

TAKE THE A-TRAIN

Screenplay by
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Based on the Novel by
Michael Blankfort

PROPERTY OF:
Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation

FIRST DRAFT
REVISED

TAKE THE A-TRAIN

FADE IN:

INT. DOC'S ROOM - BEACHPORT, LONG ISLAND - 1947 - DUSK

DOC (MELVIN) HENSHEL, 16, lies on an unmade bed in his parents' modest duplex. His head is propped up on a doubled-over pillow. A geometry book rests in his lap. A RADIO PLAYS a late-in-the-season baseball game.

From his surroundings, we can tell Doc likes the Yankees, the Globetrotters, all the local teams. Dirty clothes lie in heaps around the room. At first glance, he seems more than casually interested in his geometry. As his eyes scan the text, we begin to HEAR the words he reads, obviously not geometry. Eventually, we glimpse a novel hidden in the textbook. OVER THIS, CREDITS begin.

DOC'S VOICE (OVER)

(as he reads)

Jenkins finally knew what he was up against. This dame wasn't just gorgeous; she was dangerous. And now she was making a play for him. Two men less careful than Jenkins were wearing cement shoes in the bottom of the Hudson, and Jenkins had the funny feeling he was next. But he liked a good challenge, and the way Ginger's perfume hung in the air excited his nostrils, rushed his heartbeat. He knew it was a trap, but he knew what he liked. And Ginger Albright was his favorite flavor. He wanted it all, and he knew how to get it.

Doc is entranced with the story when his mother's VOICE breaks in.

MOM (O.S.)

Melvin...

Doc looks up to see MOM, a woman of imposing presence in her 40's, standing in his doorway. She is dressed to go out, has a dish towel in her hand.

MOM (CONT'D)

You're not fooling anyone.

DOC

(shifting the novel
from her view)

Wha...?

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

MOM

How can you study with the ball game on?

DOC

(inventing)

I only hear it when they score.

Mom turns off the radio. Before Doc can protest, she speaks.

MOM

You can listen downstairs while you dry the dishes.

DOC

It's Marcy's turn to dry!

MOM

We have debate club tonight. I told her you'd switch.

Mom tosses the dish towel to Doc, who catches it in frustration. She promptly exits. Doc sluggishly lumbers off the bed, pulls out an envelope he had been using as a bookmark, tucks it in his back pocket, closes the book. We see a detective on the cover. He wears a felt fedora. Doc hides the novel under his mattress and exits the room.

#

FAMILY KITCHEN

POP, an easygoing man in his forties, stands at the kitchen sink washing the dinner dishes. Doc dries. The radio plays the ball game.

MARCY, 19 and academic looking, stands on a kitchen chair as Mom fusses with the hem of her daughter's skirt. Marcy is smartly dressed, her hair freshly washed and a little unruly. She tries to fix it by bending at the waist to get closer to a hanging cook's pot, which she uses for a mirror.

MOM

Stand up straight.

MARCY

My hair's a mess.

POP

You look fine, Marcy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCY

It's sticking out.

MOM

I can't fix this unless you stand
up straight and stay still.

Marcy straightens up. Doc is put out by the attention
lavished on Marcy. Pop keeps washing, Doc keeps drying.

DOC

You'd think it was a beauty contest.

MARCY

Nobody asked you!

DOC

Hey, I'm doin' your job...!

POP

Stop it, you two!

MOM

You know, Melvin, it wouldn't hurt
you to take an interest in politics.

DOC

(lightly)
Yes, it would.

MOM

You could learn a lot from your big
sister.

DOC

Not much...

MARCY

Your problem is you're a philistine.

DOC

I am not!

(to Pop)
What's a philistine?

POP

Well, it's--

MOM

(interrupting)
Somebody who doesn't appreciate
the finer things in life.

(letting Marcy down)
Get your coat on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

Marcy hurries to the front hall for her coat. Mom pulls hers off a chair.

DOC

I appreciate stuff....!

(pause)

I just don't appreciate the same stuff you do....!

MARCY

You have such a way with words.

As Doc turns to respond to Marcy, he accidentally drops a glass he is drying. It shatters on the floor. Doc stoops for the dustpan, crunches on a shard of glass.

POP

Don't walk on it....!

MOM

(leaving)

This is what wisecracking gives us...

MARCY

(following Mom out)

Can't you do anything right?

Doc's eyes narrow angrily as he is left behind to pick up the broken glass. On a SQUONK of honkytonk MUSIC, we

CUT TO:

EXT. BOARDWALK - BEACHPORT - NIGHT

A gaudy array of incandescent filaments and neon light is accompanied by music from a nearby carousel.

As if in answer to Marcy's question, we see Doc in his own element now. He wears a felt fedora to match the one on the cover of his novel. We find him hurrying through the honkytonk toward the Sunset Arcade.

SUPERIMPOSE: TAKE THE A-TRAIN

When he sees EDDIE NORRIS, also 16, duck out of the arcade and start running toward him, Doc pulls the envelope out of his pocket, waves it with quiet triumph. Eddie nearly trips over a passing bicyclist, reaches for the envelope, which Doc deftly tucks back in his pocket.

EDDIE

Lemme see it, Doc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

It's just blueprints...
(enjoying teasing)
I thought you didn't want anything
to do with this.

EDDIE

I don't.
(pause)
I can't believe you're going through
with it.

They walk toward the arcade, Eddie increasingly worried.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Franklin'll kill ya if he catches
you.
(adding gravity)
He was in the war, y'know. Killing
prob'ly comes easy to a guy after that.

DOC

Eddie, sometimes you can be a real
jerk.

They enter the Sunset Arcade.

INT. SUNSET ARCADE

The store is filled with a variety of pinball machines,
many manned by glassy-eyed youths unflinchingly dropping
nickels and dimes into oblivion.

Presiding over the cacophony of the arcade is a tall and
handsome black man, a chocolate-covered Gary Cooper by
the name of FRANKLIN GILBOA, 35. Franklin's countenance
exudes satisfaction, as though, despite his thinness,
he's just had a hell of a good meal.

Doc and Eddie go to their regular machine.

AT THE MACHINE

Doc drops a nickel in, starts playing.

Eddie looks nervously toward Franklin, who is dispensing
change to some kids across the room.

DOC

(eyes fixed on the game)
Is he lookin'?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

We're gonna get in trouble...

DOC

Play my game.

EDDIE

I can't, Doc. It's not right.

DOC

Just play like you always play.
Nothin' wrong with that.

Eddie nervously takes over, tries to keep the ball going, as Doc peeks over at Franklin, sees him preoccupied, ducks under the table.

UNDER THE TABLE

Doc quickly pulls out a screwdriver and a wrench, begins tackling some of the underpinnings of the game.

A moment later, the game stops. Doc, alarmed, looks up.

From a skewed angle, Eddie Norris' frightened face pleads down to his friend.

EDDIE
I need another nickel.

Doc fishes out the cash, hands it to Eddie, peeks across the floor of the room, sees Franklin's legs walking the other way. A good sign. He resumes making adjustments to the game.

FRANKLIN

rings up the cash register, hands out a prize to a youngster, seems to scan across the room, not clearly recognizing anything amiss, but not necessarily missing anything, either.

AT DOC'S MACHINE

Eddie is enthralled with his newly found success at pinball. He lets out an involuntary whoop. Doc bumps his head hurrying out from under the table, a spot of grease on his face.

EDDIE
This is great!

DOC
(whispered)
Shut up!

But it's too late. Several boys have gathered around the table to watch Eddie Norris achieve an extremely high score.

Franklin starts across the room toward the table.

Doc catches a glimpse of himself in a cheap mirror, dabs away the grease just before Franklin reaches them.

Eddie finishes the game with a high score. His friends are impressed, and he can't help gloating, as though unaware that Doc is his reason for success.

NEARBY KID
Lemme try that, will ya?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

DOC

(to the nearby kid)

Beat it. This is my table.

Eddie obediently backs away to make room for Doc. Doc reaches into his pocket, starts to drop a nickel into the machine. A large darkly tan adult hand stops him.

FRANKLIN

Let Eddie play his own table. He's hot.

DOC

It's mine! He can't play it.

FRANKLIN

He just did. Find yourself another one.

DOC

You don't understand, Mister Gilboa. Eddie's my friend.

FRANKLIN

(gently, with a smile)

Everybody's friends with a winner. Take another table.

EDDIE

That's okay. I don't have any money, anyway.

DOC

I got a lot of dough invested in it.

FRANKLIN

They're all the same. You know that.

DOC

I'm used to that one!

Franklin turns to give someone some change, and Doc tries to move away, but his hand holds firmly to Doc's.

FRANKLIN

You feel okay?

DOC

(fighting panic)

Yeah. Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

FRANKLIN

Your heart's goin' too fast. That's healthy only when you're clumpin' a chick. No play for a while.

Franklin sees Doc's utter frustration.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Suppose you pick a friend to play?

DOC

(angry)

How 'bout Eddie?

FRANKLIN

How 'bout somebody with some coin?

Several boys look ready to volunteer. Doc is too disgusted to continue.

Franklin lets go of him, and several boys crowd around the table, the first Nearby Kid dropping his money in. He starts racking up a big score immediately. Franklin leaves Doc, walks over to the cash register.

EXT. SUNSET ARCADE - LATER

It is pitch dark now. Lights start going out around the boardwalk. A few lights go out inside the pinball arcade. The Nearby Kid exits the building with an armful of stuffed animals, several packs of Camels, two Mickey Mouse lamps, and a couple of penny ashtrays.

INT. SUNSET ARCADE

Doc and Eddie start to leave. Franklin insinuates himself between Doc and the door.

FRANKLIN

Stick around. I want to talk to you.

As Franklin continues turning out the lights in the arcade, Doc and Eddie sneak worried looks, Doc trying to act nonchalant.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What time do you have to be home?

DOC

(trying to sound cocky)

Any time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

I don't want your Pop walloping you.

DOC

He never does.

(pause)

My Mom does that.

EXT. SUNSET ARCADE

As Franklin closes up, he and Doc pass a petrified Eddie.

DOC (CONT'D)

(looking worried)

If you see my folks, tell 'em
I'll be home in a little while.

EDDIE

Okay.

Eddie starts off in one direction. Doc and Franklin head the opposite way.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Doc and Franklin walk wordlessly past Honey's Beauty Parlor, past big apartment buildings, a corner Rexall, a newsstand, where Franklin buys a Daily News and a Racing Form. Doc can't think of anything to say. He looks frightened, tries to hide it.

Their silence is accented by the hollow sound of their shoes on the sidewalk. They reach Solomon's Arms, a big red-bricked apartment house. Doc grows more uneasy.

FRANKLIN

(as they enter)

I live here.

Doc can't believe that a black man could live in this otherwise all white building. He says nothing, hides his surprise from Franklin. He's too scared to swallow.

INT. FRANKLIN'S BUILDING

Things make a little more sense to Doc as he silently follows Franklin down a stairway to a modest doorway across the hall from the boiler room. Franklin unlocks the door, ushers Doc inside. After a barely noticeable hesitation, Doc enters.

INT. FRANKLIN'S APARTMENT

Franklin locks the door behind them.

FRANKLIN

Want a coke?

Doc nods, still looking at the locked door, then forcing his eyes around the apartment.

The room is full of books, littering the chairs, floors, and wooden grocery cases. Piles of the Racing Form and other papers fill one corner. Large pictures of mostly naked women of all races adorn the walls. Doc tries not to stare. There's a bed, a large Emerson radio and record player, and stacks of records. A blackboard with numbers on it hangs from one of many pipes on the ceiling. The room is hot, and Doc starts sweating.

Franklin returns with a coke, gestures for Doc to sit down on a wooden kitchen chair next to a table. He himself sits on a blue velvet easy chair. A strong lamp next to it accents his features dramatically.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

The kids call you Doc. Why?

DOC

I dunno.

FRANKLIN

What's your real name?

DOC

Henshel.

FRANKLIN

Henshel what?

DOC

That's my last name. I hate my first name.

FRANKLIN

What is it?

DOC

Melvin.

Doc isn't made any more comfortable by the sight of Franklin's .38 on a nearby chair. He tries not to focus on it.

FRANKLIN

I don't think it's bad.

(pause)

Is your father a doctor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

No... he sells insurance.

Franklin puts on a Count Basie record, lights up a reefer. Doc is intrigued by the joint, but Franklin doesn't share it with him. He lets the silence swell between them, lets Doc grow even more uncomfortable.

Doc tries to be cool, sipping his coke and smiling at the same time. It doesn't work. He gets coke up his nose.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(after a pause)

I've been watching you, Doc. For two summers now...

Franklin takes a deep drag, lets out the smoke in little spurts.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What do you want to do when you grow up?

DOC

Make lots of money.

FRANKLIN

What for?

DOC

(with a shrug)

Put it in a bank.

FRANKLIN

Hell, man, money's for spending. Not for saving. Ever see a Brinks truck follow a hearse? Lay it out, give it away, stir it around on nags, cars, clothes...

(sees Doc eyeing his pinups)

...chicks.

Doc just smiles abashedly. Franklin blows smoke rings with his reefer.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You like those pretties on the wall?

Doc shrugs, grins foolishly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I laid every one of 'em. I started
when I was ten, and there's a lot
more chicks in the world just waiting.

Doc is astounded. Envious. Finally, ashamed.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You ever been laid, boy?

DOC

(after ashamed hesitation)

No.

FRANKLIN

How old are you?

DOC

Seventeen... almost.

FRANKLIN

Shee-it. You're wasting away.
(referring to the pictures)
They won't bite.

Doc gets up, walks around Franklin's apartment, admires
some of the pinups from a closer vantage point.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

How you going to make all that
money? You want to make it legit?

Doc doesn't know the answer to that.

DOC

(bluffing)

If necessary...

FRANKLIN

Lemme tell you something, Doc.
There's legit and there's legit.
Take my pinball machines.

Doc freezes, then relaxes.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Some people think they're fixed.
Just the odds, that's all. In my
favor. Over a summer I know to the
penny how much I'm going to make.
But they're not rigged.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(eyes Doc closely)

Now, there are other things I do that's not within the law, but that don't make it dishonest. Take horseracing. Bet at the track, okay. Bet on the street, the cops'll get you if you don't pay 'em off. But there's no cheatin'.

Just the odds. Now, you can be crooked in a legal business and you can be honest in an illegal business.

(pause)

Are you listenin' to me, boy?

Doc sits down, squirms a little.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I'm an honest gambler. The rest of the world downtown in the Wall Street houses and banks, that's another business, I think. I don't want any part of it.

(pause)

I know what I do want, and I know how to get it...

Doc reels with recognition of a line from his detective novel.

Franklin leans forward and relights the reefer, but doesn't smoke it.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

... legit.

(pointedly)

But anybody cheats on me, no matter who, he's through, wiped out.

(raises his arms)

See these broken thumbs?

Doc nods quickly. He's scared.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I got them in a gang fight when I was twelve. They were broken when I wouldn't tell on a friend. I respect trust and loyalty in a man.

He lights the reefer again, pulls in a lungful of smoke.

DOC

I got something to tell you, Mister Gilboa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (4):

FRANKLIN

You have, eh?

He rubs the top of his shiny black hair, settles back in his easy chair.

DOC

I-- I tried to cheat you...

Franklin doesn't reveal whether that surprises him or not.

FRANKLIN

You did, did you?

DOC

I fixed the machine...

FRANKLIN

Now how did you do that?

DOC

I learned about the set screws underneath... I got the word from the company that makes the tables.

FRANKLIN

Why are you telling me now?

DOC

(hesitantly)

Because...

FRANKLIN

(commanding)

Come on.

DOC

I want you to trust me.

FRANKLIN

Trust you? And why would I be doin' that?

DOC

I want you to teach me stuff.

FRANKLIN

What kind of "stuff"?

DOC

I want to be like you.

Franklin stands up, laughs and slaps his hands together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (5):

FRANKLIN

Want to be like me! Oh, lady, lady!
It ain't like fallin' outa bed.

(sits down, calms down)

Get it outa your head, kid. There
ain't a nigger in Harlem can be just
like Franklin Gilboa!

(sudden smile)

Not in a million years.

DOC

(with admiration)

You were on to me, all along, weren't
ya?

FRANKLIN

I can use a smart-ass like you, and
a white one's something special.
Some of my associates aren't comfortable
in white neighborhoods.

DOC

I bet you can go any place you want.

Franklin just smiles patiently.

FRANKLIN

Your folks'd be real sore if they
knew you were hangin' around a
reefer-smokin' numbers man.

DOC

My Pop goes to the races.

FRANKLIN

That's no answer.

DOC

Yeah, they'd be sore.

Franklin does what he will repeat whenever he makes a
bet or a decision: he scratches the back of his neck.

FRANKLIN

(hiding sentimentality)

Got a bookful to teach a young fellow.
And I don't mean about numbers, whores,
and horses. I mean about humanology.

DOC

(puzzled)

Humanology...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (6):

FRANKLIN

Give us time, you'll know what I'm talkin' about.

(pause)

I look at you, I see a white brain, real sharp. I got vibrations about you. Saved my life in the war a couple of times feelin' vibrations. That get to you, Doc? You understand?

DOC

Yes, sir.

Franklin looks right through the boy, as though searing his soul. He glances at his watch.

