

TAP

TAP

FADE IN:

1. CLOSEUP - MAX

It's very dark. MAX WASHINGTON, a black man in his thirties, is asleep. His eyes are closed, beads of sweat formed on his brow. He's having a bad dream. He shudders in fear. Suddenly he awakes. He breathes heavily, like the nightmare won't go away.

Just then he hears a DRIP of water into a puddle. He looks over at a puddle in the corner and up to a leaky pipe right above the puddle. His labored breathing begins to ease.

He sits up in bed and grabs a pair of shoes. He turns them over. Metal taps on the bottom of the shoes glint, reflecting an unseen light. He slips them on and stands up. And now we see where we are.

2. INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT (DANCE ROUTINE)

Max begins to tap. It starts simple. He taps a toe down in syncopation with the DRIPS of water. He drops his heel and now the rhythm is more complex.

We look down the jail corridor as other inmates begin to hear the dancing. They rustle in their cells. A few hushed words whisper down the hallway from one inmate to the other.

Max continues to play off the rhythm of the DRIPS OF WATER. The steps become more complex, faster and faster. As he keeps up the pace he starts to kick at the wall, including this beat in the routine. Then he hits the bed, a chair. The jail bars become surface for his taps.

He spins in the tiny cell. The routine is now driving. It's dynamic, almost violent. Some inmates stick mirrors out the bars to get a glimpse. Max spins, slapping his taps across the bars and walls. Faster and faster. Finally, he comes to a screeching halt.

Sweat drips from his brow as he snaps his fingers continuing the beat. He looks down at the puddle. He's right on. His snaps and the puddle DRIPS are synchronous. He stops snapping his fingers and listens to the perfect beat of water. He breathes a sigh of relief. The dancing got him through another night. A solid ROCK BEAT cuts in as we:

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3. INT. JAIL CELL - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE)

As TITLES AND TITLE MUSIC BEGIN we see SEVERAL SHOTS of Max packing up. The tap shoes are thrown into a duffile bag. He puts on a pair of shades and takes a deep breath.

4. JAIL HALLWAY - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

Max throws his duffile bag over his shoulder and walks straight towards CAMERA. A few prisoners' arms stick out of their cells. Max slaps each palm, high and low-fiving. He acts more confident in front of the other inmates. Cockier.

5. SEVERAL ANGLES - RELEASE PROCEDURE (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

A few QUICK SHOTS show Max checking out. One hundred dollars in twenties are counted out. He is escorted to the door.

6. EXT. PENITENTIARY - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

Max steps out of the Penitentiary. A guard closes the door behind him. A van picks him up along with other inmates.

* 7. INT. TRAIN - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

Max sits next to an elderly man who's fast asleep. He looks around the train and focuses in on a sailor with his girl resting on his shoulder.

8. EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

The train zooms by and the CAMERA CRANES UP to reveal the familiar skyline of New York City.

* 9. INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

Max, with his duffile bag slung over his shoulder, walks out of the train station and onto the streets of Manhattan. Now that he's back on the street again his pace picks up into a cocky strut.

10. EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

A salesman slaps some mustard on a frank and hands it to Max. Max has been waiting for this moment for years. He bites into the hot dog.

11. INT. SUBWAY - DAY (TITLE SEQUENCE CONTINUED)

We are CLOSE on Max as he bobs from side to side in the ROARING subway train. Lights kick on and off. The train is packed but no one communicates.

Max closes his eyes and listens to the BEAT of the train going across the rails as it BLENDS WITH THE TITLE SONG. His feet begin to move to the rhythm. Slowly he opens his eyes to find a fat man watching him disapprovingly. He stops tapping.

12. EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Max emerges from the subway tunnel and onto a street lined with down-and-out businesses and cheap hotels as the TITLE SEQUENCE AND MUSIC COME TO AN END.

He stops and looks ahead. Between a couple of trashy storefronts is a weathered three-story building. The afternoon sun gives the place a warm orange glow. An old sign above the entrance reads, "SONNY'S" and in smaller letters, "SIDE OF THE STREET". Below that it reads, "Tap Dance Studio".

A blend of DIFFERENT MUSIC flows from the unseen rehearsal halls above. And, of course, TAP. There's another world up there. A world Max is apprehensive about jumping into. He walks into an old hotel across the street from Sonny's. The CAMERA PANS up to a third story window and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

13. INT. MAX'S ROOM - ANGLE OUT WINDOW - NIGHT

at Sonny's, as a few elderly BLACK MEN exit the place. The CAMERA PANS from the window to Max who sits on the bed in a tiny, dumpy hotel room finishing a bite of fast food.

He seems to have been watching Sonny's all evening. He spots some more of the old timers leaving the place. They say goodnight to another old man, SANDMAN, who leans out of the second story window. Sandman pulls the shade closing Sonny's up for the night.

* Max feels alone in his little room. Taking out his wallet, * he removes a picture of Sonny and looks at it. He then takes a drink from a bottle on the night table feeling depressed. Sonny's neon sign buzzes off and on across the street. Max picks up the rhythmic SOUND of the pulsating neon sign.

Max rolls back a little throw rug in the middle of the little room and begins to tap, bare footed, to the beat of the BUZZING sign. He starts to feel better. But no sooner does he start to get into it than he is stopped by a loud BANGING from the room

(CONTINUED)

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below.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
(angrily)

* Stop the Goddamn noise! *

MAX

* Up yours! *

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

* You want the cops up there, asshole? *

Max sits back on the bed and then lies down. The CAMERA MOVES CLOSE on Max as the lights outside throws bar-like shadows through the blinds. They fall across his face and body. It reminds us of the jail cell.

He closes his eyes and listens to the buzzing sign. He begins to breathe deeply trying to get through the night.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

14 EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

Hectic, HONKING Manhattan. Max, wearing his shades, walks through a sea of humanity. He turns into the formidable facade of a city administration building.

* 15 DENEEN'S DESK - CLOSE TYPEWRITER *

* as Max's name is typed across the page. Max's parole officer, MR. DENEEN, a middle aged, overweight sarcastic fellow, sits across a table from him checking out his record and eating a sandwich from a lunch pail. *

Max leans back in his chair, shades in place, keeping his cool.

