd)

You know what this is, Randy? It's a chokehold, they teach it to you at Ranger School. A little pressure and I bust your windpipe. Now -- 'Charles'. After me -- 'Charles'.

Randy, against the wall, has gone blue. Suddenly, between the two combatants, Charlie shoves his way through. Slade senses him.

CHARLIE

C'mon, Colonel, c'mon --

Unconsciously, Slade eases up. Gretchen and Gail are frozen at the kitchen door, Garry blinks emptily and W.R. doesn't know which way to turn. Slade removes a pristine napkin which he had tucked under his chin for dinner, dots both corners of his mouth.

SLADE

Gretchen, you outdid yourself.

He releases the napkin, it drops on the floor in a damask crumple, Slade reaches out for Charlie, and Charlie is there in an instant.

SLADE (contd)
 (to Gretchen)
 If you twist my arm hard enough, and
 we're talking Turkey Marbella next
 year, who knows...?

A terrible SILENCE. Slade finds a wine glass on the table, any
 glass, he starts to raise it to his lips.

W.R.
 Frank?

A moment.

SLADE
 Good-bye.

Slade extends his hand, W.R. looks at it, shakes it.

SLADE (contd)
 Willie, I'm no fucking good and I
 never have been.

Slade raises his wine in a toast.

SLADE (contd)
 Here's looking at you.

He taps the glass against his glass eye. PING! He polishes off
 the wine. Charlie leads Slade out now, leaving W.R. and his
 bewildered family behind.

47 EXT. W.R.'S HOUSE - WHITE PLAINS - NIGHT 47

Slade comes down the path towards the limo with Charlie. Manny
 jumps out, opens the passenger door.

SLADE
 Nueva York, compadre. Vamos.

Slade and Charlie get in, Manny closes the door, climbs behind
 the wheel and drives them away.

48 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NIGHT 48

Charlie, toothbrush in hand, wanders into Slade's bedroom.
 Slade, his face wreathed in a lascivious smile, is propped up on
 his pillows listening to the television where two big-breasted
 women cavort topless on a water bed. Slade wears a patch,
 beside him on a bedside table, a glass eye rests in a liquid
 solution. Charlie notices it, the iris, colored a deep blue,
 stares up intensely at him.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 ...A little taste of Cindy and Mindy,
 the most delightful duet in town.
 They will turn those dreams into a
 reality. Our operators are waiting
 by the phones --

SLADE
What are they doing now?

CHARLIE
Colonel, you know what they're doing.

SLADE
I'm blind, you little prick! What's happening?!

CHARLIE
It's a sleaze show --

SLADE
'Sleaze?!' 'Sleaze?!' Cindy and
Mindy are the Meryl Streep of the New
Age.

CHARLIE
Okay, okay --

SLADE
You're an employee, Simms. Keep your
opinions to yourself.

Slade sips from his flask, shakes a pill out of a bottle.

CHARLIE
What are you doing, taking pills with
liquor?!

Charlie snatches the bottle of pills away from Slade, tries to
read the label.

CHARLIE (contd)
(squinting)
What are these?

SLADE
My German downers. Give 'em back
here.

CHARLIE
Colonel Slade --

SLADE
GIVE 'EM BACK!

Charlie hands him the pills.

SLADE (contd)
Pull duty with NATO, you eat and drink
like a king, then they send you to a
spa to sweat it out.

He washes the pill down with whiskey, caps the bottle lovingly.

SLADE (contd)
 Baden-Baden. Every night they award
 you one of these little greenies and
 you sleep like a gnome in the Black
 Forest.

He shakes the bottle of pills, enjoying the SOUND.

SLADE (contd)
 They're still green, aren't they?

Charlie gets up and heads for his room.

SLADE (contd)
 Hey, runt!

Charlie turns around.

SLADE (contd)
 Where are you going?

CHARLIE
 Back to bed.

Slade smiles enigmatically, Charlie stares anxiously at him, but Slade's eye is blinking closed peacefully. Charlie moves out to the sitting room now, tries to fix up his mussed-up bed, but he can't get comfortable. He lies there in the darkness.

A THUD. Charlie jumps up, runs into Slade's room, Slade has fallen out of bed, is lying face-down beside it. On the night table the bottle of German sleeping pills, now empty, lies on its side.

CHARLIE
 Colonel! Colonel!

He shakes him desperately.

CHARLIE (contd)
 For God's sake, wake up!

Slade lies still, his jaw slack, Charlie lunges for the telephone but keeps Slade in view, Slade's one eye opens and Charlie blinks into the shining, sea-blue iris. Suddenly Slade's face lights up, breaks into a smile, he starts laughing, feels under the skirt of the bedside table, pulls out a little vase into which he has poured the pills, now spills them back in the bottle.

SLADE
 You're easy --

Charlie hangs up the phone.

CHARLIE
 That's not funny.

SLADE

Charlie, my boy, you got no sense of humor.

Slade leans back in bed, presses a button on the TV remote, another access channel comes on, the host is interviewing a transsexual.

CHARLIE

It's time you went to sleep,
Colonel --

SLADE

At ease, son.

Charlie watches Slade "watching" television. He reaches for the light switch, gently turns it off.

CHARLIE

(softly)
Good night.

SLADE

Shush, this is fascinating.

49 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NEXT MORNING

49

Charlie wakes up, hears a CLICKING sound from the direction of Slade's room. CLICK-CLICK, the sound repeats itself, then repeats itself again, it is unearthly in the dark of the morning, like some creature from another planet.

Charlie gets up, opens the door between the rooms, the light from his room barely illuminates Slade who is sitting in a wing chair, a side table pulled up in front of him. The extra blanket from his bed is folded in half over the table.

SLADE

You got a watch?

Charlie looks at the clock besides Slade's bed.

CHARLIE

It's 7:19.

SLADE

I didn't ask the time, I want to know whether you got a watch?

CHARLIE

Yes. In my room.

SLADE

Get it.

Charlie hesitates, another CLICK.

CHARLIE
There's a clock right beside your bed,
Colonel --

SLADE
Does it have a second hand?

CHARLIE
Yes --

SLADE
Time me.

Charlie switches on the light, Slade is holding a .45 in his hand. Slade signals Charlie to start timing him, in what seems like an instant Slade has dismantled the gun, every part comes out and is laid in perfect position on the blanket in front of him, just as quickly he reassembles it, cocks it, dry-fires.

SLADE (contd)
How long?

Charlie hesitates, decides to go along.

CHARLIE
(checking Slade's
bedside clock)
49 seconds.

SLADE
I'm rusty.

He starts to take the pistol apart again, slowly, feeling the parts, taking a lot of pleasure in the process.

CHARLIE
Where'd you get the gun, Colonel?

SLADE
Piece or weapon, Charlie, never a gun.

CHARLIE
Where'd you get the piece?

SLADE
I'm an officer in the United States
Army, this is my sidearm.

CHARLIE
You're not an officer anymore --

SLADE
So I'm retired, so what? An officer
never relinquishes his .45.

CHARLIE
You better relinquish it to me or I'm
going to have to call Mrs. Rossi.

SLADE

Good idea.

CHARLIE

And then I'm going back to school.

SLADE

Blue skies, green lights, I hope you have a wonderful trip.

CLICK, CLICK, Slade has reassembled the pistol in rapid time.

SLADE (contd)

That felt like 45 seconds. You should be able to do a .45 in 45. Did you time me?

CHARLIE

No, I did not. And I'm calling Albany.

He searches in his pathetic wallet, finds Karen's slip of paper, carefully unfolds it when suddenly Slade, quick as a cat, has snatched it out of his hand, balled up the piece of paper and swallowed it.

Charlie regards him, Slade's Adam's apple still bobbing.

CHARLIE (contd)

That was stupid.

SLADE

You're stuck with me.

CHARLIE

No, I'm not, I'm out of here.

SLADE

How? All the way to New Hampshire on no money? Ever hitchhiked on the West Side Highway? You'll end up hog-tied in a dumpster in Hackensack.

CHARLIE

You don't scare me.

SLADE

You scare me, Charlie.

(sings)

'Charlie, my boy
Oh, Charlie, my boy
You thrill me, you chill me
With shivers of joy...'

SNAP, Slade has taken apart the .45 again, his fingers are like a watchmaker's with the gun.

SLADE (contd)
(rubbing his stomach)
Karen's number tastes like Albany.
(tilts his head)
I'm headed for Arlington, Charlie. I
got my plot all picked out, section
46, next to Audie Murphy's. They may
give you a hard time because The
Unknown Soldier area is high-rent, but
be firm, tell them I qualify on every
count -- 100% disability, Silver Star,
20-year man, active duty, authentic
Purple Heart.

CLICK-CLICK, Slade has reassembled the pistol, Charlie reaches
for it, Slade extends the pistol at arm's length, out of
Charlie's grasp.

SLADE (contd)
If they give you a hard time on
Section 46, ask for a space near Joe
Louis' or Abner Doubleday's. I always
liked baseball.

CHARLIE
Give me the gun, Colonel.

SLADE
An officer never gives up his sidearm,
I told you.

CHARLIE
In that case, I'm leaving.

Charlie takes a step towards his room.

SLADE
Charlie!

Charlie stops.

SLADE (contd)
(carefully)
All I want from you is another day.

Silence.

CHARLIE
For what?

Slade throws up his hands spontaneously.

SLADE
One last tour of the battlefield. I
can get around in a big city like New
York but now and then, I need a point
in the right direction. What's a day
between friends?

A moment.

CHARLIE
Say I stay for another day, will you
give me your weapon?

SLADE
I'm a Lieutenant-Colonel in the United
States Army and I'm not giving my
fucking gun to anybody. What are you
drinking?

He tilts his flask, takes a huge swallow.

CHARLIE
Colonel, this is unacceptable.

SLADE
'Unacceptable?!' Don't give me any
of that prep school crap. Have they
already taken the Oregon out of the
boy and turned it into Harvard
Business School?

CHARLIE
Okay, give me the bullets.

SLADE
My ammo?

CHARLIE
You want to be next to Joe Louis or
not?

Slade cackles.

SLADE
You do see the sense of it, Charlie,
don't you? I can't chew the leather
anymore. So why should I share in the
tribe's provisions?

CHARLIE
(firmly)
The bullets, Colonel.

SLADE
'The bullets, Colonel.' You sound
like a guy in 'Lives of a Bengal
Lancer.' Next thing you'll be asking
for my blindfold and cigarette.