FRANKLIN

Hell, it's after twelve. Better beat it home.

Franklin gets out his keys, unlocks the door for Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Tomorrow, come by Rossini's Barbershop on Market Way. After school.

DOC

Okay, Mister Gilboa.

FRANKLIN

Call me Franklin, boy.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Doc excitedly runs through the empty streets toward his house.

INT. DOC'S APARTMENT

Mom and Pop stand in their bathrobes as Doc ENTERS.

MOM

Melvin, it's after twelve.

DOC

My watch stopped.

POP

You're supposed to be in by eleven.

MOM

Let me see your watch.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

DOC

I fixed it when I saw the clock
in Kramer's window.

POP

Where were you?

Doc doesn't respond right away.

MOM

Your father asked you a question.
Where were you?

DOC

I was talking with the guy who runs
the pinball machines.

Doc starts for his bedroom.

MOM

Melvin, in civilized society, when
people address each other, other
people don't walk away.

DOC

I gotta go to the bathroom.

POP

Marcy's in there. You'll have to
wait.

DOC

Figures.

Doc sits down, fidgets in his seat.

MOM

(to Pop)

Saul, do you know this man he's
talking about?

POP

I seen him around. The schwartz
with the shoeshine stand on Market
Way. He runs the arcade at the
beach, too.

DOC

You don't like him 'cause he's colored?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

MOM

(defensively)

Now that isn't fair. You know we like people regardless of their color or their religion. What I want to know is how could you forget that tomorrow is a school day!

DOC

I dunno. We just got talking.

MOM

About what, I'd like to know?

Doc, feeling pressure on his credibility and on his bladder, fidgets anew.

DOC

Stuff. Nothing special. Pinball games.

POP

(echoing under his breath)

Pinball games...!

MOM

From now on, we want you to be home at eleven, and you're not to leave this house without showing us your completed homework.

POP

Acknowledge your mother!

DOC

(not knowing it was a question)

Yes, Ma'am. May I be excused?

Mom nods to Pop, who gestures that Doc may leave. He makes a beeline for the bathroom.

HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM

Doc leans on the bathroom door.

DOC

Hey, Marcy. Finish up, will you?

Marcy answers through the door.

MARCY'S VOICE

I'm washing my hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is no sound of water running. Doc is restless, really needs to go.

DOC

I gotta go to the can.
(long pause, kicks door)
I know you're not washing your hair. And if you don't get the hell out right away, I'm gonna go into your bedroom and pee on your floor.

MARCY'S VOICE

(approaching door)

You are such an animal....!

She unlocks the door. CAMERA FOLLOWS DOC into the bathroom. Marcy has left books everywhere: on the floor, the washbasin, the top of the toilet tank, and the laundry basket. She is lathering her hair. Doc gets to the toilet just in time.

MARCY

You know, Melvin. It wouldn't hurt you to try a little courtesy some time. Mom and Pop were really worried about --

DOC

Listen, Marcy. Maybe Mom and Pop think you're so smart, but you don't know what hurts me and what doesn't, so just bug off, okay?

Doc brusquely exits the bathroom.

MARCY

You didn't flush!
(to herself)
What a slob.

INT. DOC'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Doc lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. A train rattles the apartment building, but he doesn't even notice it. His eyes are electric, excited.

DOC

(to himself)

There's legit and there's legit.

He smiles, closes his eyes.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. DOC'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Doc hurries out his front door, meets Eddie Norris on the way to school.

EDDIE

What happened? Did you get in trouble?

DOC

'Course not.

EDDIE

Well... what'd he say?

DOC

I did most of the talkin'. He just needed some advice.

EDDIE

What kind of advice?

DOC

You sure ask a lot of questions.

EDDIE

I wouldn't ask so many questions if you just told me stuff...

Doc notices Eddie has been jiggling a handball. He manages to sneak it away from him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Hey...!

(as Doc tosses it back)
Wanna play after school?

DOC

(preoccupied)
Sure.

They disappear around a corner. Other kids are on their way to school, too. A SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

EXT. ROSSINI'S BARBERSHOP - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY

As the scene unfolds, Franklin carries on an active numbers business with his regular clientele. This includes Mario from Kaplan's Deli, Bobby from Rexall's, Mrs. Gumbracht from the A&P, and hefty Mrs. Anderhorst.

Doc approaches on the run. Franklin continues selling numbers as he addresses Doc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

Folks give you hell for staying
out late?

DOC

Nope.

Franklin squints his eyes suspiciously.

DOC (CONT'D)

Not much.

FRANKLIN

C'm'ere.

(steps into the shade,
indicates numbers slips)
Know what these are?

Doc nods, a little unsure.

FRANKLIN

What are they?

(seeing Doc's hesitation)
They're numbers slips.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
(lamely)
I know. I just didn't know what
you called 'em.

Franklin reaches into another pocket, pulls out a thick envelope containing a huge wad of cash. He scribbles an address down on the envelope, hands it to Doc, who hurriedly pockets the money. Franklin fishes out train fare and an extra five dollar bill.

FRANKLIN
This's for the train.
(indicating the five)
This's for you. Lets see what
kinda legs you got.

DOC
I got good legs.

FRANKLIN
Show me, boy.

Doc is off on a sprint.

MONTAGE

Doc running into the Beachport Station. Doc paying his train fare. Doc on the train, the stations whizzing by as fast as a merry-go-round: Oceanside, East Rockaway, Jamaica, Kew Gardens, Forest Hills, Penn Station. Doc getting off the train, each passing moment showing Doc feeling an increased sense of importance.

BOARDED-UP SHOE REPAIR STORE

It's on 33rd Street right off Seventh. A black man leans near the entrance, talking to a cop. He sees Doc, nods to him, and Doc overcomes his hesitation, enters.

INSIDE THE SHOE REPAIR STORE

It is dark and ratty. A group of white and black men study a blackboard with race results. A Fat Old Dame dozes with her eyes open behind the counter. Doc starts to approach her, but is interrupted by HAYES' VOICE.

HAYES
Hey, Doc!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doc is startled that anyone knows him. He approaches HAYES, a black man with a moustache and gold-rimmed specs balanced on the tip of his nose. Next to him is a real DUDE with a wide-brimmed black hat and a checkered suit.

HAYES (CONT'D)

I'm Hayes. Friend of Franklin's.
He give ya somethin' for me.

DOC

(unsure)

He didn't say anybody's name.

HAYES

It's okay, kid. He called. Said
you was comin'.

DOC

(it's a lot of money)

Yeah, but...

HAYES

How'd I know your name was Doc if
he didn't tell me?

Doc unceremoniously gives Hayes the envelope. Hayes turns his back, starts counting the money. The Dude carefully scrutinizes Doc. Hayes finally hands the money to the Dude.

HAYES (CONT'D)

It's all there. You're a lucky
roller, man.

DUDE

(counting for himself)

Y'all's the lucky one.

HAYES

He hit a triple with a fiver.
Three grand.

(to the Dude)

It's all there, Billo.

DUDE

(still counting)

Stop interruptin'.

HAYES

Franklin said for you to get back
on the next train. He don't want
you gettin' into no trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
(unconsciously imitating
Hayes' accent)
Won't be no trouble.

Hayes gives Doc a double-take, as if to ask, 'Where'd that accent come from?'. Before Doc can say anything, The Dude approaches him, much more friendly now.

DUDE
Where you-all goin' to?

DOC
Beachport, Long Island.

DUDE
You been a messenger of good luck,
boy. Been laying five bucks on that
number forevah.
(pointedly to Hayes)
Goddam it when it comes ridin' in I
want the bread right warm in my hands.
C'mon, young man. I'll drive ya home.

EXT. DRIVING SHOT - DUDE'S RED BUICK

They drive in silence for a long while. The Dude keeps eyeing Doc in a way that makes him increasingly uneasy. Approaching the 59th Street Bridge, the Dude speaks.

DUDE
I got my place near here. Wanna
come up for a minute?

DOC
Better not.

The Dude removes his wide-brimmed hat, revealing freshly-coiffed hair. He touches it with his slender fingers.

DUDE
Nothin' to worry about.

DOC
It ain't that. Gotta get home,
that's all.

DUDE
How much bread did you make today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

Five bucks.

DUDE

Five lousy dollars! If you worked
for me, I'd give you more than that.

The Dude opens his wallet, pulls out a ten, leaves it on
the seat between Doc and himself.

DOC

(really squirming)

Look, sir, if you're in a hurry to
do somethin', you don't have to
take me home. I'll pick up the
subway at Penn Station.

DUDE

(eyes wetting up)

No hurry. Jus' want to stop off
for a couple of minutes. Got
some groovy platters. You like
Louie?

(gets no answer, touches
the ten on the seat)

That's for you. No strings.

Doc thinks about opening the door and jumping out right
there, but he doesn't quite dare. He takes stock of the
situation, thinks fast.

DOC

I'm a friend of Mister Gilboa's.

DUDE

That doesn't bother me.

(turns a corner)

Got some high-class kif.

Doc doesn't know what that means, says nothing.

DUDE (CONT'D)

(tapping the steering wheel)

Get you some new clothes.

They reach a red light. Doc's hand goes to the door
handle, but the light changes, and he fails to make his
move. The car reaches 63rd Street and the Dude slows
down in front of a brownstone house. Doc's hand begins
to turn the door handle, but the Dude has anticipated
that, and in one deft move he simultaneously gets one
arm around Doc's shoulder and taps the lock closed.

DUDE (CONT'D)

Here we are, sugar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

DOC
(sudden idea)
I got crabs.

The car jerks to a stop.

DUDE
(screaming)
You lousy little punk. Get the
fuck outa my car!

Doc exits faster than he's ever moved in his life.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN BEACHPORT - A FEW DAYS LATER

Doc and Eddie are having a competitive game of handball.

EDDIE
Whattaya have to do?

DOC
I'm a runner in a coupla streets
in Oceanside.

EDDIE
(losing the game)
Is it scary?

DOC
Not if you know how to handle
yourself...

EDDIE
What's it like?

DOC
It's kinda like in books... you
meet all kinds.

As Doc slams a kill shot past Eddie, we

CUT TO:

INT. AND EXT. MONTAGE - OCEANSIDE - DAY

Doc's dialog continues over shots of him climbing fire escapes, running up and down stoops, in kitchens, taking bets, eating homemade cakes, being hugged and slapped on the back and getting wet kisses on the forehead by a wonderful variety of women -- Russian, Polish, Jewish, and Italian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC (V.O.)
(continuing)
They're all foreigners. Most of 'em
work for the Long Island Railroad.

EDDIE (V.O.)
Don't ya feel bad takin' their money?

DOC (V.O.)
Are you kidding? When I show up,
it's like Christmas around there.
Sure, the odds are against 'em, but
it gives the dames somethin' to think
about other'n work or kids or washin'.
And how they pick the numbers... I
never heard such crazy ideas!

DOC WITH ITALIAN WOMAN

ITALIAN WOMAN
What's your name?

DOC
Doc Henshel.

She counts out the letters in his name, totaling 10.

ITALIAN WOMAN
Okay, give me number ten.

Doc sells her number ten as we

CUT TO:

DOC WITH JEWISH WOMAN

The lady dumps out her purse onto her kitchen table,
closes her eyes, stabs a finger at one of her coins,
picks it up, takes the last number from the date.

JEWISH WOMAN
Five, please.

Doc sells her number five as we

CUT TO:

DOC WITH RUSSIAN WOMAN

She has a painting of a Russian Saint on her wall, which
she addresses in her native language.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUSSIAN WOMAN
(to painting, in Russian)
What number should I choose?
(listens, turns to Doc,
in broken English)
Twenty-four today, thank you.

Doc sells her number twenty-four as we

CUT TO:

DOC WITH BUXOM HOUSEWIFE

He is bringing her some winnings. She is so excited that she pushes Doc's head between her large breasts as her out-of-work husband happily recounts the money. Doc blushes, but is happy for both of them.

DOC (V.O.)
They have a good time. And, y'know,
Eddie, sometimes they win.

BACK ON THE STREET IN BEACHPORT

Doc and Eddie finish up their game.

EDDIE
(with disapproval)
It's still gambling.

Doc picks up the handball, puts his arm around Eddie.

DOC
Listen, Eddie. Franklin says life is like having to kiss a thousand asses. Okay? There's the Con Edison ass, the telephone ass, the landlord ass, the bread-butter-and-potato ass, the undertaker's ass. And gamblin' is a way to get one big round sugarsweet mama ass to handle all the little ones.
(pause)

Franklin says every man's got to find himself one, or he's a bum. That's humanology.

EDDIE
That's disgusting!
(thinks)
What's humanology supposed to mean, anyway?

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

DOC

It's philosophy. Study of humans,
I guess. I dunno.

EDDIE

It's a buncha baloney, if you ask me.

DOC

Who asked ya?

(pause, smiling)

Eddie, you wanna make some money?

EDDIE

(suspicious)

Doing what?

DOC

Franklin asked me to go into Harlem
with him on Columbus Day. I think
he wants to take me to Em's place.

EDDIE

What's that?

DOC

(grinning)

A whorehouse.

EDDIE

God, can I come, too?

DOC

Look, Eddie. He's doing me a big
favor just takin' me in, and I
work for the man.

EDDIE

Come on, Doc! Everything we've ever
gone through, we've gone through
together. You can't do this without me!

DOC

Franklin told me never to tell anyone--
even you.

EDDIE

(flattered)

He knows we're friends?

DOC

Sure. Look, I need you to cover for
me. I'm tellin' Mom 'n' Pop you got
tickets to a Globetrotters game. Go
to the game, tell me who wins and how,
and meet me on the last train home.
I'll pay you plus buy your ticket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

EDDIE

I hate to lie.

DOC

Who you hurting?

EDDIE

(after considerable thought)
But what if they ask me if I ever
lied when I go up before the Bar
Association?

DOC

It'll be years from now. Who'll
know?

(pause)

You're going to the game anyway, or
to the movies. All you have to say
if my mother bugs you is 'Sure, we
were there'. Is that too much to ask?

EDDIE

(taking the money reluctantly)
Okay. Just this once.

DRIVING SHOT - INSIDE FRANKLIN'S CADILLAC - HARLEM

Although we stay primarily with Doc and Franklin in the car, we may notice hazily in the b.g. crowds of kids and adults yelling, laughing, fighting, eating. Juke boxes blare out, radios blast from open windows. Franklin slows down occasionally for a beautiful woman. Invariably, the women respond. Many of them know him. One cocoa-skinned beauty in a shiny green dress, earrings floating from the side of her head, pocketbook swinging like a pendulum as she struts down the sidewalk, blows a kiss to Franklin.

While Doc tries to pull his eyeballs back in his head, Franklin drives through a red light at a busy intersection.

DOC

You just ran a red light.

FRANKLIN

This is my neighborhood.

(pause)

That's my red light.

Doc just smiles in admiration. They drive on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

Man, this is great! What a place.
Makes me wish I was born black.

Franklin gives Doc a dark look.

FRANKLIN

It may look like May Day in the
park to you, but the sound of Harlem
you hear ain't joy, man, or nigger
beat. It's a handful of hard cash
and a bucket of trembling.

(pause)

You're smart with percentages. How
you doin' in school?

DOC

Okay...

FRANKLIN

I want you to do better than okay.
You got to get into law school.

DOC

I don't want to be a lawyer.

FRANKLIN

I'm wasting my time with you, boy.
You're not as smart as I thought.

(getting madder)

I thought I had someone I could teach
about gamblin' and greed so we could
use it in the legit big time. That's
what it's all about in this country.
Make a bundle 'n' keep the law on
your side.

A silence is followed by long sighs from Franklin.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Well. Vibrations can be wrong sometime.

They drive on without further conversation.

DOC

(finally)

Okay, Franklin. I'll work at school
like you said.

FRANKLIN

I'll be on your tail, boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

DOC

(too familiar)

Don't worry. We're a team, right?

Franklin chews a while on a cigarette, doesn't smoke it.

FRANKLIN

Somethin' else you gotta know. No one got me in their hands. I'm Mister Himself, by himself. Ain't no chains on me. Like I tell chicks when they're scratchin' at me. 'Get outa my mouth. I ain't nobody's dog. Let the air flow between us, hear?'

Franklin makes a dangerous, rowdy pass on a busy street.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Everyone's for the party of Me and Now. That's humanology, too! No one's gonna put cuffs on my hands. Any runnin' I'm gonna do is on top of the world, over everybody's head. I want space all around me!

Franklin grins and hits his hand against the wheel.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Damn, I feel good!

Franklin pulls over in front of the Red Dog Grill. He hops out of the car, and Doc follows him in.

#

INT. RED DOG GRILL - DAY

The lighting is dim in this low budget establishment. A Juke Box plays in the b.g. Doc is the only white in the place. Many of the customers are recently discharged Army veterans. Hayes is there, nods to Franklin. Next to him is HOBIE, who wears dark glasses even in this dim light. JOHN HEMINGWAY, the bartender, wears a silver patch over one eye.

Franklin leads Doc through a sea of black faces to join Hobie and Hayes at the corner of the bar.

HEMINGWAY
(meeting Franklin)
The usual?

Franklin nods.

HEMINGWAY (CONT'D)
Cutty Sark on the rocks and a little water.

