

STREET SMART

by David Freeman

Revised

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"STREET SMART"

FADE IN:

1 INT. NEW YORK JOURNAL - EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The editor, TED AVERY, in a rumpled, hand-tailored English suit, and BEN SINGER, the managing editor, are listening to JONATHAN FISHER pitch article-ideas. It's not going well.

JONATHAN

What about a piece on Lombardi on Staten Island -- corruption bombs are going off around that guy and he's Mr. Clean. You know he's got his hands where they don't belong --

TED

No... What else have you got?

JONATHAN

Remember all those construction cranes that fell? Six people were were killed in a couple of months...

(off Ted's blank expression)

Never mind... There was a lot of talk from city hall about new inspectors and tougher standards. Well, the damn things are still falling over.

TED

Weren't you working on a service piece?

JONATHAN

Best pork sausage on the Upper West Side. I stuffed myself --

TED

Excuse me.

(picks up phone)

Tell my wife I'll meet her at the restaurant. Check on the reservation.

(to Jonathan)

That thing about the cranes isn't bad, but I'd really need a heavy hitter on something like that.

JONATHAN

Ted, I can do it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

TED

I don't think so, Jonathan.
It's not your side of the street.

JONATHAN

What's that supposed to mean?

BEN

(to the rescue)

Ted, I'm not so sure about
Freddy's Times Square piece. I
haven't seen a word and he's in
L.A.

TED

The issue closes Monday.
What's he doing in L.A.?

BEN

Probably chasing movie deals.
(to Jonathan)
He's supposed to be doing a
profile of a pimp.

JONATHAN

(sees his chance)

I can do that.

TED

I want to talk to Freddy...

BEN

You and me both.
(to Jonathan)
It's part of Times Square After
the Clean Up - How Clean is It.

TED

(to Jonathan)

Freddy has all the contacts.

JONATHAN

But he's not doing it.

BEN

If he doesn't deliver, it means
spiking a page and a half of
ads.

That worries Ted. He thinks for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

TED

(to Ben)

What's the working head?

JONATHAN

(improvising quickly)

A Day in the Life. We follow a pimp around, see how the whole thing works. How he thinks -- politics, money, religion, real estate. See what's happened to him since the Times Square clean up. I want to look into his skull. 2000 words.

TED

(considers then makes
his decision)

It has to be on this desk
Monday morning.

Jonathan gets up, shakes Ted's hand and starts to leave.

BEN

I'll walk you out.

CUT TO:

2

INT. CITY ROOM TO HALLWAY - DAY

Jonathan and Ben walk through the city room -- busy with writers and editors, at computers, on the phone, etc. Jonathan's feeling a lot better than he did a moment ago. He smiles at people, nods hello.

BEN

I don't know if it's such a favor. Monday doesn't give you much time. Start with the police P.R. --

JONATHAN

I've got a captain in Public Morals who owes me one. I'll start there. I'm going to need some expense money.

BEN

There's the old Jonathan. You'd need expense money for the elevator.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Got to flash a little to get this one.

BEN

Just come through. Stay close to me on this one.

JONATHAN

Thanks, Ben.

They're at the elevator.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. TIMES SQUARE AREA STREETS - NIGHT

From inside a moving car, CAMERA observes the streets. We don't see the inside of the car or the two people in it. The passenger is a street pimp called FAST BLACK. With him is REGGIE, his driver and factotum. Reggie is singing along with the radio.

REGGIE (V.O.)

(stops singing;
speaks)

How 'bout that Tyson? You see that dude punch? He put the lights out on that mother so fast... First round, bam-bam-bam.

(chanting)

Mi-tee, Mi-tee, Mi-tee --

FAST (V.O.)

Shut the fuck up.

Reggie is quiet. Fast's hands reach down to a styrofoam ice chest. He pulls out a bottle of Yoo-Hoo, a chocolate drink.

As he pulls it to his lips, we get our first look at Fast Black. He's a fortyish black man in blue jeans and a baseball cap. Reggie is in his early twenties, a hand me down version of his boss.

FAST

(continuing; change
of heart)

When he's fighting again?
We'll go see him.

The car stops across from a cluster of hookers. One of them, DARLENE, is talking to a middle-aged man. We see the pickup from the POV of the car.

(CONTINUED)

FAST (V.O.)
Come on, baby... He do or he
don't... Make your move, bitch.
It's his chance of a lifetime.

Darlene walks away; the man follows.

FAST
(continuing)
Okay! Things are happening.
Let's get on over to the Del
Rio, see who's tushy is
snapping.

CUT TO:

4 EXT. DEL RIO HOTEL - NIGHT

A staircase leading into darkness, in the Forties, off Eight Ave. Fast's car, a non-descript sedan, stops in front, by a no parking sign. Fast emerges and strolls toward the hotel. Reggie trots along behind him.

5 INT. DEL RIO LOBBY - NIGHT

A cage and a room clerk who says something we don't hear to Fast, who nods. The clerk hands Fast a key.

6 INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Fast, with Reggie a step behind, comes around the corner, moving toward loud voices. A woman is struggling and yelling in Spanish. Fast stops in front of the door, hesitates, then knocks. The yelling continues; he opens the door with the key the clerk gave him.

7 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A middle-aged suburban JOHN is beating a Puerto Rican WHORE who's trying to get her clothes on and get out of the room. The John is punching her silly. Her face is bloody.

(CONTINUED)

WHORE

Stop it... Don't... No. No...lo
siento. Yo probó mas...Let
me... Don't... parase...

Fast tries to calm the man and pull him off the whore.

FAST

Hey, come on, come on...It's
all over. If it didn't work,
we give you a refund.

JOHN

Get off me. Where'd you get
this bitch?

FAST

It's her fault. She always
doing this. We going to send
her back to San Juan. You get
the limp dick money-back
guarentee.

JOHN

I can get it up any time I...

The John swings a fist, bloody from the whore's face, at
Fast. He connects and it angers Fast. He punches the John
in the crotch, full blast. The man goes down and Fast kicks
him in the face.

REGGIE

Hey... cool it...easy...

Fast kicks him again, in the side of the head. The man gasps
for breath and begins wheezing. His arm goes stiff and his
face turns red. Fast backs off, scared.

FAST

Hey, hey...

But it's too late. The gentleman is having a coronary. He
sits up wide-eyed for a moment, then flops back, dead.

Fast pushes the guy's eyes back, then listens for breath. He
slaps his heart several times, trying to start it. The man's
a corpse and Fast knows it. The whore is terrified. She
finishes dressing, quickly.

REGGIE

Holy shit. What we going
to do?

FAST

Throw him out the window.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. STREET - NEAR DEL RIO - NIGHT

Jonathan walks along 44th Street, looking at the area, trying to get a feel for his assignment.

A FLASHY MAN stands next to a news kiosk, near a porno joint. He looks high. Jonathan walks over to him.

JONATHAN

How's it going?

The Flashy Man stares straight ahead, chewing his gum, hard.

JONATHAN

(continuing)

Slow out here tonight?

FLASHY MAN

Man, they send you guys out looking all kind of ways. Aint nothing here for you, Jack.

JONATHAN

I just want to talk to you for a minute.

FLASHY MAN

Get your face out of here or I cut your balls off and shove'em up your ass.

JONATHAN walks away. Quickly.

8A EXT. DIFFERENT PART OF THE STREET - ON JONATHAN - NIGHT

As he walks past the Del Rio, a beefy HOOKER stops him. She wears a long straight wig that sits on her head like a helmet.

HOOKER

Want a date?

JONATHAN

Well... I...

HOOKER

You tell me. You tell me what. I got it for you.

Behind Jonathan, in the b.g., Fast and Reggie exit the hotel and drive away. Jonathan doesn't notice these two men in a plain car as they drive away.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN
I don't think you're... I
mean... I'd rather --

HOOGER
It's cool. I could go any
which way.

She lifts the corner of her wig revealing a short
unmistakably male head of hair.

HOOGER
(continuing; deeper)
You like it hard and dark?

JONATHAN
No... No...

Jonathan steps backward, off the curb into the gutter as the
hooker leers at him.

He turns away, almost dizzy, moving down the street. As he's
reeling away, a frizzy-haired white girl (PUNCHY) drifts
toward him.

PUNCHY
Hi.

JONATHAN
Hi.

PUNCHY
Want to go out?

JONATHAN
What's the deal?

PUNCHY
You want to come up?

Jonathan nods yes. He's a little uneasy.

9 EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A dark, dirty set of stairs. Jonathan has second thoughts.

JONATHAN
Could we go somewhere else?

PUNCHY
My time is valuable.

JONATHAN
I'll pay you for the travel
time. Come on.

CUT TO:

10 INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - B'WAY & 46TH - NIGHT

Summer crowd: after theatre, tourists, school kids, etc. In a rear booth, Jonathan and Punchy.

JONATHAN
Good ice cream, huh?

PUNCHY
It's okay. I like Rocky Road.

JONATHAN
So what's your name?

PUNCHY
Tiffany.

JONATHAN
That on your birth certificate?

She shrugs and plays with her ice cream.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
Where'd you grow up?

PUNCHY
When guys ask questions,
they're scared or cops. You're
not a cop.

JONATHAN
I'm a reporter.

PUNCHY
(unconvinced and
unimpressed)
Yeah, well, I don't read the
papers too much.

JONATHAN
No. Really. I am.

PUNCHY
So?

He's unsure what to say next, so he plunges in.

JONATHAN
Do you work for anybody in
particular?

PUNCHY
Nobody. Just me.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

You don't have... You know, a man?

PUNCHY

No pimp. Just me.

JONATHAN

I don't believe you.

PUNCHY

I don't give a shit.

JONATHAN

Does everybody call you Tiffany?

PUNCHY

I said, yeah.

JONATHAN

For my forty bucks, why don't you give me one piece of truth? What do your friends call you? What do you call you?

PUNCHY

(considers)

Punchy.

JONATHAN

That's your name?

PUNCHY

I get paid before the action. You got my name. The bill's overdue.

Jonathan drops two twenties on the table.

PUNCHY

(continuing)

That's it?

JONATHAN

You want a tip?

PUNCHY

(picks up
the twenties)

You get a very good time for forty bucks.

CUT TO:

11 INT. JONATHAN AND ALISON'S LOFT - BEDROOM - SOHO - NIGHT

Created more out of taste than money -- second hand and thrift shop furniture.

Jonathan and ALISON PARKER, his long time girlfriend and roommate, are dancing, playfully, romantically, wrapped together in a bed sheet. They're celebrating Jonathan's assignment -- drinking champagne and laughing.

JONATHAN

That's worth more than forty dollars.

ALISON

But I'll settle for the forty... Weren't you tempted a little bit?

JONATHAN

Alison...what I wanted was information -- but she wasn't selling that.

ALISON

I wouldn't charge you.

JONATHAN

You didn't.

ALISON

We haven't finished yet.

JONATHAN

Yeah...but they get their money up front.

ALISON

It's going to be a great story.

JONATHAN

If I can get it.

ALISON

You'll do it.

JONATHAN

By Monday? Do you know how many people I've got to talk to? Even if I can find them all...

She starts to nibble at his ear.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

(continuing)

That doesn't mean they'll have
what I want.

ALISON

I have what you want.

Alison guides him to the bed. They roll about, kissing and
starting to make love.

ALISON

I get paid before the action.

CUT TO:

12 INT. CRIMINAL COURT - ARRAIGNMENT - DAY

The courtroom has seen better days. The MAGISTRATE is a middle-aged woman.

Fast Black stands with JOEL DAVIS, his white lawyer. LEONAR PIKE, an assistant district attorney represents the state. Pike is dressed in an expensive suit. He does a pretty good imitation of the upper classes. What's left of his Brooklyn accent betrays humbler origins.

PIKE

The seriousness of the charge speaks for itself Your Honor. And in light of Mr. Smalls previous record, the people ask that no bail be granted.

DAVIS

Your Honor, Mr. Smalls is a native of this city, well known in the community. He has been convicted of nothing. We ask he be released on his own recognizance.

A few of the reporters in the gallery snicker at that.

MAGISTRATE

Bail is set at \$250,000.