CLICK, CLICK, Slade removes the magazine, flips it to Charlie,
he catches it.

SLADE (contd)
What do you give a shit for?

CHARLIE
About what?

SLADE
About whether I blow my brains out or not.

CHARLIE
Because I have a conscience.

SLADE
Oh yes, I forgot. The 'Charlie' conscience. Do we tell or do we not tell? Do we follow the rich boy's code or not? Do we let the blind asshole check out? When were you born, Charlie, at The Round Table? Haven't you heard, conscience is dead?

CHARLIE
No, I haven't heard.

SLADE
THEN TAKE THE WAX OUT OF YOUR EARS AND GROW UP! Fuck your buddy, cheat on your wife, call your mother on Mother's Day. It's all shit.

Slade stands up.

CHARLIE
Where are you going?

SLADE
To take a leak. I know I said only a day, but even I can't hold it that long.

The phone RINGS, Charlie answers it.

CHARLIE
Hello.
(to Slade)
It's for you -- Manny...

Slade doesn't respond.

CHARLIE (contd)
...the limo driver.

Slade takes the phone.

SLADE
Colonel Slade...yes, Manny...Fifth Avenue?...really?...all right, give her my name, tell her she'll be hearing from me...no, no special needs...you did good, hombre.

He hangs up.

SLADE (contd)
Get dressed -- the battlefield awaits.

Slade turns towards the bathroom.

SLADE (contd)
And Charlie...you forgot the one in
the chamber.

Slade instantly cocks and uncocks the pistol, expelling the bullet, which tumbles in a harmless arc, landing at Charlie's feet. Slade spins his .45 cowboy-style, drops it into his bathrobe pocket and disappears into the bathroom.

50 INT. WALDORF-ASTORIA BARBER SHOP - DAY

50

A Manicurist works on Slade's fingernails, a Bootblack does his shoes while a Barber gives him a shave. Charlie paces in the narrow alley behind the ornate chair.

SLADE
...No haircut, Charlie? Take a shave.
Let this old pro loose on your peach
fuzz, you'll feel like a new man.

CHARLIE
No shave, thanks.

SLADE
(to Barber)
I'm trying to get him laid.

The Bootblack finishes Slade's shine with a flourish.

SLADE
(to Bootblack)
Thank you, sir.

BOOTBLACK
These are good shoes.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
You hear that?
(to Bootblack)
Twenty-six years in the service, I
never let an aide shine my shoes.

He senses Charlie pacing behind him.

SLADE (contd)
Where will you be in twenty-six years,
Charlie? Playing golf, I'll bet, with
those friends of yours from The Baird
School.

CHARLIE
I don't even like those guys.

SLADE
Of course you don't. They're
assholes. It'll be a pleasure to
squeal.

CHARLIE
I'm not a squealer.

SLADE
What is this, The Dreyfus Case?
Refresh my memory. You and, what's
the other guy's name again -- ?

CHARLIE
George Willis.

SLADE
You and George Willis saw who do what?

CHARLIE
Harry Havemeyer and two of his buddies
pour concrete into Dean Trask's
Jaguar.

SLADE
Good grief! Vanden Plas or a J6?

A nonplussed Charlie doesn't answer.

SLADE (contd)
Never mind, are you worried that Harry
Havemeyer's going to get the boot?
Not with a name like that.

Slade, whose shave is finished, stands up, wipes his face clean
with the barber sheet. A moody silence surrounds Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
I'm getting that heavy feeling again,
Charlie.

51 EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - AFTERNOON

51

Slade strides along, his hand resting on Charlie's arm.

CHARLIE
...I was offered a bribe.

SLADE
Now we're cooking.

CHARLIE
Dean Trask said he would see to it
that I got into Harvard --

SLADE
If you squeal?

CHARLIE
Yes.

SLADE
What a dilemma. Should Charlie Simms accept a free ride into Harvard or not? What do you think your friend George would do if he were in your shoes?

CHARLIE
He is, practically. Except the Dean hasn't promised to get him into Harvard.

SLADE
He doesn't have to. George's father will take care of that.
(a moment)
Do the deal, Charlie. Take it. Go to Harvard.

CHARLIE
I can't do that.

Slade stops.

SLADE
Why not?

CHARLIE
There are some things you can't do.

SLADE
Charlie, my boy, you're going to have a hard time in this world.
(a moment)
To soften the blow, let me buy you a drink.

52 INT. GRAND FOYER, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - AFTERNOON

52

The lush atmosphere of an ornate public room, tea tables and gilt chairs, palm fronds and ficus trees surround a dance floor. The chatter of a sophisticated New York crowd mingles with the music of an elegant trio. A Waiter is taking Slade's order for drinks.

SLADE
Double Jack Daniels on the rocks.
Bring the young man a Shirley Temple.

CHARLIE
Not so fast.
(to Waiter)
You got beer?

WAITER

Yes. Can I see some I.D.?

Slade raises his cane to the Waiter.

SLADE

Interested in walking the rest of your life, Chappie?

WAITER

Sir, I --

SLADE

I'm a regular here. My boy's going on twenty-three. Speak to Mr. Gilbert in the front office, he's a friend of mine.

The Waiter weighs the situation.

WAITER

(to Charlie)

Any particular beer?

SLADE

Schlitz. No Schlitz, Blatz.

The Waiter goes, Slade punches Charlie on the shoulder.

SLADE (contd)

You're human.

(peering around)

Who are we drinking with? I'm getting a nice, soap-and-water feeling next to us.

CHARLIE

Female.

SLADE

'Female!' Hey!

(cackles)

If you're calling her 'female,' you must like her or you wouldn't be playing it so casual. Chestnut hair?

CHARLIE

Brown.

SLADE

22?

CHARLIE

What am I, a guy at a carnival?

Slade drills Charlie with his blind stare.

SLADE
The day we stop looking, Charlie, is
the day we are dead.
(after a moment)
Move.

CHARLIE
Where?

SLADE
You know where.

Slade gets up, chuckling excitedly.

SLADE (contd)
Charlie, this girl was made for you.
God-dam beautiful, isn't she?

CHARLIE
Not bad.

SLADE
Bingo! The boy's alive.

In fact, DONNA, the young woman at the adjacent table, is a
knockout.

SLADE (contd)
(nudging Charlie)
C'mon, son, perambulate, perambulate!

Charlie, embarrassed, gets up and steers Slade towards Donna.
Hiding behind Slade, Charlie does a weird balancing act between
being present and not being present.

SLADE (contd)
(to Donna)
Excuse me, senorita, could we join
you?

Donna takes in this pair, the stunning, blind, middle-aged man
and his young, awkward companion.

DONNA
(pleasantly)
Well, I am expecting somebody.

SLADE
He's here?

DONNA
No, but any minute --

SLADE
Okay, 'any minute.' What are you
doing right now?

DONNA
(smiles)
I'm waiting for him.

SLADE
So you don't mind if we wait with you?

Donna smiles again.

DONNA
No.

Slade has already pulled up a chair. He sits down, Charlie joins him as Slade leans into Donna.

SLADE
You smell like a bar of Ogilvie Sisters soap.

A moment.

DONNA
That's amazing.

SLADE
Good, I'm in the amazing business.

DONNA
It is Ogilvie Sisters soap.
(to Charlie)
Granny gave me three bars for Christmas.

SLADE
I'm crazy about your grandmother. And I think she would have liked Charlie, too.

CHARLIE
(to Donna)
Don't pay any attention to him.

SLADE
What's your name?

DONNA
Donna.

SLADE
Hi Donna, I'm Frank and...

DONNA
That's Charlie.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
She likes you.

Donna laughs, she is looking right at Charlie now.

SLADE (contd)
(seductively)
What's that music?

DONNA
Samba. Or is it a tango?

Donna's shoulders sway gently.

SLADE
Yes, it's a tango. You tango, Donna?

DONNA
I love to. But --

SLADE
But what?

DONNA
Michael doesn't.

SLADE
'Michael,' who you're waiting for.

DONNA
Michael thinks the tango's hysterical.

SLADE
Tell Michael I think he's hysterical.

CHARLIE
(to Donna)
Don't pay any attention to him. Or
did I say that already?

Donna giggles.

SLADE
You know the name of this tango?

DONNA
Tangos have names?

SLADE
Of course, this one's called La
Punalada.

Slade's Spanish is perfect.

SLADE (contd)
You know what that means?

DONNA
No --

SLADE
'The Stab.'

Donna risks another look at Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
Would you like to dance?

Donna checks with Charlie, he gives a reassuring nod and, in this moment, endears himself to Donna completely. Slade and Donna rise.

SLADE (contd)
(to Donna)
Your arm?

Slade takes Donna's arm.

SLADE (contd)
I need some coordinates here, Charlie.

Charlie leans into Slade.

CHARLIE
You're looking at about forty by twenty. You're facing the long end. Halfway down on the left there's a palm plant sticking out, on the right side's the band --

Slade puts up his hand to tacit Charlie, hands him his cane. He moves out to the dance floor with Donna, she raises her arms, he takes hold of them, and in an instant they are into a tango.

Slade is a marvelous dancer, he moves in perfect consonance with the music, at first it is all Donna can do to keep up with him but he leads so brilliantly, after a while she becomes a perfect partner. The little trio is into the number now, the dance floor clearing for Slade and Donna, the tempo speeds up, rivulets of sweat run down Donna's cheek but the Colonel remains cool and precise and in command. As Donna dances, her eyes keep meeting Charlie's eyes when suddenly, with a great glissando, the tango ends and the trio takes a brief break but first they, and the customers at the tables, applaud.

Donna leads Slade back to Charlie.

DONNA
Frank, you are one incredible dancer.

SLADE
Wait 'til you see Charlie.

CHARLIE
He's a liar, I don't dance.

SLADE
(to Donna)
Isn't he a charmer? Truth is, not only can he dance, he can sing you a helluva tune.

DONNA
La Punalada.

SLADE

The stab.

Silence, Charlie looks from Slade to Donna and back again.
MICHAEL, an attractive young man, approaches, he carries an
attache case.

MICHAEL

Hi, honey.

DONNA

Hey!

They embrace.

DONNA (contd)

This is Frank and this is Charlie.

MICHAEL

Hi Frank, hi Charlie.

(to Donna)

Sorry I'm late --

DONNA

That's okay, these two guys
entertained me. I got to tell you,
the time flew.

SLADE

(to Michael)

Your girl does a helluva tango.

MICHAEL

(to Donna)

At last. You found someone to tango
with.