FRANKLIN
(to Hemingway, Hobie, and Hayes)
Junior here is a special friend of mine.
(to Hemingway)
One beer'n he's ready to fight.

HEMINGWAY
(winking at Doc)
One beer and one Cutty Sark coming up.

Hemingway goes to work.

FRANKLIN
(pointing out Hobie)
This guy next to Hayes? This's Hobie.

Hobie nods a noncommittal hello from behind his dark glasses.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
These two're my partners. Everything I do we split fifty-fifty. Fifty for me, 25 each for them. You keep up the good work, we may talk about cutting you in some day.

Neither Hobie nor Hayes looks overjoyed at that idea. Hemingway serves them their drinks.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

DOC

(pleased, curious)

Shouldn't you have fifty-one per cent?

I mean, what if you disagree? How do you make a decision?

Doc immediately realizes he has made a faux pas. Hobie gives him a distressingly chilling look.

HOBIE

We don't.

Now Doc notices a gun is causing the bulge in Hobie's coat.

FRANKLIN

If we don't agree on something, we just don't do it.

Doc has never felt so uncomfortably white in his life. He sees Franklin chewing on a cigarette, tries doing the same thing, does it awkwardly.

HOBIE

(referring to Doc)

Boy kinda stands out, don't he?

FRANKLIN

That can work to our advantage, gentlemen.

HAYES

In some neighborhoods, maybe...

FRANKLIN

I wanted you to meet him 'cause you're gonna be seein' him around a lot. He's studyin' to be a lawyer.

Now things make sense to Hobie and Hayes. They visibly relax a bit. This lets Doc relax, too.

HAYES

Brainy kid?

FRANKLIN

Very brainy kid.

Doc relishes the attention, downs his beer with great gusto, wipes his mouth like a man, or at least his youthful version of one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

Franklin gulps down the rest of his scotch, feels expansive. He's ready to move on.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Let's go, Doc. We're goin' to Em's place to find us some sweet, sweet sugar.

Doc gets up, nods confidently to Hobie and Hayes, whose expressions seem to wonder what planet this kid came from.

EXT. SIDEWALK - HARLEM - DAY

Doc and Franklin are outside, walking down a crowded sidewalk. Franklin notices something, hurries toward a corner where a skinny black PUSHER in a Navy peajacket is standing with some kids. Doc belatedly follows him. On his way, Franklin passes Daisy, the large sleepy woman from Solly's Barbershop. She knows what's happening.

FRANKLIN

(to Daisy)

Call Cohalan.

DAISY

Yes, Mister Gilboa.

Franklin reaches the gathering, starts pushing the kids to one side, puts his nose into the face of the Pusher.

FRANKLIN

Get lost, punk.

The Pusher doesn't look scared. He is practically catatonic.

PUSHER

Yeah...

He makes no effort to move. Franklin takes a small envelope out of the guy's hand.

PUSHER (CONT'D)

Hey! That's mine...

One of the kids tries to grab the envelope from Franklin, but Franklin holds him off, leans to the Pusher, speaks quietly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

I'm Mister Franklin Gilboa. This is my street, and if you lived here, you'd know it.

A crowd is gathering.

PUSHER

Okay. We'll split the bread.

FRANKLIN

Who's the dealer?

PUSHER

What about fifty-fifty?

Franklin SLAPS him hard in the face.

FRANKLIN

No one, y'hear, is goin' to push drugs around here. Not on the streets. Not to kids. Not to anyone!

MAN IN CROWD

The man said it!

WOMAN IN CROWD

God bless you!

The Pusher tries to break away, but Franklin holds tight.

FRANKLIN

You ain't goin' anywhere.

Daisy comes through the crowd with a white cop, COHALAN.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Take him, Cohalan. He's all yours.
(handing him the envelope)
Here's the evidence.

COHALAN

Thank you, Mister Gilboa. We need all the help we can get.
(cuffing the Pusher)
Get movin', scum.

FRANKLIN

How's the missus?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

COHALAN

Doin' fine, sir. She asked me to thank you for your gift to the Ladies Auxiliary.

FRANKLIN

My pleasure, Mister Cohalan.

COHALAN

(to Pusher)

I told you to get movin'.

People follow Franklin to his car, try to touch his coat, try to shake his hand. Doc just follows along, beaming proudly. CAMERA FOLLOWS them up to a penthouse entrance. The sun is beginning to set.

INT. PENTHOUSE LOBBY

Doc and Franklin wait for an elevator.

FRANKLIN

That cop's on my payroll. We build up a nice arrest record for 'em. Now and then we even let 'em raid Solly's when no one's around with much cash. Keeps the City Hall heat off.

(starts chewing a cigarette)

Damn pushers. Bad for Harlem. Bad for my business. Bread going into drugs is bread not going into numbers.
(gets thoughtful)

And kids...

Franklin looks uncharacteristically upset. Doc doesn't get it, decides not to push the subject. The elevator arrives.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Well, we're about to forget all that.

Franklin and Doc enter the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - DUSK

Franklin knocks on an ornate hand-carved wooden door. A skimpily attired WHITE CHICK seems delighted to see Franklin, who gives her a pat on her partially-exposed ass as she greets him.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

WHITE CHICK

Hello...

Your hands are warm.

FRANKLIN

Just for you, Clarissa.

CAMERA FOLLOWS as she ushers him through an ornate room populated by beautiful semi-clad women of all races. They entertain an assortment of clients of varied background with one thing in common: affluence.

They enter an even larger, fancier room. It is all white: carpets, walls, furniture -- even the piano. A black man in a white tux plays jazz softly, accompanied by another on a white string bass. This room makes the previous one look like Sunday school.

One voluptuous black woman plays hide-and-seek with a customer's gold pocket watch, dropping it into her cleavage and telling him to "close your eyes" before searching for it.

Two oriental women entertain a large man, each sitting on a knee, both running their fingers through his hair, one of them wearing his hat, which is much too big for her.

Doc's eyes bulge and his head spins at the sight of even more semi-dressed beautiful women surrounding him. The room's whiteness is further enhanced by the haze of cigarette smoke hanging in the air.

A French maid in an abbreviated costume freely passes around drinks and has plenty of takers.

EM, a large, very tall, very black woman in a very black dress, comes out a side door, greets Franklin affectionately.

EM

Franklin!

They embrace, kiss. Doc can't believe how tall she is, how black she is, or how much bigger than life she is with her magnificent breasts, her neverending legs, and her deep voice.

FRANKLIN

This is my very good friend Doc.

DOC

(shyly)

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

EM

(playing a little)

What a gorgeous young man you are!
Give Em a proper greeting.

Doc doesn't know what she means, but she wastes no time in showing him, wrapping her long arms around his, planting a wet kiss on his lips, letting her ample breasts burn into his shirt.

EM (CONT'D)

Yesss. If you're a friend of
Franklin's, then my ladies are at
your command.

(to Franklin)

He's a cute one.

Franklin rescues Doc from mammary suffocation.

FRANKLIN

We're going to be partners someday.
I'd like him to meet Vincy.

Em gives Doc a motherly smile.

EM

(to Doc)

Honey. Take a look around and talk
to the girls. They won't bite you...
unless you want 'em to.

Her laugh is infectious. Doc can't help laughing with her.

EM (CONT'D)

(to the maid)

Sweetness, tell Vincy there's a
friend of Franklin's I want her to
meet.

Even the maid eyes Doc warmly, then exits upstairs.
CAMERA FOLLOWS DOC as he wanders around, past one woman who is playing peek-a-boo with her breasts for an admiring patron. Trying not to stare, he looks back to Franklin and Em in time to see them disappear into another room.

EM (CONT'D)

How old is he?

FRANKLIN

Old enough, but don't let his
height fool you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (4):

Then they are gone. Doc doubletakes on that line, then turns back toward the stairs and is bowled over by a lovely vision. Her name is Vincy. She is a mulatto, with skin the color of vanilla ice cream in a chocolate soda. She wears a low-cut light blue dress, and her eyes are the same color. Her hair is dark, cut short.

VINCY

Hello.

(pause as Doc stares)

I'm Vincy.

It's love at first sight for Doc.

DOC

(voice shaky)

Hello. Ahem.

VINCY

You're Doc.

Vincy starts over to a nearby loveseat. Doc follows her, enchanted, not knowing how to behave. Vincy addresses the passing maid.

VINCY (CONT'D)

I'll have an orange blossom.

(to Doc)

For vitamins. What'll you have?

DOC

Cutty Sark on the rocks and a little water.

The maid exits, and they sit.

VINCY

You live in New York?

DOC

Yes. I mean, New York State. Long Island.

VINCY

That fits you. It's very pretty there.

DOC

Yeah. It's nice here, too.

VINCY

I kind of like it. We meet interesting people here.

(flirting)

You seem very interesting.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED (5):

Doc's tongue is practically hanging out.

VINCY (CONT'D)

You haven't been here before, have you?

DOC

No, but...

(searches for more to say)

I get around.

The drinks arrive with the maid. She flirts with Doc as she serves him. Doc doesn't know how to handle it, feeling loyalty to (and preference for) Vincy. Still, it is heady stuff, and he is distracted.

VINCY

She's cute. That's Linda.

DOC

(breathless)

You're more beautiful.

She puts her hand on his. He tries to stop its shaking.

VINCY

I bet you know how to treat a lady.

Doc can hardly breathe. Vincy politely smiles, sips her drink. Doc takes his cue, drinks his. She looks at her tiny gold watch.

VINCY (CONT'D)

Would you like to go to my place?

Doc swallows his drink, nods too quickly, adds coolly:

DOC

Why not?

VINCY

(getting up)

I'll get my coat.

Doc stares longingly after Vincy as she exits. Em enters, waves Doc over to her. He obeys.

EM

Franklin says for you to enjoy yourself. Everything's taken care of.

Doc nods, pretending to know what that means. He hurriedly downs the rest of his drink as we

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

CAMERA slowly MOVES IN on an open window. As we draw closer, we see the dim lighting and hear the frantic pounding and squeaking of bedsprings as Vincy shouts in the final throes of orgasm. CAMERA arrives at the bed just as the lovers finish. Doc looks worn out, astounded, and a little proud all at the same time. They lay back on the pillows.

VINCY

You were terrific, sugar.

Doc smiles, happy to get the judgment. He wasn't sure.

VINCY (CONT'D)

You can stay here all night. It's okay.

DOC

I don't think I can. But I'll
be back tomorrow or the next day.
(pause)

Vincy?

VINCY

Yes?

DOC

(in love)
What's your last name?

VINCY

De Havilland.

DOC

(pleased)
Like the movie star?

VINCY

All my last names are movie star
names.

(seeing Doc's puzzlement)
Sometimes I go by Vincy Fontaine,
when I'm feelin' real good it's
Cagney, 'cause he's my ideal man.

DOC

What's your real name?

VINCY

I don't tell anybody my real name.

Doc grows silent, feels hurt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCY (CONT'D)

But I'd tell you, 'cause you're
sweet... if you promise not to
spread it around.

DOC

I swear to God...

VINCY

Mabel Smith.

DOC

(savoring it)

Mabel...

VINCY

(sharply)

Don't you ever call me that.
You call me Vincy.

DOC

Okay...

(kisses her forehead)

Vincy.

She snuggles up closer to him. He feels great.

VINCY

Was this your first time?

(long pause)

Was it?

Doc tries to think of a manly answer.

DOC

(after a long pause)

Kinda.

VINCY

Kind of what?

DOC

Kinda my first time... I did a lot
of hot necking.

Vincy laughs and puts an arm around him, kisses him.

VINCY

Sugar, you're great! You're terrific!
A real man. Any time I'm around and
you're there, you come to Vincy, hear?

Doc looks at his watch, sees it's 10:15.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

VINCY (CONT'D)

How long have you known Franklin?

DOC

(preferring other subjects)

A while...

VINCY

Franklin's my best friend. I'd've died without him. When we were shackled up together, he taught me a lot. How to dress, how to talk. You know, no 'aint's' and 'up yours'. He was very strict with me because he thought I had class, and his whores had to have class. He--

DOC

What do you mean, 'his whores'? Don't you work for Em?

VINCY

Franklin's got his own stable. Me and Rosemary and Opal. He brought us to Em's and he gets his cut. He's my number-one man. I was no virgin, believe me, when we met. But I didn't know screwing from a traffic light. He taught me how to please a man. Timing, he used to say, that's the thing with a good lay. And listening, too. Men like to talk. Men like to hear themselves with a dame.

DOC

Yeah, well. I guess I oughta be going.

VINCY

That's a shame, honey. I'll take you where you have to go.

DOC

No. You go to sleep.

VINCY

Don't worry about me. I don't get real washed out until three, four o'clock. Holiday like this is big at Em's.

Doc tries to smile, can't quite manage it. He starts getting dressed.

VINCY (CONT'D)

What's the matter, sugar?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

Doc finishes dressing.

DOC

I wish you didn't have to go back.

VINCY

C'm'ere.

Doc obeys, nestles up to Vincy. They kiss one last time.

DOC

(mustering courage)

I love you, Vincy.

He hastens out the door before she can respond. She just smiles, shakes her head, starts getting dressed.

CUT TO:

INT. PENN STATION AND ON TRAIN - NIGHT

Doc and Eddie run down the stairs, along the platform, and onto the last train of the night.

EDDIE

I didn't think you were gonna make it.

DOC

I told ya I would. Who won?

EDDIE

Globetrotters. 110 to 89. You shoulda seen Sweetwater. He was crazy. Played like a machine gun. So... tell me about it.

Doc's mind races. He finally takes the easy way out.

DOC

I got laid.

EDDIE

Wow!

Doc suddenly feels sick.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

How was it?

Doc gets sick, makes it to the toilet just in time. Eddie looks on with curiosity. OVER THIS, we hear

FRANKLIN'S VOICE (OVER)

How was it, Doc?

EXT. SOLLY'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

Franklin is sorting numbers slips, addressing Doc.

DOC

Okay...

FRANKLIN

Vincy liked you.

Doc resents Franklin having any knowledge of the night.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You want to see her again?

DOC

(trying to be casual)

Sure.

Franklin hands Doc the slips and some cash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

You got a couple hits to pay off.

(pause)

First time can mean a lot to a man.
Can make him really sure of himself
or make him worry all the time.

Doc keeps silent, wishing Franklin would shut up.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Depends on the chick, too. Get one
who doesn't know what's going on, it
can set you back. I wanted you to
have the best.

DOC

I think I'd better get going.

Franklin puts his hand on Doc's shoulder. Doc can't
stand to be touched at the moment, but doesn't resist.

FRANKLIN

Listen to me careful, kid. One thing
you don't want to do, otherwise you
lose a helluva lot of fun in life--
don't ever keep hanging your coat on
the same hook all the time. Dig it?

DOC

(pulling away)

Yeah.

Doc gets on his bike.

FRANKLIN

I mean that, Doc.

Doc rides off.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - DAY

The marquis advertises BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES and THE
KILLERS. Doc meets Eddie in front, hands him some cash.

DOC

Here. Here's something for popcorn.
You want some jujubes?

EDDIE

Sure! Thanks.

DOC

(starting down the sidewalk)
Just don't forget the ending.
Marcy always asks me the endings.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

#

INT. DOC'S FAMILY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Marcy is reading the Sunday Times Book Review. Pop is blowing his nose between bites of cereal. Mom is staring at Doc, who is about to drink his orange juice.

MOM

Where did you get it?

Doc looks around, thinking she was addressing Pop or Marcy.

MOM (CONT'D)

Yes, Melvin, I'm talking to you.

DOC

(nervous)

Me?

MOM

I think you know what I'm talking about.

Pop blows his nose again.

DOC

You talking about the money I had under the bed?

MOM

Melvin, you know perfectly well what I'm --

DOC

You mean that I was saving to buy the family presents with?

Marcy puts down her paper at that whopper.

POP

That's very nice.

MOM

A hundred dollars. That much you don't save out of fifty cents a week spending money.

DOC

I worked for it.

MARCY

Cleaning streets, no doubt.

Doc throws Marcy a dirty look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARCY (CONT'D)

What do you do? Shoot craps every afternoon?

DOC

A lot you know!

POP

How did you make a hundred dollars?

DOC

I bet on horses at Jamaica and won.

MARCY

Hah!

MOM

I told you, Saul, we should've put our foot down. Melvin's becoming a racetrack tout.

POP

(intrigued)

You had a long shot?

DOC

(lying)

Yes. Sunny Cloud at fifty-to-one.

Pop looks pleased, a little envious. Mom's voice snaps him back to respectability.

MOM

I think your father should take charge of the money.

DOC

It's my money!

MOM

You'll save it for college. We don't need such expensive presents. And from now on, you will stay away from horses. Is that clear?

DOC

Yes, Ma'am.

Doc resumes eating his breakfast, his secret friendship safe from his snooping parents. Pop sticks his nose into the sports page, comes up with a question for Doc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

POP

Who's favored in the first race
today?

MOM

(sharply)

Saul...!

Doc and Pop exchange unresolved glances as silence fills
the scene.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. MOVING VAN - DAY

Franklin is turning over cards in a heated game of five-card stud against a loser named TILL. Till is black, tall, and skinny, with a long nose and thick lips, which he habitually wipes with a red handkerchief. His huge pile of chips indicates that Franklin is winning big. He's been drinking for a couple days straight. As he plays, he unconsciously whistles through his teeth, which irritates Till. Doc stands nearby, sipping a coke, a bar cloth ready to wipe up spills. The men drink whisky.