DAVIS

Mr. Smalls can make bail.

MAGISTRATE

This case is remanded until the 28th. Gentlemen, prepare your pre-trial motions.

She bangs her gavel.

CUT TO:

13 INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING - CORRIDOR - DAY

Joel Davis approaches Pike. Fast hangs back watching.

DAVIS

Mr. Pike? May I call you
Leonard? Pike says nothing.

DAVIS

(continuing)

I would like to suggest a way
out of this that's advantageous
all around.

PIKE

I suppose you want to plead to
purse snatching.

DAVIS

The man had a heart attack, Mr.
Pike. A heart attack.

PIKE

Your client has a rap sheet a
mile long. He kicked the man's
face in.

DAVIS

That's involuntary manslaughter.

PIKE

He's a danger and a menace and
I'm going to see that he's off
the street. The people are
going to ask for murder two.

DAVIS

You and I can settle this right
here. I can't believe you want
to tie up the courts, spend a
lot of tax dollars --

PIKE

Murder two.

DAVIS

Involuntary manslaughter
carries time. I'm sure
reasonable men can come to an
accommodation here.

PIKE

(hard; righteous)

I'll see you in court.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - UPPER WEST SIDE -DAY

Jonathan stands on the street, outside the school with Captain GUY D'ALELIO, of the Public Morals Division. He's in his late thirties, wearing jeans and a windbreaker. Jonathan's got his notebook out.

GUY

I tell you, Public Morals, we chase all the stuff the uniforms won't touch. "They refuse it, we use it."

JONATHAN

(laughs)

You understand my situation?

GUY

Yeah. Your story's definitely out there.

JONATHAN

So where are these guys?

GUY

They're around... the clean up changed things -- but there's still plenty of action in the box.

JONATHAN

(writing it down)

The box?

GUY

Times Square.

JONATHAN

Right. Could you introduce me to one?

GUY

Be ready to stay up late. I'll take you to Maguire's.

JONATHAN

Maguire's? Over on Eleventh?

GUY

Yeah...

JONATHAN

That's just a neighborhood joint -- corn beef and cabbage.

(CONTINUED)

GUY

Not at night. How's next Friday?

JONATHAN

Got to be sooner than that. I have to deliver by Monday morning.

GUY

(shakes his head)

You guys have to give us more notice than that.

JONATHAN

I really need to talk to one of these guys.

GUY

It's very tricky. I wish you'd wait till Friday.

JONATHAN

I can't.

As they talk, kids come out of the school, and a nine year old BOY runs over to GUY, who scoops him up. Guy walks away with his son. Jonathan stands there for a moment, thinking.

CUT TO:

14A INT. LOFT - EVENING

Jonathan's on the phone talking to Ben at the magazine. He's in the loft's main room.

JONATHAN

(phone)

It's going great, Ben -- I've talked to a few of them...

Alison, carrying a set of blueprints and plans, enters and listens to Jon on the phone as she takes off her jacket.

JONATHAN

(continuing; phone)

I haven't narrowed it down to the perfect one yet -- but I'm closing in on him... No... No... It's all fine, I'm absolutely on schedule, ahead of schedule... Right... 'Bye.

ALISON

I've been thinking about it all day -- it's going to be such a great story.

JONATHAN

It's nowhere. I haven't got one usable piece of information.

ALISON

But you just told Ben --

JONATHAN

What am I going to tell him -- that I can't do it?

She puts her arms around him, comforting him.

ALISON

Oh, baby...

JONATHAN

Why don't you come out on the street with me tonight?

ALISON

You mean it?

JONATHAN

At least I'll have somebody to talk to.

CUT TO:

15 INT. MAGUIRE'S - 11TH AVE - NIGHT

A dark, sleazy place populated by pimps, hookers and the denizens of Times Square. There are a few straighter types about, probably looking for trouble.

Jonathan's at the bar. The BARTENDER walks over to him, put some change on the bar.

BARTENDER
Phone's in the back...

JONATHAN
Give me a Bud.

ANGLE - ALISON

As she steps into the bar. She looks around, sees a few possible pimps, gathers her nerve and goes to the bar. The crowd checks her out.

ALISON
Scotch... rocks.

She waits for her drink. Within seconds, one of the customers, a white guy, a thirty-year-old Low Life, sits down next to her and starts to make his move.

LOWLIFE
How you doing, babe...

Before Alison answers, a black pimp, SOLO, steps up to her.

SOLO
(to lowlife)
Split...
(shoves the lowlife
away; sits)
You got to look out in here --
some people might not be okay.

ALISON
I'm waiting for my friend.

SOLO
Your man?

ALISON
My girlfriend.

SOLO
I buy you a drink. We watch the
door, see if she come in.

(CONTINUED)

Jonathan drinks his beer and watches Alison and Solo go to a booth. She slides in and Solo sits opposite her.

SOLO

You look nice. You should dress more sexy...fix your hair. You like to dance?

ALISON

I guess so... Sure.

SOLO

I show you all the steps...how to use what you got. Where's your man?

ALISON

(starting to
get into it)

I don't have one.

SOLO

(decides it's safe)

You could make a lot of money. You like that?

ALISON

Sure...

SOLO

I take care of you...show you how to do it. You call me Solo, because I'm the only one you ever need. You want that, don't you, girl.

ALISON

Well...maybe...

SOLO

Don't answer like that. Don't lie to Solo. Tell me you want that.

He eases around to her side of the booth.

SOLO

(continuing)

Make the men crawl...lick your shoe and pay you for more.

Jonathan strains to hear and see -- he's getting worried.

SOLO

(continuing)

Torture a man -- just look at him -- and drive him crazy...

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

(getting too strange
for her)

Excuse me. I have to go.

She tries to stand up. Solo reaches up, grabs her around the throat and slams her down. He pushes her into the corner of the booth. He never lets go of her throat. She struggles for breath.

SOLO

You don't go nowhere till I say so.

Jonathan gets off his stool and hurries toward the booth.

At the same time, a drunk at the bar gets up and pulls a walkie talkie from his pocket. He's an UNDERCOVER COP.

UNDERCOVER COP

(to Alison)

Friend of yours?

SOLO

(getting up)

What's your problem? Nothing
happening here. Can't bust me.
This a private conversation. I
buy the lady a drink...

Alison stands, trying to get out of the booth. She's confused and upset. Solo starts to back away, toward the rear of the bar.

UNDERCOVER COP

(to Alison)

Get out of here.

Alison runs out the door. Jonathan follows. In the b.g., Solo continues to defend himself to the Undercover Cop.

CUT TO:

16 EXT. MAGUIRE'S - NIGHT

Alison looks numb as they come out of the bar. Jonathan puts a protective arm around her, trying to comfort her.

ALISON

You bastard. How could you put
me through that?

JONATHAN

I'm sorry. It's okay...

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

You used me.

JONATHAN

Alison, I didn't mean for that to happen to you.

ALISON

Well it did happen! You don't care about anybody as long as you get your goddamn story.

She runs up the block. As she does, a WOMAN UNDERCOVER COP gets out of an unmarked car.

WOMAN COP

Hey, Fisher...

Jonathan turns to her, then turns back and sees Alison getting into a cab.

WOMAN COP

(continuing)

Smooth move. You sure know how to handle women. Think you're bullet proof, asshole?

JONATHAN

(sharp)

What?

WOMAN COP

This one's on the captain. Try it again, we won't be there.

She goes back to her car. Jonathan looks around at the street life. He's tempted to stay and keep working but thinks better of it and hails a cab.

CUT TO:

17 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

Jonathan enters the darkened loft and looks around.

BEDROOM

Jonathan walks in and sees Alison's sitting on the bed, trembling. He kneels in front of her, trying to comfort her.

JONATHAN

Oh, baby... It's okay now.
It's all over. You're safe...
You're home.

She starts to cry.

JONATHAN

(continuing)

Easy... It's all right now...
It's over...

He tries to comfort her; as she cries she puts her arms around him. They hold each other. Finally:

ALISON

I'm sorry for what I said. I
didn't mean it.

JONATHAN

You were right. I didn't know
that was going to happen. I'm
going to run you a hot bath.
It'll make you feel better.

Alison nods yes; Jonathan goes to the tub and turns on the water.

ALISON

Jonathan, it was so ugly... to
get people like that...

JONATHAN

It works sometimes.

ALISON

(nods)

I guess so. For a second or
two, part of me was sucked
in... It could happen to kids
so fast...it's scary.

(pause)

I don't understand how people
can live that way. How are you
going to get the story?

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

I don't know. I don't have to live it -- that's the mistake I made tonight. I just have to write it down.

He hugs her.

JONATHAN

(continued)

If I work, will it keep you awake?

ALISON

Not tonight. What are you going to do?

JONATHAN

See where I am. Try to figure it out.

He walks out of the bedroom. Alison watches him, compassionately.

MAIN ROOM OF LOFT - DAWN

Jonathan's asleep on the sofa. PAN AROUND TO Alison, sitting at Jonathan's desk, reading a manuscript.

ALISON

It's fantastic.

JONATHAN

You think so?

ALISON

Where'd you get all this stuff?

JONATHAN

Easy.

ALISON

You made it up.

CUT TO:

18 INT. NEW YORK JOURNAL - CITY ROOM - DAY

The usual bustle of editors and writers -- on phones, at computers, talking, etc.

Jonathan and Ben walk through. Ben's excited. He keeps stopping to read from Jonathan's manuscript.

BEN

This is really terrific...

JONATHAN

Think you're going to run it?

BEN

Damn right we are.

He stops and reads from the manuscript.

BEN

(continuing)

"Although he says he doesn't vote and never has, Tyrone has no modesty about his own political potential. "If I was the President," he says, "I could fix the world in thirty seconds. I send everybody pussy -- then they don't have no time for trouble."

As Ben reads, staff members come over to listen. There's a buzz in the room about the hot story Jonathan has just delivered.

BEN

(continuing)

Ted'll make you change "pussy" to something dumb.

Ted Avery has come into the city room to see what the fuss is about.

TED

(to Jonathan)

Make your deadline?

BEN

Damn right he did. Listen to this:

(reads again)

"Like businessmen everywhere, Tyrone's biggest problems are with his employees.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN (CONT'D)

The girls who bring in the money are not always as steady as he would like. But there are always more to take the place of the ones who move on or disappear. "Bitches always ready to be turned out," he says, in one of his more reflective moods. "They all just waiting to be asked by the man who knows the magic words."

TED

Not bad...

BEN

Listen to this part: "His control of his employees is so absolute that when he sends his girls on vacation, to his condo on Maui--" I think it's next to yours, Ted. "--they still work and send their earnings home."

A ripple of appreciation goes through the crowd.

TED

What about art? Are there any photos?

JONATHAN

That's a problem...

TED

(to Ben)

We'll have to go with drawings then.

Ted takes the manuscript from Ben and skims it.

TED

(continuing)

Wait a minute. I don't know about this.

JONATHAN

I should probably explain...

TED

You have him working an awful lot. These guys sleep till noon.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

You want me to change how late
he sleeps?

TED

There's always some little
stuff -- Ben'll run it down for
you. What are you working on
now?

JONATHAN

Well, there was the piece about
the construction cranes that
kept falling over --

TED

Great idea! Do it.

(to Ben)

Get him a researcher.

(to Jonathan)

Come up with some more ideas.

Come on Ben, I want to review
the ad schedule.

Ted and Ben walk away, through the city room, toward Ted's
office.

JONATHAN

(as they leave)

Thank you... Thank you very
much.

He stays calm and gracious, but he's amazed and his insides
are churning.

CUT TO:

19 INT. JAVITS CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

An enormous, not quite finished, glass and steel structure. In the b.g., through the glass walls, the NYC skyline is visible.

A cab stops in front, Jonathan gets out and hurries into the building, carrying a magazine. He sees Alison, in a hardhat, on the mezzanine. She's with JAY, a colleague; they're looking at working drawings for the building. Jay leans over Alison as they work.

JONATHAN

(calls to her)

Alison...

She looks down as he holds up the magazine. It's an advance copy of the New York Journal. On the cover is a painting of a black man. A banner across the top says: Tyrone, Sheik of the Street. Across the bottom: Times Square After the Clean Up - How Clean Is It?