(smiling, to Charlie)

Let me shake your hand.

He pumps Charlie's hand.

DONNA

No, no, it was Frank --

MICHAEL

What the hell, I'll shake both your
hands.

Michael pumps Slade's and Charlie's hands.

MICHAEL (contd)

Honey, this looks like 'the place,'
but we got a date with Darryl and
Carol in the village.

DONNA

Okay, okay --

Michael reaches in his pocket to pay the check, his change jingles.

SLADE
Take your hand out of your pocket,
Michael, I'll get this.

MICHAEL
Why thank you.

Donna kisses Frank, and now she kisses Charlie. Then suddenly she hurries away.

MICHAEL (contd)
'Bye, guys.

And Donna and Michael are gone. Charlie watches them disappear as Slade stares in the direction where Michael last stood.

SLADE
(emptily)
'Darryl and Carol.'

53 INT. P.J. CLARKE'S, THIRD AVENUE - NIGHT

53

Slade and Charlie are perched at the bar, drinking, and eating cheeseburgers. They are like the eye of a storm in an excited holiday crowd, junior executives, male and female sizing each other up, some already coupled.

SLADE
Soap, for Christ's sake! Twenty-two years old and she smells of soap and water! God, that's a once in a lifetime thing and what happened? You blew it!

CHARLIE
Blew what?

SLADE
That girl was crazy about you.

CHARLIE
Me? She was getting ready to have kittens with you on the dance floor.

SLADE
That's the point. She was coming on to me but it was you who she wanted. It's the oldest trick in the world.

CHARLIE
I think you're wrong. It was you that she liked. And you know she liked you, you just don't want to admit it.

SLADE

Watch it, I'll do the mind-fucking
around here.

CHARLIE

We should have all gone to dinner.
Then you and Donna could have snuck
off and danced the night away.

SLADE

And then what?

CHARLIE

You tell me.

Slade summons the bartender.

SLADE

Triple Jack Daniels, and another beer
for the professor.

CHARLIE

I've moved up to 'professor'.

SLADE

That's for the cretin behind the bar.
I don't want him worrying about the
Beverage Commission.
(a final bite)
This is my last cheeseburger.

CHARLIE

That bad, huh?

Slade smiles at Charlie's attempt at a joke.

SLADE

I feel like eating it all over again.

CHARLIE

Let's get you one, I'll spring for it.

SLADE

Thanks, Charlie, I'm full. But I'm
empty, if you know what I mean.

The bartender serves up the new round of drinks.

SLADE (contd)

(to Charlie)

Ever hear that song of Frank
Sinatra's, 'My Way?'

Charlie nods, sings a little bit of it.

SLADE (contd)

I hate that song.

Charlie smiles.

SLADE (contd)

I did it my way but my way's no fucking good.

(a moment)

You won't make the same mistakes I did, will you?

CHARLIE

I don't know, I don't have a way yet.

SLADE

Oh yes, you do. You're a giver, Charlie. A helper. A reacher-out. Very valuable --

CHARLIE

You think so?

SLADE

Great with women. They love that stuff. If I'd understood women, I could've ruled the world.

CHARLIE

Donna sure went for you.

SLADE

Maybe. The truth is, Charlie, with women I didn't wear well. But that's nothing against women. Men felt the same way.

CHARLIE

I think you're being hard on yourself.

SLADE

Isn't it about time?

CHARLIE

Everybody's got problems. It's how you work them out. You're a marvelous man and you got a lot to offer --

SLADE

Don't blow smoke up my ass, you'll ruin my autopsy.

CHARLIE

Your reasons for killing yourself are invalid, Colonel. I'd love to 'tear a herring' with you and I'll bet there's plenty others standing in line behind me -- if you'd only give us a chance.

Slade stares at Charlie.

SLADE

I got a phone, Charlie. In the last two months I received one call. They were trying to sell me The Boston Globe. I decided against it. But I enjoyed talking to them.

Charlie regards Slade, Slade senses him, reaches out, rumples Charlie's hair a little too roughly.

SLADE (contd)

The head is slightly underdeveloped. Oregon out of the Boy Scouts by Mom's Apple Pie.

Slade's hand falls to Charlie's chest.

SLADE (contd)

But you know something, Charlie my boy, in parts your heart is good. Play it smart. Give a little now and then so you can get what you want.

CHARLIE

Sell out?

SLADE

In installments. To the highest bidder.

Charlie switches drinks with Slade, swaps his beer for Slade's shot of Jack Daniels. Takes a sip, winces.

CHARLIE

You don't believe a word of that.

Slade smiles.

SLADE

No.

CHARLIE

All that stuff about squealing and running for cover and doing the deal -- that was all bullshit, wasn't it?

SLADE

Yes.

Charlie drains the Jack Daniels, exhales at the strength of the drink. Slade, for the moment, has fallen silent.

SLADE (contd)

I used to come here with Big Ed for brandies after '21'. We'd sit in the back over there --

Charlie looks around, plugs into the charged atmosphere of paired-off singles.

SLADE (contd)
We never went home alone. Things were
different then, Charlie.

After a sudden and deep silence, Slade turns to a woman on his left.

SLADE (contd)
Dance?

The woman, frightened, swivels away.

SLADE (contd)
No?

Slade sits for a moment, then steps off his barstool, drifts towards a dark, empty area next to the jukebox, and dances alone. He moves like a sylph and Charlie, for the instant, gives himself up to Slade, enjoys it.

Suddenly, Slade calls to Charlie.

SLADE (contd)
Get a hold of Manny. Tell him 'now'.

Slade is staring blindly but intently at Charlie and it is not until Charlie crosses to a pay phone, that he resumes dancing.

54 EXT./INT. LIMO, STREET - NIGHT

54

Slade and Charlie are seated in the back of the limo, it is parked in the east 60's just off 5th Avenue, Manny at the wheel, the lights out. Charlie is peering through the limo window at a brownstone down the street.

CHARLIE
I'd say it's about twenty steps --

SLADE
Yards. Always give it to me in yards,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
About fifteen yards, and there's
stairs --

SLADE
A stoop. How many?

CHARLIE
One, two, three...looks like nine.

SLADE
Nine steps up. Railing?

CHARLIE
No railing.

SLADE

Bell?

CHARLIE

There's a shiny, brass plate on the right, about shoulder high.

SLADE

How do you know it's not the mailbox?

CHARLIE

This mailbox has got an ivory button in the middle.

SLADE

Good work.

Slade leans towards Charlie.

SLADE (contd)

How's my part?

Charlie checks Slade's hair.

CHARLIE

Straight as an arrow.

Slade fluffs up his pocket handkerchief.

SLADE

I got the red foulard okay, didn't I?

CHARLIE

Real dark red --

SLADE

Burgundy! Burgundy, Charlie! They love it.

Slade takes a deep breath, exhales, sniffs.

SLADE (contd)

(to himself)

Bay Rum.

(adjusts his tie)

Windsor knot.

He swings open the door of the car and steps out. As he straightens himself up on the street, he turns back once towards Charlie, throws him a happy, mini-salute, walks on down towards the brownstone. Manny and Charlie are tracking Slade as he moves unerringly to the bottom of the brownstone's steps, climbs them, rings the bell, a black woman in a formal maid's uniform admits him, closes the burnished wood door.

An awkward silence.

MANNY

You know, Charlie...

CHARLIE
Yeah?

MANNY
Normally, I don't do no whoring and
pimping around for the customers.

CHARLIE
I'm sure you don't, Manny.
(after a moment)
This your first time?

MANNY
Well...

Another moment.

MANNY (contd)
Maybe when I first purchased the car,
I had this big balloon payment. But
the Colonel, you know, Charlie --

CHARLIE
What about him?

MANNY
The Colonel is a gentleman.

CHARLIE
A gentleman?

MANNY
Class.

Charlie weighs Manny's sincerity, regards the burnished wood
door down the street. He reaches for the car phone.

CHARLIE
Can you get long distance on this?

MANNY
And how. Be my guest.

Charlie unfolds a piece of hotel memo paper from his wallet,
dials.

CHARLIE
George Willis, please.

HARRY (V.O.)
Hello?

CHARLIE
Harry?

HARRY (V.O.)
Chas. You just caught us. We were
chauffeuring George to the airport.

CHARLIE
What's he going to the airport for?

HARRY (V.O.)
Hold on, why don't you talk to the man
himself?

Charlie waits.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Chas...

CHARLIE
Hi, George.

GEORGE (V.O.)
You just caught me.

CHARLIE
That's what Harry said. Where're you
going?

GEORGE (V.O.)
Home.

CHARLIE
To Boston?

GEORGE (V.O.)
Catching the puddle-jumper. Keep your
fingers crossed.

CHARLIE
Why are you going home?

GEORGE (V.O.)
I was thinking, Chas, this asshole
Trask is making no sense at all.
Somebody's got to talk to him. My
father's class of '59 --

CHARLIE
Your father? I thought we were going
to keep our parents out of this.

GEORGE (V.O.)
This guy Trask's out of control. Dad
will bring him to his senses. He's
a major fundraiser, you know.

CHARLIE
No, I didn't.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Relax, he'll get us off the hook, hey
-- what time is it?

CHARLIE
A quarter to ten.

GEORGE (V.O.)
Whoa, I gotta go. Everything all
right?

CHARLIE
Sure.

GEORGE (V.O.)
See you Monday. 'Bye.

Charlie hangs up, slumps in the seat, stares at the phone.

55 EXT./INT. LIMO, STREET - NIGHT - LATER

55

Through the window of the car, Manny can be seen sound asleep,
his hat tilted over his eyes.

The door to the brownstone opens and Slade emerges, counts down
the steps, makes a left turn up the street to the limo. Charlie
swings the car door open and Slade slides inside. He seems
completely at peace.

After a long silence:

SLADE
What a beautiful woman.

Manny, awake now, smiles at Charlie in the rearview mirror.
Charlie nods, Manny starts up the car, Slade sinking into the
backseat, all afterglow and dreamy wondrousness as they drive
away.

56 INT. WALDORF SUITE - NEXT AFTERNOON

56

Charlie is watching television, Sally Jessy Raphael interviewing
a couple. He checks his watch, opens the door to Slade's room.
Slade is fast asleep. Charlie edges towards him, touches a
shoulder, an eye opens.

CHARLIE
You okay?

Slade nods drowsily, but the eye closes. Charlie shakes him
awake.