DENEEN

* Let's see. What do we got here?
Number A25000. Captain Zero. Grand theft. One year... extended vacation. *

* He looks over at Max for an explanation. Max shrugs with a little smile, his fingers still keeping time on the arm rest. *

DENEEN

* Assault and Battery on a prison guard. We got a bad temper, Mr. Zero? That our problem? *

* Max looks away. Deneen turns back to the file *

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DENEEN

* Punching out a guard. That was smart. Are we still mad? *

* Max shrugs. *

DENEEN

* We in control of yourself now? We're not going to pull that shit in the office, are we? Are we? *

MAX

* Whatever we say. *

DENEEN

* Alright. So what do we got here? We got an address. We got any medical problems? *

MAX

* No. *

DENEEN

* We got employment? *

MAX

* No. *

DENEEN

* We have any skills? Can we do anything? *

* Max thinks for a second. *

MAX

* No. *

DENEEN

* So what do you wanna do? How we going to live? You think about that at all for the last year and a half? Did you expect us to find a nice position for you here in New York? You think we need another joker like you? *

* Deneen is pushing him on purpose to see his reaction. Max is starting to get annoyed. *

DENEEN

* We need another jive ass nigger with no money, no job, no family, no (more) *

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CONTINUED: (2)

DENEEN (continued)

* brains... *

Max grips the seat holding back his anger. Deneen knows he's ready to go for his skull.

DENEEN

* There we go. Hold on to your seat. Dig in tight. Hold back. See, Captain Zero. We're still not in control yet, are we? And this ain't nothin' like what we're going to get out there. *

* Max angrily starts to calm down. Deneen looks in his files. *

DENEEN

Why don't we forget about all this bullshit. You're just going back to the streets with all your goofball friends. Why don't I just throw you back in jail where you belong, save us all a bunch of grief?

Max stares at him angrily.

MAX

I'll get a job.

DENEEN

Bullshit.

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX
(firmer)
I'll get a job!

Deneen looks at him disbelievingly. He pulls out a sheet of paper from his files and shoves it in front of Max's face.

DENEEN
No. You got a job.

CUT TO:

16. CLOSE ON DISHES

A number of hands scrape out dishes. Half-eaten food is thrown into a garbage disposal. Faucets spray water on grimy soup bowls. We WIDEN TO REVEAL:

INT. CAFETERIA KITCHEN - DAY

Max follows JULIUS, a heavy set man in his late fifties, as he walks him through the kitchen. Julius is king of his simple grimy domain. The place is steaming with percolating food, hot water and sweating WORKERS.

JULIUS
...then you take the dirty dishes,
you place 'em carefully in the
sink...you break a dish, fifty cents.
A cup, that's a quarter. Saucer,
twenty-five. Soup bowl or platter,
fifty...

As Julius keeps rattling off the do's and don't, Max looks out at the dining room. It's a cheap cafeteria. A lot of elderly people gumming their food. Just then, some dishes
BREAK.

Max looks around to see a number of DISHWASHERS in a row along a giant trough of a sink. The FIRST WORKER looks down at his mistake and sighs. Julius walks over marking something on a pad of paper. He squats down assessing the damage.

JULIUS
That's two saucers at twenty-five a
saucer...etc...

As Julius adds up the damage. Max looks at the overworked, underpaid, broken WORKER. They exchange a glance. The Worker's seething anger can be seen brewing inside but he has no more strength to respond. Max takes this in.

CUT TO:

17. INT. MAX'S HOTEL ROOM - POV OF SONNY'S - AFTERNOON

as MUSIC emerges from the place. Inside his room Max is keeping one eye on Sonny's and unpacking some newly bought essentials. He takes a pair of socks and throws them into the open bureau drawer. Toothpaste is thrown into the tiny bathroom. A box of condoms is thrown in a drawer, then another, and another. Just then he hears a MALE VOICE yell, "Amy". He looks back out the window and spots a pretty black woman (AMY), leaning out of the second story rehearsal hall window. The white DANCER below waves and heads off. Max takes special notice of Amy. She leans back into the room.

Max sighs. He looks over into the closet and spots his tap shoes. As he mulls over what he is going to do we hear:

AMY(O.S.)

Five six, five, six, seven, eight.

CUT TO:

18. INT. SONNY'S - REHEARSAL HALL - AFTERNOON

A class of tap dancers go at it. Amy roams around them checking out their steps.

19. EXT. SONNY'S - AFTERNOON

Max, with a gym bag slung over his shoulder, heads across the street dodging traffic and stops in front of Sonny's. He thinks, takes a step to the flower shop storefront underneath, pays for a single rose and walks to the door.

20. INT. SONNY'S STAIRWAY - LOBBY

Max walks up the staircase and stops at the landing. He looks through the rehearsal hall window and spots Amy teaching the class. Amy's as tough as she is beautiful. A dancer's body, trim and sexy in tights and a T-shirt. A tall, good looking forty year old man, BOB, sits to the side watching the class. But he's really more interested in watching Amy. Max takes it all in.

AMY

Most of you are losing it at the same place. Watch.

She puts the needle down on the record player and starts to do the routine herself. Everyone watches Amy including Max. She's great. She moves with grace, strength and style. She ends with a cool, sexy pose that gets some applause and HOOTS from the dancers.

Max smiles. He knows Amy. There's a history there. Amy
(more)

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* continues to watch her dancers. Max walks across the lobby *
not noticing the young boy to the back.

* LOUIS, a thirteen year old, is playing three-card-monty on an *
old rickety desk. He looks up and spots Max. A big
involuntary smile crosses his face which he quickly supresses *
into a playful grimace. He calls out to Max who is standing
at the window looking in at Amy.

LOUIS

* Whatchoo staring at, man? *

* Max turns around to spot Louis. A smile forms, but just like *
Louis he goes into a little game of "tough guy".

MAX

* I'm staring at a fine lookin' woman. *
You got a problem with that?

LOUIS

* That fine lookin' woman is my mama, *
sucker. You stare at her ass you're
going to be missing some teeth.

MAX

* That so? *

* Max approaches Louis menacingly. Louis puts up his fists. *

LOUIS

* Come on, turkey. *

* They spar playfully, until Max flicks his hand towards the *
kids crotch.

MAX

* Take a bow. *

* Louis involuntarily "bows" to get away from Max's hand. He *
steps back and laughs. Max smiles. The "tough guy" game
ends.

LOUIS

* How's it going, Max? *

MAX

* Okay, man. How's it going with you? *
They got you workin' now? Sitting
behind a desk?

LOUIS

* Yeah. How about you, Max? Haven't *
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX (continued)

little mark here, a little crease
there, some sharp gambler's apt to
notice.

* With that, Max reaches down and turns over the ace. Louis *
frowns. Just then, the phone rings and Louis picks it up.
He starts to answer some questions about the place. Max *
picks up the money and puts the rose down on the desk and
slowly heads towards the door.