Alison calls to him as he walks up the escalator.

ALISON

(continuing)

It's great!

JAY

(to Alison)

What's that?

ALISON

It's his article. He's got the cover.

Jonathan arrives at the mezzanine.

JAY

Congratulations. I look forward to reading it.

JONATHAN

It'll be on the stands on Monday.

JAY

I'll take my coffee break now. We can do the elevator specs later.

He nods to Jonathan and leaves.

JONATHAN

I worry about that guy.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON
He's harmless.

JONATHAN
He could kill himself up here,
trying to grab your ass.

ALISON
Jonathan...

CUT TO:

20 INT. L'ODEON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CAMERA moves through the high priced swirl.

ALISON (V.O.)
I like this place.

JONATHAN (V.O.)
It's better now that they let
us in.

CAMERA arrives at a prime table where Jonathan and Alison are seated. There's champagne on the table.

JONATHAN
(continuing)
Just be witty, charming and
beautiful and I'll do fine.

Ted Avery returns from working the room and sits down. As he does, the waiters bring menus.

TED
You absolutely have to try the
nage de petoncles et crevettes.

JONATHAN
I wouldn't dream of skipping it.

ALISON
Could we have more of the
little green things?

MARTY, a local TV news executive and YVONNE, an attractive black woman TV reporter, come toward the table.

TED
Hey, Marty...Yvonne. Come on
over. This is Jonathan Fisher.
He did the cover piece this
week.

MARTY
Oh, right. Tyrone, Sheik of
the Streets. Good story.

YVONNE
(a little cooler)
The pimp story.

TED
Excuse me.

Ted leaves to work the room some more. Marty takes his seat.

(CONTINUED)

MARTY

It had a real authenticity. Do they really have those condos in Hawaii?

JONATHAN

Well, this guy does. I don't know about others.

MARTY

Yeah... You really got the street. That thing breathes.
(thinks)
Do you know anything about TV news?

JONATHAN

It goes on at six and eleven.

YVONNE

Yeah, I go on at six and eleven.

MARTY

You look different than I thought you would. How do you know so much about this stuff?

JONATHAN

I'm a reporter.

Ted returns; he stands next to Marty who's in his seat.

TED

I think your table's ready.

MARTY

Why don't you come over to the station. We'll run a little tape on you... Make you a star.

TED

He's already a star. My star.

YVONNE

Why don't you just make him an anchor?

MARTY

Call me.

Marty and Yvonne go to their table.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON JONATHAN AND ALISON

As Ted talks to someone else.

ALISON
You've got to be kidding.

JONATHAN
Call me.

ALISON
People are pointing you out in here.

JONATHAN
So I'm the flavor of the week.
This is my week. Let's enjoy it.

Ted turns back to them.

TED
You kids having a good time?

JONATHAN
Barely managing.

TED
Jon, I really want to do more with Tyrone. He's a great New York character. When are we going to meet him?

Jonathan and Alison exchange looks. Ted sees it.

TED
(continuing)
It's your story -- absolutely yours. We'd all like to meet him.

Ted raises his champagne glass.

TED
(continuing)
To Tyrone. And to you, Jonathan.

JONATHAN
Tyrone.

Alison rolls her eyes heavenward and they all drink.

CUT TO:

21 INT. LOFT - DAY

Jonathan's on the phone.

JONATHAN

Well, sure... That good, huh?
Marty, tell me the truth --
does the camera put on ten
pounds?

(laughs)

I've been thinking about it a
lot. For the name of the spot
-- how about Street Smart? I
can actually report from the
street. It's got a lot of
range, but it's still
specific. It'll be great...
Okay, Marty... Yeah, I'll come
in for a fitting. You bet.
Thanks... 'Bye.

(hangs up phone)

This is Jonathan Fisher and
Street Smart. I'm on
television.

There's a knock at the door.

JONATHAN

(continuing; calling)

Just a minute...

He walks through the loft to the door.

JONATHAN'S POV - THROUGH PEEPHOLE

Leonard Pike stands in the hall.

RESUME SCENE

As Jonathan opens the door.

PIKE

Jonathan Fisher?

(hands him a
business card)

I'm Leonard Pike. Assistant
District Attorney.

Jonathan takes the card. The PHONE RINGS again.

JONATHAN

Come on in.

Jonathan hurries back toward the RINGING PHONE.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

(continuing; phone)

Hello...Oh, hi. Can I call you
right back? Right... right...

As Jonathan talks on the phone, Pike looks around the
apartment. He inspects a few Harvard souvenirs. His eyes
stop at a framed copy of The Crimson.

JONATHAN

I have to get off. I'll call
you.

Jonathan hangs up and walks to Pike.

PIKE

I see you went to Harvard.

JONATHAN

Is this going to be an alumni
meeting?

PIKE

I didn't.

JONATHAN

You didn't miss all that much.

PIKE

(uncomfortable; getting
down to it)

Has "Tyrone" read your article
yet?

JONATHAN

Probably. I guess you have.

PIKE

Did "Tyrone" like it?

JONATHAN

Do I need a lawyer, Mr. Pike?

PIKE

Everyone does from time to
time.

JONATHAN

What do you want?

PIKE

The District Attorney and I
have reason to doubt that the
subject of your article is
actually named Tyrone.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

You going to arrest me for getting a name wrong?

PIKE

You're very witty, Mr. Fisher. Murder is a very serious crime, don't you agree?

JONATHAN

There's nothing in that story about a murder.

PIKE

Not a murder, a murderer. A killer. Under indictment. You and I know you were writing about Leo Smalls, Jr. Fast Black.

JONATHAN

I don't know who that is.

PIKE

Don't try to jerk me around. And don't protect a killer.

JONATHAN

This is a feature story.

PIKE

You're trying to make some kind of folk hero out of this...pimp, this killer.

(cold; hard)

I want whatever information you have.

JONATHAN

(shaken)

Whatever I know is in the story. I don't have any other information.

PIKE

Don't give me that crap. That might work for a magazine. I'm prosecuting a killer. That's a very real undertaking.

JONATHAN

I can't help you... I...

(CONTINUED)

PIKE

You think a man like this only kills once? Why don't you go out and buy him a gun?

JONATHAN

Wait a minute...stop. There's a terrible misunderstanding here. I don't have anything to do with murders or murderers.

PIKE

I don't think you pulled the trigger. But I know you're exploiting it.

(reads from
the article)

"Tyrone works New York's mean midtown streets, strolling in and out of the dark cheap hotels where he earns his living. Gliding through traffic in his customized Cadillac, he sips apple juice from morning till night, surprisingly aware of modern trends in health and diet." Because you change his car and make chocolate soda, apple juice, you think it makes him a different person? And this coffee shop you go on about is clearly Louise's up in Harlem.

Jonathan is stunned; he has no answer.

PIKE

(softening)

Don't make a jury think he's glamorous. I have a good case, but it's not airtight. Don't get in the way.

Hold on Jonathan as he absorbs this turn of events.

CUT TO:

22 INT. LOUISE'S HOME COOKING RESTAURANT - LENOX AVE - DAY

Fast Black and Reggie are talking with JOEL DAVIS, Fast's white lawyer. All three are eating ribs. Davis has a copy of the New York Journal.

DAVIS
(re the magazine)
This is you! "Tyrone" is you! -

FAST
Put some sauce on them ribs.

DAVIS
(lecturing)
This article contains a striking coincidence of detail and it all points to you.

FAST
(unimpressed)
That aint me. Don't use that lawyer voice on me. I pay you. I can stop paying you. I'm the one who was arraigned and indicted. You was the one standing there pulling your dong. So don't play school with me.

DAVIS
Did you ever talk to anybody from this magazine?

FAST
Oh, sure. I go on "Meet the Press" all the time.

DAVIS
(to Reggie)
You ever talk to any reporters?

FAST
He don't talk to nobody who lives under 110th Street.

DAVIS
No dealings whatsoever?

FAST
If you don't get to the point, I'm going to stick these ribs up your Jew ass.

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS

(angry)

Mister, you are looking at
fifteen years in the joint.
Very possibly twenty-five.

FAST

That makes you a pretty shitty
lawyer, don't it.

DAVIS

I'm going to subpoena this
guy's notes.

FAST

So?

DAVIS

He'll never give them up. I'll
bet on it. We'll say the notes
could exonerate you.

FAST

Even if he give'em to you, they
aint going to be about me.

DAVIS

It'll spread doubt and
confusion over your trial. If
we play this right, I can
change this from a murder trial
to a constitutional
confrontation.

FAST

Shit...that aint going to work.

DAVIS

I know reporters. He'll be a
martyr first. He'll go to
jail, but he'll never give up
his notes.

CUT TO:

23 INT. NEW YORK JOURNAL OFFICES - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

A mural-sized blowup of the current cover, the painting of Tyrone, is on the wall.

An attractive RECEPTIONIST smiles at Jonathan.

JONATHAN

If I get famous, you want to be my groupie?

RECEPTIONIST

You just go see Ted.

CUT TO:

24 INT. TED'S OFFICE - DAY

The door is ajar and Ted, in another rumpled hand-cut English suit, has his feet up. He's with ARTHUR SHEFFIELD, an upper crust attorney. Jonathan enters.

TED

Hi, Jon. This is Art Sheffield, our attorney.

JONATHAN

(shaking his hand)
Ours?

SHEFFIELD

I enjoy your work, Jon.

JONATHAN

Thanks.

SHEFFIELD

Let me tell you why we're here.
Mr. Leo Smalls, Jr. --

JONATHAN

Oh?

SHEFFIELD

--and his attorney have asked the court to subpoena your notes. They're claiming, in effect, that Mr. Smalls is Tyrone, and that you have knowledge that is exculpatory, evidence in the form of interview notes that would bear on his trial.

JONATHAN

Jesus...

(CONTINUED)

TED

(on his soapbox)

Jon, this is an important issue. The press in this country is free. You don't work for the defense or for the D.A. You work for this magazine and we work for the people. The First Amendment ---

SHEFFIELD

Ted. If you don't mind.

JONATHAN

Will they get the subpoena?

SHEFFIELD

New York has a shield law that protects reporters, but there are holes in it. Smalls' attorney is Joel Davis. He's very good at exploiting this sort of thing.

JONATHAN

What if I say no.

SHEFFIELD

If you refuse to comply with a subpoena, I would say you would be in contempt of court.

Jonathan's throat constricts as he reacts.

TED

The First Amendment protects you.

SHEFFIELD

But the Sixth Amendment -- a defendant's right to a fair and impartial trial, protects him.

TED

If you give up your notes, we might as well just review restaurants, because that'd be it for real reporting. No, this magazine stands with the First Amendment.

JONATHAN

Will I go to jail?

TED

I won't allow that to happen.

CUT TO:

26 INT NEW YORK JOURNAL BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

Jonathan, flanked by Ted and Art Sheffield, comes out of the elevator, into the lobby. A pack of journalists, including Yvonne, are waiting for him. They follow Jonathan and yell questions, or thrust microphones at him; TV crews record it. Jonathan tries to move to the lobby door, to leave the building. It isn't easy. He looks stunned. Sheffield does the talking.

REPORTERS

(all at once)

What about the subpoena -- what are you going to do?...You going to give them your notes?... What if it means going to jail?...

YVONNE

How'd you get Smalls to sit still for an interview? How'd you meet this guy?

SHEFFIELD

Mr Fisher will have no comment on any matter that is before the court.

They continue across the lobby; the reporters follow.

CUT TO:

28 INT. LOFT - CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN - EVENING

We see video footage of bag ladies, the homeless and derelicts on midtown streets. A busboy in front of a coffee shop gives some food to a hungry looking man. Jonathan's voice is heard over the tape.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

The people of the street come to this place from the towns of America. Some are running from trouble, others running to it. They scavenge for food, for shelter and occasionally for a bit of pleasure in lives that don't offer much.

The video tape changes to Jonathan in a TV studio for his wrap up. He's wearing a snappy new suit.