CHARLIE (contd)
Wake up, Colonel.

The eye opens again. Slade shakes his head irritably.

SLADE
What is it?

CHARLIE
It's afternoon, you've been sleeping
all day.

SLADE
So what?

CHARLIE
I talked to George last night. His
father's a big-deal alumnus, he's got
a lot of clout.

No response.

CHARLIE (contd)
He's going to talk to the Dean.
George thinks his father might be able
to get us off the hook.

SLADE
That's what he said?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

SLADE
Watch the 'us' part.

Slade turns over, away from Charlie. Charlie regards him.

CHARLIE
Hey, Colonel, don't you want to get
out and do something?

SLADE
Do what?

CHARLIE
...See the Statue of Liberty, visit
the Empire State Building -- do
something.

Slade's one eye closes again, his head slumps back into the
pillow. Charlie walks around to the other side of the bed,
rocks him, the eye opens.

SLADE
What do you want, Charlie?

CHARLIE
I don't know, you're making me
nervous.

SLADE
You've got last-day-of-combat jitters.
Your tour of duty is almost over.

Slade's eye stares into the middle distance.

SLADE (contd)
My money belt's under the mattress.
Take out your plane ticket and four
hundred dollars. Mustering-out
pay plus airport-to-school taxi.

CHARLIE
Hey, no rush, Colonel, I can stay a
while --

SLADE
Charlie, you already gave me a day and
for that I'll be eternally grateful.
Right now, I have other plans.

A moment.

CHARLIE
(carefully)
What other plans have you got?

SLADE
To die.

CHARLIE
Oh no, Colonel, you're not going to
die today.

SLADE
Much as I value your opinion, that is
not your decision. Go away now and
let me sleep.

Charlie squats by the bed, speaks quietly into Slade's ear.

CHARLIE
Let's start over, Colonel. What do
you feel like doing today?

No response.

CHARLIE (contd)
Look at this. The sun is shining,
it's a beautiful day.

Silence.

CHARLIE (contd)
We don't want to sit around and molder
in this hotel room, do we?

More silence.

CHARLIE (contd)
Don't be a party poop, Colonel Slade.
Let's get out of here, go for a ride.

Slade's eyelid flutters.

CHARLIE (contd)
Yeah, a ride.

The sun is streaming in now, hitting Slade's face, he seems to
relax for a instant.

SLADE

A ride?

CHARLIE

Yeah, a wild ride. A lip-biting,
bone-rattling, double-clutching,
mother-fucking ride!

Slade shrugs noncommittally at Charlie's outburst, but a trace of a smile flickers over his face. Charlie catches it, hunches his shoulders purposefully.

CHARLIE (contd)

A ride, it is.

57 EXT. PARK AVENUE - AFTERNOON

57

Charlie leads Slade up the street. Charlie strides on purposefully, a passive Slade leaning on his arm.

58 INT. FERRARI DEALERSHIP, PARK AVENUE - AFTERNOON

58

Slade stares distantly out the window into the busy street as Charlie, standing next to a gleaming car, is locked in conversation with Fred Bisco. Other salesmen are around today, they watch bemusedly.

FRED

...Yes, this is a valid Oregon driver's license and yes, we let appropriate customers test drive the Testarossa. But 17-year-olds with a blind companion, that we don't do.

CHARLIE

The Colonel is not my companion, I'm his.

FRED

Very nice. But this is a hundred and ninety thousand dollar piece of machinery, and I'm not letting it out this door.

Charlie moves to another model.

CHARLIE

How about this one?

FRED

The 348 ts, same deal. I'm not letting an unaccompanied kid get behind the wheel of a hundred and thirteen thousand dollar piece of machinery.

As Charlie moves on through the showroom with Fred, they come within earshot of Slade.

SLADE
(quietly)
He will not be unaccompanied, I'll be
with him. I'm his father.

Fred stops, turns back to Slade.

FRED
You're his father?

Fred looks from Charlie to Slade and back to Charlie again.

FRED (contd)
I got an idea. Why don't I take Dad
for a ride?

Slade is at odds with himself, he remains oddly quiet and
passive, but Fred is an irritation he can't ignore.

SLADE
What's your quota, Freddie?

FRED
Quota?

SLADE
How many Ferraris you sold this month?

FRED
Uh --

SLADE
The market's down, isn't it? These
things are not exactly walking out of
the store.

FRED
The Ferrari is the finest piece of
machinery sold in the automotive
world.

SLADE
So what are you going to do, sleep in
it or sell it?

Fred regards Slade.

FRED
Sir, I'd love to accommodate you but
--

SLADE
Do we close or not? This vehicle
performs like I expect it to, you'll
have a certified check for a hundred
and four thousand and change when you
open up tomorrow.

FRED
One hundred and thirteen thousand,
eight hundred dollars.

SLADE
Freddie, for you, one-oh-seven and a
case of champagne. To go with your
leftover turkey.

Fred shifts, glances at Charlie who is inscrutable, now directs
his attention back to Slade.

FRED
Can you testify to your son's driving
ability?

SLADE
He got his learner's permit from Mario
Andretti.

Fred smiles, starts walking towards the drive-out area.

FRED
...35 miles an hour on city streets,
you know.

SLADE
Not a revolution over.

59 EXT. FERRARI DEALERSHIP, PARK AVENUE - DAY

59

Charlie emerges at the wheel of a Ferrari-red 348 ts, a tense
Slade in the seat beside him, orienting himself to the noisy
traffic.

60 EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

60

A red bullet flies up the highway, MOVE IN on the Ferrari,
Charlie hunched over the wheel, the window on the passenger side
zips down, pointing the way with his cane now is Slade.

61 INT. FERRARI - CROSS-BRONX EXPRESSWAY - AFTERNOON

61

Stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic, Charlie raises the
convertible top and he and Slade are now fully visible, Slade
flourishing his cane, remonstrating with the driver of a huge
semi. As the traffic releases past a bottleneck, Charlie picks
up speed, the red lozenge of a car slips past everybody, down
the ramp, and onto the Harlem River Drive.

62 INT. FERRARI - AFTERNOON

62

Charlie is all business at the wheel. Slade's head bobs in the
vacuum of the windscreen, it is hard for him to suppress his
excitement. A big diesel horn is BLOWN at them and Slade waves
his cane in acknowledgement.

63 EXT. EAST RIVER DRIVE - AFTERNOON

63

Charlie picks his way expertly through traffic, under the Queensboro, down past Stuyvesant Town, and across the Brooklyn Bridge. As the World Trade Center gleams in the background, Slade, like an oblivious child, starts to stand up in his seat, but Charlie yanks him down.

64 EXT. WAREHOUSE AREA - AFTERNOON

64

A warehouse area under the Brooklyn Bridge, the sun shining brightly on cobblestone streets deserted on this holiday weekend. The Ferrari is nowhere in sight.

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Just take it easy, man.

SLADE (V.O.)
Is it clear...or is it clear?

CHARLIE (V.O.)
Wide open.

The 348 ts now emerges from around the corner of a building. Slade is at the wheel.

CHARLIE
Straight! Straight!

The Colonel is beside himself with excitement. He picks up speed.

CHARLIE (contd)
For Christ sake, slow down, Colonel!

SLADE
Hold on, Charlie, I think we got
another gear here --

The car goes even faster.

CHARLIE
COLONEL SLADE!

Slade, his shoulders rocking, is dancing with the Ferrari, Charlie hides his head.

SLADE
Now let's see how this baby corners.

Charlie straightens up.

CHARLIE
Corners?!

SLADE
Say when.

CHARLIE
Say when, what?

SLADE
Say when to turn!

CHARLIE
You can't turn!

SLADE
Where's the turn? Two o'clock, three
o'clock -- right oblique, right face,
what?! Talk!

CHARLIE
Three o'clock.

SLADE
I knew it! Now?

CHARLIE
No, not now!

The empty intersections fly by.

SLADE
Now?

CHARLIE
Please, Colonel!

SLADE
I'm getting ready to take a corner.
Here we go --

CHARLIE
Okay, okay -- wait-wait-wait -- NOW!!

Slade double-clutches very professionally, making a screeching, terrifying Grand Prix turn.

SLADE
Charlie, you're riding with a very
happy man.

Charlie, frozen in his seat, cannot speak. And for the moment, neither can Slade. He seems transported by the situation, completely open and totally vulnerable.

SLADE (contd)
Oh, I love this.

Then, in the very next instant, he is all himself again.

SLADE (contd)
Let's take it to the max.

Slade stands on the accelerator.

CHARLIE

Oh, jee-zus.

The car hurtles down the empty warehouse street, the Ferrari engine deafening, Charlie's eyes wide with fright, Slade's teeth bared in ecstasy.

CHARLIE (contd)

Oh please, oh don't, oh don't --

Charlie is desperate, suddenly he hears a SOUND, he can't identify it for a moment, it is Slade, screaming, he is SCREAMING with delight, his hands clutching the vibrating wheel.

Charlie goes white.

CHARLIE (contd)

Let me out.

The SOUND of a police siren.

SLADE

Shit, the yellow flag. And I hadn't even opened her up yet.

Slade, cackling, slows the car.

SLADE (contd)

Where's the curb?

CHARLIE (contd)

Uh -- uh, one o'clock.

Slade starts easing over.

CHARLIE (contd)

Easy, easy...

The Ferrari bounces off the curb.

BULLHORN (V.O.)

Pull over.

SLADE

Pit stop. We'll be out of here in seconds.

A blue-and-white Traffic Division vehicle is right on the Ferrari's tail. More BLIPS of a siren.

SLADE (contd)

I haven't had a ticket in years.

CHARLIE

Oh my God --

Slade comes to a halt.

SLADE
I'll do the talking.

65 EXT. CURB, WAREHOUSE AREA - DAY

65

Slade cuts the motor, lowers the window, looks right out at
PATROLMAN GORE, 28, an attractive example of New York's finest.

GORE
License and registration.

Charlie reaches across Slade and hands Gore a document from the
glove compartment.

GORE (contd)
(to Slade)
Test-driving this baby?

SLADE
Don't she purr, though?

GORE
At ninety miles an hour.

SLADE
Wait til you hear her at a hundred and
twenty-five.

Charlie slumps in his seat.

GORE
Where's your license?

SLADE
At the dealer's. They give it back
to you when you return the car.

A moment.

GORE
I.D.

Slade reaches in his wallet, hands Gore a plastic card. He
reads it very carefully.

GORE (contd)
Lieutenant-Colonel Slade?