The van is set up for gambling, and the table has been designed to protect glasses and chips from spilling when the van hits potholes. The owner of the van, CHRIS JOHNSON, also black, monitors the game as Doc keeps the glasses filled.

TILL

(about the whistling)

Can that.

Franklin continues whistling, continues dealing,
continues winning. Tension increases. Chris looks at
his watch.

CHRIS

Last deal.

TILL

You can't shut me down now, man.
I don' have nothin'.

CHRIS

We agreed to stop after forty-eight
hours. It's forty-eight hours.

Till meets a wall of intransigence in the faces of
Chris, Franklin, and Doc. He knows it's hopeless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TILL

I want open cards.

Franklin nods his okay, deals Till a king, himself a jack. Till puts in twenty-five dollars. Franklin meets him, gives Till a ten, himself a three.

TILL (CONT'D)

Pass.

Franklin passes, too.

The van lurches, spilling some of Till's drink on him. He doesn't move or speak. His eyes stay on the cards.

Franklin deals Till a king. He deals himself an ace.

Doc refills Till's glass as Till stares at the cards: his own pair of kings ten against Franklins's ace jack three.

FRANKLIN

What's it going to be?

Till counts his chips, divides the stack in thirds, bets one stack. Franklin raises him fifty. Till meets him.

Franklin deals Till an eight, himself a five. The hand favors Till.

The van stops, the engine turns off. Suddenly all is quiet. Chris opens a small door leading to the truck's cab, peeks out, turns back to the players.

CHRIS

This is the last game. We're back in the garage.

Franklin stops whistling. He waits. He holds his fingers about six inches from the deck.

FRANKLIN

Last card.

Till folds his handkerchief, wipes the side of his sweaty nose, puts his fingers behind his chips, rides them into the center of the table, downs his whiskey.

Franklin's fingers inch to the deck. He deals Till a four. He's about to turn over his own card when Till puts his handkerchief hand on the deck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

TILL
(whispering)
I'll deal it.

Doc looks on, entranced.

FRANKLIN
(with a firm smile)
I'm dealer.

TILL
I don't like the way you handle
the deck.

FRANKLIN
Late in saying so.

CHRIS
Let's get it over with. I'll draw
the card.

TILL
The hell you will.

FRANKLIN
There's only one dealer, and that's
me.

He reaches for the deck, pushes Till's hand to one side,
turns over the top card, giving himself a second ace.
He wins the pot.

Franklin brings the mountain of chips to his side of the
table.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Take your cut, Chris. And cash
me out.

TILL
Got me a new Caddie outside. Bet
you five grand against it. On one
card.

FRANKLIN
Got my own.

Franklin runs his finger around his shirt collar, checks
his watch.

TILL
Ain't gonna give me a chance at
gettin' some of it back?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

FRANKLIN

Brother, you had forty-eight hours of chance. Besides, you got nothing left to play with but a secondhand Caddie. Game's over and done with.

A disturbing look crosses Till's face. As Chris pays Franklin off, Doc cleans up, Till puts on his overcoat and stares at the money. He leaves the van without saying a word.

CHRIS

(about Till)

He's an asshole. I'm not letting him play here anymore.

FRANKLIN

It's okay.

(to Doc)

What time you got to get back, son?

DOC

If I make a call around six, I can maybe stay until the last train.

FRANKLIN

Give Doc a Cutty Sark and water. Lots of water. We're going to have us a ball the next couple of hours.

EXT. GARAGE LOADING AREA

The van sits idle in the garage. YANKEES MOVING COMPANY is written on its side. Till gets in his Cadillac, angrily peels out of the garage.

INT. HARLEM JAZZ CLUB

At a table near the band, Doc sits alone, wearing a grin he couldn't wipe off if he tried. He sips a whiskey and water, taps his fingers and feet to the wailing jazz as scores of uninhibited black bodies writhe and wiggle and sweat on the dance floor.

Franklin is in his element, bouyant from his fatigue and his winnings. He's a terrific dancer, and Doc clearly loves the man and envies Franklin's blackness as he watches him lead a rather plain but phenomenally talented black woman through some amazing jazz moves.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

Doc is the only white in the club, and he stands out in stark relief to the others. But he doesn't care about that as he lets the music wash over him. A pretty woman stands near Doc's table, eyes him invitingly. He smiles back. She winks. He grins, winks back, only to have his gesture intercepted by her wiry dude of a boyfriend, who tosses Doc a dirty look as he whisks his woman out onto the dance floor. As she disappears into the swarm of bodies, Doc sees her laughing, as if at him. He feels too white, sips his whiskey, and looks for Franklin once again.

The music ends, and Franklin escorts his dancing partner to her table on his way back to Doc. Before he gets there, another number starts up, and dancers fill the floor. Franklin sits with Doc, wipes the sweat off his face, and thirstily wolfs down his drink, pours himself another. He looks across to Doc, smiles.

FRANKLIN

When I was ten I was like you, tall and skinny. I used to swear by the time I was twenty-one I was going to have me a thousand bucks. Took me a little longer, but hell, Doc, I got ten of 'em in my pocket right now. Oh, man! More warmin' than a pair of grapefruit-sized tits is ten grand...

DOC

I'm gonna do that some day...

FRANKLIN

Damn right, you are, Doc.

Franklin takes another drink, savors it.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You know what I'm gonna do with all this bread? Going to find my Mama.

He gulps his Cutty Sark, stares into space past Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I'll find her, and I'll hang thousand-dollar bills from titties to toes and back again...

Franklin snaps out of his reverie, looks to Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

... one of these days...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

Doc doesn't know what to say, sips his drink.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(a little drunk)

I told you about humanology, Doc. It means you don't hurt anybody, right? Means you don't go for sellin' horse or facepowder. It means you work the odds in your favor, but you pay off. Build yourself, but keep your space. See a guy slip on the ice, you help him up. Say 'never mind' when he thanks you. Walk off without taking his name and address. You don't start connectin'. You're your own man, hear, Doc? That's humanology.

(stands, calls to the waiter)

Check...!

You know what I'm talkin' about, Doc?

DOC

(unsure)

Yes.

FRANKLIN

Humanology! Don't forget!

(putting a tip down)

We're going to Em's, old Doc. Do a little rockaby-babying. I got me a new broad up there. Name of Idabelle. What d'ya say?

Doc doesn't say anything.

EXT. HARLEM JAZZ CLUB - DAY

It is still drizzling. Doc and Franklin make it halfway to his Cadillac when Till comes out from behind a high pile of old tires. He has a gun in his hand, and he's inches from Franklin.

TILL

Okay, you cheatin' sonuvabitch.
Let's have my bread back.

Franklin stops, reaches into his overcoat.

TILL (CONT'D)

Keep ya hand right there.

(to Doc)

You, ofay. You get his wallet.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

I won fair.

TILL

Bullshit.

Doc doesn't know what to do. He's scared.

FRANKLIN

Do what the bad man tells you, Doc.
It's his gun.

Till doesn't like Doc, either, sneers at his whiteness.

TILL

Lotta goddam ofays in the Navy. Too
goddam many. I came back to Harlem
to get away from your kind. I don'
know why you think you c'n come in
here. Hurry up with that.Doc reaches into Franklin's coat, takes the wallet out,
opens it for him, revealing a wad of cash. As Till's
eyes focus on the money, Doc slams his fist down on
Till's arm, knocking the gun to the street. He cracks
Till across the mouth with his left hand. As Franklin
picks up his wallet, Doc runs to pick up the gun, gives
it to Franklin, who puts it in his coat.Till is bent over, whining. He looks up to see Franklin
wipe the rain off the wallet, stick it back in his
pocket. Franklin's eyes sparkle merrily at what Doc has
done.

FRANKLIN

(proud of the kid)

Nice...

Doc responds to this highest form of praise with an
attempt not to grin. He feels he's arrived.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Till stands up slowly, stops whining, his lips trembling. It's hard to tell whether it's the rain or tears on his face. Probably both.

TILL

You-- gonna-- hear-- from me again.

Franklin laughs in a crazy, drunken way, startling Doc.

FRANKLIN

Hell. I don't plan on spendin' the rest of my life worryin' about you, man.

Franklin takes Till's gun out of his pocket and returns it to him.

Doc is flabbergasted. Till holds the gun as though he's afraid of it. He wipes his eyes.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I told ya I ain't gonna live that way. Ya got your gun. Use it. Use it now.

Franklin puts his hands behind his back. Doc looks on in fear. Till is breathing hard, holding his gun and staring at Franklin in disbelief. Without a word, he sticks his gun in his pocket, turns, and sashes through the puddles toward a street light.

DOC

(in awe)

He coulda killed us!

FRANKLIN

The odds were with us.

He starts off toward his car, Doc just following in amazement.

CUT TO:

INT. EM'S PLACE

Doc and Vincy are in one of Em's private rooms. They've just made love, and Doc is rolling a joint, a task he has just learned to do.

VINCY

You're getting it.

Doc doesn't say anything. He looks morose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCY (CONT'D)

Why do you look so grumpy, sugar?
Didn't I give you a good time?

DOC

That isn't it, Vincy.

VINCY

Tell your sweet mama.

Doc doesn't want to speak. He stifles his emotions, tries to keep a clear head. But he's obviously disturbed. Vincy cups one of her breasts with one hand, rubs the other hand against Doc's thigh. He is aroused, despite his evident misery.

DOC

Damn it, Vincy! Why don't you
leave Em's?

VINCY

(laughing a little)
Do what, honey?

DOC

(embracing her)
I'll take care of you!

VINCY

Golly, golly...

DOC

What the hell does that mean?

VINCY

It means you're shootin' off your
sweet mouth but you're not makin'
sense.

Doc holds her tighter, nuzzles her breasts like a baby.

DOC

Vincy, Vincy... It hurts like hell.
I love you...

VINCY

Man, I love you too.

DOC

Then how can you take on all the
other johns?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

VINCY

Oh, Doc boy, how you think I make
me a nice living?

DOC

But if you love me--

She runs her fingers across his cheek.

VINCY

What's the one thing got to do
with another? I love you because
you're a man where it counts. And
you're young and ain't -- aren't--
spoiled and you treat me nice. Hell,
you get me over the hill like nobody
else.

DOC

If I had lots of bread, you'd go with
me.

Vincy pulls her hands away and sits up.

VINCY

Not if you had a million.

DOC

Why not?

VINCY

Because I like what I'm doing.

Doc can't speak. He looks incredibly hurt. He bolts
out of the room.

VINCY

Where you goin'?

She follows him into the hallway.

DOC

I don't know.

She wraps her arms and her legs around him, holds him
tightly, breathes hard.

VINCY

Let's get with it, man!

She leads him back into the bedroom, and they make love,
more wildly and more passionately than either of them
has done before.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. ROSSINI'S BARBERSHOP - SHOESHINE STAND - DAY

Franklin stands beside his Cadillac, evidently waiting for someone. He checks his watch, finally gets in, closes the door, starts up and begins to drive off when Doc runs into the street, waves him down, stands by the driver window as Franklin rolls it down.

FRANKLIN

Where've you been?

DOC

I had trouble gettin' out. My folks kept thinking of more jobs for me to do around the house.

FRANKLIN

Did you do them all?

DOC

Yeah, but I ditched out after I took out the trash.

FRANKLIN

Get in.

Doc starts to run around the car when Mom's car suddenly screeches to a stop at the adjacent corner. Franklin sees her make a beeline for the Caddy before Doc does. She grabs Doc by the arm, bodily pulls him into the street.

MOM

So this is where you run off to!
What are you doing getting in that man's car?!

DOC

(inventing)

Franklin wants to teach me how to drive.

MOM

I don't want you driving automobiles.
Who said you could leave the house?

DOC

I finished everything.

Franklin has gotten out of the car, approaches Mom with his most gleaming smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

How do you do? You must be Missus Henshel. My name is Franklin Gilboa. I wanted to tell you what a fine young man you've raised.

MOM

Thank you. We try.

FRANKLIN

(oozing charm)

And you've succeeded admirably. Young Melvin has a leadership quality you just don't find in young people anymore. And his initiative is unsurpassed by any of his peers.

MOM

(embarrassed)

Then he's showing something we don't see around the house.

While Doc moves toward the car, Franklin moves in for the kill.

FRANKLIN

But isn't that the way with youngsters? Parents put in all the work to raise them up right, and it's their friends and neighbors who derive the benefit of all that good upbringing.

MOM

If you'll excuse me, we're going home.

FRANKLIN

By all means. And it's a pleasure meeting you. Your son has told me so many loving things about his family.

MOM

(to a mortified Doc)

In the car!

(to Franklin, civilly)

I want you to stay away from my son.

FRANKLIN

There must be some misundersta--

But Mom is already out of earshot. Doc is near tears in the front seat as Mom throws herself into the family car. Franklin watches the car awkwardly back over a curb, pull an illegal U-turn, and scream away. He just shakes his head.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - DOC'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pop carries supper on a tray toward Doc's room. He lightly knocks, gets no response, quietly enters.

DOC'S ROOM

Doc is just rousing from sleep. Pop puts down the tray, sits beside Doc's bed.

POP

You've slept all day. Are you hungry?

Doc weakly smiles, sits up, stretches, takes the food, starts wolfing it down. Pop watches benevolently.

POP (CONT'D)

Listen, Mel. I've been thinking. I want to talk to you... We worry about you... getting into trouble.

DOC

I can take care of myself.

POP

(feeling awkward)

This man you see, this Mister Gilboa--
(stops, nervously wipes
his nose)

This man-- I'll tell you what worries us. You know there are older men who are sick. They make friends with-- you know, with young boys.

DOC

(almost choking)

You mean you think Franklin is a fruit, a fag, a pansy?

POP

You know all those words?

DOC

Listen, Pop. You don't have to worry about Franklin.

Mom enters.

MOM

Everything all right here?

POP

He's okay, Anna.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM

What about that thing? Did you talk to him?

POP

It's okay, Anna.

MOM

Then what about girls?

POP

Thank God, he likes girls.

DOC

I like girls a lot, Mom.

MOM

You have no business liking girls at your age.

Doc says nothing, chomps on another bite of his supper.

CUT TO:

INT. SOLLY'S BARBERSHOP - BACK ROOM

Smoke in the air. Doc gets race results on the phone, writes them on a blackboard. Franklin counts money.

FRANKLIN

Your Mama has quite a personality on her.

DOC

She's real embarrassed about what happened. She makes this big deal about helping colored people.

FRANKLIN

I know the type.

DOC

I told her you thought that's why she was mad.

FRANKLIN

Did it work?

DOC

She hasn't brought the subject up ever since.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

She doesn't know you're here...?

DOC

She thinks I'm with Eddie.

Hobie and Hayes can be SEEN getting Madame Walker slicks in the front room. Hobie has his hair half slicked, half brushed up, when he spies something outside, jumps out of his chair, comes in to Franklin.

HOBIE

There's a dum dum out there, Franklin. Pickin' up a lotta trade. Want me to give 'em the boot?

Franklin shakes his head. Hobie's a killer.

FRANKLIN

Is Cohalan around?

HOBIE

Don't see him.

Franklin sticks a cigarette in his mouth and leaves. Doc puts on his jacket and follows. Hobie stays put. Hayes sleeps under a towel in the barber chair.

#

EXT. THE STREET

A big, fat Puerto Rican PUSHER is handing something to a black girl with braids down her back. An old lady passes Franklin, nods hello, and Franklin tips his hat, kisses her cheek. He continues toward the pusher, who leaves the corner, starts walking up the street.

FRANKLIN

(mock friendliness)

Hey, Juan.

The pusher stops, turns around, waits for Franklin. He has a big smile on his red lips.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What you doing around here?

PUSHER

Free country, eh?

The pusher begins to shimmy a little, hopping on one foot and the other. He's smashed on horse. He turns to walk away. Franklin grabs his arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

You're pushing my territory.

PUSHER

Fuck off!

FRANKLIN

Don't want pushers around.

PUSHER

Ya hear' me, nigger.

Doc spots Cohalan coming out of a bar across the street.

DOC

There's Cohalan!

FRANKLIN

Cohalan!

Cohalan waves his stick and keeps walking away.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Doc, get him. Tell him we got
us a scumrunner.

Doc runs across the street, carelessly dodging cars.
CAMERA FOLLOWS.

DOC

Franklin wants you. He's got a
pusher.

COHALAN

Tell him I got to get back to
the stationhouse.

Suddenly, Franklin is there beside them.

FRANKLIN

What's holding you up, Barney?

Doc looks over, is puzzled to see the pusher just
leaning against the wall, waiting.

COHALAN

I'm off duty, Franklin.

FRANKLIN

What the hell does that mean?

Cohalan doesn't have a good answer. Franklin grabs
Cohalan's buttons and pulls him to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What's the score, Barney? Damn it, what's up?

COHALAN

God be my witness, Franklin, my hands are tied.

Franklin lets him go like he's garbage.

COHALAN (CONT'D)

It's organized now. Big time. Mafia. Syndicate. Me. Horowitz. Riley. Who the hell knows? They're up to the captain and inspector.