JONATHAN

(video)

We'll be taking a look at them -- how they live and sometimes how they die.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Jonathan and Alison watching the screen. There's a video recorder next to the set.

JONATHAN

(with his video self)

This is Jonathan Fisher and Street Smart.

(clicks it off)

Three times a week.

ALISON

That was great. You look like you've been doing it all your life.

(pause)

You didn't make it up, did you?

JONATHAN

Shhh...

ALISON

(re his TV wardrobe)

Where'd you get that suit?

JONATHAN

They get you clothes. I call it the sincere-power look.

ALISON

I think we ought to get ready.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

For what?

ALISON

Dinner. You made the reservation.

JONATHAN

I can't tonight. This guy's going to show me a van.

ALISON

What do you mean, a van?

JONATHAN

With smoked windows and a periscope for night shooting.

ALISON

Can't you see it another night?

JONATHAN

No. He's bringing it in from Jersey. He's on the way. Alison, this is my job. It's pretty new to me. Is it too much to ask for you to be a little supportive? We'll go out tomorrow night.

ALISON

I can't tomorrow night.

JONATHAN

Well, what am I supposed to do? Look, I'll order in some Chinese food.

ALISON

For one.

CUT TO:

29 EXT TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

A TV news-remote van stops on Eighth Avenue. Jonathan gets out, calling to the driver as he exits the van.

JONATHAN

I think it'll do everything I want it to do. I've just got to see if Marty'll okay the money.

He looks around the block, considering if he should stick around. His eye falls on a donut shop.

30 INT. DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

He walks in, glances at the crowd and sits at the counter. Before he can order, he senses someone behind him. He turns. It's Punchy.

JONATHAN

How you doing, Tiffany?

PUNCHY

Hello, Ice Cream. Finally feeling horny?

JONATHAN

I don't know...

PUNCHY

Want to talk about it?

CUT TO:

31 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Pretty grim. Jonathan and Punchy enter. He's more nervous than he expected to be.

PUNCHY

Home sweet home.

JONATHAN

Lovely. Who's your decorator?

PUNCHY

It came furnished. Except for the bed. I handle that myself.

She steps close to him, puts a hand on his chest.

JONATHAN

Feel anything in there, 'cause I sure don't.

PUNCHY

You're funny.

(CONTINUED)

She brings his hands to her breast.

PUNCHY
(continuing)
Oh, yes...yes. Do that.

JONATHAN
You really put on a show.

PUNCHY
(pulling back)
You don't like it?

JONATHAN
I don't mean that. It's...
well, I expected a little more
wham-bam, thank you, ma'am.
You know.

PUNCHY
I could do that.
(reaches for
his crotch)
Let's see what we got.

JONATHAN
Wait. Wait a minute.

PUNCHY
You want to screw or talk?

She starts to unbutton his shirt.

JONATHAN
Wait...

She continues to seduce him as she speaks.

PUNCHY
I knew you'd be back from the
ice cream time. I thought you
wanted a little sugar and
sweetness... Now you're worried
you're going to take some
souvenirs back to the suburbs.

JONATHAN
Slow down... Wait...

PUNCHY
How do I know you don't have a
little gift for me? Put your
money down and I'll show you
what it's worth.

CUT TO:

32 INT. LOFT - LATE THAT NIGHT

Jonathan enters and walks quietly toward the bedroom.

BEDROOM

He puts his jacket on a chair; sits on the edge of the bed. Alison, asleep, is facing away from him. He looks at her for a long moment.

She reaches back and touches his hand. He leans over and kisses her on the head.

CUT TO:

33 EXT. TIMES SQUARE AREA - DAY

Jonathan is doing a wrap-up. In the b.g., a few hookers hover and then move away when they notice the TV crew.

JONATHAN

(on-air manner)

The players who come to the streets come to dance with danger.

(stumbles on the words)

Sorry. Again.

(collects himself)

The players who come to the streets come to dance with danger. And in spite of the Aids scare, the world's oldest profession rolls right along. This is Jonathan Fisher and Street Smart.

(normal manner)

You get it?

The crew clicks off the sound equipment.

CAMERAMAN

Yeah. It'll cut with the stuff we got this morning.

ANGLE - PUNCHY

Watching and casting a cold eye.

PUNCHY

You stand on the street and say "Here's the street" and everybody comes in their pants. It's ridiculous.

JONATHAN

(slightly uneasy around her)

Glad you like it...Listen, I have to get back to the station.

PUNCHY

Friend of mine wants to meet you.

JONATHAN

Who would that be?

PUNCHY

He read your magazine. I told him I knew you. Interested?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Your pimp? Yeah!

PUNCHY

Shit. Call him that, he'll kill you.

JONATHAN

You're a hard woman, Punchy.

PUNCHY

Yeah, Well, big surprise.

JONATHAN (amused)

I like you.

PUNCHY

Which means you're finally getting
laid enough to curl your hair.
What's that girl friend of yours
do for you? Where's she?

JONATHAN

Yeah. Well, it's a different kind
of relationship.

PUNCHY

Meaning the pussy isn't any good.

JONATHAN

It's more a question of applied
ethics.

PUNCHY

Damn. I love it when you talk that
Harvard shit to me.

JONATHAN

I knew it'd come in handy for something.
Is your man black or white?

PUNCHY

He's black and he's mean.

JONATHAN

Let's go.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. LOUISE'S HOMECOOKING RESTAURANT - HARLEM - DAY

A cab stops in front. Punchy and Jonathan get out.

PUNCHY

Don't joke around...Give him
plenty of room.

35 INT. LOUISE'S HOME COOKING RESTAURANT - DAY

Jonathan and Punchy enter. A few people are at the counters and tables. Fast is on the phone talking to Joel Davis. Reggie feeds him quarters. Jonathan stands and waits patiently.

FAST

(on phone)

Yeah...right.

DAVIS (V.O.)

Take him every place you go...
public places. Make him an
expert on you. I want every-
body to know he wrote that
story about you.

FAST

It aint going to work, just
more lawyer bullshit.

DAVIS (V.O.)

Just do it!

Fast hangs up and turns to Jonathan.

FAST

Hello, show business. How you
doing?

Fast puts out a palm and Jonathan starts to slap, but Fast grabs Jonathan's hand and shakes it in a more traditional manner.

FAST

(continuing)

Sit down... What's your name
again?

JONATHAN

Jonathan Fisher.

FAST

(jiving; treading
water)

Right, right. How you doing,
Jonathan?

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

(wary)

Doing just fine.

FAST

Yeah, yeah. So I hear. You want some food maybe -- make yourself at home.

(getting to it;

sharp and sudden)

My man says to say hi to you.

JONATHAN

(puzzled)

Who would that be?

FAST

My lawyer, Mr. Joel Davis. Mean anything to you?

JONATHAN

(realizing the truth)

Whoa... whoa... Wait a minute here.

(to Punchy)

Is this... I mean...Are you --

FAST

What's the matter, boy? This whore say you want to meet me. Here I am.

(to Punchy)

What are you standing around for? There's money to be made. Get it snappin'.

JONATHAN

You're him, right? You're Fast Black?

FAST

To some people. My mama always called me Leo, Jr. Figured it out, did you? Smart kid.

He puts his palm out to Jonathan. This time he leaves it there as Jonathan slaps it.

JONATHAN

They think I wrote about you.

FAST

Right! Now you can write about me for real.

(CONTINUED)

As Jonathan absorbs this turn of events, Fast clicks his fingers toward the counter. Reggie gets up to get drinks.

CAMERA follows Reggie, then continues through the restaurant to the front, the window with the neon sign.

Beyond the window, on the street, in a parked car, is Leonard Pike. He watches Jonathan and Fast in what must appear to him to be a meeting of old friends.

Pike nods to a young man with a camera, standing a few feet from the restaurant. The man begins taking photos. He turns around as if to take a picture of the window, and then focuses in on Jonathan and Fast as they slap palms.

CUT TO:

36 INT. FAST'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY

Reggie drives and Jonathan and Fast sit next to him, Jonathan in the middle. Fast drinks Yoo-Hoo from the ice chest.

FAST

Boy, you dont know nothing. I read that magazine. Tyrone is stupid. He wouldn't last twenty minutes on the street.

JONATHAN

A lot of people liked it.

FAST

A lot of people got their head up their ass. I'll show you the life.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. HARLEM BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Reggie parks near the courts. Fast and Jonathan stroll toward the action. The game quickens as the players perform for Fast.

FAST

This is where I hang out.

Jonathan takes it all in. A BOY, about 13, speaks to Fast.

BOY

Hey, Fast. What's happening?

FAST

Might play a little ball.

BOY

When you going to take me downtown?

FAST

(re Jonathan)

They got dudes like him down there -- wall to wall.

BOY

So?

JONATHAN

(dry)

Nice to meet you, too.

FAST

They eat you up down there. Spit you out all over 42nd Street.

BOY

I been there.

Fast moves out onto the court. The men stop playing, pleased that Fast is joining them.

FAST

Hey, man, what is this? You playing ball or you jerking off?

Fast takes the ball and dribbles down court.

FAST

(continuing; his own play by play)

Okay, okay, all right. The big man's here... He moves down the court and goes up for two...

(CONTINUED)

Fast moves quickly to the basket for a lay-up.

FAST

(continuing)

That's how to play ball!

That's how it's done!

Everybody plays...

The others move back to their positions. Fast dribbles in a tight circle, then attempts a sky-hook. As he's about to shoot, a BALL PLAYER about 17, jumps and blocks the shot.

Fast's high spirits disappear and he grabs the guy by his shirt, pulls him off balance and kicks his legs out from under him.

FAST

(continuing; fierce)

Fuck that! You cheat me out of my shot. Who you think you are?

I like to put your ass through that hoop... aint nobody gets in my way. You understand?

BALL PLAYER

Hey... Hey... I'm sorry, man.

The other players are very quiet. Everyone's watching Fast. Then, suddenly as it started, the storm passes. Fast smiles and helps the guy up.

FAST

It's cool. Tell you what...

(hands the guy

a fifty)

You go on over to Chicken City.

Get me some ribs. A chicken.

A pie. All that shit. Keep the change.

BALL PLAYER

Sure...Okay. Thanks, man.

Jonathan and Reggie watch it all.

REGGIE

He don't like to lose.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. FAST'S HARLEM APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Jonathan and Reggie enter, carrying food.

39 INT. FAST'S APARTMENT - DAY

Filled with what a lot of cash and indifferent taste can buy, including expensive audio and video equipment.

FAST

Hey! Harriet...

HARRIET appears in the bedroom door. She's about 35, a handsome woman with clear features and a natural haircut.

FAST

(continuing;
re Jonathan)

Lookie here. This be my man --
He's going to put me on
television.

HARRIET

(looks him over;
then ignores him)
You bring some food?

FAST

You sleeping again?

HARRIET

I worked last night. I'm
tired. What did you get?

REGGIE

Chicken, ribs, a pie...

HARRIET

(pokes through food)
You get any coffee?

FAST

Je-sus! We got coffee. Make some.

HARRIET

What are you leaning on me for?
I don't like to make coffee.
All you get is dirty dishes and
lousy coffee. Anyway, what
happened to that dishwasher you
was getting me? Where's that
little item?

FAST

What for, you never cook
nothing.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

If I had a dishwasher, maybe I would.

JONATHAN

I don't want any.

HARRIET

Who the fuck are you?

FAST

I told you.

HARRIET

Yeah, yeah. More lawyers.

FAST

He aint a lawyer.

HARRIET

You got a problem.

FAST

No more I aint.

HARRIET

I mean a new one. Darlene.

FAST

Shit. Now what?

HARRIET

She thinks she's your partner. Seventy-eighty bucks a night.

FAST

I'll take care of that whore.

HARRIET

Cut her loose.

FAST

That aint going to do it. I'll take care of her.

HARRIET

You don't want to, 'cause you're into popping her. She's your little piece, all set up.

FAST

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

HARRIET

You wipe the floor with everyone else and you just kiss Darlene's ass.

(CONTINUED)

FAST
Where is she?

HARRIET
Where she always is. That or
spending our money at Bergdorf
Goodman's.

She goes back into the bedroom. Jonathan looks at Fast,
waiting for him to say something.