Slade snaps off a sharp salute.

SLADE
And you, soldier?

Charlie groans.

GORE
The name is Patrolman Gore, Colonel.

SLADE
What outfit?

GORE
Traffic B.

SLADE
You're doing a helluva job, Gore.

GORE
And so are you.
(nods at Charlie)
Who's this?

SLADE
That's my boy, Charlie. He kept
telling me to let it out, what was I
going to do, disappoint him?

GORE
Yes.

Slade falls silent, so does Gore, who keeps checking the
military I.D., then Slade. Slade has a choirboy's expression on
his face, as if waiting to receive his punishment.

GORE (contd)
I'm going to let you go Colonel Slade
-- on one condition --

SLADE
What's that?

GORE
You take this rig straight back to the
dealer.

CHARLIE
You got it!

SLADE
(to Charlie)
Shut up.

He turns back to Gore.

SLADE (contd)
Your face and your voice are familiar,
Gore. You ever in the Officer's Club
in Dhanang?

Charlie's head sinks into his chest.

GORE
No.

SLADE
Never in the Army?

GORE
Coast Guard.

SLADE
Good Lord.

Gore contemplates Slade for a moment.

GORE
(to Charlie)
Your Dad's looking good, Charlie, but
he's got a heavy foot. Tell him to
lighten up a bit.

SLADE
I hear you.

Gore starts back towards his car.

SLADE (contd)
Gore! If you ever need a letter of
commendation for your 201 File, let
me know. I'll write the Commandant.

Slade revs up the Ferrari noisily.

CHARLIE
Get out of that seat, you're not
driving anymore!

SLADE
Just keeping this baby warm.

As the blue-and-white police car drives away, Charlie jumps out of the Ferrari, runs over to the driver's side, helps Slade out, hands him his cane, and Slade taps his way back to the passenger side.

66 INT. PARK AVENUE FERRARI DEALERSHIP - DAY

66

Fred is waiting as Charlie pulls in with Slade. Fred checks the car over, approaches Slade as he is helped out by Charlie.

FRED
I was afraid you guys took a powder
to Passaic.

Slade ignores him.

FRED (contd)
So?

SLADE
I'm crazy about the car.

FRED
It's another world, isn't it?

SLADE
We took her to the max and she sang
like a dream.

FRED
(smiles)
I ought to put you to work here on the
floor, Colonel.

SLADE
There's only one thing wrong.

Fred looks anxious.

SLADE (contd)
The color.

Fred checks the car, now Charlie.

FRED
The color?

SLADE
I don't like the color.

Slade is staring blindly right at the 348 ts.

FRED
You want silver, we'll give you
silver?

SLADE
No, this is the car I want.

FRED
This car is Ferrari red.

SLADE
I don't like Ferrari red. It reminds
me of the G-2's dick, you know what
I mean, Charlie?

CHARLIE
(reluctantly)
Yeah.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
Some other time.

CHARLIE
(to Fred)
Some other time.

Slade takes Charlie's arm now, and they calmly stroll out. Fred
watches from the doorway as Charlie gives a piercing
two-fingered whistle, a cab materializes right out of the rush
hour traffic, they climb in and disappear down Park Avenue.

67 INT. TAXICAB, PARK AVENUE - DAY

67

The taxi is stuck in traffic, a classic New York City gridlock. Slade jerks his head this way and that, tapping his foot impatiently, but there is no movement on the street, just the HONKING of horns and the SHOUTS of taxi drivers. Charlie senses his impatience but Slade, uncharacteristically, says nothing. He is within himself. His sightless eyes blink agitatedly.

SLADE

This is taking too long.

In an instant he has opened the door and stepped out into the maelstrom of cars and pedestrians in midtown, his cane flailing, his antennae taking him with the flow, Charlie throws some money at the taxi driver, jumps out, but Slade has already strode away.

CHARLIE

Hey! Colonel! C'mon, Colonel!

The light changes, around Slade the traffic starts moving, but he continues on through it. SCREECHES of cars braking, cabbies and drivers yelling, Slade loses his cane but he is impervious as he hurries along on his forced march, slamming into a trash can, taking a moment to knock the heavy thing into the street. Charlie retrieves the cane, catches up. Slade has an odd look to him, a film of sweat.

CHARLIE (contd)

What the hell are you doing?

SLADE

I've got to take a piss.

He starts to undo his fly.

CHARLIE

Colonel, for Chrissake, you're on Park Avenue.

SLADE

The perfect place.

They are on the median of the street now, Charlie backs Slade against the fence, at the same time shields him.

CHARLIE

Button your fly, here comes a cop.

SLADE

I've got nothing to hide from the New York City police.

CHARLIE

Please, Colonel -- zip it up!

SLADE
 Okay, Charlie, okay, don't get
 excited.

Slade has spun around now, zipped up his fly, he reaches over
 the fence, fumbles in the bed of Fall flowers planted in the
 median, plucks a huge chrysanthemum.

SLADE (contd)
 Will you be my date for the Navy game,
 Charlie?

CHARLIE
 Cut that out!

SLADE
 (sadly)
 'Cut that out.' Jack Benny used to
 say that. I loved Jack Benny. Gimme
 your arm, I'm getting tired.

Slade seems to collapse for a moment, all his weight going on
 Charlie.

CHARLIE
 Promise me, you'll never do anything
 like that again.

SLADE
 What'd I do?

CHARLIE
 Run out in front of a whole bunch of
 cars.

SLADE
 What kind?

Charlie hustles Slade through the revolving door of the Waldorf.

68 INT. WALDORF LOBBY - DAY

68

Slade and Charlie move up the steps leading to the lobby.

SLADE
 Which way's the men's room?

CHARLIE
 We'll be upstairs in a minute.

SLADE
 Okay, I'll use a palm tree.

They are in the lobby, and indeed the fronds of a palm tree are
 brushing the Colonel's face as he again undoes his fly.

CHARLIE
 You do that, Colonel, and I'm going
 to leave you here.

SLADE

That's why they put palm trees in
hotel lobbies, Charlie, to pee in.

CHARLIE

Good-bye.

Charlie releases Slade's arm and walks away. Slade is
bewildered for a moment, his head turns this way and that.

SLADE

CHARLIE!

People lower their newspapers, a Bellman notices him. Slade
bursts with song:

SLADE (contd)

(sings)

'I don't want to walk without you, baby
Walk without my arms about you, baby
I thought the day you left me behind
I'd take a stroll and get you right
off my mind
But now I find that...'

A plainclothes Security Man is closing in on Slade, Charlie is
coming from the other direction, Jaime, a bag in hand, restrains
the Security Man and something stops Charlie as Slade,
beautifully dressed and as presentable as always, delivers the
song to the bustling Waldorf lobby.

SLADE (contd)

(sings)

'I don't want to walk without the sunshine
Why'd you have to turn off all that sunshine
Oh, Baby, please come back or you'll break
my heart for me
'Cause I don't want to walk without you
Nosiree'.

A stunned silence in the lobby, Jaime applauds, now someone
else, it isn't crazy or not crazy, just a polite round of
applause and everybody goes back to their business as Charlie
resignedly approaches Slade.

CHARLIE

Could we go upstairs now?

SLADE

Why not?

CHARLIE

You won't piss until we get to the
room?

SLADE

The feeling's passed.

He takes Charlie's arm and they proceed to the bank of elevators amid murmurs of "That was very nice" and "You've got a sweet voice" from the onlookers. They recede into the distance as Slade marches and counts cadence straight into an elevator whose door opens.

SLADE (contd)
 'G.I. beans and G.I. gravy
 Gee, I wish I joined the Navy
 Count off
 Three fo'
 Count off
 One, two, three, fo'!'

Charlie hurries in after him, Slade reaches the back wall of the elevator, pivots and continues to march in place.

69 INT. WALDORF SUITE/CORRIDOR - DAY

69

As Charlie fumbles with the key, Slade slumps against the wall, Charlie turns the key and leads Slade inside, the door slamming behind them.

CHARLIE
 Whew.

Slade, standing in the tiny foyer leading to the sitting room, appears contradictorily quiet.

CHARLIE (contd)
 Are you okay?

SLADE
 Yeah.

It sounds like a grunt.

CHARLIE
 Did you want to go to the toilet?

SLADE
 No.

CHARLIE
 Don't you want to go in your room now?

SLADE
 No.

Charlie is puzzled by the sudden lack of affect.

CHARLIE
 You're sure you're okay?

SLADE
 I'm fine.

Slade leans against the wall, he seems strangely silent but intent.

CHARLIE
How about some television?

SLADE
Whatever you say.

Charlie turns on the television, flips through channels, little or no reaction from Slade, Charlie switches it off, checks his watch.

CHARLIE
I think I'll make a call.

SLADE
Go ahead.

Slade is fooling with his cane, testing the shape of the back of a chair. Charlie pokes in his wallet, withdraws a small address book. He locates a name, picks up the phone, dials.

CHARLIE
Hi, is George there?

An unfamiliar VOICE answers.

GEORGE'S FATHER (V.O.)
Senior or junior?

A pause.

CHARLIE
Junior.

GEORGE'S FATHER (V.O.)
Who's this?

CHARLIE
A friend of his from school.

GEORGE'S FATHER (V.O.)
Well, George isn't going to be talking to any of his friends from school right now.

Charlie glances over at Slade who has been carefully listening to the conversation.

CHARLIE
Oh?

GEORGE'S FATHER (V.O.)
Good-bye.

The CLICK of a careful hang-up, Charlie slowly puts down the phone, Slade's attention is centered on him.

CHARLIE
Are you looking at me?

SLADE
I'm blind, Charlie.

They stand there in silence, regarding each other.

SLADE (contd)
I'm going to take a nap. Too much
fresh air.

CHARLIE
Good idea. Let's get you into bed.

SLADE
No, the couch. I like this couch
here.

He finds the couch, falls on it and closes his eyes.

CHARLIE
You okay, Colonel? Everything all
right?

SLADE
Go down and get me some aspirin.

CHARLIE
Aspirin? You got it.

Charlie goes.

70 INT. NEWSSTAND/GIFT SHOP, WALDORF - DAY

70

Charlie emerges from the shop, clutching a little brown bag,
catches sight of doors about to close on the facing elevator,
with a jump he just makes it inside.

71 INT. WALDORF SUITE - LATE AFTERNOON

71

Charlie enters the suite, flipping the bottle of aspirin, but
Slade is no longer on the couch. Charlie hears movement in
Slade's bedroom, he walks in. Slade is partially dressed in his
dress blues, knotting his tie, fastening his jacket.