FRANKLIN

(yelling)
Christ almighty!

Passersby stop.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You're lettin' drugs come in. Open up Harlem to these sewer rats. You bastards!

COHALAN

Shut up!

FRANKLIN

You'll drown babies in that shit!
You'll bomb this town with shit!
You'll sell your own fuckin' mothers for shit.

Cohalan raises his night stick. Franklin twists away, backhands the cop. Cohalan begins to cry.

COHALAN

What ya expect from a beat cop, fight Center Street?

People gather around to watch. Others move on quickly. Franklin looks at Cohalan for a long time.

FRANKLIN

I'm sorry for you.

He walks back across the street. Hobie is standing in front of Solly's Barbershop. Suddenly, the pusher comes around the corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

PUSHER

(yelling)

Get off my street, nigger!

The next moment seems like an eternity to Doc, but when it's over, Franklin is sticking his leg between the pusher's legs, hooks him up to the crotch, chops him on the neck as he falls.

FRANKLIN

Put it away, Hobie!

Doc turns to see Hobie with a .38 in his hand. He puts it in his side pocket. A crowd gathers. They all stare at the Puerto Rican pusher. Franklin pulls him up. The guy is shaking, almost falling. Franklin reaches into the man's pockets, pulls out a few packets of heroin and some loose red and blue pills. He hands it to Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Throw this crap down the sewer.

PUSHER

(yelling pitifully)

My babies! My babies!

FRANKLIN

These babies are garbage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

PUSHER

(crying)

No! No! I need money for my babies!

Franklin pushes him through the crowd, which parts open for him.

FRANKLIN

Beat it!

The pusher runs down 115th Street like he's on fire.
Franklin rejoins Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Poor eat poor like maggots on
rotten meat.

HAYES

(approaching Franklin)

Venturi and Katz wanna see us.
They wanna up the interest rates.

Franklin is bleary-eyed. He just shakes his head and walks away from them.

HAYES (CONT'D)

(to Doc, about Franklin)

Don't leave him alone.

Franklin's three closest friends look worried about him.
Doc follows after him.

INT. SMOKE-FILLED BAR

Franklin sits at the bar, staring blankly into a half-empty bottle of Cutty Sark. Doc is beside him, wants to say something to cheer Franklin up, but doesn't know what. Billie Holiday's I Cover the Waterfront is playing on a juke box. Doc reaches past Franklin's bottle to the man's cigarettes, starts chewing one the way Franklin always does.

Franklin looks at Doc, issues a faint smile.

FRANKLIN

Got to get out of the business.
Can't compete with drugs, boy.

DOC

(humoring him)

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

(drunk)

They swore on their mothers' lives
they'd never do it.

Franklin's left hand is trembling. When he notices it,
he looks to Doc, sees that Doc notices, too.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Tremblin'...

Disgusted, he takes a drink, refills his glass.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Hard cash and tremblin'...
World's full of it... Fear and
hard cash. Never thought it'd
hit me so hard...

DOC

(trying to be brave)

Don't worry, Franklin. We'll beat
em.

Franklin stares at Doc so long it makes Doc
uncomfortable. There is despair in his eyes.

FRANKLIN

They don't play by our rules.

DOC

(knee-jerk response)

Then we'll play their way.

Franklin's gaze goes absent. Doc knows he's said
something wrong. Franklin drinks. He refills his
glass, drinks again. Doc joins him, the two getting
grimly drunk in silence.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

#

EXT. EM'S PLACE - DAY

Vincy comes out the front door with one of her johns, a
middle-Eastern man with a Bentley. She wears a gray
silk dress, and she looks beautiful and respectable.

They don't notice that Doc is following them.

They start to get into the Bentley.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

VINCY

Could I try driving?

JOHN

Yez, of course.

He lets Vincy in behind the wheel, walks around to the passenger side. Doc feels sick, hurries over to a nearby taxi.

DOC

(to Cabbie)

Follow that car.

CABBIE

You got the dough, kid?

DOC

More than you made today, buster.
Let 'er rip.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The cab begins following the Bentley. They drive into Central Park toward Fifth Avenue. CAMERA FOLLOWS.

CABBIE

How close ya want me to get to him?

DOC

I don't care. Just don't lose him.

The Bentley stops at a red light. Vincy and the john get out, exchange seats.

Doc is jealous as hell.

The cab follows the Bentley to the Sherry-Netherland Hotel. Vincy and the john get out as a valet takes care of their car.

Doc gives the Cabbie a twenty dollar bill, runs off after them. The Cabbie is impressed, says nothing, stuffs the money away before the crazy kid changes his mind and comes back.

Doc looks a little out-of-place as he enters the hotel lobby.

INT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Time has passed. A clock in the lobby reads 3:30. Doc sits eating his third Hersey bar when some brass-assed guy with a flower in his lapel speaks out to an arriving guest.

BRASS-ASSED GUY

Welcome, Miss Dietrich!

Doc checks out the lady, his heart elsewhere. He looks to the elevator, hoping to see Vincy any minute.

LATER

Doc is incredibly bored, very uncomfortable, and terribly jealous. He looks to the elevator, then to the clock. It reads 4:35.

He starts to pick up a magazine for the fifth time, when he sees Vincy walk out of an elevator and head for a row of telephone booths. He loses his carefully constructed sense of decorum, calls out to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

Vincy!

She turns around, gives him a blank stare.

VINCY

What the hell are you doing here?

DOC

(lying)

I was paying off a guy for Franklin.
One of the bell captains.

She squints her blue eyes at him, hikes her fur scarf
around her throat, as though chilled.

VINCY

(disgusted)

You followed me here.

She walks to the phones, leaving him standing alone.

Doc finally follows, approaches to hear her ask Em if
Franklin is around. She hangs up.

VINCY (CONT'D)

(to Doc, annoyed)

You're crazy.

DOC

I love you.

VINCY

You shouldn't have followed me.
Franklin'll give you hell.

DOC

You won't tell him.

A fat lady walks between them, gives Vincy a
disapproving look.

DOC (CONT'D)

(to fat lady)

What're you looking at?

The woman continues on without further ado. Vincy grabs
Doc's arm, as if to quiet him.

VINCY

You look ready to faint. Let's
go for a drink.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND BAR

The waitress brings Vincy a gin fizz, Doc a coke.

VINCY

Doc, honey, we have to get something straight between us. I have a profession. I can't do it right if I go around getting involved with somebody on a love basis. I know how you feel, Doc, but it won't work. I already told you that.

Doc looks miserable. She strokes his hand.

VINCY (CONT'D)

We're great when we're together. But that doesn't mean I'm gonna knock off and be a singleton for one guy. Not for little ol' Vincy Bogart. You're Dapper Dan in the sack, honey, but that's all it's going to be.

DOC

(after a long silence)

It hurts, Vincy.

(getting no response,
losing his temper)

Y'know, maybe if you gave a shit about somebody, you wouldn't have to be so tough.

He knocks Vincy's glass to the floor. Everyone in the bar stops to look. Doc stands there trembling. Vincy coolly throws some money on the table and walks out. Doc starts after her.

VINCY

Leave me alone! I never want to see you again!

She exits to the street. Doc follows.

EXT. SHERRY-NETHERLAND HOTEL - DAY

DOC

I'm not going to leave you alone. I love you!

Passersby slow down. Vincy walks briskly away from Doc. Doc becomes afraid he'll lose her in the growing crowd, so he grabs her arm. She shakes loose, hurries to the curb, hails a cab, gets in, leans forward to the driver, her body just a gray smudge behind the closed window. Doc stands on the sidewalk, miserable and rejected.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. DOC'S SCHOOL - DAY

Doc and Eddie are walking toward the parking lot, when Franklin pulls up in his Cadillac. Eddie stands there as though he expects to be reintroduced to Franklin.

EDDIE

Does he know I cover for you?

DOC

Yeah, Eddie. He does.

(awkward pause)

See ya later.

Doc gets in.

INSIDE THE CAR

As Franklin drives away, he watches Eddie in the rearview mirror.

FRANKLIN

What's he want?

DOC

Nothin'.

FRANKLIN

Nobody wants nothin'.

DOC

Eddie does.

Franklin holds out his hand. Doc is reluctant to show him the report card he is holding.

DOC (CONT'D)

It's not so hot.

Franklin looks over the report card. He's displeased. He starts driving.

DOC (CONT'D)

I did okay in math.

FRANKLIN

(still holding the thing)

You're flunking.

(scans the card)

Playin' a lot of hooky, too, hunh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

Those attendance records are always wrong.

FRANKLIN

I told you about lying to me.

DOC

(caught)

I'm sorry.

FRANKLIN

How the hell you gonna get into law school on shit like this? Boy, you get organized, or we ain't gonna make it.

Franklin passes a car dangerously. Doc is speechless.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You know, my girls do what I tell them or I kick them out of Em's.

(pause)

And I'll go just so far for a partner.

Franklin turns on the radio. Jazz plays low in the b.g.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You been seein' a lot of Vincy.

DOC

I love her.

FRANKLIN

You're not going to see her anymore. I put out the word.

DOC

No!

FRANKLIN

You asking her to get kicked out into the street?

Doc won't let himself cry. Franklin pulls over.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Tell me what this love business is about.

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED (2):

DOC

I don't know... You want! That's all. You want her. You try getting laid with someone else but it don't mean anything. Everything with her is great. Her looks, her smell, when she talks, laughs, screams... You want every square inch of her. When I don't see her for a day, when she's not at Em's, I want to go stick my head in the can and flush it down. I try to think of something else but I can't. I sit in school like a dummy. I can't blow her away. And when I think of her with the johns, I go nuts. A bad dream. So bad I want to kill her!

FRANKLIN

Do you wait until they go out together and run down the stairs hoping you'll get to the street before they drive off so you can follow them?

DOC

(shocked)

Who told you? How do you know?

FRANKLIN

You got the greens. You been pussy-whipped. It's an old street, chum. You walk that street and you're in prison. I warned you before.

DOC

Nothing you say'll keep me away from her. Even if you throw her out, I'll find her.

FRANKLIN

She's not going to thank you.

DOC

You don't know... YOU DON'T KNOW!

Franklin shakes his head wearily.

FRANKLIN

You don't know what love is. All you know is what your prick tells you. You think it's the greatest thing since coca-cola. And it is. You think you got God almighty between your legs, and you have. But, boy, you also got a .38 that could rip your guts to pieces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

Franklin is angry. He rubs the sweat from his hands and looks down at his broken thumbs.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You got to have control. Or you're not free. You can't let dames get into you instead of you getting into them. Learn to say bye-bye baby, it's been nice and maybe I'll see you next week. Keep your cock hard and your heart cool. That goes for everything!

DOC

(defying Franklin for the first time ever)

Bullshit!

Franklin leans over and slaps Doc's face hard. Doc reaches to hit him back, but Franklin holds his arm until it hurts too much and Doc begs him to let go. Franklin pulls a U-turn, squealing his tires, startling Doc.

DOC (CONT'D)

Where're we goin'?

Franklin just drives. His features harden. Doc doesn't like what's happening.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRANKLIN'S CADILLAC

It disappears into heavy traffic.

EXT. EIGHTH AVENUE BROWNSTONE - DAY

Franklin and Doc pull up. Franklin gets out of the car, checks his watch.

FRANKLIN

Let's go.

DOC

Where we going?

FRANKLIN

Just let's go.

Franklin unlocks a front door. They enter.

#

INT. BROWNSTONE

Franklin and Doc climb up two flights of stairs. Doc senses an air of mystery about the event. He follows Franklin through another door, into a room with one wall covered by a floor-to-ceiling mirror. There are a couple of easy chairs, a table, and a double bed. Through a half-open door, a bathroom is visible. In the corner, near the bed, is a camera tripod.

Doc sits on the bed, fidgets nervously. Franklin slumps into one of the chairs. Doc starts checking himself out in the mirror, fixes his hair.

Suddenly, through the mirror, Doc sees Vincy and a man in the next room. They are kissing and fondling each other. Doc turns to leave the room.

FRANKLIN

(sharply)

Watch. You can see them, but they can't see you.

DOC

I don't want to see them!

FRANKLIN

Why not? You wanted to see when you followed them.

The man is taking his pants off. Vincy is down to her lace see-through panties.

Doc tries to break Franklin's hold.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Cool it! I'm not going to let you miss a trick. This is cold, cold turkey.

The man says something and Vincy laughs.

Doc kicks and squirms, inaudibly begs Franklin to let him go.

FRANKLIN

Want to be your own boss? To know who you are? Get the greens out of your soul, boy!

DOC

I'm going to throw up.

Doc tries to keep his eyes shut, but he can't, and he begins to retch as Vincy and the john twist together on the bed like white snakes. That's the last thing Doc sees before he faints.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

#

EXT. STREET

Doc and Franklin sit on the stoop, Doc still crying, his face still puffy.

FRANKLIN

Knock it off!

But Doc can't stop crying. A moment later, Vincy exits the building. She doesn't look directly at Doc. She leans against the building, straightens her skirt.

DOC

I want to go home.

FRANKLIN

There's no hurry.

(pause)

What about Vincy now?

Doc looks hard at her. She is more beautiful than ever, but he doesn't want to let his feelings show.

DOC

She ought to get back to Em's. You don't want to lose any trick time, do you?

Franklin gives a broad smile.

FRANKLIN

Doc's right, sugar.

She is annoyed by that, straightens up and fixes the scarf around her head.

VINCY

You give me a lift, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

What's the matter? Didn't the john leave you any yellow money?

VINCY

I want to ride with you.

FRANKLIN

Not going your way. Doc and I've got business.

VINCY

(confused)

What's the matter, Franklin, man?

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

I'll take it up with you later.

VINCY

What I do?

FRANKLIN

I told you to lay off Doc, didn't I?

DOC

I kept after her.

FRANKLIN

She takes orders from me. I warned her.

(pause)

Take a walk, Vincy.

Doc's blood boils. He charges after Franklin, bats his head against the man's belly, flings his fists into his chest. Franklin takes it without fighting back. When Doc becomes so exhausted he can't keep his arms up, he tries kicking Franklin. Franklin pushes him away. Doc charges back. Again, Franklin pushes him away.

FRANKLIN

Cool it, Doc.

Doc doesn't stop, so Franklin pushes him hard against a wall. Doc falls to the ground.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Okay, man, that's it. You've had your run for the day.

He tries to help Doc up, but Doc shakes him off, gets up by himself.

VINCY

Lay off him, Franklin. He's only a kid.

That statement stings Doc.

FRANKLIN

Listen, Doc, and listen with two ears and your brain. Nobody likes teachers that hurt. But you got to learn that a little pain never really hurt nobody.

DOC

You don't need me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

FRANKLIN

Shut up and listen. You got too close to Vincy and I warned you about that. You're not so smart, Doc. You'd end up a pimp.

DOC

Bullshit.

FRANKLIN

You've grown to think you've got a call on Franklin Gilboa.

DOC

No, I don't.

FRANKLIN

It's gettin' so if Franklin don't give you what you want when you want, you get killing in your eyes. If you had a gun or a shiv, you'd have tried, wouldn't you?

DOC

No...

FRANKLIN

Eyes don't lie.

DOC

I swear--

FRANKLIN

I swear I didn't mean it, judge. You're not funny, kid, but you're making me laugh.

Doc is at a loss for what to do or say.

FRANKLIN

Hear me, Doc. People who get too stuck on each other generate a helluva lot of heat. Heat changes the shapes of things. That makes me real uncomfortable. I go for cool. Space between people. A little air.

Nearby, fire engine sirens go by. Franklin points with his broken thumb as though they were making his argument for him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Doc, I liked you. And I like you now, even if you are a crazy kid. But when I felt you butting your head against me, boy, I knew we'd come apart.

(holds out his hand)

Doc, I'm not liking this either...

DOC

(scared to death)

You said you needed me.

FRANKLIN

Not that much. This is getting-off time.

Franklin keeps his hand out, but Doc won't shake. He thinks it's a con. But Franklin turns away, gestures to Vincy to join him.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

If you ever get in trouble, kid, honest-to-God trouble, Em'll always know where to reach me.

DOC

No!

Franklin and Vincy start away.

DOC (CONT'D)

Okay. I guess I'll drop out of school.

FRANKLIN

(laughing)

You're conning the wrong fellow.

DOC

I'll take drugs!

Franklin stops, turns to Doc.

FRANKLIN

I already got one messed up kid. I don't need another one.

DOC

(puzzled)

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (4):

FRANKLIN

I thought you were smart. You think I just plain don't like drugs 'cause I'm too lazy to push it?!

(pause)

I got me a son. He's about your age.

Doc is stunned.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Lives with his mother down in Florida. He's so far gone on coke and horse, he'll never live to be twenty. He's OD'd twice already.

Doc is speechless, feels hollow.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I thought I saw somethin' different in you... but if you want to cut your own throat, I'm not handing you a knife, but I'm not stopping you, either.

(to Vincy)

Let's go, sugar.

Vincy has tears in her eyes.

VINCY

(to Doc)

Take it easy, lover.