FAST
You shut up in a hurry.

JONATHAN
Yeah, well, it's new territory.

FAST
Not according to that magazine.
Come on. Let's ride.

CUT TO:

40 INT. FAST'S CAR - HARLEM STREETS - DAY

Reggie's driving; Jonathan's in the middle. Fast drinks a
Yoo-Hoo. He glances out the window, looking for someone.

FAST
She is some bitch, that
Harriet.

JONATHAN
That your wife?

FAST
I guess.

JONATHAN
Right.

FAST
(mood changing)
What do them TV girls make?

JONATHAN
Who do you mean?

FAST
On the news. Them girls who
tell the news.

JONATHAN
You watch the news?

(CONTINUED)

FAST

I know what's going on, man. When I walk out, I know what's going on. Them girls that give the news? You know them? I know dudes who'd pay five grand a night to fuck them news girls. You know that one, the blonde one, talks through her teeth and wears them big round glasses?

JONATHAN

I think I know who you mean.

FAST

(tries to imitate;
his version of Park
Avenue lockjaw)
"And over on Flatbush Avenue six
guys got took out." There's guys
would kill to fuck her. They
don't make no two grand a night
do they?

JONATHAN

They make a lot, but not that
much.

FAST

I could give them two grand and
make three for me. Man, if I had
a couple of them news girls I
could retire.

JONATHAN

I'll mention it to them.

FAST

(mood changing again;
looking out the window)
Where is that bitch?

REGGIE

(sees something)
There she is.

41 EXT - LOUISE'S HOMECOOKING RESTAURANT - DAY - THEIR POV

Darlene, a black woman about 25, with a natural
haircut, exits the restaurant and saunters down the
street. She's wearing jeans and an old blouse.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED

She looks tired, but sassy -- a whore on her day off. She stops when she sees the car. She looks worried, but she stays cool.

Reggie pulls to the curb, next to Darlene.

REGGIE

Hey. Darlene.

42 INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

DARLENE steps over to the driver's side. She speaks to Reggie, but her eye is on Fast. She glances at Jonathan.

DARLENE

Hey.

Fast turns slowly to look at her. He takes his time.

FAST

Get in.

She's not crazy about the idea, but she starts to enter the car.

FAST

(continuing)

This side.

Fast looks her over as she walks around the front of the car, to the passenger side. The walk, for Darlene, is agonizing.

43 INT. CAR - DAY

Darlene squeezes into the front, pushing Jonathan even closer to Reggie. With all four in the front, it's very uncomfortable. Fast drinks more of his Yoo-Hoo, slowly, casually.

FAST

How'd you do last night?

DARLENE

What I give you. Four-fifty.

FAST

Yeah?

She nods yes, her self-assurance crumbling.

(CONTINUED)

FAST
(continuing)
I think more like seven-
fifty...eight.

DARLENE
No, no. I give you what I got.

Fast drains the last of the Yoo-Hoo. He looks at the empty bottle for a moment, still casual and contained.

FAST
Good.

Then suddenly Fast smashes the empty bottle across the dash, breaking it and splashing it on everyone.

It drips down Jonathan's face, but he says nothing. Fast pushes the jagged end of the dripping bottle very near Darlene's face.

FAST
(continuing; hard)
I take the bread. The whole loaf. You understand? You need money, you come to me. You go into business for yourself, you be one dead whore.

DARLENE
(transfixed by the jagged bottle)
Please...not my face.

FAST
It aint your face. It's my face. And my tits and my ass.

DARLENE
Please...

Fast lowers the bottle, quickly; instead of her face, he rips the fabric of her blouse. She gasps.

JONATHAN
Hey...Hey... Easy...

He reaches for Fast's arm to stop him. Fast turns on Jonathan and holds the bottle to his face. A tiny nick appears on Jonathan's face, but the break is enough to change Fast's mood. Darlene says nothing, but she's grateful to Jonathan.

(CONTINUED)

After a moment, Fast drops the bottle to the floor and takes Darlene's face in his hands, gently, like a lover.

FAST

Whose girl are you now? Hmm?
Whose girl?

DARLENE

(drained)

Yours...yours.

Fast kisses her eyes, her face, her mouth. It's tender and erotic.

DARLENE

(continuing)

Thank you. Thank you.

FAST

Now you get on out of here,
girl.

Darlene gets out quickly. Fast turns to Jonathan.

FAST

(continuing; cool)

You lookin' whiter than usual,
boy.

JONATHAN

You play rough.

FAST

It aint all basketball and
dishwashers up here.

(to Reggie)

Move it out.

Reggie pulls back into traffic.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. EAST SIXTIES - NIGHT

Jonathan and Alison, dressed to the nines, follow Fast and Punchy as they approach an elegant townhouse.

ALISON
(private; re Punchy)
I guess she's cute, if you like
pure raw sexual energy.

JONATHAN
Easy...

ALISON
Do I call him Fast? Or Mr.
Black?

JONATHAN
Easy... There's no telling what
he'll do in there.

ALISON
Then why'd you bring him?

45 EXT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

This odd foursome steps up to the door. Jonathan rings and an Oriental butler answers. He stares at Fast.

FAST
We be here for the party.

The butler is non-plussed until Ted Avery appears behind him

TED
Jon, Alison, how are you? Come
on in.

Ted kisses Alison on the cheek and pumps Jonathan's hand as he stares at Fast and Punchy.

JONATHAN
(droll)
Ted, Leo. Leo, Ted. Ted,
Punchy. Punchy, Ted.

Fast slaps Ted's palm and moves past the butler, into the house. Jonathan takes a tall drink from a passing butler.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

TED
Boy, you really did it. You
brought the troops.

JONATHAN
As promised.

TED
(eyeing Punchy)
Punchy?

PUNCHY
(recognizes the
money)
Call me whatever you like.

They all move into the house.

CUT TO:

46 INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

A chic cocktail party is in progress. Writers, editors,
famous people and rich people stand about drinking and
talking.

Jonathan tries to keep an eye on Fast and Punchy.
They're already circulating.

TED
Alison, have you been here before?

ALISON
(the kind of place
nobody forgets)
I can't remember.

TED
(corralling a society
matron)
Hey, Trish. I want you to meet
Jonathan Fisher.

TRISH is about 35 and looks very rich, which she is.

TRISH
Oh, hi.
(re Fast)
Is he really her pimp?

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

Let me answer that as carefully as I can. The answer is approximately yes.

TRISH

God. Could I meet them?

TED

Trish, you can take them to Southampton with you if you like.

TRISH

(conspiratorial)

Do they have any social diseases or anything?

JONATHAN

Impoverished backgrounds.

Trish nods.

FAST AND INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

They're deep in conversation. Two other women, apparently friends of the one Fast is with, listen, enchanted, at a slight distance.

INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

Actually, I think it all ought to be legalized. Women have been selling it for centuries anyway. It's a central feminist position.

FAST

I'm sort of a feminist, too. A ladies' man.

INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

Right. Prohibition didn't work. The dope laws are a joke. I think it's the same thing.

FAST

You got beautiful tits.

That stops her. She stammers for a moment.

FAST

(continuing)

I could do things for you, you'd never forget.

(CONTINUED)

INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

I was speaking more on a
theoretical level.

FAST

I could put magic in your life.
Introduce you around. You
could make a lot of money. I'd
like to see you doin' the TV news.

INTELLECTUAL WOMAN

I don't think so...

The CAMERA moves on as Fast continues talking.

FAST

I could change everything for
you.

PUNCHY WITH SILVER BEARDED MAN AND HIS WIFE

SILVER BEARD

(calculating the
numbers)

Five times a night, seven
nights a week, fifty-two weeks
a year...

PUNCHY

I don't keep score.

MRS SILVER BEARD

Do you do it with anybody who
wants to?

PUNCHY

I stay away from creeps.

MRS SILVER BEARD

Creeps?

PUNCHY

Some jokers try to beat up on
you. That kind of shit.

TED, JONATHAN AND ALISON

TED

(re Fast)

He's great. You think he's a
killer?

JONATHAN

He's a pimp.

(CONTINUED)

TED

When you said you'd bring them
-- I figured they'd hustle the
guests, but it's mostly the
other way.

THEIR POV - FAST AND BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN

She looks like Bloomingdale's and she's talking intimately
with Fast, an arm touching his shoulder, her hip pushed out
provocatively.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

Everybody likes to think
they're hanging out with the
underworld.

RESUME SCENE - TED, JONATHAN, AND ALISON

TED

You don't turn those notes over
to anyone. I'll back you up.
I'll go to the wall with you.

JONATHAN

I'm going to take care of
business. Excuse me.

Jonathan walks back into the fray. Ted and Alison continue
talking as they watch Jonathan move among Fast, Punchy and
the guests.

TED (V.O.)

When they heard who was going
to be here, everybody wanted to
be invited to this one.

ALISON (V.O.)

Yeah. Party of the year.

TED (V.O.)

(missing her
sarcasm)

He really has put it all
together, hasn't he?

(pause)

He's too good for television.
He belongs in print.

ALISON (V.O.)

I guess so.

TED (V.O.)

He was floundering there for a
while.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

the attack. He has a choice -- go after her or stay and keep a lid on Fast. Ted comes over to him.

TED
Something wrong?

JONATHAN
(he's made his choice)
Yes and no. We're going to split, or my man over there'll recruit all your friends.

TED
Don't go. There's about a ton of sushi in the kitchen.

JONATHAN
I think we're headed uptown.

Ted nods. He knows.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. SOUVLAKI STAND - MIDTOWN - NIGHT

Jonathan, Fast and Punchy stand in front of a souvlaki joint eating.

PUNCHY
They were nice.

Fast throws his souvlaki down, splattering on their shoes.

FAST
You dumb bitch. Don't you know them people was making fun of you? Can't you see nothing. You're some kind of joke to them.

PUNCHY
Well, I had a good time.

JONATHAN
He's right. That's called patronizing. They were patronizing you.

PUNCHY
There he goes, talking Harvard.

JONATHAN
You did fine. Both of you were great.

(CONTINUED)

TED (CONTD)

We couldn't find the right slot
for him. Now... You must be
very proud.

Jonathan and Punchy are talking with a middle-aged couple. A
waiter passes with a tray of canapes. Punchy looks at the
tray, uncertain if she should use her fingers. Jonathan pops
one in her mouth.

ALISON (V.O.)

(just seen Jonathan
feeding Punchy)
I'm thrilled. Excuse me.

Alison joins Jonathan and pulls him aside.

ALISON

(continuing)
I'm going.

JONATHAN

You just got here. Watch the
show. We'll all go out later.

ALISON

You can make up stories for
that magazine, but don't
bullshit me.

She turns away. He holds her arm to keep her from leaving.

JONATHAN

Wait a minute...

ALISON

(fierce)
Let go of my arm!
(pulls away)
I know you're fucking that
girl.

She turns and hurries through the crowd, weaving in and out
of the guests. She's in tears. Jonathan is about to go after
her when he sees:

JONATHAN'S POV

Fast is in animated conversation with a middle-aged woman.
He jabs his finger at her. She looks scared.

RESUME SCENE

Jonathan watches Alison's retreating figure and then Fast, on

(CONTINUED)

FAST

Now you patronizing me, boy.
She might buy that shit from
them or you. But I don't. A
man don't got to talk Harvard
to know what you're doing.

Fast takes Jonathan's jaw in his hand and starts to squeeze.

FAST

(continuing)

You understand what I'm saying?

(squeezes harder)

You understand?

(harder)

Do you?

JONATHAN

Yes I do.

FAST

Then shut the fuck up. You
don't tell me how people react
to me. I make more money than
you ever dreamed of, by reading
people's minds. I know what
people are doing no matter what
they say. And I don't take no
shit from you, 'cause you been
lying through your teeth
know it, and you know it and
she know it.

PUNCHY

Let him alone.

Fast turns on her and slaps her, hard. she doesn't flinch.

FAST

The night's over.

He takes her arm and yanks her away.

PUNCHY

What are you doing?

FAST

Whatever I want.

He leads her away. Jonathan is left alone, rubbing his jaw.