He looks great.

CHARLIE
Are we going someplace?

SLADE
Yeah. I'm taking a trip.

CHARLIE
Where are you going?

Slade ignores him, places his medals against his chest, discards
them for the simpler ribbons, Charlie is observing him closely.

CHARLIE (contd)
...Colonel?

Slade pivots and as he pivots, his .45 becomes visible strapped to his side, he unholsters it, inserts a magazine, CLICK-CLICK. Ejects the magazine, CLICK-CLICK, inserts it again. Manically, Slade loads and unloads the gun, Charlie watching him. CLICK-CLICK. CLICK-CLICK.

CHARLIE (contd)
(quietly)
I thought we had a deal.

SLADE
I'm welching. I'm a welcher, didn't I tell you?

CHARLIE
What you did tell me was you gave me all the bullets.

SLADE
You believe everything people tell you? Don't you know, Sailor, no self-respecting officer is without ammunition for his sidearm --
(touches his hat)
-- either in his hat band --
(clicks a heel)
-- or in his shoe.

CHARLIE
(grim)
You could have fooled me.

SLADE
And I did. How, Charlie, are you going to survive in this world without me?

Slade places the barrel of the gun at his own temple.

CHARLIE
Give me that gun.

Slade lowers the pistol, spins it Sammy Davis-style on his index finger, leaves it hanging. Charlie regards the gun dangling from Slade's finger, takes a step towards it. Slade flips it again, the handle smacks into his palm and now the gun is pointing straight at Charlie.

CHARLIE (contd)
What are you doing?

SLADE
I'm going to shoot you, too. Your life is finished anyway. Your friend George is going to sing like a canary. And so will you.
(MORE)

SLADE (contd)

And once you've sung, Charlie my boy, you will take your place in The Long Gray Line of American Manhood.

(a pause)

And you will be through.

CHARLIE

What makes you think I'm going to sing?

SLADE

The same thing that brought you to The Baird School from Appleknocker, Oregon. Ambition. You reek of it. Striving is the name of your game. You were on your way up, Charlie, you were going to sit at the Councils of the Mighty. But you would have had to sing before they'd let you pull up a chair.

CHARLIE

I'd like to disagree with you, Colonel --

SLADE

You're not in a position to. I've got a loaded .45 and you've got pimples. I'm going to kill you because I can't bear the thought of your selling out -- and don't worry about death. Lives are not measured by their length. You've stuffed a lot into 17 years, Charlie, gobs more than I have in 49.

CHARLIE

Put that gun down, Colonel.

SLADE

You giving me ultimatums? I give the ultimatums.

CHARLIE

Sorry.

SLADE

That's all right. I stood up to everybody and everything because it made me feel important. You stand up because you mean it. You know, Charlie, I don't know whether to shoot you or adopt you.

CHARLIE

Not much of a choice, sir.

SLADE

Don't get cute with me.

He cocks his gun again. CLICK-CLICK.

CHARLIE

Colonel, please -- Colonel, put it away.

SLADE

Godammit, I asked you a question! Do you want me to adopt you or don't you?!

Charlie is speechless.

SLADE (contd)

You know, the spouse or unmarried child of those having at least twenty years of active service are also entitled to burial at Arlington?

CHARLIE

Could we get off suicide? You're just in a slump right now.

SLADE

No slump, Charlie. I'm bad. Not bad, rotten.

CHARLIE

You're not bad, you're just in pain.

SLADE

What the fuck do you know about pain? You're a fucking little snail darter from the Pacific Northwest.

Slade reaches for a cigar one-handed, lights it with his Zippo, blows a smoke ring, aims the gun at the smoke ring, Charlie steps towards him and Slade lowers the gun again and points it right at Charlie.

SLADE (contd)

This is no time to grow a dick, my boy.

CHARLIE

Please put the gun away, Colonel...

Charlie takes one more step towards Slade. Slade hesitates, twirls the gun furiously, and suddenly it is pointing at his own head again.

SLADE

Don't move.

Charlie freezes.

SLADE (contd)
I'm talking Parade Ground --
(shouts)
-- Atten-shun!!

Charlie is motionless, sweat at his hairline as Slade's antennae work overtime, the place static with the electricity of his concentration. Charlie advances on Slade, who keeps the pistol trained on his own temple.

SLADE (contd)
Soldier, you were given an order.

CHARLIE
Give me the gun, Colonel.

SLADE
Charlie, in five seconds I'm going to
kill myself.

CHARLIE
I want your gun, Colonel.

SLADE
Five -- four -- three -- two --

WHAP! Charlie, ducking under the electrical field and quick as a cat, grabs the barrel of the gun, tries to wrest it away, but the Colonel won't give it up. They struggle, Charlie holds on desperately, pulling the gun down towards himself but Slade won't release it. The barrel of the gun is now pointed at Charlie's stomach, he has both his hands around it, but the Colonel's finger is still firmly on the trigger.

SLADE (contd)
Let go.

CHARLIE
No, I won't.

SLADE
You're going to die like a dog,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
Do it! You want to do it? Do it!
Do it!

Only the sounds of their breathing now.

CHARLIE (contd)
I'll explode all over you. Pull the
thing, you blind motherfucker.

Charlie starts to hyperventilate, his breaths coming in terrible heaves, sweat running down his cheek. Slade is inches away.

SLADE
You smell.

CHARLIE

I'm scared.

SLADE

You don't want to die, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Neither do you.

SLADE

Give me one reason not to.

CHARLIE

I'll give you two. You can dance a tango and drive a Ferrari better than anybody I've ever seen.

SLADE

You've never seen anybody do either.

He stares down at his gun.

SLADE (contd)

(noodling gently)

'Did you ever have the feeling that you wanted to go still have the feeling that you wanted to stay...'

CHARLIE

Please, Colonel, give it to me.

A moment.

SLADE

You know how to handle a .45?

Another moment.

CHARLIE

Half as good as a .90.

Slade hesitates for a moment, he manages a weak smile, relaxes imperceptibly. Charlie looks down, finds Slade has released the gun, Charlie holds it awkwardly by the barrel. Slade gently reaches out, with one hand he flicks a lever, the magazine drops out of the gun, with the other hand Slade catches it and in one smooth move, reaches up and deposits it in Charlie's breast pocket. Now Slade turns away.

SLADE

I could use a drink.

CHARLIE

How about a cup of coffee?

SLADE

That's too big a leap for me right now, Charlie. Maybe tomorrow. Mr. John Daniels, no water.

Charlie crosses to the mini-bar, and Slade listens to the comfortable sounds of Charlie fixing him a drink. Charlie hands the glass to him. Slade takes a gulp, makes a face.

SLADE (contd)
I said no water, Charlie.

CHARLIE
No water. They have strong ice at the Waldorf.

Slade smiles, takes another sip.

The RATTLE of a key in the door, the Night Maid, an aging but attractive Hispanic woman, enters.

NIGHT MAID
Turn down your bed, sir?

CHARLIE
No, thank you --

Slade sniffs the air, opens his arms invitingly.

SLADE
What he means, senorita, is come right in.

The Night Maid smiles anxiously. Charlie removes a set of towels from her arm, shows her out.

CHARLIE
(kindly)
Maybe later.

NIGHT MAID
Yes sir, good night.

She leaves, Slade is still sniffing the area, his teeth bared in a ravenous smile.

CHARLIE
Boy, have you got a one-track mind.

SLADE
Is there anything else in the world, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Not for you.

SLADE
What's so bad? Women are the essence of life. You know what's kept me going all these years --
(MORE)

SLADE (contd)
(hesitates)
...The thought that maybe one day I
could have a woman's arms wrapped
around me -- and her legs -- wrapped
around me -- and --

CHARLIE
And what?

SLADE
And that she might still be there in
the morning when I wake up -- the
smell of her, all funky and warm...

Slade is staring blindly into the remains of his watery drink,
Charlie watching him closely, Slade oddly drifts away.

SLADE (contd)
I finally gave up on it.

CHARLIE
Well, you're making a mistake. I
don't know why you can't have that.

SLADE
(dazedly)
Have what?

CHARLIE
You know, when we get back to New
Hampshire, I don't know why you can't
find someone. You're a good-looking
guy...you're a lot of fun...great to
travel with...sensitive...
compassionate --

Slade smiles.

SLADE
Are you fucking with me, Charlie?

CHARLIE
Yes.

Slade laughs. The telephone RINGS.

CHARLIE (contd)
(to Slade)
You know, from now on you don't have
to decide to kill yourself to come to
New York and have a good time.

Charlie picks up the RINGING telephone.

CHARLIE (contd)
 (into phone)
 Hold on.
 (to Slade)
 Do you?

A long moment.

SLADE
 No.

CHARLIE
 (phone)
 Yeah? Oh hi, Manny...The plane? What
 time does it leave? --
 (checks his watch)
 Oh my God!
 (to Slade)
 We missed our plane!

SLADE
 Your plane, Charlie, my ticket was
 one-way.

Charlie holds up his hand to Slade.

CHARLIE
 That's okay, Manny says there're
 shuttles on the hour till 9 o'clock.

Slade ignores Charlie, rubs his sleeve on the patent leather
 visor of his dress hat, fits it to his head. He looks
 impressive.

SLADE
 No way, Charlie. Not the shuttle, not
 at any price.

72 EXT. WALDORF-ASTORIA - NIGHT

72

The limo is at the curb, Jaime adjusts Slade's bag in the trunk,
 slams the lid shut, hurries around to hold the door for Slade.
 Slade slaps him fondly on the arm.

SLADE
 Hyman, I like the cut of your jib.

He hands him some money.

JAIME
 Thank you, sir.

SLADE
 Nada.

Slade steps into the car, Charlie following after, Jaime salutes
 the limo as Manny drives away.

73 INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Manny picks up the phone.

MANNY
New England Turnpike all the way,
Colonel?

SLADE
Open 'er up, Manolo.

Slade stretches out his legs.

74 EXT. NEW ENGLAND TURNPIKE - NIGHT

The limo catching the reflection of iron oxide tollbooth lights
as the car enters Westchester.

75 INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Slade takes out his flask, tries to drink, but it is empty.
Charlie passes him the remains of a bottle of water, Slade
drains it.

Charlie peers moodily out the window, Slade's head tilts towards
him.