MAX

* I'll be upstairs. *

* Louis nods turning back to the phone call. *

* 21. STAIRCASE *

* Max passes some dancers on the second story landing and heads *
for the third floor.

22. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY

Max steps into the third floor lobby. He might as well
have stepped into the 1930's. It has all the atmosphere of
the good old days. It's packed with framed eight-by-tens.
Wall-to-wall memories.

He stops in front of a group of pictures. There's a big one

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of a handsome BLACK MAN standing on stage in a sharp three-piece-suit and derby hat with a big smile on his face. Another photo below shows Max (ten years old) and the same man in matching tuxedos.

Just then he hears some TALKING, swivels a picture and looks through a peep hole into the next room.

23 MAX'S POV - REHEARSAL HALL #1

The place is run-down. The wood floors are warped, the mirror's cracked, it's dim and dingy. An old, rickety upright piano leans against the wall. But the place reeks of originality. And the ambiance isn't hurt at all by the five elderly hoofers sitting around a card table playing poker in the corner.

These men, now in their sixties and seventies, are products of the jazz era. Still cool, still hip. Dark clothes. Well-worn hats. Characters.

* The card players, Harold, Slim, and Bunny, Arthur are black. *
* Spats is the only white guy. But race doesn't seem to matter *
* to these old-timers. *

* HAROLD *

Make a bet or pass. You're the slowest fuck I ever played with.

* SPATS *

Give the man some space, Harold.

* Bunny looks at his cards somberly. He starts to tap while *
* staring at his hand. *

* SLIM *

Oh, shit. I'm out. The nigger's getting excited.

The men all fold.

* BUNNY *

Wait a minute. How you know what I got?

The bullshitting continues.

24 THIRD FLOOR - LOBBY

Max smiles, turns and walks into the opposite rehearsal hall.

25 REHEARSAL HALL

He walks into the hall. It's old and worn with broken mirrors and broken down furniture. He walks into the middle of the place. He bends down and slowly slides his fingertips along the chewed-up, roughed-up wood floor. There's a lot of history in those scuff marks. He starts to put on his shoes.

26 LOBBY

Just then, an elderly black man, SANDMAN, walks out of a doorway into the lobby. From the SOUND OF THE FLUSH we can figure where he's just been as he tucks in his shirt and walks down the hall.

He stops short as he spots Max inside the rehearsal hall #2.

27 REHEARSAL HALL #1

Sandman walks into the room and stops in front of some of the Old Timers who are dealing out another hand.

SANDMAN

Who's the kid?

SLIM

What kid?

SANDMAN

The kid across the hall.

ARTHUR

We didn't see no kid.

Sandman frowns again, and walks out a rooftop door as Bunny goes to check out "the kid."

28 ROOFTOP - AFTERNOON

Sandman walks onto a cluttered rooftop. In the corner is a man seated with his back to us. He wears a robe, a dirty old rag over his head and gardening gloves. He wears a walkman headset over his ears, ROCK MUSIC bleeds through.

He's putting some liquid in a dying plant. Several other flowers and ferns sit on crates and boxes around the roof. They're all dead or dying.

SANDMAN

(loud over music)

Junior!

CONTINUED:

The man, JUNIOR, doesn't turn. He simply "shushes" Sandman and carefully administers to his plant. Sandman walks up to him.

SANDMAN

You going to kill it with too much
of that poison shit.

JUNIOR

I'm killing the little bugs, Sandman.
It's the bugs I'm killing.

SANDMAN

Between the poison and that damn noise,
looks like the plant ain't long for this
world either.

Junior ignores him. And now we get a good look at him. He's an elderly man in his seventies. In his silly get-up, you'd never think he was the hottest hooper in his day. But there's still something in his face. There's still an unmistakable style. He's the boss. He takes the headset off.

SANDMAN

Who's the kid upstairs?

JUNIOR

What kid?

SANDMAN

There's a kid across the hall.

JUNIOR

Third floor?

SANDMAN

Yeah, third floor.

JUNIOR

What's he doing there?

SANDMAN

I don't know. Why you think I'm
asking you?

Junior puts down the poison and takes off his gloves. Just
then, Harold sticks his head out the door. *

HAROLD *

Hey, Junior. There's a kid
'cross the hall.

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JUNIOR

I heard. I heard the story.

Slowly, Junior gets up. Sandman offers him a hand.

JUNIOR

Get away.

SANDMAN

I'm trying to help you, damn it.

JUNIOR

Help your own tired ass. Step aside.

Junior's obviously recuperating from something. He straightens up and walks across the rooftop.

29 LOBBY - THIRD FLOOR - REHEARSAL HALL #2

* Bunny stands at the window looking in at Max with cards. Max *
picks up a tape laying on a table next to a ghetto blaster in
the back of the room. He sticks in the tape, ROCK MUSIC
* EMERGES and he begins to dance. Bunny is impressed and leans *
over, revealing Slim who is equally impressed.

Just then, Junior, Sandman and the rest of the hoofers walk
into the lobby with cards. Bunny turns back to Junior. *

* Bunny *

There's some kid in there playing
your music.

JUNIOR

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

They all gather at the window. Junior looks in and spots Max
doing a few intricate steps. His back is to Junior. He's good
and the old-timer knows it. Junior's curiosity peaks.

JUNIOR

Who is that kid?

Sandman shrugs as the others lean in to get a peek.
He nods to Sandman and the two walk into the rehearsal hall.
The others gather around the window checking out the action.

30 REHEARSAL HALL #2

Max continues to practice to the MUSIC, paying no attention to
the two. Junior looks over at Sandman who shrugs. The guy's
back is still to them. Maybe he didn't hear them. Junior
clears his throat.

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JUNIOR

Excuse me there, son.

Max continues to practice, his back on them. Junior and Sandman give each other another look. Is he deaf?

JUNIOR

I said, excuse me, son. The third floor is private. You gonna have to work downstairs.

Still no answer. Junior starts to get annoyed.

JUNIOR

You have a hearing problem or...

Just then, Max does a complicated set of steps that make Junior and Sandman stop in their tracks.

JUNIOR

Where'd you get that combination?

Max shrugs, his back still to him.

JUNIOR

That combination! That step? Only two people are allowed to do that step, me and the nigger I stole it from and he's dead!

Max turns around and finally Junior and Sandman gets a close look. They stare at him curiously. Max laughs.

MAX

How's it going, old timer?

(to Sandman)

Sandman. How's your "feets"?