CUT TO:

48 INT. LOFT - NIGHT

Jonathan enters to find Alison packing. Her clothes are
(CONTINUED)

spread out on the bed and she's putting them in a suitcase. He expected her to be angry, but not this.

JONATHAN

What are you doing?

ALISON

(furious)

You lied to me. I was the beard at that party. I'm not putting up with any more of this shit.

JONATHAN

I can't talk to you when you get like this.

ALISON

Do you know how humiliating that was?

JONATHAN

Alison, you're overreacting. I made a stupid mistake...

ALISON

So did I.

JONATHAN

It didn't mean anything. I was curious.

ALISON

You make me sick. You just stomp on me and you don't even notice. I don't need it.

JONATHAN

That is such a distortion.

ALISON

I don't even know who you are anymore and what I see, I don't like.

JONATHAN

You're getting hysterical over a total non-event.

ALISON

You suck up to Ted. You go around with disgusting people. And you don't even care. Fine.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

(exploding)

Goddamn it, you can accuse me of anything else you want, but not that, because I do care. I didn't plan it but if you can't see that what's happening to me is good for both of us, then you're blind.

She snaps her bag shut and heads for the door.

JONATHAN

Where you going?

ALISON

To Susan's, if she'll take me back.

JONATHAN

Susan? The world's worst roommate.

ALISON

No, you're the world's worst roommate.

And out she goes. Jonathan is left very much alone.

CUT TO:

49 INT. NEW YORK STATE SUPREME COURT - DAY

A hearing on the subpoena of Jonathan's notes is in progress.

H.A.R. BEVIS, the judge who will hear the case, is a straight ahead, no nonsense judge.

In front of him are Joel Davis and Fast.

Next are Jonathan, Arthur Sheffield and a pair of expensive-looking attorneys.

Next to them is Len Pike and his staff.

The gallery is full of reporters, but of course no TV cameras.

Joel Davis is addressing the Judge.

DAVIS

Under the Constitution, Mr. Smalls has a right to a fair and speedy trial. Mr. Smalls freedom is at stake. A conviction carries --

BEVIS

(cutting him off)

The court is not interested in your lectures anymore than Mr. Sheffield's. Mr. Pike?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

PIKE

This is clearly an attempt to obfuscate the issues. If there is any evidentiary reason for the defense's request to see Mr. Fisher's notes, let them state it clearly.

BEVIS

I have no intention of allowing this matter to either obfuscate or delay. The court holds that the press is not an investigative force for either the defense or the prosecution.

Jonathan and Sheffield look cheered.

BEVIS

(continuing)

However, if there is evidence bearing on this case, the court will hear it. From whatever quarter. Mr. Fisher, you will assemble your notes, and all pertinent documents, all records of conversations with or about Mr. Smalls, and you will present them to the court for examination by both the defense and the prosecution. Mr. Fisher, you have had access to a man indicted for murder. Anything pertinent will be heard in this court.

Jonathan confers privately with Sheffield.

SHEFFIELD

Your Honor, Mr. Fisher would like to address the court.

BEVIS

(clearly antagonistic)

Briefly, Mr. Fisher, briefly.

JONATHAN

Your Honor, I ask you to recognize the difficult choice that confronts me.

BEVIS

No speeches. The court's order is clear. Are you ready to comply?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

JONATHAN

I don't think I have any choice. I have to stand on the First Amendment to the Constitution. I can't surrender my notes.

BEVIS

I think rather that you stand on publicity and I will not have it.

JONATHAN

Your Honor, that's an unfair assumption --

BEVIS

(angry; righteous)

You are in contempt, Mr. Fisher. And I sentence you to be incarcerated until such time as you purge yourself of that contempt and comply with the court's order. The New York Journal Corporation is also in contempt and is fined \$10,000 per day until such time as both parties are in compliance with the court's order.

Jonathan looks pale. He expected it, but the reality is still a shock.

SHEFFIELD

Your Honor, we would like time before the sentence to put Mr. Fisher's affairs in order. We wish to file an appeal.

BEVIS

You may file all the appeals the law allows. But I will not stay the sentence. No one, absolutely no one, refuses to comply with my subpoenas or withholds evidence from my court. The marshals will remand the prisoner to Riker's Island.

He BANGS the gavel. The marshals clamp handcuffs on Jonathan and lead him away. There's a STIR in the press gallery as the reporters scribble notes and the sketch artist draws rapidly.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. RIKER'S ISLAND - DAY

A Department of Corrections bus with bars on the windows stops at the receiving area. A line of prisoners in chains, mostly black and Hispanic, gets off. Jonathan is among them. Guards move them along.

51 INT. PRISON - CHECK-IN ROOM - DAY

The prisoners trudge through the check-in. The men are searched, stripped and their belongings catalogued.

52 INT. CELL

A cot. A table. A toilet. And Jonathan, alone. He looks at the bars. The light bulb above the cell is bare, and it burns all the time. Jonathan stares up at it.

CUT TO:

53 INT. PRISON - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

Ted Avery is visiting Jonathan. He's carrying newspapers and magazines with stories about Jonathan.

TED

Have you seen these?

JONATHAN

Some of them.

TED

Newsweek is talking about the cover. Except you might be out before the issue closes.

JONATHAN

You won't hold up the appeal over that --

TED

This Pike person has been all over Sheffield trying to make you give up your notes. But we're totally behind you. Newsstand sales are up eight percent. It's you, Jonathan. Your moral courage sells magazines.

(pause)

You are keeping a diary here, aren't you? I brought notebooks for you. The Prison Diaries of Jonathan Fisher. Pulitzer Prize.

JONATHAN

Ted -- just get me out of here as soon as possible.

CUT TO:

53A EXT. PRISON - DAY

Jonathan emerges from the prison, escorted by Ben Singer. Reporters and a TV crew are waiting for him.

REPORTERS

Don't you think the judge
ignored the sheild laws?...
Have you talked to Mr. Smalls?
... Are you going to give them
the notes?

JONATHAN

You want to give me a break
here?

The reporters laugh as Jonathan tries to leave.

BEN

Ted keeps going on about prison
diaries. Did you do them?

Yvonne, the reporter from Jonathan's station, follows him.

YVONNE

Hey -- Jonathan... Can't you
give your own station a minute?

JONATHAN

I really can't --

YVONNE

(signals to her crew
to roll tape)
You're on television.
(on air voice)
Did you make a deal to get out?

JONATHAN

I got out on appeal. My
position hasn't changed. It
won't.

YVONNE

A lot of people think that man
should be behind bars.

JONATHAN

That might be. But that's not
the issue.

YVONNE

(lowers the boom)
Why did you choose this subject
to write about? It's hard
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YVONNE (CONTD)

enough for blacks to present
our children with positive
images. Articles like yours
make it harder. Why pick a
subject who embodies the worst
of our people?

CUT TO:

54 INT. LOFT - DAY

CLOSE: TV Screen. The interview continues.

JONATHAN

(video)

We can't pretend things
like this don't exist --

YVONNE

(video)

It might not be conscious
racism, but its racism.

As the ANGLE LOOSENS, we see Jonathan's at home, watching
himself on TV.

YVONNE

(continuing; video)

We've been talking with
Jonathan Fisher, released today
from Riker's Island...

The doorbell rings and Jonathan, keeping an eye on the TV
set, walks toward it. He looks through the peephole, then
opens the door.

Reggie is in the hall. Jonathan lets him in and Reggie
checks out the loft, impressed despite himself.

REGGIE

(re the loft)

Hey...

Reggie sits down, relaxes.

JONATHAN

This a social call?

REGGIE

He wants to see you.

JONATHAN

I'm in the middle of something.

(CONTINUED)

Reggie puts his leg up on the table, letting his trousers slide back, showing a cheap revolver tied to his leg with a bandana. He does it for Jonathan's benefit.

JONATHAN

I'll get my jacket.

REGGIE

You been on the TV all day. A star.

Jonathan looks for his jacket.

REGGIE

(continuing)

How much you get paid when you be on the news?

JONATHAN

Thinking about a career change?

REGGIE

How much? Tell me.

JONATHAN

When I report it -- I do okay.
When I am the news -- nothing.

CUT TO:

55 INT. FAST'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY

FAST

How was it on the inside?

JONATHAN

I wasn't crazy about it.

FAST

Right. I been there. It aint heaven.

JONATHAN

I'll quote you.

FAST

With what I know about you, I could just blow you right out of the water.

JONATHAN

That wouldn't help you much, would it?

FAST

I got us a new plan: You're going to write up them notes everybody wants. You're going to say on the day that dude bought it, you and me was having a hotdog in Rockaway. You understand? That way you get off the hook and so do I.

JONATHAN

The court'll never buy that.

FAST

Oh, I don't know. You be a very skilled writer.

JONATHAN

That's conspiracy.

FAST

Maybe. But I tell you something. You take care of me here or I'll take care of you. And not just you -- I start reaching out, I'm going to grab you and everybody around you.

JONATHAN

It won't do any good --

(CONTINUED)

FAST

Boy, I got a real good nose on me, and right now they's two smells in it. One smell says I do 15-20 in Attica, the other smell says I walk. Now I aint taking no vote here.

JONATHAN

Fast, it won't work.

FAST

You going to make it work.

CUT TO:

56 & 57 INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Where Alison is staying. Fussy and overdecorated. SUSAN, Alison's current (and former) roommate is a precise, meticulous woman.

Alison and Susan are watching Jonathan's TV show. On the TV screen, shot with a hidden camera, we see tape of a drug-buy. An out-of-state car stops in front of a tenement and waits, idling at curbside. Jonathan's voice is heard over the tape.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

The buyers come from the suburbs with their shopping lists: uppers and downers, Angel Dust, cocaine and heroin. The sellers are home grown.

Susan's quite taken with the show; Alison's interested, but looks blue. She's eating chocolate chip cookies. The show continues.

SUSAN

He's very good.

ALISON

Sometimes...

Alison puts a cookie down on an end table.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

I thought we agreed about the crumbs.

ALISON

(brushes crumbs
into ashtray)

Sorry.

On the TV screen, seen through the hidden camera, a girl about 15 exits the tenement and goes to the suburban car. A small package is exchanged for cash, and then the car drives away.

JONATHAN (V.O.)

Here's a transaction now, one more in a continuous string -- street capitalism in action...

In the apartment, Susan disposes of the crumbs and wipes out the ashtray. As she does, she keeps an eye on the TV set.

Jonathan is on the screen, doing his wrap up. He's wearing street clothes, no fancy suit.

JONATHAN

(video)

It's easy to find and easy to condemn. But this is the economy of the street.

Susan stops cleaning and looks at the screen.

SUSAN

Is he that tall in real life?

CUT TO:

58 EXT. TENEMENT STREET - DUSK

Jonathan is finishing his wrap-up. The crew is with him.

JONATHAN

Two universal laws are in force here: survival of the fittest and supply and demand. This is Jonathan Fisher with Street Smart.

The crew clicks off and as Jonathan unclips his microphone, he sees Punchy signalling to him. He walks over to her.

PUNCHY

I want to talk. Not here.

CUT TO:

59 INT. HARVARD CLUB - NIGHT

A vast hall filled with old furniture and old men. Punchy sits in a leather chair, sipping a drink. Some of the help give her the fish-eye, but the members barely notice.

PUNCHY
I like places like this.

JONATHAN
They're habit forming.

PUNCHY
I like the habit.

JONATHAN
Terrific. So?

With a measure of discretion, she opens her blouse. Her breasts are covered with burns and welts. A Waiter coughs, but the members barely look up.

JONATHAN
Fast?

PUNCHY
He said you'd understand.

JONATHAN
(shocked; feeling
her pain)
I'm sorry.

PUNCHY
He left the face alone this
time so I could keep working.

JONATHAN
My, God...you better get out of
town. If you need money...

PUNCHY
He'd come after me. I been
through worse. You think you
know, but you don't. If I run,
I break the rules. Just give
him what he wants.

JONATHAN
I can't do that.

PUNCHY
Then you're going to be next.

She gets up and leaves. HOLD on Jonathan as he considers his dwindling options.