The news is too much for Doc. On top of that, he watches the two people he loves most in the world walk out of his life. Tears well up in his eyes, then break and run down his cheeks.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. BEACHPORT DRUGSTORE - DAY

Doc and Eddie, clothes sweaty from sandlot baseball, saunter up to the soda fountain counter. A WAITRESS lackadaisically approaches with her order pad ready.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
Two virgin cokes.

Doc and Eddie can't help smiling.

WAITRESS
(unamused)
What's that?

DOC
With a cherry in it.

Doc raises his eyebrows. Eddie stifles a laugh. The waitress doesn't even bother frowning, just turns and starts pouring the cokes.

EDDIE
I don't think she liked that.

DOC
That's her problem.
(gets the coke)
Thanks, sugar.

WAITRESS
My name isn't sugar.

DOC
Is to me.

While Doc unwraps his straw, the waitress takes the coke back, dumps it down the sink.

WAITRESS
(grumbling)
I don't have to take this from a
punk kid like you.

Before Doc realizes what he's doing, he lashes out at the sugar dispenser, sending it flying across the counter past the syrup dispensers, crashing into the fountain mirror, shattering it. Doc gets up, walks out.

DOC
This place stinks.

Eddie is as shocked as the waitress is.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACHPORT STREET

Eddie catches up to Doc, who is extremely upset.

EDDIE

Hey, wait up!

Doc doesn't slow. Eddie finally catches up to him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

They're really mad.

DOC

Tough.

EDDIE

They were gonna call the police.
I told 'em we'd take care of it.
I had to leave our names.

Doc stops dead in his tracks, stares furiously at Eddie.
Eddie gets nervous.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I didn't tell 'em where you lived.

DOC

You don't know anything. You don't
know about friendship, you don't
know about life, you don't know about
women. Grow up, Eddie.

Eddie just stands there, his jaw slack, hurt to the
quick. Doc angrily storms off.

CUT TO:

INT. DOC'S HOUSE - DAY

Doc slams the door on his way in. Marcy is making a
sandwich in the kitchen.

MARCY

Boy, are you in for it!

DOC

Shut up, Marcy. You don't know
anything.

Mom enters swiftly, startling Doc. She starts chasing
him around the kitchen. Marcy "inadvertently" gets in
his way, allowing Mom to trap him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM

It's not enough you sulk around the house all summer like your dog died, now you're throwing sugar bowls in restaurants! What has gotten into you, Melvin?! Who do you think you are that you can be rude to your family and vandalize your community?
(slaps him)

Answer me.

DOC

Nobody.

MOM

What?

DOC

(starting to cry)
Nobody. I'm nobody. Just leave me alone!

Doc runs out of the room.

MOM

Don't you walk out when I'm talking to you.

He ignores her.

MOM (CONT'D)

Wait until your father gets home, Mister!

DOC (O.S.)

(from upstairs, screaming)
Aaaagh! Leave me alone!

Mom and Marcy look to each other as though Doc has just gone insane.

INT. DOC'S ROOM - DAY

He is packing an old seabag with as many of his clothes as he can stuff into it. When he finishes, he opens his door, listens, hears activity downstairs, closes his door again, opens his bedroom window, tosses the bag out onto the roof, then follows it out.

CUT TO:

SUBWAY STOP - EIGHTH AVENUE LINE

It is early morning. Doc stands waiting for the subway to arrive. He has the worn-out seabag at his side. He is surrounded by a variety of travelers: kids shooting their mouths off, maids and cooks on their way to work downtown, a drunk sleeping it off on a nearby bench, well-dressed young women on their way to office jobs, large black mamas moving their lips to read the ads on the subway walls.

Doc's train arrives, a sign on the front reading: "A -- Harlem".

MONTAGE

depicts the color change as the train makes it from Eighth Avenue through 42nd street (where the riders are still mostly white), then to 96th, where whites still dominate, with a sprinkling of black maids, cooks, and cleaning women. By 110th Street, the riders are mostly black, with a few Irish. Doc is at home here, having ridden this train for weeks.

The train continues to 125th Street, then 135th Street. Doc gets off here.

EXT. STREET LEVEL - DAY

The heat is sweltering. Kids yell under water from corner hydrants, radios bomb away from many windowsills, fire engine and police car sirens fill the air.

Doc makes his way through the totally black population, his seabag in tow.

EXT. RED DOG GRILL - DAY

Doc rounds the corner, walks into the bar.

INT. RED DOG GRILL

John Hemingway greets Doc without any hint of intrigue.

HEMINGWAY

Hey, Junior, how ya doin'?

DOC

Awright, I guess. You seen Franklin around?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now Hemingway looks wary, says nothing, waits on a couple customers. Doc waits for an answer. Finally, he returns to Doc.

HEMINGWAY

Ya try Em's? If she don't know
where the man is, I sure don't.

Doc goes to a phone, dials, waits for an answer.

DOC

(on phone)

Em there?

(waits)

Will ya tell her it's Doc? I'm
lookin' for Franklin.

(waits impatiently)

Will ya ask her why not?

Doc hangs up, hurt and angry. Hemingway pretends not to look, finally turns away, walks into the back room. Doc stands frustrated for a moment, then leaves.

MONTAGE - DOC'S SEARCH FOR FRANKLIN

Everywhere Doc goes, his seabag gets heavier and the response is the same. No one has seen Franklin. There appears to be a previously unseen hostility toward Doc, as though maybe it isn't safe to tell Doc anything. Doc gets increasingly discouraged as he travels from the lobby of the Hotel Theresa to Eppie's Diner, to the Chicken Shack, the Bar-B-Que next to the Apollo nightclub, Solly's Barbershop, the Cotton Club, finishing up with the doorman at Small's.

DOC

sees a FOR RENT sign on a brownstone on 117th street. The stoop is crowded with kids shooting craps or playing tic-tac-toe for pennies. Doc enters a dark hallway.

INT. BROWNSTONE

Doc knocks on a door marked MANAGER. A FAT OLD MAN opens up.

FAT OLD MAN

Yeah?

DOC

You got a room for rent?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT OLD MAN
(regarding Doc's whiteness)
What you want a room for?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Who is it, Webb?

FAT OLD MAN
(eyes locked on Doc)
Someone to rent.

The WOMAN comes to the door. She's short with gold teeth, has a pot in her hands. She looks at Doc as she might look at garbage.

WOMAN
No kids.

DOC
I'm seventeen.

WOMAN
I'm Eleanor Roosevelt.

DOC
That's the truth. I swear to God.

FAT OLD MAN
What you doin' up here?

DOC
I like it up here.

WOMAN
Hah! Ya on to somethin' else,
boy. Besides, we don't rent to
whites.

She goes back inside.

DOC
(to Fat Old Man)
I'm looking for a friend of mine.
Franklin Gilboa.

FAT OLD MAN
(to Woman)
Ya know any Frank Gilboa?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
No! And close the door. Ya lettin'
in all the hot from the street.

The man shuts the door on Doc.

EXT. STOOP

Doc, exhausted, struggles with his seabag down the stoop to the street.

120TH STREET

Doc looks out of place in his khaki shorts and tennis shoes. Several hookers contemplate approaching him, always deciding against it after a closer look. Doc tries another brownstone, climbs the stoop, knocks on the door.

An old lady answers, a very light-complected black woman. After a few unheard words, we see her take the FOR RENT sign off her window. Doc enters.

INT. DOC'S APARTMENT STAIRWAY

A high angle reveals that Doc has climbed to the fourth floor to his tiny little room. He unlocks the door, CAMERA FOLLOWS him inside the dumpy hole of a room, and Doc flops out on the small, hard bed, dust flying as his body hits. He doesn't even notice, and he passes out.

CUT TO:

INT. AN EXPLOSION OF BOWLING PINS

We are in the Regent Bowling Alley on 154th Street. It is daytime. Doc is talking to Hayes, who is a little uneasy.

HAYES

They tell me you been lookin' for Franklin.

DOC

Yeah.

In the b.g., a couple guys are slapping each other congratulations on some outstanding bowling. It irritates Doc.

HAYES

What d'ya want to see him for?

Doc doesn't know how to answer. To cover for it, he pulls out a cigarette, tries tapping it like they do in the movies. Hayes isn't impressed.

HAYES (CONT'D)

He ain't been around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
Where'd he go?

Hayes' look to Doc isn't the friendliest.

HAYES
He didn't tell me.

A black man comes over to Hayes, whispers something to him.

HAYES (CONT'D)
Sorry, Doc, I've gotta get to work.
If I see the Man, I'll tell him
you've been around.

Doc knows something is up, doesn't know what. He nods uneasily, walks out.

EXT. STREET - ANOTHER NIGHT

Doc is still wandering the streets looking for Franklin. As he rounds a corner, he hears a familiar VOICE.

VOICE
How about it, man?

Doc turns to see Vincy coming into the street light. She looks terrible. Her hair is in a bandanna, and her face is caked with a thick layer of make-up.

DOC
Vincy!

Vincy laughs, moves away. Doc grabs her arm, pulls her to him.

DOC (CONT'D)
For Chrissake, Vincy.

VINCY
(pulling away)
Let me go.

DOC
No. Vincy, I missed you.

VINCY
(unmoved)
You got a butt, Doc?

He gives her his pack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC

Let's go have some coffee
somewhere.

She lights up, sticks the rest in her pocketbook.

VINCY

Don't have the time, boy. Way
behind for the night.

DOC

I got some bread.

VINCY

How much?

DOC

Enough.

Vincy smiles. They walk around the corner to Danny's, a
sleazy pimp hangout, way below Vincy's previous style.

INT. DANNY'S

Doc and Vincy sit drinking black coffee.

DOC

What gives, Vincy?

VINCY

You seen Franklin since that day?

DOC

Nope. Know where he is?

She finishes her coffee, asks for a refill.

VINCY

You gotta go home tonight, honey?

DOC

No. I'm living up here now.

VINCY

(not in the least surprised)
Want to go back to my place?

DOC

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCY
(as they leave)
Let's stop off at Sammy's and
buy us a bottle.

She gives Doc her old seductive smile, and he melts.

CUT TO:

INT. VINCY'S APARTMENT

Two ratty chairs, a double bed, and a tiny bathroom constitute the entire apartment. On the wall is a color picture of Satchmo and Dwight Eisenhower talking together.

Vincy opens the bottle, pours a couple of stiff drinks, immediately sits down on one of her chairs and slugs the liquor down. Doc says nothing, just watches, somewhat puzzled.

VINCY
What you doin' these days, Doc?

DOC
Nothing...

VINCY
How much bread you got?

Doc takes out all his money, counts it out.

DOC
Sixty-five bucks. You can have
it all.

She takes thirty, puts it under her pillow.

VINCY
I'm bushed.

DOC
What's the matter, don't you like
me anymore?

Vincy takes a deep slug from the bottle.

VINCY
Ya want your money back?

Doc laughs nervously, trying to signal that the money doesn't matter to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCY (CONT'D)

Got any coke?

She removes her dress, revealing nothing beneath it.

DOC

No.

VINCY

Reefers?

DOC

No.

Vincy jumps into the bed, lies back on the pillow. Doc takes a slug of his drink, moves next to her on the bed, places his hand on her belly. She moves away.

VINCY

Take my shoes off.

Doc obeys, kisses her feet. She pulls them away.

VINCY (CONT'D)

Why do you want Franklin?

DOC

Just to see him.

VINCY

I hate his guts! Ya know what he did to me? Threw me out of Em's. Cut me down like I was a dog. From that time on I had to hustle the streets. No one'd take me in. That fucker's gotta have everythin' his own way, just like he wants it. If you don't do it, you're on your ass.

Vincy starts to cry, her tears running her makeup. Doc puts his arms around her and tries to kiss her, but she pushes him away.

VINCY (CONT'D)

(still crying)

He couldn't love another human being if he worked at it twenty-four hours a day. I loved him. You did, too... Anybody love him, he runs...

(groans)

He's so hot, everybody around him gets hot. Thur when ya get real close, he burns and we burn. He don't like that worth a shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

Doc is less interested in Franklin at this moment than he is in getting closer to Vincy.

DOC
You'll be okay, Vincy...

VINCY
I'm workin' for five bucks. Christ,
I used to tip bellhops five bucks.

Doc puts his hand on Vincy's breast. She allows him to leave it there.

DOC
I love you.

Vincy reaches over, rubs her fingers against Doc's cheek. Tears fall down her face. Doc wipes them away.

DOC (CONT'D)
I haven't been laid since that
last time.

He bends to kiss her mouth. She pushes him back hard.

VINCY
Ya can have your lousy money back.

DOC
I don't want it back.

VINCY
Beat it.

DOC
I'm not going to beat it.

Doc swings over the bed, half covers her, holds her breasts in his hands, presses his mouth to hers. She bucks, twists away.

VINCY
You crazy bastard! I'm sick.
I got the red-white-and-blue blues.

DOC
(falling back beside her)
Oh...

VINCY
I'm not givin' it to you.

DOC
Oh...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (3):

VINCY

The dude who took me up gave me
that little piece of poison.

Doc trembles at the thought of Vincy's condition, of all
she's been through.

DOC

You got to get fixed up. I heard
there's a quick cure.

VINCY

Sure. But find someone who's got
penicillin right now. You need
a lot of bread just to get to the
man.

DOC

I'll find somebody.

VINCY

You get me cured, honey boy, and you
get all the free loving you'd ever
want.

Vincy drinks some more, begins to giggle and cough. Doc
embraces her, whispers to her.

DOC

More than anything else, Vincy, I
want you to get better so I can
love you and be the way we were.
Only this time it'll be different.
I won't be jealous this time.

(pause)

Tomorrow, you stay in bed. I'll
bring you some food, and then we'll
make some connections with some
doctor.

Vincy looks completely skeptical.

VINCY

Will you buy me another bottle, too,
baby?

DOC

Yeah.

VINCY

Can you stay here tonight?

DOC

Sure, if you want me to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (4):

VINCY

I want you to.

She raises up a little, holds her breasts in her hands.

VINCY (CONT'D)

You can come and kiss them. That
won't hurt you.

Doc bends to her breasts, nuzzles her lovingly. She
strokes his hair.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

It is a hot and sunny morning. Women are fanning
themselves. Men are stripped to the waist, sitting on
stoops, drinking cold beer or cokes; kids play in the
hydrants as mounted policemen look on, leaving them
alone.

Doc enters the apartment building with a shopping bag
full of groceries.

INT. VINCY'S ROOM

She is still asleep as he finishes unpacking the
groceries. Included in the inventory is a liquor
bottle. Doc peeks in on her, exits.

EXT. THE STREETS - A CROWD

is gathered in front of John Hemingway's bar. Doc
approaches, hears Franklin's voice doing a street
hustle, but can't see him. He anxiously works his way
through the crowd.

FRANKLIN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Worth six or seven bucks in the
stores on Fifth Avenue. Not a
fire sale. Not a bankruptcy. Not
a sale at all. But the right price
for the right heads, brothers. One
dollar!

Doc stands behind two tall onlookers so Franklin can't
see him. He looks on in disbelief as his hero tries to
sell hats to a disinterested crowd. Franklin wears a
bright red tie, a white seersucker jacket, and a straw
hat with a red band.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

One pure dollar. And you'll be wearin' Rockefeller's hat. Or Frank Sinatra's.

(hands one to a dude,
takes his money)

There's a smart fellow. An' if you don't like Sinatra, old Satchmo wears these hats, too.

Within moments, the hats are all sold, and Franklin is counting up his dollar bills.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I've got eighteen bucks in my hand. Who'll match me, even money? Highest number on the first bill we take out. How about it, sports?

No one speaks up.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(really working)

Make the odds better. My eighteen against your ten.

Some in the crowd shuffle and whisper.

JAMAICAN

Okay, man.

FRANKLIN

Let's get ourselves an honest judge.

Franklin scans the crowd, spots Doc, doesn't flinch.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(referring to Doc)

Here's a young fellow from downtown. He may be white but that don't figure him crooked. Look at that face. How about it?

The Jamaican gives Doc the onceover, nods his acquiescence. The Jamaican reaches into his pocket.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Hold it, friend. The bill we take out first is what we're playing with. No dice looking at 'em.

The Jamaican isn't sure, but those around him shout that it's fair. Franklin quickly hands his bill to Doc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

MAN IN CROWD
(to Doc)
Read it, kid.

ANOTHER IN CROWD
Loud and clear!

DOC
(reading Jamaican's bill)
Fourteen million three hundred
thousand five hundred and five.
(holding up Franklin's)
Nineteen million--

Before Doc can get any more numbers out, the Jamaican grabs both bills. Franklin is right beside him in an instant, ready to clobber him if he tries to run. With a grunt and a curse, the Jamaican turns the money over to Franklin.

JAMAICAN
I'll match you again on the last
number. High man wins.

FRANKLIN
Sorry, friend, but I got to get me
to the track before they finish the
morning workout.

Franklin ducks into the bar behind John Hemingway, leaving the crowd standing flat-footed. Even Doc waits a moment, then hurries into the bar.

INT. BAR

Doc runs in to see Franklin hurrying out a fire exit. Doc follows. Franklin sees him, but doesn't stop.

EXT. REAR EXIT OF BAR

Doc jumps into Franklin's Caddie before he can get away. Franklin doesn't say a word. The Caddie peels out.

DRIVING SHOT - IN CADDIE

FRANKLIN
(after long silence)
What you want?