SANDMAN

(not friendly)

They alright.

Junior's response is cautiously sympathetic while Sandman isn't friendly at all. In fact Sandman walks out of the room.

JUNIOR

God damn... I didn't even recognize you back in your shoes.

* Max nods, looking away.

JUNIOR

Your hoofin' looks sharp. You
(more)

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* JUNIOR (continued)
lookin' for a gig? *

* MAX
Nah. Just came by to say hello to
Amy and the kid. *

* JUNIOR
Yeah, well let me show you a step I'
been thinkin' about. *

Junior starts to walk closer to Max but Max steps towards him
and escorts him to the door.

* MAX
No thanks. *

* JUNIOR
I got some new things that go to that
music. *

* MAX
That's alright, Junior. I'm just
exercising. *

Junior gets to the door.

* JUNIOR
Exercising? *

* MAX
Exercising. *

Max closes the door.

OMIT 31-32

33. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY

* Junior walks over to the window and looks in at Max. *

JIMMY
Who is that, Junior?

Junior's busy thinking to himself. The Old Timers look at
Sandman.

SANDMAN
That's Sonny's boy.

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CONTINUED:

The old timer's nod, jabbering with each other. Ad lib dialogue. "The boy's hoofin again" etc. Slowly, the old-timers drift back into the Rehearsal Hall, back to their card game, leaving Sandman spots Junior by the window looking in at Max and walks over.

SANDMAN

* What are you starin' at? *

JUNIOR

* Look there, Sandman. What do you see? *

SANDMAN

* I see the devil is what I see. *

* They watch Max do a few moves. Junior looks in at Max who does a difficult step. *

JUNIOR

(pointing to Max)

* The boy's got his shoes on again. He ain't "exercising". *

* Junior smiles and he chuckles to himself. Sandman looks at him. *

SANDMAN

* Whatchoo cackling about, old man? *

JUNIOR

(he laughs, interrupting)

* I can't believe this. Just now, I'm sitting up there thinking, "what a great idea I had. Too bad there ain't nobody special around anymore who's good enough to pull it off," and boom, the boy comes back with his shoes on. Now somebody's telling me something. *

SANDMAN

* Well don't matter who's telling you nothin', first of all you're not suppose to be on your feet and second, the kid won't even dance with you. *

JUNIOR

* That's what he "said." I ain't going to let this go to waste just 'cause the nigger don't know what he wants. He'll dance with me. *

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Junior gives a confident nod and walks though the door.
Sandman checks out the action through the window.

33A. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Junior walks directly in back of Max to a table across the room. Max eyes him in the full-length mirror. They nod hello to each other.

Junior takes an album from a table in the back of the room and starts back to the door.

He pauses ever so briefly to watch Max do a step. Max eyes him. Junior looks at the step, shakes his head disapprovingly, and walks to another part of the room. Max curiously looks down at his feet. Did he do something wrong? Junior looks over at Sandman who watches through the window.

LOBBY

Sandman watches through the window as Louis walks up. He spots Max dancing and looks at him curiously.

LOUIS

What's Max doing in there?

SANDMAN

What's it look like?

BACK TO SCENE

Junior walks behind Max, picks up another album, checks out Max's step, shakes his head disapprovingly but this time lets out a disgusted little laugh. He heads for the door where Sandman is peeking in.

Max looks down at his feet again. What the hell is he doing wrong? The little laugh gets to him. Before Junior reaches the door Max stops dancing and looks over at him.

MAX

Hey!

Junior turns around innocently.

MAX

You got a problem with somethin' ?
Walkin' back and forth, shakin'
your head, laughin' ?

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JUNIOR

I don't got no problem. I'm not
the one that got the sloppy left
side.

MAX

What do you mean?

JUNIOR

Your right foot's stronger then your
left. You favor it. Makes you
sloppy.

MAX

(a little laugh)
Bullshit.

JUNIOR

Suit yourself.

He starts towards the door. Sandman watches closely. As
Junior begins to open the door he turns once more.

JUNIOR

Plus...

(thinking better of it)

Ah, never mind. You're just exercising
don't really matter...

MAX

What?

Junior, the consummate actor, turns back to Max. He's milking
this set-up for all it's worth.

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JUNIOR

Well... you got no form.

Max gives another little laugh.

MAX

Form? Listen, Junior, I know you old timers were good in your day, but just 'cause you don't got no legs under you no more don't mean you can come in here and rag on me.

Junior's eyes narrow.

JUNIOR

No legs?

Max realizes he shouldn't have spouted off. After all, Junior is an old man.

JUNIOR

You say me and Sandman got no legs?

MAX

Okay, Junior...

JUNIOR

(interrupting)

No legs? You choosin' us off boy? You hear that, Sandman? The nigger said us old timers got no legs. He chose us off.

Junior turns to Max and stares him down angrily. It's good theater. Junior knows exactly what he's doing.

JUNIOR

(to Sandman)

Get me my metal!

Suddenly, Sandman gets nervous.

SANDMAN

(whispering)

Sunshine! Amy'd kill me.

JUNIOR

(angrily)

Go get me my shoes!

SANDMAN

(to himself)

Ah, shit.

34. REHEARSAL HALL #1

* The hoofers play cards. Henry is still at the piano. Just *
then, Harold hurtles into the hall.

* HAROLD *

Challenge!

They all look over at him. Quickly, they put down their cards
and start to get up. Henry spins around on the piano bench.
The excitement builds. It's like they're going to a
showdown.

* 35. FIRST FLOOR LOBBY *

* Louis is still on the phone. Just then, Harold calls down to *
* Arthur who is walking slowly up the staircase. Louis *
listens.

* HAROLD *

Challenge! Third floor!

* Arthur suddenly is more agile. He takes off up the *
* staircase. A few of the dancers milling around the lobby *
hear this and head upstairs. Louis hangs up the phone and
follows.

36. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Junior confidently strolls into the middle of the floor as
the other old timers move in.

MAX

Junior...

JUNIOR

I'll start ya' off slow. Don't
want to get ya' hurt.

The Old Timers start CLAPPING OUT A RHYTHM in this old
"challenge" tradition. Junior shows his stuff. It's simple,
straightforward. His taps are clean, precise. He points to
Max.

Max does some good steps. The old timers know it but they
won't give him the satisfaction.

JUNIOR

Kinda' weak on the left side, Hot
Shot.

Max smiles and finishes his turn. Now the other old timers
take their turns. Their fantastic. Each one does their
speciality. The steps that made them famous in their day.
Max watches them with admiration. They can still go.