CUT TO:

60 INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alison and Jonathan are on the sofa; he's warning her, trying not to frighten her too much.

JONATHAN
People are getting hurt...

ALISON
Well, what does that mean?

JONATHAN
This guy is totally unpredictable.

ALISON
What does he want you to do?

JONATHAN
Come up with some notes that'll clear him.

ALISON
That'll just make everything worse.

JONATHAN
Not for him.

Susan comes out of the bedroom. She's put on make-up.

SUSAN
(an entrance)
Hello Jonathan. It's nice to see you. You're certainly famous these days.

JONATHAN
It's a mixed blessing. Susan, if you'd excuse us, there are some things I really need to talk about with Alison.

SUSAN
You won't bother me at all. Mi casa es su casa.

She sits down and opens a book. Jonathan and Alison try to speak quietly. Susan listens to it all.

ALISON
Do you still have that lawyer?

JONATHAN
Sheffield. Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Jonathan, can I ask you a question? Is it harder to be a reporter for TV or for a magazine. I know they're different, but --

JONATHAN

Maybe we could talk about that another time.

SUSAN

Sure.

ALISON

Tell him exactly what happened. End it.

SUSAN

Would you like something to drink? I'm going to have a little something. Brandy, maybe?

JONATHAN

No thank you.

Jonathan nods to Alison and takes her by the hand. They walk out of the apartment.

61 EXT APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY TO DOOR AND STREET - NIGHT

Jonathan and Alison exit the building.

JONATHAN

Promise me you'll stay out of sight.

ALISON

Jonathan, I have a job.

JONATHAN

Call in sick.

ALISON

For how long?

JONATHAN

I'll go to Sheffield. I'll try to get it settled as fast as I can. Be careful.

He starts to kiss her goodbye. She offers her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

I'll call.

Jonathan leaves and Alison goes back into the building.

62 EXT STREET ACROSS FROM APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Reggie sits in Fast's car, parked; watching it all.

CUT TO:

63 INT. ARTHUR SHEFFIELD'S OFFICE - DAY

Luxurious. Jonathan sits across from Sheffield.

SHEFFIELD

Who exactly has been threatened?

JONATHAN

Take my word for it. People are getting hurt.

SHEFFIELD

There are legal remedies. His bail could be revoked if there's been --

JONATHAN

I made the whole thing up and now it's over.

SHEFFIELD

I beg your pardon?

JONATHAN

The whole story was a fake.

SHEFFIELD

Jonathan, do you realize the seriousness of this? You're going to face a perjury charge.

JONATHAN

It's getting dangerous. I've got to try to stop this thing here.

CUT TO:

64 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Bevis presides. The press gallery is full. Pike keeps a wary eye on the proceedings. Jonathan and Sheffield stand in front of the bench.

BEVIS

(exploding)

That's the most outrageous lie I've heard in over thirty years on the bench.

JONATHAN

I made up the story from start to finish. I never expected it to get so far. I apologize to the court, the rest of the press and to the public.

There's a doubtful stir and a buzz from the press gallery. Bevis shuffles through the papers in front of him. They include the photos of Jonathan and Fast that Pike had taken at Louise's Restaurant in Harlem.

BEVIS

Then I can assume the New York Journal is equally culpable. Is that what you're suggesting?

JONATHAN

Only me.

BEVIS

Mr. Sheffield, have you discussed the laws of perjury with your client?

SHEFFIELD

Mr. Fisher stands behind his statement, Your Honor.

BEVIS

(barely contained)

Young man, you baffle me. You may appeal your original subpoena, but this preposterous subterfuge is equally culpable and contemptuous of this court. Return the prisoner to Riker's Island until he has purged himself of this additional contempt.

He bangs his gavel.

(CONTINUED)

The MARSHALS cuff Jonathan; the press spills out of the gallery, onto the floor, trying to question Jonathan.

JONATHAN

It really is the truth... I told you the truth...

He's caught in a swirl of reporters and guards, all shouting questions or orders at him. Sheffield tries to stay close. Pike hurries across the floor toward Jonathan.

MARSHALS

Clear the floor... Please stand aside...

REPORTERS

Are you kidding?... Where are the notes?... Any videotapes?... Who are you protecting?...

Pike arrives at Jonathan's side.

PIKE

(contemptuous)

I can see right through you.

JONATHAN

I don't have any notes. I never did.

CAMERA PUSHES IN CLOSE on Jonathan as he realizes no one will believe him.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Pike stands watching the action. He looks as if he's been here for a while.

Punchy, working the street, approaches him.

PUNCHY

Hi. Want to go out?

PIKE

Yes.

PUNCHY

Come on then.

PIKE

No. You come with me. My apartment.

(CONTINUED)

She hesitates; it feels wrong to her.

PIKE
(continuing)
I'll pay you double.

CUT TO:

66 INT. PIKE'S APARTMENT BLDG - NIGHT

Punchy and Pike walk toward his door. She puts her hand on his ass.

PIKE
Please don't touch me.

67 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Small and expensive. It looks as if a mole lives in it.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

It's stacked with newspaper clippings and legal briefs.

PIKE

Don't worry, you won't be here long.

PUNCHY

(as she enters)

That a boast?

When Pike turns on the lights, Punchy looks around.

PIKE

Would you like a drink?

PUNCHY

Whatever you're having.

She sees the stacks of newspapers and magazine articles about Jonathan and Fast.

Pike mixes the drinks as she looks at the articles.

PUNCHY

(continuing)

What's going on?

PIKE

I think you know.

PUNCHY

I got the feeling you didn't bring me here 'cause you're horny.

PIKE

That's right.

PUNCHY

So?

PIKE

You should know I'm in a position to have you arrested if I choose to.

PUNCHY

It's not hard to get me arrested. But you're not a cop. So?

PIKE

I'm prosecuting a friend of yours.

PUNCHY

Who would that be?

(CONTINUED)

PIKE

I've been watching you.
Sometimes you're dumb, other
times you're smart. Make this
one of the smart times.

PUNCHY

Where'd you get those clothes?
You worried about the good
taste patrol?

PIKE

(momentarily
distracted)

The what?

PUNCHY

You supposed to be Winston
Churchill or something?

PIKE

(terse)

I want to know what the big
secret is about those notes.

PUNCHY

Hey. I give him head. I don't
know what he writes down. I
don't care.

PIKE

I don't believe you.

PUNCHY

I don't know what to tell you
then.

PIKE

Think of something.

PUNCHY

I think you probably like it
kinky. More than you know.

PIKE

Don't try to change the subject.

PUNCHY

It's the only subject there is.
You think I have something
that'll help you. I do. I know
what you really want. You want
to do things to me. You want
to hurt me. Don't you? Go
on. Face what you want...
Come... Come on...

(CONTINUED)

As she speaks, she takes off her clothes. Pike is shaking, trying to be steady.

PUNCHY

(continuing)

I know you. Better than you think. I know what you dream about.

PIKE

I don't want you here. Get out. Leave.

PUNCHY

Oh, baby, baby... I know what you like...

PIKE

Just go.

PUNCHY

Something I said?

PIKE

Out!

CUT TO:

68 EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF PIKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Punchy exits the building. The doorman gives her a knowing look. She ignores him and crosses the street.

69 INT. PIKE'S WINDOW - NIGHT

Several stories up. He stands in his window watching her go. He's upset, shaking. His glance is furtive, private.

CUT TO:

70 INT. RIKER'S ISLAND - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

Pike and Jonathan sit across the table.

PIKE

Is there anything I can do for you?

JONATHAN

You could tell the Judge to retire.

PIKE

Anything you need to make it easier? We have some pull here.

JONATHAN

When my lawyer hears you came to offer me favors, he'll be very pleased.

PIKE

Do you ever think about what this means? In the real world? If this man's a killer and you protect him and he kills again, how are you going to feel? That worth your principle?

JONATHAN

(weary)

I don't have any notes. I never had any notes.

PIKE

You expect us to believe that?

JONATHAN

Listen, you uptight asshole. This is not some legal maneuver. I am telling you the truth! There are no notes.

Jonathan reaches across the table and grabs Pike by his lapels, yanking him out of his chair.

JONATHAN

Can you understand the truth?

PIKE

Get your hands off me --

The door bursts open and two guards rush in. One puts a nightstick in front of Jonathan's throat and the

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

other clamps cuffs on him, hands behind his back.

JONATHAN
(choking; trying
to speak)
There aren't any notes... There
aren't...

PIKE
Enjoy yourself here.

CUT TO:

71 INT. FAST'S APARTMENT

Fast is grilling Punchy. He's angry. Harriet sits
back and watches and listens.

FAST
I want to know exactly what he
wanted. You understand me?
Exactly..

PUNCHY
(scared)
He thinks something's weird. He
seen you and me going around.

FAST
What'd you tell him?

PUNCHY
I told you. I didn't tell him
anything, 'cause I don't know
nothing.

HARRIET
She knows plenty. She just
looking for the best hand. You
don't try no whore tricks around
here. I already read that book.

FAST
(to Harriet)
You keep your mouth shut.
(to Punchy)
You don't go near that D.A. You
understand? Not near him.

PUNCHY
Nothing happened. He's weird. He
didn't want to fuck, but he did.
He's weird. I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

Revised 4/11

71 CONTINUED:

HARRIET

I tell you what the problem is,
it's your pal the reporter.

PUNCHY

He's in jail, so he's no problem.
I want to do something else for a
while.

FAST

Yeah, like what? Brain surgeon?
Shit, girl, you doing what you do.
And you ain't doing it so good
since your reporter anyway.

PUNCHY

He's not mine.

FAST

He
think he can hide from me in jail?
I can reach him anywhere. You're
trying to play all the sides -
just like him.

PUNCHY

No, no, no.

FAST

You raising your voice to me,
girl? I believe you are.

PUNCHY

Just let me alone.

HARRIET

Whoa. Tell him, girl, it be your
last chance.

FAST

(to Harriet)

Quiet.

(to Punchy)

Maybe you want to start running
the show?

PUNCHY

I just want to figure stuff out a
little.

(CONTINUED)

Revised 4/11

FAST

Why now, I thought that was my job. We changing positions around here?

PUNCHY

(near tears)

Just let me alone.

Fast slaps her across the face, a loud RINGING CRACK.

FAST

Hey, I like that, That makes a good sound.

He slaps the other cheek, just as hard.

FAST

(continuing)

That, too.

Punchy just stands and lets him hit her. He slaps her a few more times.

PUNCHY

No! No more! I'm not doing this no more!

She pushes Fast away from herself, or tries to. He moves back a little, and then shoves her straight back into the corner by the throat. He stands over her, his hand around her throat, pinning her to the wall.

HARRIET

Did I see that? Girl, you're crazy.

FAST

Oh, you crazy bitch. you crazy, crazy bitch.

Fast squeezes her throat; she begins to gasp for air.

FAST

(continuing)

Hey, baby, you getting blue? Got a problem, do you? I do believe you need to be punished, girl. That is what I honestly believe.

(CONTINUED)

Revised 4/11

93.

71 CONTINUED.

PUNCHY
(barely audible)
I'm sorry.

FAST
Now there's a number of things I
could do. But I got a taste for a
little piece of you.

PUNCHY
Yes, yes.. Okay.

FAST
You're a good little piece, aren't
you?

PUNCHY
Yes. For you. Just for you.

He reaches behind him for a pair of scissors. He
points them toward her face, casually but unmistakably.

FAST
But that ain't the kind of piece I
want today. Oh, no. Today I might
rip out your nose. And I could
cut your lips. Couldn't I just do
that? Wouldn't that be a nice
little piece of you? Hmmm?

The blade is almost touching her face.

PUNCHY
(can hardly talk)
Please... Please... I'm sorry.

FAST
Oh, but you been looking where
you shouldn't. Ain't that right?

PUNCHY
Please...

FAST
(scissors near
her eyes)
So it's your eyes need to be
punished. I'm going to cut me out
an eye.

PUNCHY
No... No...

(CONTINUED)

FAST

An eye. One eye. That's the little piece I want. You tell me which one. Right or left? Tell me! Tell me, bitch. Which one? Right or left! You tell me or I take 'em both. You tell me, right or left!