DOC
I wanted to see you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

Why?

DOC

A lot of reasons...

FRANKLIN

Start with number one.

DOC

Jesus, Franklin, I hated when I
didn't see you anymore.

Franklin doesn't say a word. He concentrates on the
traffic, turns on the radio for racing news.

FRANKLIN

I told you, I didn't need a friend
who wanted to eat me up. Was better
we split. I told you that, didn't I?

DOC

Yeah...

FRANKLIN

So what do you want?

Doc has never seen him this way... so angry, so cold.

DOC

(trembling)
You in trouble?

FRANKLIN

What you talking about?

Doc doesn't answer.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Just because you saw me do a little
street pitch? Didn't I tell you
there's always a down with the up?
Bread one day and stones the next?

(pause)

So I'm in the stones at the moment...
but I'm in control of the situation,
y'understand?

CUT TO:

INT. NEDICK'S ORANGEADE STAND

This is a real come-down from the kind of establishment Franklin used to frequent. Franklin is going over his scratch sheet and the Racing Form.

FRANKLIN

You came at the right time. Hi-ho silver bullet. Not that you can solve the problem.

DOC

(interrupting)

Will you tell me...? What problem?

FRANKLIN

(deciding to trust Doc)

Couple months ago, a real hot dude called San Juan Joe came into the shop and put fifty bucks on a combination. Three eight seven. I'm never too jazzed up with that big a piece. If it hits, it pays mighty big. So I laid off part of it with Hayes and Hobie and a couple of others, and with the chances 999 to 1, I didn't lose any sleep.

Doc starts calculating figures on his napkin.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Next day he came back with another fifty.

As Franklin continues his story, we

CUT TO:

INT. SHOP - A COUPLE MONTHS AGO

San Juan Joe and his cronies placing his bet, getting confrontational. The only sound we hear is Franklin.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D, OVER)

Day after day, he kept coming back with the same ass-licking friends. I tried to talk him into cutting down the bet, but he gave me some smart-ass jive about whether I was running policy or playing tic-tac-toe, so I told him, 'I'll take your bread and eat it toasted'.

INT. NEDICKS - DOC

finishes his calculation.

DOC

That's thirty grand!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

(wearily nodding)

Sometimes I'd look at my other bets, see how many threes were in, or three eights, or three eight sevens. If I was light on them, I wouldn't bother to even lay off the bet. I figured I had the odds.

A slobby waitress comes by with the check. Franklin overtips her a dollar, eliciting a reversal in her from disinterest to extreme gratitude. She smiles at him as she walks back to the counter.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

So he'd come in every day with his fifty, and after he'd laid about two grand, I was kind of taking it for granted. No sweat.

Franklin makes a face, chews on a cigarette.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

One day, just after he made his bet...

INT. SHOP - FRANKLIN

getting a call, responding enthusiastically, manipulating the blackboard, the racing form, and the cash box.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D, OVER)

... I got a call from a guy I knew at Jamaica. Said there was a push on a horse in the first race. Homing Pigeon. Couldn't say why on the phone, but he wanted me to have a word with the jockey. It was going to be big -- 20 to 1.

DOC (OVER)

A fix?

FRANKLIN (OVER)

Boy, I got the hots. I had the good old tickle in the back of the neck and it was all I needed! So I bet the day's take from the shop -- twenty-seven hundred -- which brought the odds down to 18 to 1, but who cared?

NEDICK'S - PRESENT

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Couple minutes before the horses got onto the track, I remembered I hadn't laid off San Juan Joe's bet. I ran back to the phones like a wild man, but they had 'em locked up 'cause of the race.

(pause)

Homing Pigeon sulked and hung there like he had put down roots. It was my day in hell. Three eighty seven came in, and I didn't have a dime laid off.

DOC

Shit!

FRANKLIN

I wouldn't have missed that 20-to-1 shot for the president of these United States. If he'd called. So I had to pay off, thirty grand, and I didn't have that in my pocket. Called my bankers, but they were out of town. When San Juan Joe turned up the next morning,...

INT. SHOP - PAST

Franklin, armed with a .38, partially paying San Juan Joe. They get in a heated argument, until Joe surprisingly backs off, calms down, acts friendly.

FRANKLIN (OVER)

(continuing)

I gave him five grand and told him I'd pay him the rest the end of the week, three days away.

DOC (OVER)

What'd Joe say?

FRANKLIN (OVER)

He was so hot I could smell his perfume across the room. We nose-to-nosed for a while. Then he backed away, saying he was a good guy. Right then I got this feeling there was a fix in it somewhere. I checked it out with some of my friends. Nobody knew a thing.

BACK IN NEDICK'S

DOC

What about your friend who gave you
the tip on Homing Pigeon?

FRANKLIN

(suddenly cool)

I looked for him after the race, but
he wasn't around... nowhere. The
whole thing was a fix-- the race and
the winning number.

(pause)

Funny thing, Doc. Your best friends
are the little people. Guys and
dames who play policy for pennies.
Or the winos you bought a bottle for.
Or the hookers you put into the trade
when they were broke. The others--

(spits tobacco on floor)

The others--

(shakes his head)

I got a meeting with my bankers this
afternoon. Venturi and Katz.

CUT TO:

EXT. 500 FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Franklin's Cadillac is parked outside.

INT. PENTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Doc and Franklin approach a door reading LAW OFFICES -
CHARLES VENTURI AND SAMUEL KATZ. Doc hesitates at the
door.

FRANKLIN

Come on in. You're my good luck.

Doc feels a rush of acceptance, proudly follows Franklin
in. CAMERA FOLLOWS them in to REVEAL an icy-looking
white male secretary in a conservative tie, belted
jacket and creased pants.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(not letting the man
lead him in)

I know the way.

(to Doc, as they approach
the inner sanctum)

That one in there's a bad boy.

Franklin opens the office door.

INT. VENTURI AND KATZ' OFFICE

Venturi is well-groomed and well-fed. Katz is lean, acne-scarred, and smokes a long cigar.

FRANKLIN
Meet my friend Doc Henshel.

KATZ
Hello, Jew boy.

Doc immediately doesn't like Katz, says nothing back.

FRANKLIN
He's one of my best runners.

VENTURI
Who'd like a drink?
(to Franklin)
Scotch, isn't it?

Franklin nods coolly.

FRANKLIN
Where'd you fellows go last weekend?

VENTURI
I flew to Chicago. No place to
spend the weekend.

KATZ
I took my family to our place in
Southampton.
(pause)
How's with you?

FRANKLIN
Some dude got hot and hit big.

KATZ
Jesus.

Venturi winces at the profanity.

VENTURI
(bringing Franklin's drink)
How much?

FRANKLIN
A combination for fifty bucks.

VENTURI
(serving the drink)
Whoa! Man!

KATZ
Thirty big ones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

I've paid off all but twenty-five.
Some pickup bread and a couple good
days.

Venturi lets out his breath with a sizzling sound.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I'll get it back to you soon at
the usual ten per cent.

VENTURI

It's fifteen.

FRANKLIN

Okay, fifteen.

Doc's heart is sinking for Franklin.

VENTURI

I know how you feel, Franklin.
We just had a land deal go sour
in Louisiana. Lost a big chunk.
We know what it's like. How is it
you didn't lay it off?

FRANKLIN

This fellow made his bet forty days
running. I laid it off whenever
the odds moved down. This one time
I missed.

KATZ

That's not like you. You're a smart
operator. I'm surprised. Really
surprised. Aren't you, Charlie?

VENTURI

I'm surprised.

FRANKLIN

I need it tonight.

KATZ

We haven't got that kind of cash in
the office, have we, Charlie?

VENTURI

Not tonight.

FRANKLIN

I'll pay off with one of your
bearer notes. The guy'll come by
tomorrow to give it back for cash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

VENTURI

It's a lot of money.

Franklin knows he's not going to get it now.

FRANKLIN

You've done it before, Charley.
More than twenty-five grand. What
gives?

VENTURI

Nothing gives.

FRANKLIN

What's the score? You going to bank
me or not?

VENTURI

It's not our money. You know that.
We have a fiduciary relationship with
the lenders and I don't think we can
make a decision just like that.

FRANKLIN

You did it before.

VENTURI

Not after a week when we dropped a
quarter-million on that Louisiana
land. I don't see our lenders
running to pay out twenty-five
grand for a mistake.

FRANKLIN

They know I'm good for it. My credit--

VENTURI

(interrupting)

Forget it, Franklin. They don't even
know your name.

Franklin takes a couple deep breaths, wipes his mouth
with a handkerchief.

FRANKLIN

You guys have made a lot of money
off me.

KATZ

You've done pretty well yourself.
How's Em doing for you? And how
about the bowling alley? We bought
in for you.

CONTINUED (3):

FRANKLIN

And got paid back. I've got a crazy after me for twenty-five. If he doesn't get it, he'd like to cut my liver out if I let him. My name's always been good. I pay off on the dot. Franklin Gilboa's game is better than the mint. I had one hustle you could trust. Everybody in Harlem knows it. And you fellows tell me for a lousy twenty-five grand you got to call the big shots to okay it. Okay it, hell. I know where you get your bread from, you with your goddam lawyers' diplomas all over the place.

(to Doc)

What are we waiting for? Let's go.

VENTURI

Hey, wait a minute. Don't get on your high horse.

FRANKLIN

Let's cut the bullshit. Going to bank me or not?

VENTURI

We can't right now. Not the whole thing. Maybe a couple of grand. Okay?

KATZ

Why don't you try the Guaranty Trust for the rest?

Doc has decided he hates Katz by now.

VENTURI

But we know where you can get all of it. More, even. Right, Sam?

KATZ

On the nose and every week.

VENTURI

Some people who contacted us recently have a very interesting proposition to make for the right man up in Harlem.

FRANKLIN

What's the deal?

VENTURI

A very good one.

CONTINUED (4):

FRANKLIN

Are you boys in it?

VENTURI

No. It's not our kind of law work.

FRANKLIN

Not rich enough?

KATZ

Very rich.

Franklin straightens up as though he knows what's coming.

FRANKLIN

Okay, what is it?

KATZ

(to Doc)

Go outside for a few minutes,
Jew boy.

DOC

Fuck you!

FRANKLIN

Shut up, Doc!

KATZ

Your little white friend's got a
temper, hasn't he?

VENTURI

Cut out the gutter talk, kid. And
do what Mister Katz said.

FRANKLIN

Anything I know he can know.

KATZ

We don't have business with him.

FRANKLIN

I told you he's been running for
me for years.

Katz throws his cigar in the trash, lights another.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

What's the deal?

CONTINUED (5):

VENTURI

(finishing his drink)

You understand that we have nothing to do with it ourselves. We just want to put it your way because of our long association.

FRANKLIN

Yeah...

VENTURI

Well, these people are looking for someone like you. You'd be absolutely up their alley and I could guarantee if you went in with them you'd be making enough to set up your own bank, with all kinds of protection. You'd be kind of handling a big part of the operation in Harlem, a wholesaler, so to speak.

Outside, traffic and fire engines muffle the rest of the conversation, but Doc watches the men listen to Franklin as he talks very quietly. They nod their heads.

KATZ

How about it, Franklin? We're doing you a favor.

Franklin wipes the sweat off his hands.

FRANKLIN

You know what you can do with your fucking deal? I wouldn't handle drugs for a million bucks a day. I'd kill my mother first. You can stick it up your ass. I'm not going to touch drugs and everybody in Harlem knows it.

KATZ

Mister Pure. You're behind the times.

VENTURI

(filling his own glass)

I'll tell you what, Franklin. You're making a big mistake. Bigger than not laying off that bet. What we're talking about is going to be the biggest item in the country in five, six years. Everybody, I mean everybody'll be wanting the product. Like Zippo lighters. It'll get so the kids in high school'll be getting the stuff at the corner ice cream store. We're giving you more than a favor. We're giving you your life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (6):

KATZ

A rich man's life, too.

VENTURI

Take our advice. See these contacts.
Talk to them. Maybe you'll think it
over.

FRANKLIN

This is all shit. A setup. A fix.
I think your contacts banked that
crazy with his fifty-buck bets for
a straight forty days. Get me
against the wall. You tell your
contacts to go shove it.

Franklin grabs Doc's arm, starts for the door.

KATZ

Hey, boy. Remember when they found
out that a linotyper working at the
Daily News was bribed by some policy
gamblers to fix the last three numbers
on the stock exchange reports? You
know what happened to the linotyper?

Franklin slams the door hard.

CUT TO:

DRIVING SHOT - DAY

Franklin drives in silence. After a while, he speaks.

FRANKLIN

I've got to be out of sight until
I think things over.

DOC

What about Em's?

FRANKLIN

That's the first place they'll look.

DOC

You think Joe knows about Em's?

FRANKLIN

It's not Joe anymore. It's bigger.
You heard them in the office. They
want my number. I know too much
already. And so do you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have taken you with me.

(touches Doc's arm)

I'm sorry, Doc. You'll have to get out of Harlem. Go home.

DOC

I got me a room on 120th street.

Franklin slows down, disbelief on his face.

FRANKLIN

What for?

DOC

So I'd have time to find you. You can hide out there.

FRANKLIN

Shee-it.

Franklin turns a corner. He doesn't say anything to Doc, but he is evidently impressed with him.

DOC

I saw Vincy last night. She's sick.

FRANKLIN

She give it to you?

DOC

Hell, no. She just about let me kiss her. I want to get her to a doctor with that stuff they give for syph.

FRANKLIN

You still sugarin' for her?

DOC

Kind of.

FRANKLIN

You need a lot of bread for penicillin. You know I don't have that kind of floating cash.

DOC

Yeah...

(pause)

Could we stop in and see how she is?

Franklin can't believe Doc is still hung up on Vincy.

CUT TO:

INT. VINCY'S APARTMENT

The door is open. Doc and Franklin look around for her.

DOC

Why didn't she wait for me?

FRANKLIN

Because she's a whore. They hate
being alone. Got to be where the
action is.

DOC

(nearly crying)
But she's sick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN

Let her go. You can't help her.

DOC

I promised I'd get her a doctor.

FRANKLIN

This ain't no time for the Red Cross, boy. You coming?

CUT TO:

EXT. DOC'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Franklin and Doc enter, looking to see whether anyone is following them.

INT. DOC'S HALLWAY

Franklin and Doc complete a tiring climb to the top floor of the building.

DOC

(unlocking the door)

It's not real fancy.

FRANKLIN

Doc, you done okay.

Doc tries not to beam proudly as he lets Franklin in.

INT. DOC'S APARTMENT

It is swelteringly hot. Franklin strips and lies on Doc's bed, hitting flies as they come in an open window. Doc just stands respectfully at the door. After a while, Franklin notices him.

FRANKLIN

What ya doin'?

DOC

Nothing.

FRANKLIN

I'll sleep a bit, then give you a turn.

Doc doesn't say anything. Franklin closes his eyes, half-heartedly swats a few more flies, nearly dozes off, when Doc finally gets up the nerve to speak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
I'm gonna go find Vincy.

Franklin opens his eyes, doesn't answer. He seems a million miles away.

DOC (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go find Vincy.

Franklin looks to Doc as though for the first time. He seems burned out. After a moment, he has the awareness to speak.

FRANKLIN
Lock the door and take the key.

CUT TO:

EXT. VINCY'S STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Doc finds Vincy standing there, hustling johns.

VINCY
Go away. I'm busy.

DOC
I have a doctor.

VINCY
(disbelieving laugh)
Where you gettin' that kind of dough?

DOC
I got this friend, Doctor Rosenberg.
He'll do it for nothing.

Vincy's derisive smile disappears.

VINCY
Call him.

They walk to a nearby phone booth, Doc drops in a coin.

{INTERCUT WITH DR. ROSENBERG AT HOME, AS NECESSARY}

DOC
(on phone)
Hello, Doc. This is Mel Henshel...
I'm in New York.

ROSENBERG
Do you know you've driven your father
and mother half crazy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doc's heart sinks.

ROSENBERG (CONT'D)

You go home right away.

DOC

Doc, I can't go home right away. I need your help. I got a friend... Well-- Doc, you got this new medicine for VD?

ROSENBERG

Melvin, you come right over.

DOC

It's not me.

ROSENBERG

You can tell me the truth.

DOC

Doc, I swear--

ROSENBERG

Then send him in tomorrow.

DOC

It's a girl.

(long silence)

Hello, Doc? Hello!

ROSENBERG

You better come in, too.

DOC

You don't understand. I'm okay. Can she see you now?

ROSENBERG

Have her come to the office at nine tomorrow morning.

DOC

She doesn't have any money.

ROSENBERG

I'm not asking for money. I'm asking you to--

DOC

I'll phone them. I'll phone them tomorrow morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

ROSENBERG

Tonight. How can you let them suffer?

DOC

Okay, Doc. I'll call them right now if you'll take care of my friend. A deal?

ROSENBERG

Mel, I'm going to wait a few minutes, then I'm going to check with your parents to make sure you keep your word.

DOC

I will. I promise.

Rosenberg hangs up. Doc, sweating profusely, turns to Vincy, gives her a slip of paper.

DOC

He wants you there at nine sharp tomorrow.

Vincy kisses Doc on the forehead.

VINCY

You can stay with me tonight, sugar.