37. FIRST FLOOR LOBBY

Amy wraps a towel around her shoulders as she exits her class. She notices a few dancers running up the staircase.

* The class hears about the challenge and heads up. Amy looks around for Louis. *

AMY

Louis? *

* She looks around and spots the rose on the desk. Amy looks at it curiously. Suddenly, she's uneasy. *

38. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Another Old Timer moves around the room. Junior and Max stand together.

JUNIOR.

You come with me to the club tomorrow night. I gotta show you something. Something you ain't gonna believe.

Max looks back non-committedly.

39. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY - AMY'S POV

Just then, Amy walks up the stairs and spots Louis looking over the heads of the crowd to the dancers. She spots Max as he starts to do some more steps. She's filled with emotion: curiosity, anger, passion. Her anger subsides when she see's that he's dancing again.

JUNIOR

(to Max)

That's it. Move around. Use the space. We don't rent this wood by the square foot. Chew it up!

Max finally points to Junior and he starts to dance. Amy watches her father and anger begins to bubble over. She walks into the rehearsal hall.

40. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Amy comes to a stop. Junior's still dancing with his back to her. The Old Timers spot her. Max is to the side. She pretends she doesn't see him.

*

SLIM

(under his breath)

Oh, shit.

*

She crosses to the tape recorder and turns OFF THE MUSIC. Junior does a turn and stops abruptly. He sees her and knows he's in trouble.

AMY

(to Junior)

What do you think you're doing?

JUNIOR

Now, honey...

AMY

(to Sandman)

And what are all you doing?
Standing there, watching?

Sandman and the Old Timers could crawl into a hole.

AMY

All of you should be ashamed of
yourselves. Now get out of here.

They start to stream out as she holds the door for them.

AMY

(to Old Timers)

Go on. You going to stay up with him
all night?

(to another)

You going to drive him to the doctor
at four A.M.?

(to others)

You?

Harold shakes his head.

AMY

(to Slim)

You?

*

*

He shakes his head. Max is the last one to file out. He turns around on the other side of the door and smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Hey, Amy.

She still doesn't respond. She just stares at him. Junior tries to smooth things over.

JUNIOR

Looks who's back, honey.

Max smiles. He's expecting a little smile back. A little something. But then, Amy closes the door in his face. Slam!

41. ON MAX

Max smiles. He likes that woman.

JUNIOR (O.S.)

Wait, son. She didn't mean that.

* Max looks down at Louis. Louis shrugs. *

42. BACK TO SCENE

Amy is staring down her father.

JUNIOR

Now, Amy...

He starts to go around her to the door.

AMY

Don't "now, Amy" me. Just look at yourself.

Junior opens the door and looks in the lobby. Max is gone. He spots Louis who is looking down the staircase.

JUNIOR

Where'd he go?

Louis nods towards the staircase. Junior walks over with Amy at his heels. He looks down the staircase and spots Max just about to leave the building.

JUNIOR

Come on back tomorrow. Seven o' clock.

Max waves without any commitments. He exits. Junior turns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNIOR

Damn!

(to Louis)

Go find out where he's staying. Go
'head.

Louis trots down the stairs after Max. Junior turns to his
daughter. She's still mad as hell.

AMY

You wanna kill yourself? Is that
it?

JUNIOR

Come on. We gotta talk.

AMY

You bet we're goin' to talk.

They walk through the beaded curtain into the apartment.

43. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Junior sits down with a thud. The dancing did take something
out of him. Amy starts drying his face with a towel.

AMY

Look at you! Sweating, out of
breath. The doctor said that if you
stayoff your feet, take it easy...

JUNIOR

(interrupting)

That I'll still die! Just be more
bored doing it!

Amy sighs. Junior looks in her eyes.

JUNIOR

I tried to sit it out. Little cards.
Gardening. But I'm no damn good at
any of them. I'm good at one thing.
I'm a tap dancer. And I'm proud of
that.

She understands her dad but doesn't give in.

JUNIOR

Now I got some things to do before
I go. And Sonny's boy ...

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY

(derogatorily)

* Sonny's boy. He's not interested in your ideas, Pop. You know what he's like. *

JUNIOR

* I know what he's been like but there's no reason to say a man can't change. *

AMY

* Come on. Max is what he is. He'll never change. *

JUNIOR

* He's got his shoes on again, don't he? When's the last time he's come by with his shoes on? Answer me that. And he's got his daddy's legs on top of those shoes. Nobody's got those kind of legs no more. That means he's been practicing. Now I still got a few more tricks up my sleeve and that boy's the one who can pull 'em off. But I gotta be on my feet for that. So I ain't going to kill anymore of those poor goddman plants. That's all over. If I'm going to die, I'm going to die with my metal on my feet. *

He crosses his arms defiantly. Amy sighs.

JUNIOR

What's the worst thing that can happen, baby? I get to see your mama a little sooner, that's all.

She kinda smiles. They hug. Just then, Louis enters the room.

LOUIS

Clark Hotel.

JUNIOR

(to Amy))

Now I want you to go apologize to him.

AMY

Pop...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNIOR

Make sure he heard what I said 'bout coming to the club. Be nice to him for once. The way you slammed that door in his face he's probably packin' his bags right now. Get going.

Junior kisses her on the forehead. She starts to take off. Now that she's gone, Junior downs the pill.

44. EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Amy crosses through traffic and stops in front of the Clark Hotel. She looks up at the rooms apprehensively. She gathers her strength and heaves a big sigh.

45. INT. MAX'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Max sits on the bed taking off his tap shoes. He sighs. Just then, there is a knock on the door. Then, Amy calls his name. Max smiles.

MAX

(singing out)

Come in.

Amy opens the door and walks in. She's not in a good mood. She looks around and spots Max in the corner pouring himself and her a drink. He's playing it cool.

MAX

Hey, baby. I was just having a drink, you want one?

AMY

What are you doing here?

MAX

Now what kind of a hello is that, Amy?

AMY

(perfunctorily)

Hello. Now what are you doing at the Clark Hotel?

MAX

I just got back in town, I needed a place to stay.