SLADE
I'm getting that heavy feeling again,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
Um --
(a moment)
Ahh --

SLADE
One um -- one ahh --

CHARLIE
Um...I think you were right about
George and his father.

Another moment.

SLADE
I'm sorry to hear that.

CHARLIE
As soon as we get back, Dean Trask is
bringing us up in front of the whole
school --

SLADE
Putting your feet to the fire?

CHARLIE
A special meeting of the Disciplinary
Committee.

SLADE
And you say what?

CHARLIE
I'll think of something.

Slade tries to get a last sip out of his flask. Charlie hands him a fresh bottle of water.

SLADE
Thanks. Why are you all alone with this? Where's your father?

CHARLIE
He left.

SLADE
I thought it was a Mom-and-Pop store. Who's the Pop?

CHARLIE
My stepfather.

SLADE
Oh yeah. Why isn't he in on this?

Charlie doesn't answer.

SLADE (contd)
He's no good, huh?

CHARLIE
He's okay. We just don't get along.

SLADE
Why not?

CHARLIE
Because he's an asshole.

SLADE
That's all right. Every family's got one nowadays.

They drift into silence.

76 EXT. LIMO, NEW ENGLAND TURNPIKE - NIGHT 76

The limo drives on, passing noisy semis and lonely night-hound cars.

77 INT. LIMO - NIGHT 77

Slade and Charlie are both asleep, a blanket covering them. Slade wakes up, picks up the phone.

SLADE
(quietly)
Where are we?

MANNY

Worcester.

SLADE

(whispers)

Keep rolling, Manny.

Charlie, asleep, shivers. Slade takes the blanket off himself and doubles it up on Charlie, now he settles himself ramrod-straight in the corner of the backseat, his dress hat rests on his knee, his eyes are closed, but an acute sense of awareness about him, as if he could bounce awake in an instant. As if he were in a foxhole.

78 EXT. DORMITORY, THE BAIRD SCHOOL - MORNING

78

A screen door keeps slamming as students pour out of the building, green book bags and bicycles, they make their way down gravel paths to the Academy Building in the distance.

The limousine pulls up and parks, a few of the students glance at the tinted windows of the car as they pass. The limo door opens, Manny hands Charlie a plastic Waldorf-Astoria laundry bag.

MANNY

...This it?

CHARLIE

Thanks.

He takes the bag, climbs out of the limo, turns back to Slade who is still seated in the car, his head tilted towards Charlie. A bell RINGS.

SLADE

What's that?

CHARLIE

First bell. I just got time to shave.

Slade extends a cigarette-sized roll of bills.

SLADE

Three hundred dollars. A job well done. If you ever need references, Charlie, I'm your man.

Charlie takes the money.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

(to Manny)

It's 16 Water Street. Just over the bridge and --

SLADE

We'll find it.

He holds out his hand.

SLADE (contd)
Good-bye, Charlie.

CHARLIE
Good-bye, Colonel.

They shake. Silence.

SLADE
Okay, Manny.

Manny squeezes Charlie's shoulder, Charlie ties the knot of the laundry bag tighter, then runs into his dormitory, dodging other students as they come out.

79 EXT. THE BAIRD SCHOOL, BELFRY - MORNING

79

The bell RINGS again.

80 INT. ACADEMY BUILDING, BAIRD SCHOOL - MORNING

80

An impressive assembly hall, portraits of founders and former headmasters line the walls, the entire student body is settling into long benches, century-old relics with initials of alumni long dead carved into the backs. The benches face a stage and a podium.

Charlie enters, the bell is RINGING steadily now, a Monitor touches Charlie's arm, motions him up the steps to the stage where the members of the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee are taking seats in wooden armchairs arranged in a semi-circle. Facing the Committee are a pair of elementary school-type desks.

Charlie notices George at one of the desks, but he is depressed to see a distinguished-looking, gray-haired man seated beside him, GEORGE WILLIS, SR. George, Jr., who appears to have shrunk in size next to his father, studiously avoids meeting Charlie's glance as Charlie takes his seat at the other desk. Mrs. Hunsaker is beside the podium with a note pad. A noisy rustle and scraping of benches, the students rising as Dean Trask enters from a wing.

Charlie, isolated at his desk, looks out, his eyes rove the sea of students' faces in the great hall. Seated in their midst, and side-by-side, are Harry, Trent and Jimmy. The bell stops ringing as the last tardy students take their seats. Trask approaches the podium.

TRASK
...I called an open meeting of this institution this morning because the incident that occurred this Tuesday last, describes an issue that concerns all of us...not an isolated case of
(MORE)

TRASK (contd)

vandalism, what happened is the symptom of the sickness of a society, a sickness which runs counter to the principles this school was founded on. A school among whose graduates, three have sat at the desk in the Oval Room of The White House. Baird men have run State Departments and investment houses, founded department stores and coached football teams, our alumni receive their bulletins in ashrams in India and in palaces in Jordan, we are, in fact, known around the world as the cradle of this country's leadership. But today we are bleeding from disrespect.

A door to the assembly hall SQUEAKS open and Manny, caught like a rabbit in headlights, appears. Awkwardly, he leads Slade onto the stage and into a chair next to a startled Charlie. Slade settles himself in as if he were right at home, Manny departs quickly as Trask looks Slade up and down, as do the other participants on the stage. The students on the back benches rise, to get a better view of this blind article who has arranged himself at the side of Charlie Simms.

Slade leans over to a bewildered Charlie, speaks intently to him, now Charlie turns Slade in the direction of George's father, Slade tilts his head in his fashion, examining George, Sr. with his antennae, but George, Sr. meets his gaze.

TRASK (contd)

Who is this, Mr. Simms?

CHARLIE

Ummm -- ahh --

SLADE

(to Trask)

'This' is Frank Slade,
Lieutenant-Colonel, United States
Army, retired. I'm here in place of
Charlie's parents.

TRASK

Excuse me?

SLADE

In loco parentis.

Trask blinks.

SLADE (contd)

They could not make the trip from
Oregon today.

TRASK

And what is your relationship to Mr. Simms?

SLADE

Is this a courtroom?

TRASK

The closest thing we could manage to it.

SLADE

Then if we're taking oaths, I'd like to swear a few people in.

Silence.

TRASK

There are no oaths at Baird, we are all on our honor.

SLADE

Larry and Franny Simms are old and dear friends of mine. They asked me to appear here today on Charlie's behalf. Okay?

A moment.

TRASK

Happy to have you with us, Colonel.

Trask turns towards the desk where George and his father are seated.

TRASK (contd)

Mr. Willis?

WILLIS, SR.

Which Mr. Willis?

Slade pokes Charlie with his elbow.

TRASK

George, Jr., sir.

GEORGE

Yes?

TRASK

You were in a position last Tuesday night to see who vandalized my car. Who was it?

GEORGE

Well, I have an idea who it was.

TRASK

Not an 'idea', Mr. Willis, did you see or did you not see?

GEORGE

I didn't have my glasses on.

George's father stares at him.

GEORGE (contd)

(quickly)

I was in the library, I had on my reading glasses, and then I helped Simms close up and I started to put on my regular glasses but it was a real frosty night, right? So I started to clean them, then I heard this sound, but I never got a chance to put them on.

TRASK

Whom, with your limited vision, did you see?

George hesitates, his father puts his hand on his arm, whispers purposefully to him.

GEORGE

(to Trask)

Well, like I say, it was real blurry -- I mean I can't see without my glasses --

TRASK

What did you see, Mr. Willis?

GEORGE

You mean definitively?

TRASK

Stop fencing with me, Mr. Willis, and tell me what you saw!

George's father drills George with another stare.

GEORGE

Now don't hold me to this, but -- I mean no glasses, and it was dark and everything and --

TRASK

Mr. Willis?!

GEORGE

Maybe Harry Havemeyer, Trent Potter and Jimmy Jameson.

TRASK

'Maybe'?

GEORGE
Ballpark. Best guess.

TRASK
Could you provide us with some detail?

GEORGE
Well, Charlie could tell you for sure,
he was closer.

Trask, finally, irritated by the interchange, turns to Charlie.

TRASK
Mr. Simms?

CHARLIE
Yes?

TRASK
You don't wear eyeglasses, do you?

CHARLIE
No.

TRASK
With your untrammelled sight, whom did
you see?

A moment. From their seats in the middle of the assembly,
Harry, Trent and Jimmy, very nervous now, await Charlie's
response.

CHARLIE (contd)
I saw something, but I couldn't say
who it was.

TRASK
All right, what was the 'something'
you saw?

CHARLIE
I couldn't say.

TRASK
You 'couldn't say'? Or you wouldn't
say?

CHARLIE
I -- I just couldn't say.

TRASK
Couldn't, wouldn't, shouldn't! Mr.
Simms, you're exhausting my patience
and making a mockery of these
proceedings. I am giving you one last
chance -- the consequences of your
response will be dire.

(MORE)

TRASK (contd)
 By 'dire,' Mr. Simms, I mean your
 future will be jeopardized --
permanently. Now, for the last
 time -- what did you see last
Tuesday night outside my house?

CHARLIE
 I saw somebody --

TRASK
 (interrupting)
 'I saw somebody.' Good! And did you
 see their size and shape?

CHARLIE
 Yes, sir.

TRASK
 And they were the size and shape of
 whom?

CHARLIE
 They were the size and shape of --

A very long moment.

CHARLIE (contd)
 ...most any Baird student.

Slade is ecstatic. Harry, Trent and Jimmy sink back into their
 seats and exhale with relief.

Trask surveys the gathering: the student body, the Disciplinary
 Committee, George, Jr. and George, Sr., and finally, Charlie and
 Slade.

TRASK
 I am left with no real witness. Mr.
 Willis' testimony is not only vague,
 it is unsubstantiated. The substance
 I was looking for, Mr. Simms, was to
 come from you.

CHARLIE
 I'm sorry.

Silence.

CHARLIE (contd)
 I really am.

TRASK
 I'm sorry, too. Because you know what
 I'm going to do inasmuch as I can't
 punish Mr. Havemeyer, Mr. Potter and
 Mr. Jameson -- and I won't punish
 (MORE)

TRASK (Cont'd)

Mr. Willis, he is the only party to this incident who is still worthy of calling himself a Baird man -- I am going to expel you, Mr. Simms. You are a cover-up artist and you are a liar.

SLADE

But not a snitch.

TRASK

Excuse me?

SLADE

No, I don't think I will.

TRASK

Mr. Slade --

SLADE

This is a crock of shit.