DOC

Can't... I've got to be with Franklin. I found him and he's in trouble.

VINCY

The bastard deserves whatever it is.

Doc doesn't speak, clearly doesn't like what she said.

VINCY (CONT'D)

(disarming smile)

Right now I'm willin' to forgive the whole friggin' world. Now, go call your folks.

As Doc picks up the phone, we

CUT TO:

INT. DOC'S APARTMENT

Doc enters, turns on a light.

FRANKLIN

Keep it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doc sees Franklin has a .38 in his hand, immediately switches the light back off.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Lock the door. Put that chair
under the knob.

In the moonlight through the open window, Doc obeys, then sadly takes a seat in a half-broken chair beside Franklin, who lies on the bed with his hands behind his head.

DOC

Not a good time. My folks are
mad. Can't help that now.

Long silence.

FRANKLIN

Wanna know the worst time in my
life?

(doesn't wait for an answer)

It was on Broad Street in Philly. I
was fifteen, walking with a friend.
And coming toward us was an old whore,
lipstick all smeared, her hair falling
over her face, her dress torn and dirty
and half open at the boobs. Manny
left me and went over to talk to her.
When he came back, I said, 'What the
hell ya doin' with an old street slut
like that?' And my friend said, 'That
was my Mama.'

Franklin closes his eyes, feels the pain from long ago.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Well, you know how I felt. I don't
think in my whole life I've cried
more than once or twice, but I
wanted to then. But he didn't say
anything, and I couldn't.

Franklin swats a fly. He lies there, sweating. Doc
finds an old newspaper, rolls it up, starts swatting
flies. A moment later, someone can be heard in the
hall. Franklin sits up slowly, his .38 in his hand. A
toilet flushes, and Franklin relaxes again, lets himself
grin.

Franklin lights another reefer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

FRANKLIN

Y'know, Doc, in a war, ya got your allies, your ammo, your little hill ya got to take from someone kinda like yourself. And all the while the big boys sit on their asses, somewhere else. An' ya can't go through it without hurtin' someone an' bein' hurt.

(stares at his reefer)

Ain't that life, though?

Franklin takes another deep toke of the joint, then passes it over to Doc, who lets it go out. Franklin doesn't seem to notice, so Doc sticks it in his pocket.

Doc just watches Franklin lie there, sweaty, handsome, the whites of his eyes showing in the darkness, and Doc seems to want to believe in the man.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. DOC'S APARTMENT - DAY

It is just beginning to grow light. Franklin's eyes are still on the ceiling.

FRANKLIN

I been thinkin'.

(grinning)

The whole thing's connecked. Ankle bone connecked to the leg bone, leg bone connecked to the thigh bone... Yes, sir! They's all connecked-- San Juan Joe, Venturi and Katz, and the big pushers. I mean, the cats in the back room, not the mice on the streets. No, sir! It's a big plate of milk, with lotsa big tiger cats. That milk ain't for me. Everybody gonna know that, so who's gonna piss on Franklin Gilboa's name 'cause he took hisself a powder and laid low for a bit, eh? So I tell ya what I'm goin' to do. I'm goin' to take me a train somewhere and you're gonna get my car out of storage and drive it to Rahway, New Jersey.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Dover Street and Main. Connie's garage. Jus' leave it where ya find a spot...

(looks Doc straight in the eye)

Then go home, boy. Go home, take a long, hot bath, clean yourself of this stinkin' room, Harlem, and the rackets. One of these days you'll be gettin' a call from me, long distance, and I'll be saying to ya, 'This is Mr. Gilboa here. That you, Doc, there?' And you'll say, 'Damn it, if it ain't old Franklin.' An' we'll make a plan to have us a glory time again. Got it, boy? You'll be hearin' from me.

Franklin starts getting dressed.

DOC

I'm going to go with you.

Franklin laughs a little from the pot.

FRANKLIN

You're one crazy kid.

(pause)

I gotta move fast.

DOC

I'll move just as fast.

FRANKLIN

Fast means one, not two. Don't ya ever learn?

Franklin finishes dressing.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

It's gettin' late. On your way, boy.

Franklin hands Doc his car keys, stands in the middle of the room, rubbing his knuckles, looking hard at Doc.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

Ya know, Doc, I ain't no Christer. Drugs is gonna be big business, and why shouldn't I get my snout onto the pig's tits like the others? But I got something they ain't got. First, I like people. Really like 'em. And second, I got me one messed-up kid in Florida.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

At the mention of Franklin's son, this time Doc is sympathetic. Franklin reaches over and touches Doc on the shoulder.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

You got enough bread to see you
home from Rahway?

DOC

(barely able to speak)

Yeah...

FRANKLIN

You'll be okay. You'll be damned
okay. College and law school, hear?

DOC

Sure.

FRANKLIN

You know, when we first met, I figured
I'd teach ya how to get lucky.

(laughs)

I'll be damned if I didn't teach ya
what I shoulda learned myself -- how
to love.

(pause)

You got humanology down good, Doc.
Heh. I don't know what the hell I
had...

Doc looks at Franklin, wanting to hug him, not daring.
A tear forms in his eye, breaks, and rolls down his
cheek.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)

(voice gravelly)

Better beat it now. Time's got to
be on my side. That is, if it ain't
passed me by already.

(sees Doc to door)

Drive that car carefully, y'hear?

DOC

I will...

FRANKLIN

Good luck, son.

Doc turns and runs down the stairs, his eyes swollen.

MONTAGE

Doc driving Franklin's car through Harlem streets, thinking he's being tailed by a big Lincoln.

Doc trying to elude the Lincoln, noticing that it wasn't following him after all.

Doc going through the Holland tunnel, entering New Jersey.

Doc parking Franklin's Caddy at Connie's garage.

Doc on a train.

Doc on the A Train.

Doc returning to his own neighborhood, exhausted.

EXT. PROSSER STREET - DAY

Kids are playing long handball from sewer cover to sewer cover. They stop and stare at Doc as he walks by, evidently aware of his celebrated absence. He makes it to his house, wearily climbs the steps, opens the door.

INT. DOC'S HOUSE

Doc walks into a hornet's nest of worry and frustration.

MARCY

It's Doc!

POP

Where in hell have you been?

MOM

How could you do this to us?

MARCY

We were worried about you!

POP

You didn't answer my question.

MOM

Answer your father. We haven't been able to sleep nights.

MARCY

That was so inconsiderate--

Doc collapses on the floor. The family rushes to his side.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. DOC'S BEDROOM

Dr. Rosenberg is there with his parents when Doc opens his eyes.

DOC

She didn't come, did she?

ROSENBERG

No.

MOM

Who didn't come?

ROSENBERG

(to move, to Doc's relief)
He needs to rest now. It's just
exhaustion, but he needs to rest.

Rosenberg leads Mom and Pop out of the room.

MOM

(to Rosenberg)
Who didn't come?

Doc watches them leave, closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONTAGE

Autumn. Vibrant red and lustrous gold leaves fall from trees as students walk to school in light jackets, file out of busses with piles of books, and toss footballs across expanses of lawn littered with fallen foliage.

A school bell RINGS.

SCHOOL - DOC

walks out of the building, goes right past Eddie Norris, who isn't speaking to him, either. They both see a cab pull up, an attractive dark-skinned woman get out.

Eddie watches Doc with curiosity.

DOC

strains to see who it could be, hoping, then sure. He runs toward her.

VINCY

leans into the cab, says something unheard to the driver, who pulls over and waits. She starts for Doc. She is more dressed up than when last seen, but she looks a bit haggard.

Passing students stare as the two reach each other, Doc taking Vincy's hands, trying to embrace her.

DOC

Vincy! Oh, Vincy! You look so good.

She shakes her head. She's holding something back from Doc, but he doesn't notice yet.

DOC (CONT'D)

Doc Rosenberg said you never showed.

VINCY

I couldn't make it.

DOC

What are you doing here?

Vincy breaks. Doc sees the tears in her eyes, becomes frightened.

VINCY

It's Franklin...

DOC

What...!?

Vincy pulls a crumpled newspaper clipping out of her purse. It's an obituary. Doc reads it hastily, the color leaving him. He grows dizzy, starts to cry.

DOC (CONT'D)

St. Louis? Who knew him in St. Louis?

VINCY

(through sadness)

Hobie and Hayes flew the body back.

(pause)

They paid for the cab, if you wanna see him.

Doc looks over his shoulder, finds Eddie staring at them both. Eddie quickly pretends not to be looking, shuffles away.

Doc and Vincy jump into the cab, and it pulls out.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - DAY

Doc and Vincy are greeted by Hayes at the funeral parlor. They don't speak as they shake hands.

DOC
(to Hayes)
Could I see him alone?

Hayes walks over to the Funeral Parlor owner, whispers to him. The man opens the door for Doc.

THE CASKET

lies open in the viewing room.

Doc reacts poorly to Franklin's makeup. The red lipstick and tan face powder just doesn't look right. Franklin is in a black suit, lies on a white silk bed.

DOC
Look what they did to ya.

Doc touches Franklin's hands, looks around, sees flowers from the American Legion Post, others with no names on them. He wants to leave Franklin something.

Doc reaches into his coat pocket, finds a half-smoked joint. The one he and Franklin shared their last night together. He reaches into his other pocket and finds a movie stub and a page torn out of the Racing Form. He looks around, leans over the coffin, carefully puts the joint and the torn page in the side pocket of Franklin's coat.

It seems like forever that Doc stands there, thinking, looking at Franklin.

DOC (CONT'D)
(with sudden emotion)
Oh, Franklin...! Oh, Franklin...!

Hayes comes in, touches him on the shoulder, leads him out.

OUTSIDE

Doc looks around for Vincy. He turns to Hayes.

DOC
Where's Vincy?

HAYES
She left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOC
Where'd she go?

HAYES
(shrugs)
Who knows? This cab's for you, kid.

Doc starts for the cab, sees a limousine across the street. Venturi and Katz are in it. Doc gets scared, looks for Hayes, but Hayes is gone. Doc leans in to the cabbie.

DOC
See that limo? You gotta lose it.

CABBIE
(with understatement)
I can do that.

The cab peels out, takes its first corner dangerously, skids into the fast lane on the next street, goes around another corner just as fast. Doc's heart is in his throat. He keeps checking behind him.

CABBIE (CONT'D)
I don't think they're following ya. I'm good, but I'm not that good.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. DOC'S FAMILY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Early morning sunlight streams into the kitchen. The house is quiet. Doc is the first one up, scrounges around until he has put together a peanut butter sandwich and poured a glass of orange juice.

He just stares at his food when Pop appears in the doorway, wearing only his baggy pajama pants.

POP
From the looks of it, you make a neat peanut butter sandwich.

DOC
Want a piece?

Pop nods, tears it in half, chews a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The phone rings. Pop, still eating the sandwich, answers with his mouth partially full.

POP

Hello...?

(hang-up on line,
to Doc)

Hung up.

Pop hangs up the phone. Doc wonders who it was.

POP (CONT'D)

(finishing the half-
sandwich)

Makes you thirsty.

Doc slides the glass of orange juice over to him. Pop drinks half of it in the first quaff.

POP (CONT'D)

How about going to the races with me?

Doc gets lost in thought. Pop brings him out of it.

POP (CONT'D)

Why not, Mel? It would be good
to get out -- together.

Doc looks at his father, seems to see him as a human being for the first time ever. He smiles, nods.

DOC

Yeah... okay.

(sees Pop eyeing the
remaining food)

You want the rest?

POP

(hungry)

You sure you don't want it?

DOC

Nah. Go ahead.

Pop's eyes twinkle as he wolfs down the rest.

POP

I ate your breakfast.

DOC

So what? We can have us a bite at
the races.

Pop bends over Doc and kisses the top of his head.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. DOC'S HOUSE - SCHOOL DAY

Doc ambles up his front steps, books under his arms. He enters the house to hear the phone ringing.

INT. DOC'S HOUSE

He answers the phone.

DOC

Hello?

STRANGER

Mister Henshel?

DOC

He's not in right now. Want to leave a message?

STRANGER

(a little puzzled)
Tell him Mister Venturi called.
He can call him back at this numb--

DOC

Which Mister Henshel do you want?

STRANGER

(after hesitation)
The young Mister Henshel.

DOC

That's me.

STRANGER

Hold on.

VENTURI

You the fellow who's a friend of Franklin's?

DOC

(bile rising in his throat)
Yeah.

VENTURI

I got something important to tell you. Come to my office. You were here once.

DOC

What for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VENTURI

Not on the phone.

DOC

Hell with it, then!

VENTURI

Look, young man. I'm not calling to hear myself talk. You going to come in or aren't you? What we got to say is to your benefit. Get here tomorrow afternoon between four and five.

CLICK. Venturi has hung up. Doc takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

Doc and Eddie walk, huddled conspiratorially close.

DOC

All I want you to do is hang around outside the office til I come out, ok?

EDDIE

(still a bit sullen)

Look, I know how you feel about the guy's death'n all, but I can't go along without knowing what it's all about.

DOC

Eddie, I can't tell ya.

EDDIE

Then why should I go?

DOC

Because we're friends.

EDDIE

I thought you said I didn't know what friendship was.

DOC

Don't do this to me, Eddie. I need you now.

EDDIE

When Franklin was alive, you didn't know I existed. That night at the arcade, remember?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

#

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I waited for you outside and you just walked off with him. Then that time I waited on the handball court for an hour... And when we lied to your folks and went to New York together, you ditched me and went with him. Never once did you let me meet him. You were Mister Big shot and I was only good enough to help you with exams.

DOC

I'm sorry, Eddie. I didn't realize what I did. Okay? But this is different. It's important. It's something I gotta do, and I don't want to do it alone. I need a friend, and if you come along, I'll swear if you ever need me for anything at all, for the rest of our lives, you can count on me. I swear to God. I swear on my Pop's life.

EDDIE

Hell, when we were kids together in the Arrow AC, we swore then to be friends forever. Okay... when do we go?

Doc puts out his hand to shake it, and the two fumble around awkwardly.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm trying to remember the old secret grip.

DOC

(equally puzzled)

I didn't think we'd ever forget that.

#

EXT. 500 FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Doc is nervous. He's about to enter the building. Eddie stands at the corner, equally nervous.

DOC

If I'm not down in an hour, you call a cop and go up to the offices of Venturi and Katz, okay?

Eddie hops from one foot to the other with excitement, mutely nods. They compare watches, and Doc disappears into the big building.

INT. VENTURI'S OFFICE

Doc approaches a receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

You can go right in.

Doc tries to keep cool. He has never been so nervous in his life as he passes through the swinging gate he once followed Franklin through. Doc comes to the inner office door, knocks.

VENTURI (O.S.)

Come in.

CAMERA FOLLOWS DOC inside. Venturi is alone.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

You did a smart thing coming. Sit down.

Doc doesn't move.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

I saw you at the funeral home. It was sad for all of us. I liked Franklin. I respected him.

Doc keeps his eyes fixed on Venturi.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

I asked around. You were a close friend of Franklin's, weren't you?
(pause)

You know Hobie, don't you?

Doc nods.

VENTURI

He's working for a client of mine now.

Venturi gets up, walks around his desk, stands behind a chair.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

You know I had an interest in Franklin's business. He owed me a lot of money and friends of mine took it over. There was some trouble with his son, but we gave him a piece. And now we want to give you a piece.

DOC

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VENTURI

Because from everything I hear,
you're a smart kid.

(long pause)

What do you want? The bowling
alley? Em's? Policy?

There is a painfully long silence. Doc's eyes and
Venturi's try to read behind each other.

DOC

You trying to bribe me?

Venturi's eyes close tight.

VENTURI

Where the fuck did you get that
idea?

DOC

You set up Franklin.

VENTURI

Kid, you're crazy.

DOC

You want me in the rackets to get
a hold on me. You and Katz had
him killed.

Venturi undoes his fists, takes a long breath, moves
back to his desk. He sits down and opens a drawer. Doc
thinks the man is going for a gun, but Venturi comes out
with a cigar instead.

VENTURI

If you got evidence, why don't you
go to the police or the DA?

Doe doesn't respond. Venturi clips his cigar butt,
lights it, blows out a long trail of smoke.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

That's a terrible thing you said,
kid.

Doc stares at him.

VENTURI (CONT'D)

It could make trouble for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED (2):

DOC

Mister Venturi, maybe some day I'm going to make trouble for you. So you'll know you can't knock me off the way you did Franklin, I've written down everything that happened in this office that day.

Doc turns around, walks to the door, his back to Venturi. He expects to feel the bullet any second, but it never comes.

INT. ELEVATOR

Doc gets in, and his knees start to shake. He feels like he's going to get sick.

At the end of the ride, the elevator door slides open to REVEAL EDDIE pacing up and down in the lobby like a Marine on duty. Eddie is relieved to see Doc.

EXT. ON THE STREET

Doc and Eddie walk away from the office building. The color is coming back to Doc's cheeks. He puts his arm around Eddie.

DOC

Eddie, I'll never forget ya. Just like I promised.

EDDIE

A funny thing, Doc. When I was waiting for you, I remembered the grip. It goes like this.

Doc and Eddie link their fingers according to their secret pact, and they shake hands.

The two friends disappear into a throng of pedestrians as we ROLL CREDITS.

FADE OUT

THE END