AMY

So you happened to choose the Clark Hotel right across from Sonny's.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY (continued)

* What's this? *

* She touches his shirt. *

MAX

* A shirt. *

AMY

* Where's the slick suits? What
happened to the limo? *

MAX

(laughing)

* What is this, "Dragnet"? Am I being
interrogated or something? *

AMY

* And the tap shoes. Last time I saw
you with a pair of tap shoes you were
throwing them into the East River.
* You goofing on the old guys or what? *

Max pauses, thinking about what the shoes mean to him. He
covers up. *

MAX

* I'm just fooling around. *

AMY

* Yeah. Listen, I just came by to give
you a message. Pop's got some crazy
idea that you've changed. *

* She looks at him with sarcasm. *

AMY

Tomorrow's Hooper's Night. First
Tuesday of the month we all get
together at Charlie's Club. Junior's
leavin' Sonny's around seven.

She looks at him curiously.

AMY

* Max. Now I don't know what you're up
to but do me a favor. Don't come. *

* She turns to go out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX
Hooper's night?

AMY
Yeah.

MAX
You going to be there?

AMY
Why?

MAX
Maybe we could go out after. Talk a
little.

Amy takes this for a sexual overture.

AMY
Talk a little. Max, these little
visits of yours are not appreciated.
Do me and Pop and Louis a favor and
get lost.

MAX
You don't mean that, Amy.

AMY
I don't, huh?

MAX
No. You still feel something. I can
tell.

AMY
You're right, I still feel something.
I still feel the same way I felt when
I was seventeen years old, the
curtains open for Max Washington and
Amy Simms and there ain't no
Washington 'cause he's out with his
buddies robbin' a liquor store or
something. Yeah, I feel the same
way Max...pissed.

MAX
Amy.

AMY
Forget it, Washington.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX

* What do you mean? *

AMY

Don't even dream about it.

MAX

(calling out)

Hey, I'm right next door to Sonny's,
baby. I'm suppose to dream.

* Amy disappears below and Max's smile fades. He sighs *
* The door closes and we: *

CUT TO:

* 46. INT. CAFETERIA KITCHEN - DAY *

Water sprays down on a sink full of grimy, dirty dishes. Max wears rubber gloves digging out caked in food and scrubbing away. He hears his name called and turns around. Julius stands by the side door.

JULIUS

Someone to see ya'. Make it quick!

Max walks to the side door drying a plate. He looks outside and spots a black late model Cadillac parked in the alley. A tall fellow (HOWARD) leans against the car while a thin well dressed man (NICKY) sits in the driver's seat singing off key to the radio.

Max sighs unhappily. He breathes in deeply, gathering his strength, and walks outside with a confident smile.

* 47. EXT. CAFETERIA ALLEY *

Max throws a dish towel over his shoulder and puts the plate

(more)

CONTINUED:

down on the Cad.

MAX

Hey! Howey, you grew some hair...

HOWARD

Show-biz.

Max pats his face with the rubber gloves still on his hands.

MAX

How's it going? Take a bow.

Max flicks his hand at Howard's crotch making him bend over and looking like a bow.

HOWARD

You put on some weight in the can?
You lookin' good, Maxey.

NICKY

Yeah, I like the wardrobe, Show Biz.

Max turns to Nicky who leans out of the car. Nicky is more sarcastic. A crazy, sadistic little character. Max doesn't like him. Nicky looks over Max's wardrobe: dirty pants, shoes, a soiled apron and the bright yellow gloves. Nicky gets out of the car. He is impeccably dressed in suit and tie.

NICKY

Sharp. Very now. The gloves are particularly attractive.

He snickers at his own joke. Max doesn't find him funny and turns to Howard.

HOWARD

Francis wants to see you.

NICKY

(sarcastically)

Yeah. What's the deal, Show-biz?
Francis knew when you were gettin' out. He was very hurt when you didn't call. He got us running all around town trackin' you down. What happened? You don't wanna see us no more? You pussy-up in jail?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

* Up yours, Nicky. *

JULIUS (O.S.)

* Washington! Inside! *

NICKY

* We better go, Howard. The man has a full schedule here. *

Nicky giggles annoyingly as he walks to the car. Howard heads for the passenger side.

HOWARD

* Francis wants to see you tonight. Give us a call, we'll send a car. *

NICKY

* The man's busy, Howard. Got a date with some brillo pads. *

Nicky snickers again. Max takes the plate off the car as Nicky guns the engine. The sound of Nicky's giggles trail away. Hold on Max as he watches them drive away.

*47A. INT. JUNIOR'S - REHEARSAL HALL - CLOSE ON WRIST WATCH - NIGHT *

which reads 7:00. Sunshine looks out the window at the Clark Hotel entrance. A couple of pedestrians pass by but no Max. Amy walks up in the background.

AMY

Eat some dinner, Pop. It's late.

SUNSHINE

* You told him seven, didn't you? *

AMY

I told him.

* Sunshine exits. Amy saunters over to the mirror checking her hair and glances out the window to see if Max is coming. *

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

* After hours Sonny's turns into a soup kitchen for the hoofers and their families. Harold's wife, SARAH talks with Spats' wife, MILLY. Sandman is the cook. He brings out a new pot of beans. He wears an old frilly feminine apron. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDMAN

* The boy's a quitter through and through. He's a crook. *

SARAH

* All I know is Amy come to town with a little baby and a runaway husband and Max raised up Louis like he was his own. *

SANDMAN

* Right. Then he quit on 'em. *

BUNNY

* They wasn't married. The boy was under no obligation. *

SANDMAN

* Obligation! *

* Just then, Sarah "shushes" them as Junior and Louis walk in the room. They change the subject. *

SLIM

* These pork chops of yours getting real nasty, Sandman. *

SANDMAN

* Don't tell it to me, Slim. Go tell it to the pig. *

Sandman takes an empty plate off the table as Junior walks in.

JUNIOR

Where you going with that?

SANDMAN

The kid ain't coming.

JUNIOR

* You got a crystal ball? Leave it. *

Junior sits down in his place. Sandman holds the pan over Junior's head and pretends to level him. Amy walks in and Sarah look over at her.

SARAH

* Amy. Harold said that Max was back with his shoes on again and he was going good. *

AMY

* I guess he was, Sarah. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

* Amy walks into her room. *

HAROLD *

'Course he's going good. You don't
lose it once you got it. *

BUNNY *

He's always been good. Got it in his
genes. *

SLIM *

Oh yeah. Sonny had him on the
Sullivan show a couple of times and
he was only 'bout ten years old.
Could he sing and dance! *

* Arthur gives Louis a playful slap on the head. *

LOUIS

Hey!

ARTHUR *

See, If you didn't quit dancin' you
could be on the Sullivan show like
too. That's good money.

LOUIS

There's no Sullivan show no more.

JUNIOR

Shut up.