Silence.

TRASK

Please watch your language, Mr. Slade, you are in The Baird School, not a barracks. Mr. Simms, I'll give you one final opportunity to speak up --

SLADE

Mr. Simms doesn't want it. He doesn't need to be labeled 'still worthy of being a Baird man'. What's your motto here? "Boys, inform on your classmates and you'll save your hide, anything short of that and we'll burn you at the stake"? Gentlemen, when the shit hits the fan, some guys run and some guys stay. Here's Charlie -- facing the fire. And there's George -- hiding in Big Daddy's pocket. And what are you going to do, Dean Trask? Reward George -- and destroy Charlie?

TRASK

Are you finished, Mr. Slade?

SLADE

I'm just warming up. I don't care if William Howard Taft or William Jennings Bryan went here, their spirit is dead.

(MORE)

SLADE (contd)

You're building a ratship, a vessel for seagoing snitches, and if you think you're preparing these minnows for manhood, think again because you're killing the very spirit this institution proclaims it instills. What a performance. The only class in the act is sitting next to me and I'm here to tell you his soul is intact. You know why? Because someone, I'm not going to say who, offered to buy it.

Slade stares at Trask.

SLADE (contd)

However, Charlie wasn't selling.

TRASK

Sir, you're out of order.

SLADE

You don't know what 'out of order' is. I'd show you out of order, but I'm too old, too tired and too blind. If I were the man I was five years ago, I'd put a flame thrower to this place. I've been around, Dean-O, there was a time when I could see, and I've seen arms torn out and legs ripped off but there's nothing like the sight of an amputated spirit -- no prosthetic for that. You think you're merely sending this splendid foot soldier back to Oregon with his tail between his legs. But I say you're executing his soul. And on what rap -- that he's not a Baird man?

Slade surveys the hall. Harry, Trent and Jimmy are all attention, enjoying the drift of Slade's words.

SLADE (contd)

Baird men? You'll be Baird bums. The whole bunch of you. And Harry, Trent and Jimmy, wherever you are out there, fuck you too.

Harry, Trent and Jimmy go white. A rustle around them, even a few suppressed laughs.

TRASK

Stand down, Mr. Slade.

SLADE

I'm not finished. As I came in, I heard the words 'cradle of leadership'. Well, when the bough breaks, the cradle will fall. And it's fallen here.

Slade turns to the members of the Disciplinary Committee.

SLADE (contd)

Makers of men, creators of leaders,
be careful what kind of leaders you're
producing here. Which youth do you
think the young Tom Jefferson was
like? Which young man do you think
young Abraham Lincoln resembled? Who
here takes after George Patton?

He tilts his head towards George.

SLADE (contd)

This creep...

He turns towards Charlie.

SLADE (contd)

Or Charlie?

Slade turns towards his chair.

SLADE (contd)

I've come to crossroads in my life.
I always knew what the right path was.
But I never took it because it was too
hard. Charlie's come to a crossroads.
And he's chosen the right path. The
path is made of Principle and it leads
to Character. Let him continue on his
journey.

He sits. The hall is engulfed in silence.

The SOUND of a hand clap from a back bench, two other hand claps
and now rhythmic applause starts, Trask is banging on a gavel
but no one will listen, Mrs. Hunsaker is trying to quiet Trask
down, George Willis, Sr. turns beet-red, Harry, Trent and Jimmy
don't know which way to turn, the members of the Student-Faculty
Disciplinary Committee have already begun conferring, the
CLAPPING builds and envelops the place, the old red brick
building seems to shake with SOUND, Slade reaches down and
squeezes Charlie's arm, a wink from his gimpy eye.

SLADE (contd)

(to Charlie)

How's that for cornball?

Trask BANGS his gavel insistently, now he stands up on the stage
and crisscrosses his arms desperately, finally a reluctant
SILENCE.

TRASK

We will adjourn and the Disciplinary
Committee will take this matter under
advisement -- in camera -- in closed
session --

A BUZZ, the Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee members who are still huddled, break from it. A Senior faculty member hurries over to Trask, speaks to him. Trask reacts angrily, the faculty member holds his ground, Trask stalks off in a huff, the faculty member then hands a piece of paper to Mrs. Hunsaker.

MRS. HUNSAKER

(reading)

The joint Student-Faculty Disciplinary Committee need no further sessions, they have come to a decision. Messrs. Havemeyer, Potter and Jameson are placed on probation for suspicion of ungentlemanly conduct -- It is further recommended that Mr. George Willis, Jr. receive neither recognition, nor commendation, for his cooperation --

George, Sr. gets up and walks out.

MRS. HUNSAKER (contd)

Mr. Charles Simms is excused from any further response to this incident.

The place erupts, RHYTHMIC APPLAUSE again, the back-benchers climbing on each others' shoulders to get a better view of Slade and Charlie.

SLADE

(to Charlie)

We better get off before they give us the hook.

Slade takes Charlie's arm, Charlie leads him out, Slade sniffing as he goes:

SLADE (contd)

(to Charlie, over the NOISE)

No ginch, not a trace of a scent. When is this school going to enter the 20th Century?

CHARLIE

Where did you get that 'Larry and Franny' stuff? Those aren't my parents' names.

SLADE

Sound good, don't they?

CHARLIE

Yeah. And thanks.

SLADE

For what?

CHARLIE

For you know what.

SLADE

Hey, I was just protecting myself.
 What's going to happen to all of us
 if George and Harry are running the
 country in twenty years?

There is a hubbub around Charlie and Slade as Charlie leads him out, students calling to Slade, "Thank you, sir", "Good going, sir", "Hey, your friend's great, Charlie", but still they give the blind Slade a wide berth as he taps his cane in a broad arc. Emerging from the crowd, CHRISTINE DOWNES, 30-ish, a teacher whom we have seen sitting with the faculty, calls out.

CHRISTINE

Colonel!

Slade stops, sniffs.

SLADE

Did I speak too soon?
 (sniffs again; to
 Charlie)
 Ginch, after all.

CHRISTINE

I'm Christine Downes, Colonel Slade,
 I teach Political Science. I just
 wanted to tell you how much I
 appreciate your coming here and
 speaking your mind.

SLADE

Why, thank you, are you married?

CHRISTINE

Uh -- uh, I -- uh --

SLADE

Went to Artillery School at Fort Sill
 with a Mickey Downes. Thought he
 might have snagged you.

Charlie smiles.

CHRISTINE

No -- no -- I'm afraid not --

CHARLIE

(quickly)

Colonel Slade was on Lyndon Johnson's
 staff, Miss Downes.

CHRISTINE

Were you? Fascinating.

SLADE

...Let's get together and talk
 politics sometime.

(MORE)

SLADE (contd)
(sniffs)
Fleurs de Rocailles?

Christine is startled.

CHRISTINE
Yes.

SLADE
Flowers from a brook.

Christine, charmed, is taken with Slade.

CHRISTINE
That's right.

SLADE
Well, Miss Downes, I'll know where to
find you.
(a moment)
Charlie?

Charlie offers Slade his arm, Slade takes it, and Charlie steers him through the doors and out to the street as Christine watches them go.

81 EXT. LIMO - DAY

81

The car makes its way down the street, into town and across a bridge.

82 INT. LIMO, WILTON - DAY

82

Charlie and Slade are side-by-side in the back seat again, Slade is within himself, not depressed or exhilarated, almost relaxed.

SLADE
...I think I'll take my brother to the
Super Bowl next year.

Charlie smiles.

83 EXT./INT. LIMO, ROSSI HOUSE - DAY

83

The limo pulls up outside 16 Water Street, the distant SOUND of Francine and Willie playing, Donny's truck is in the driveway.

Slade lowers his window, breathes in the smell of the place.

SLADE
(to Charlie)
Yaba daba doo.

Manny rolls down the window between driver and passengers, he has prepared three drinks from a half-pint bottle of Jack Daniels, a fingerful in each glass, hands one to Slade, one to Charlie, takes one himself.

MANNY
This one's on me, Colonel.

Slade nods his thanks to Manny and now Slade turns to Charlie, raises the whiskey glass to his glass eye and strikes it gently. PING.

SLADE
Here's looking at you.

They drain their drinks.

Manny hops out, retrieves Slade's bag from the trunk, hands it to Charlie who has helped Slade out, Slade peels off a few hundreds, hands them to Manny who mutters great gratitude, and Slade gives Manny a good-bye squeeze on the shoulder.

Charlie picks up Slade's bag, holds out his arm for Slade.

SLADE (contd)
No thanks, Charlie, I'll take it from here. You go ahead, Manny will drop you off at your dorm. Come by before you go home for Christmas, we'll have a little cheer. And if you feel like it, you'll stay for dinner. Sometimes she cooks pot roast -- it's almost edible.

CHARLIE
Gee, that would be --

SLADE
Good-bye, Charlie.

Slade takes his bag from Charlie, heads up towards the house by himself, Charlie climbs back in the limo, watches as Francine appears around a corner of the house on her tricycle, Willie riding behind her on the rear running-board. Francine brakes sharply at the sight of Slade.

SLADE (contd)
What are you doing?

FRANCINE
Taking a ride.

SLADE
On the trike?

WILLIE
Me, too!

SLADE
(to Francine)
Get off.

FRANCINE
I will not!

SLADE
Get off, Francine, or I'll whack you
with this cane.

Francine gets off, Slade drops his bag.

SLADE (contd)
Give me your hand.

Francine hesitates.

SLADE (contd)
Your hand!

Francine gives him her hand, with his other he feels for the handlebars of the tricycle, now he hits it with his cane, Willie jumps off in terror, Francine backs away. Slade drops the cane as he locates the handlebars, now he climbs gingerly on the seat, all bow-legged and awkward. He is half-on -- half-off.

SLADE (contd)
C'mere, Francie.

She moves to him cautiously, when she reaches him, he lifts her on to his lap, now he starts pedalling, very slowly.

WILLIE
Hey!

Slade stops, Willie climbs on the back, holds on to Slade by grabbing his belt. Now Slade picks up the pace. Karen appears at the kitchen window, Donny beside her, they watch, dumbstruck, the proceedings outside.

Charlie observes from the back seat of the limo, Manny is about to pull away.

CHARLIE
Wait.

Charlie peers out the limo window at Slade running sprints on the tricycle, Francine and Willie hanging all over him, Karen and Donny, in thrall, at the kitchen window.

A smile spreads over Charlie's face. GO OUT on the smile.

THE END