PUNCHY

Please... no... don't... no.

FAST

(in a rage now;
out of control)
Right or left? Right or left?
Right or left or both! Both!
Both!

PUNCHY

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

FAST

Both! Both! Both!

He's about to jam the scissors into her eyes.

PUNCHY

(screaming)
Left... left... left....

Fast drops the scissors to the floor. He backs away from her and grins.

FAST

You get on out of here. You go do a good night's work for me.

PUNCHY

That's all? I can go?

Fast says nothing.

Punchy backs toward the door, never taking her eyes off him. He continues to smile as she backs out the door.

When she's gone, Harriet turns to Fast.

HARRIET

You think that's going to fix her?
She just going to keep on making trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

Revised 4/11

95.

FAST

She made enough trouble. Now
it's my turn.

CUT TO:

72 INT. PIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pike walks through the apartment toward the RINGING DOOR
BELL.

He looks through the peephole, considers for a moment, then
opens the door.

Punchy is at the door. Pike looks at her quizzically.

PUNCHY

Still want to talk?

PIKE

You talk, I'll listen.

She walks into the apartment.

CUT TO:

73 EXT. PIKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAWN

Punchy emerges from the lobby and glances up the street.
When she looks back, Fast is there.

FAST

Little side business?

CUT TO:

74 INT. MORGUE - DAY

An attendant slides a marble slab out of the wall. Pike
stands next to him.

The corpse is covered with a rubber sheet. A tag is attached
to the big toe of the right foot.

The attendant glances at the tag, pulls the sheet back and we
see Punchy's face. Her throat has been slit.

CUT TO:

Revised 4/11

96.

75 EXT. NEW YORK STREET - KOREAN GREENGROCER - DAY

Alison and Susan are leaving the stand, carrying bags of fruit. Alison's eating a peach.

As they walk out onto the sidewalk, a passerby steps close to Alison and appears to bump into her. As he does, Alison's face contorts with pain and shock. She starts to lose her balance; she drops her bag of groceries, spilling fruit on the ground.

As the passerby turns and runs, he blocks our view of Alison and we get a glimpse of his face. It's Reggie. Before he takes off, we see he's got a bloody razor.

When he's gone, we see that Alison's been knifed -- slashed and stabbed in the gut. A bloody spot grows and spreads across her stomach. She collapses; Susan screams.

CUT TO:

76 INT. PRISON - COUNSEL ROOM - DAY

CLOSE: JONATHAN, looking shocked and pale. Art Sheffield's just told him what happened to Alison.

SHEFFIELD (V.O.)

It was a slash across the stomach. She's going to be okay. Ted's got absolutely the top doctors --

JONATHAN

Get me out of here.

SHEFFIELD

Which is it, Jonathan. Do you have notes or don't you have notes?

JONATHAN

I have notes.

SHEFFIELD

And what about the First Amendment?

JONATHAN

(blows up)

Fuck it. One's dead, now this -- you think he'll stop there? Anybody could be next... You... Fast wins. Tell the judge I'll give him the notes.

CUT TO:

Revised 4/11

76A INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Jonathan sits alone in his cell writing in a couple of reporter's notebooks. He writes hurriedly, as if the notes were made on the run.

CAMERA notices the pages as he writes: Leo Smalls, Jr. aka Fast Black... Street pimp, about 40... Lives in Harlem... Driver and assistant, Reggie...

CUT TO:

76B INT HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Jonathan comes to the hospital, directly from prison.

Rapprochment with Alison.

Scene will be about one page -- to be written.

77 EXT. LOUISE'S HOMECOOKING RESTAURANT - DAY

Jonathan stands outside looking at Fast on the phone.

78 INT. LOUISE'S - DAY

Jonathan enters; Fast glances up, stays on the phone.
Finally:

FAST

Well. Mr. Aint-got-no-notes.
Jailbreak?

JONATHAN

I'm ready to talk.

FAST

Yeah? Aint that nice. We'll
get us a little privacy.

He pushes Jonathan ahead of him, toward the men's room door.

79 INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Small and grim. Fast shoves Jonathan against the sink.

FAST

You about to get flushed down
that toilet. You hear me? I
like to blow your brains out.

JONATHAN

I'll do what you want, but
nobody else gets hurt.

FAST

If you don't, I'll get you and
everyone around you.

JONATHAN

Don't threaten me. I'm the guy
who can get you out of this.

FAST

Fuck you.

Fast takes out a revolver and holds it to Jonathan's face.

JONATHAN

I know how you do it. You
scare the shit out of somebody,
then you give them a reprieve.

(CONTINUED)

FAST

You think I won't do it? Tell
you what, motherfucker. I'll
put this in my pocket and use
my fists. Which you want, boy?
Bullets or fist? Quick or
slow?

JONATHAN

Okay, I'm scared. Now you can
put it away.

Fast wraps Jonathan's finger around the trigger. He puts his
own hand over it and turns the gun back toward Jonathan.

FAST

Ever think about taking your
ownself out? Ever wonder about
it?

JONATHAN

If I'm dead, you're dead.

FAST

You're real good with words,
twist it all around, but I got
you now.

He places the barrel under Jonathan's jaw, pushing his head
back, until Jonathan can hardly breathe. Then he squeezes
Jonathan's finger, making him pull the trigger. The gun goes
click.

FAST

(continuing; as the
hammer strikes an
empty chamber)

Bang!

He laughs.

(Omit 80)

CUT TO:

81 & 82 EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - 3 WEEKS LATER - DAY

Fast Black and Joel Davis emerge from the courthouse followed
by reporters and spectators. Fast is smiling.

REPORTER

Were you surprised at the
acquittal, Mr. Smalls?

(CONTINUED)

DAVIS

Absolutely not. There was never anything but vague, circumstantial evidence. In this country, a man can still get a fair trial, no matter what his race or background. Justice has been served.

ANGLE - JONATHAN

He's leaving the courthouse. Pike stops him.

PIKE

Just a minute, you... I know you lied. I don't know what your deal is with him, but this isn't over. He killed that girl and I'm going to get him for it.

JONATHAN

Maybe I can help you.

PIKE

You just stay out of it, because I'm going to get you, too. Perjury carries time and you're going to do it.

JONATHAN

What's that going to get you?

PIKE

Satisfaction.

CUT TO:

(Omit 83 - 86A)

87 EXT. HARLEM STREET - NEAR LOUISE'S HOMECOOKING - DAY

Darlene walks toward the restaurant.

ANGLE - TV-REMOTE VAN

Parked across the street. Jonathan, a cameraman and sound woman are inside. As Darlene approaches the restaurant, Jonathan calls to her.

JONATHAN
(from within
van)
Darlene...

She looks up, surprised; walks toward the van.

DARLENE
(re the van)
Lookin' fine... You ready for a
real woman?

Jonathan hands her a hundred-dollar-bill.

JONATHAN
Give Reggie this for me. Okay?
Tell him there's more to come.

DARLENE
Give it to him yourself.
(points to
Louise's)
He's right there.

JONATHAN
I think you owe me one.

She knows it's a little fishy, but she does indeed owe him one.

CUT TO:

88 INT. LOUISE'S HOMECOOKING RESTAURANT - DAY

Seen through a video lens, shooting through the van window, we see Reggie at the counter. Darlene goes to him and hands him the money. Reggie smiles, pockets it, and pats Darlene on the ass, appreciatively. Jonathan and his crew watch the transaction.

CUT TO:

88A EXT STREET - TOWARD VAN - DAY

Reggie exits the restaurant and walks toward the van.
Jonathan opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN
Hey, Reggie.

REGGIE
(wary)
What's going on?

89 INT VAN - DAY

Jonathan grabs him, yanks him into the van, and slams him down on the floor.

REGGIE
(surprised; scared)
What's going on -- what are you doing?

JONATHAN
I know what you did. I might not be able to prove it, but I'm going to get you. I want to show you something.

: Jonathan runs a video tape of Reggie accepting the money from Darlene.

REGGIE
What's that, man?

JONATHAN
That's you taking money from one of Fast's girls.

REGGIE
But you gave it to me.

JONATHAN
It doesn't look that way, does it? I'm going to show this to Fast in fifteen minutes.

REGGIE
You can't do that. He'll kill me.

JONATHAN
Well, maybe I can get you some protection.

REGGIE
What?... How...

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

You remember Punchy? You can tell the D.A. what happened to her. All of it.

REGGIE

I can't go to the D.A. Fast'll kill me.

JONATHAN

Sounds like you got a problem.

Reggie lunges toward the monitor, trying to get the tape. Jonathan pulls him back; they struggle. Jonathan knocks him against the van wall, retrieves his hundred-dollar-bill, and then throws Reggie out of the van.

JONATHAN

Think about it, Reggie. Keep your eyes open.

(Omit 90)

CUT TO:

91 INT. LOUISE'S HOME COOKING - DAY

CLOSE: TV Screen. Jonathan's show is playing. He's interviewing a teenage boy (PABLO).

JONATHAN

(video)

A lot of people think what you're doing defaces the city.

PABLO

(video)

I'm famous all over. Pablo 177. People know...

JONATHAN

(video)

Do you write on the subways?

PABLO

(video)

Not me. Some other kids...

ANGLE LOOSENS and we see we're in Louise's. Fast is watching the show.

FAST

Hey... That's my main man there...

(laughs)

Yo -- Jonathan...

(CONTINUED)

A KID comes into the restaurant.

KID

Hey, Fast. They going to tow
your car out there.

FAST

I don't need this shit...
Where's that Reggie? Where he
get to?

WAITRESS

Aint been around.

FAST

He comes in, tell him I'm
looking for him.

He leaves to deal with the car.

CUT TO:

92 . EXT. PACKAGE STORE - HARLEM - NIGHT

The van pulls up in front. Jonathan gets out and walks toward
the package store.

93 INT. PACKAGE STORE - NIGHT

Reggie, sounding desperate, is talking to the clerk, trying
to hustle some money.

REGGIE

You got to let me have a
hundred, man -- I'm in deep
shit.

CLERK

Forget it.

REGGIE

Then let me have fifty. I got
to get on the road.

Jonathan strolls in.

JONATHAN

(cool)

Hey, Reggie --what are you
doing standing in the light?

REGGIE

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

If I can see you, Fast
can see you. He thought that
tape was real interesting.

REGGIE

You show him that thing? You
done that? Oh, shit...

He turns and runs out of the store. Jonathan watches him go.

94 EXT. HARLEM STREET - OUTSIDE PACKAGE STORE - NIGHT

Reggie exits and hurries up the street. He sees Fast's car, a
little way away.

Fast, in his car, sees Reggie coming toward him. Reggie
turns and runs in the other direction. Fast honks his horn.

FAST

(calls)

Hey, Reggie...

Reggie runs around a corner, panic settling on his face.

Fast drives after him, following around the corner. The car
jumps the curb and cuts Reggie off.

Reggie stumbles and falls.

Fast starts to get out of his car.

FAST

(angry)

What the fuck you think you're
doing? Where --

Reggie, still on the ground, fumbles for the gun he keeps
tied to his leg. Reggie fires twice.

CUT TO:

THE SAME - LATER

Jonathan's TV-Remote van is parked at the top of the street,
near an ambulance and two police cars.

Jonathan's cameraman is shooting tape of the murder scene.
The soundwoman is preparing her equipment.

A pair of uniformed cops lead Reggie, in cuffs, toward a
patrol car.

Two paramedics lift Fast's corpse onto a guernsey.

(CONTINUED)

Jonathan gets out of the van, slipping into his on-air blazer. He stops the paramedics and pulls a corner of the sheet from Fast's body. He stares at the corpse for a moment, then drops the sheet back.

The cameraman and sound woman get in place and Jonathan moves into position for his stand-up.

JONATHAN

(on camera)

The streets here can be hard and rough and the justice meted out isn't always the kind taught in school. The court-of-the-street found Fast Black guilty even if the court of law did not. The streets speak their own language and for a man who trafficked in death and violence, the punishment dealt out tonight, was as fitting as it was absolute.

(hint of a knowing smile)

This is Jonathan Fisher and Street Smart.

FADE OUT.

THE END