(to others)

* The boy would have been one of the
best hoofers that ever was. Had his
daddy's charm, his style... *

SANDMAN

* He didn't have his daddy's nothin'! *

* Milly "shushes" him, nodding towards Louis so Sandman will be
more sensitive. *

SANDMAN

(quieter)

* The kids a quitter. Always has been.
First he quit on his dancin', then he
quit on his daddy when he was sick.
Then he quit on everything else. *

(to Junior)

I'm surprised at you always defending
that punk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUNIOR

* Shut up, old man. You don't know shit. It ain't all the boy's fault for being the way he is. He went through some tough times. He got the rug pulled out from under him like we all did. But at least we had our day. The boy was that close to being a star when it all went down. *

Louis watches the Old Timers grumble and silently reminisce. He doesn't know what Junior's talking about.

LOUIS

When what all went down?

JUNIOR

Work. When the work dried up.

LOUIS

You mean you guys used to work?

All the Old Timers turn and look at Louis who figures he's said something wrong. Slim leans over him.

SLIM

What do you mean, "did we work?" Get over here, punk

Slim moves Louis' chair to the middle of the room as the Old Timer's good naturedly set Louis straight.

JUNIOR

You're looking at headliners in this room.

Junior turns Louis' seat around to face Sandman. Henry plays

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

35.

the piano in the background.

JUNIOR

The Sandman was still making good money doing his sand dancin' at the Apollo in '54. Ain't that right?

Sandman mimes putting sand on the ground and does a few steps.

SANDMAN

Yeah. Used to lay down the sand for some good money. Next thing I know I'm in the same place making one dollar an hour sweeping it up.

He mimes the broom as all the folks laugh. Louis watches as Harold swivels Louis' chair towards him.

HAROLD

I was in a big Broadway show. Standing ovations, doing my thing...

He does a few steps.

HAROLD

Ten years later, I'm selling tickets at the same damn theater. Those were bad times.

JUNIOR

That's when Sonny closed off the third floor. He said nobody's allowed up here except the best hoofers in the whole world. That didn't get us any work but it made us feel okay. Old Sonny had a way that made you wanna go on. With all his own problems, the kid.

ARTHUR

The wife running off with that rich dude.

JUNIOR

He still kept our spirits up.
(pause)
Those were bad times.

HAROLD

Seemed to change overnight, didn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*

SLIM

*

Like Sonny's boy. One day he's in
top hat and tails, the next day he's
in trouble at school, with the law.

*

BUNNY

*

One day we were on top of the world.
Next day...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

They all sigh, thinking about the bad times.

SANDMAN

It was that damn rock and roll.

JUNIOR

Sheiiiiit!

SANDMAN

Still killing us. And you wanna go
dance to that junk.

The old timers each offer theories on the death of tap:
"Oklahoma did it...", "Nah, Talkies...", "No way man,
Vaudeville...". As the argument picks up steam, Spats leans
in from the rehearsal hall.

SPATS

Junior! Hot Shot's out there.

Junior, Sandman and some of the others hustle out of the
apartment and into the rehearsal hall.

49. EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

Max stands across the street from Sonny's. He leans against
a wall. He looks over at Sonny's and begins to pace.

50. INT. REHEARSAL HALL #1

Junior and Sandman look through the window at Max.

JUNIOR

(to himself))

Come on, kid. What are you waiting
for?

51. ANGLE ON MAX - POV

Max leans against the wall. He looks down at his watch.

52. INT. AMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

* Louis looks out the window in Amy's room. Amy walks to the window and sneaks a peek. *

53. BACK TO MAX

He looks up at Sonny's. He spots the old timers at the window. Just then, a long stretch limo pulls up and Max gets in.

54. REHEARSAL HALL #1

Junior and Sandman watch as the car takes off.

SANDMAN
Can I take the plate now?

JUNIOR
Shut up.

55. INT. AMY'S ROOM

* Amy watches. Louis sighs and walks out of the room. Amy takes the rose that she had put in a vase on the bureau and throws it in the trash. *

AMY
(to herself)
Turkey!

CUT TO:

56. INT. LIMO

Max sits alone in the splendor of the back seat of the limo. He's apprehensive about being there but it does feel good. He plays with the buttons above him. The sunroof opens, a little bar door opens in front of him revealing champagne in an ice bucket. The divider between him and the driver opens.

DRIVER
Need anything, sir?

We HEAR THE CORK POP.

MAX
No.

He closes the divider and leans back

CUT TO:

57. EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT - NIGHT

The limo drives up to an apartment building. The CAMERA TILTS UP the side of the place and stops at the rooftop twenty floors above the ground.

58. INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Max walks down the hallway towards a penthouse door guarded by two LARGE FELLOWS. (BUD and CHARLIE).

MAX

How's it going, Bud? Charlie?

CHARLIE

Alright, Show-biz.

Bud pats Max down. Standard operating procedure.

BUD

You're looking good, Maxey. You put on some muscle in the can?

MAX

A little.

CHARLIE

He'll meet ya' in the back.

Max enters the side doorway.

59. EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT

Max walks out onto the Penthouse balcony that oversees a sparkling New York skyline. He looks into the Penthouse windows and through the curtains. He gets glimpses of a small, fancy dinner party. A couple of gorgeous GIRLS sit to the side like expensive furniture.

Max hears some coins hitting the balcony floor and turns to see Howard and Nicky pitching pennies against the wall. Nicky argues with Howard about whose coin is closer. Howard spots Max.

HOWARD

There he is. I'll go tell Francis you're here. You wanna drink?

MAX

Why not.

Howard exits. Max looks over the balcony wall at the view as Nicky picks up his coins.

CONTINUED:

NICKY

You lost me twenty bucks when you called tonight, damn it. You looked so natural in the apron and the soap suds. I thought prison life mighta' cut the balls off our ol' pal Showbiz. That's what I thought.

MAX

Thinking was never one of your strong points, Nicky.

Nicky snickers, sits back in a seat and plays with the coins in his hand. Max tries to ignore him.

NICKY

(sarcastically) ..

So the ol' crazy fuck's finally returned. Kinda like old times.

(pause))

Hey, do that thing that you used to do.

MAX

What thing?

NICKY

You know, "the thing". That walkin' 'round the wall thing.

He gestures around at the wall that borders the penthouse balcony.

MAX

Forget it.

Max walks to a chair and sits down. Nicky walks over to him.

NICKY

Come on.

MAX

I said, "forget it".

Nicky takes some money out of his pocket.

NICKY

I'll give ya' twenty bucks.

He sticks it in Max's face. Max turns away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICKY

Forty?

(pause)

Okay, fifty bucks, one time around.
 What's wrong, Show biz? Don't you
 need a little? You always liked the
 green stuff.

He holds the money in front of Max again. Nicky studies his
 cold stare. Max looks away. Nicky sees something in Max's
 eyes.

NICKY

You're scared, aren't you? You did
 pussy out.

Max looks back at him angrily, a cold-blooded stare.

MAX

Careful, Nicky.

After a beat Nicky can't help snickering. Max's anger mounts
 until...

FRANCIS (O.S.)

Maxwell.

Max and Nicky turn to see a silhouetted figure standing in
 the Penthouse doorway. Francis emerges into the light. He
 is in his early forties. The criminal side of him is buried
 beneath a handsome, debonair, intelligent facade. He walks up
 and gives Max a hug.

FRANCIS

It's good to see you. You've put on
 some muscle. You've been working out?

MAX

A little, yeah.

FRANCIS

So, when did you get back in town?

MAX

A few days ago.

FRANCIS

Yeah, I know. We were checking with
 the parole office. You didn't call.

MAX

Right. I'm cooling it for awhile,
 Francis. I just came by to pick up
 (more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

* MAX (continued) *
my stuff. Understand?

* FRANCIS *
Sure. I understand.

Francis puts his arm around Max's shoulder and walks along the balcony.

* FRANCIS *
When I was sixteen years old they threw me in prison for six months for stealing a broken TV. Six months. Now you think, six months, it's nothing. Guys like Nicky and Howard, that would be a breeze. Three meals a day, a place to sleep, what do they care? But it doesn't work that way for people like you and me. We're not just waiting around for life to end. We need it now. Every second we're not living, we're dying.

They stop and Francis turns to him.

* FRANCIS *
I know what you're going through and I know what you're feeling. Don't let them get to you. They want you to spend your life scrubbing dishes. You might as well be back behind bars. They don't care if your special, if you got talent, if you need more.

Max listens.

* FRANCIS *
You're worried about getting caught again. Forget it, you're too good. That last time was a fluke. That was my fault. You weren't right...your father passing away. You were upset. I should have never sent you out on that gig. That won't happen again.

Francis is pushing the right buttons.

* FRANCIS *
I'll be honest with you, Maxwell. I want you back here. The first time Howard dragged you in here I knew you
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANCIS (continued)
had...style. Don't let them kick
that out of you. Okay?

* Max half-heartedly agrees. *

FRANCIS

(to Nicky)

* Nicky. Bring Max's things to him
tomorrow. *

(to Max)

* Oh, and Max. As just a little favor.
Could you go with the guys tomorrow.
Check out something for me. *

Francis digs into his money clip and starts counting out
hundreds.

* FRANCIS *

* No obligation on your part. I just
want to hire you as, lets say, a
consultant. Just tell me if it can
be done. *

* Francis slips the money in Max's pocket. *

FRANCIS

(to Nicky)

* Howard. Remember that jewelry gig we
were talkin' about last week? Let Max
check it out. *

NICKY

Francis, I don't think it's a good
idea.

FRANCIS

What are you talking about?

NICKY

I don't think it's a good idea. Show-
biz don't have it anymore. I think
maybe his testicles shrunk in the
can. Can't even do that thing around
wall. He's scared.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

FRANCIS

Bullshit.

NICKY

You are scared. Ain't I right, Show-biz?

Francis looks over at him. So does Nicky and Howard. Max stares at Nicky coldly. Francis waits for an answer.

FRANCIS

Maxwell?

Max sighs, walks over to the wall, looks over the edge to the street below, looks back at Nicky with that sickly little grin and jumps onto the wall.

In the next few seconds we see Max's great athletic abilities. He walks across the narrow ledge. He hops up and over the different levels of the wall, dangerously sliding down one end with the dexterity of an acrobat.

FRANCIS

There you go, Nicky. He's still got it. Look at that balance. Look at those legs. What was it you were. Max? Runner? Acrobat?

NICKY

Tap dancer.

FRANCIS

That's right. Tap dancer. I love that shit.

* Just then, a BEAUTIFUL GIRL leans out the doorway. Max spots her. *

GIRL

Francis.

Francis motions for her to wait. Just then, Max gets to the end of the wall and jumps off in front of the others.

FRANCIS

There we go.

(to Nicky)

Show him the place tomorrow. Let him check it out.

(to Max)

I'll see you later. Remember, Maxwell... "style".

CONTINUED: (6)

Francis smiles , joins the Beautiful Girl, and walks back into the party. Max turns to Nicky who smiles. Nicky slowly applauds.

NICKY

Well done, Show-biz. Well done.

He smiles. Max smiles back.

MAX

Thanks, Nicky.

With that he leans back and socks him in the jaw. Nicky goes flying back and Max heads for the exit. Nicky rubs his jaw and smiles.

CUT TO:

60. EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

The limo drives down the street

61. INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Max sits in the back. He closes his eyes and listens to a moody love song on the radio. Soon, the car stops, the door opens, and Max opens his eyes and spots a pair of sexy legs getting into the car. Her name is MARY JO and she's a beautiful call girl. The limo starts up again.

MARY JO

Hi.

MAX

Who are you?

MARY JO

My name is Mary Jo. Francis asked me to make sure you get back home alright.

She smiles suggestively and pours a glass of champagne. She offers it to him. Max looks at the glass.

MAX

No thanks.

(to driver)

Make a right on thirty-fourth street.

Mary Jo shrugs and drinks the champagne herself.

62. EXT. TIME SQUARE - NIGHT

* The limo pulls up and Max gets out. He looks across at a little club. A neon sign blinks on and off: CHARLIE'S CLUB ROCK AND ROLL. MUSIC COMES OUT of the place and so do a couple of DANCERS with their tap shoes slung over their shoulders. Max starts for the door. *

CUT TO:

63. INT. CLUB - NIGHT

The club is small, dark and full of atmosphere. Crowded, smokey, cigarettes, liquor and tap. Max walks past several framed pictures of rock and roll performers.

* On a small stage is a group fronting a FEMALE SINGER doing a blues number. A tap dancer accompanies her. Tap dancers sit in the audience. Their tap shoes hang over their shoulders. One guy adjusts the screw in one of his taps with the end of a knife. *

Max stands in the back looking over the tops of heads. Junior, Sandman and some of the other old timers sit at a table in front of the stage. Junior interrupts a conversation when he spots Max. He waves him over.

Max walks through the crowd, checks out the dancers again, and heads for the table. Junior leans over to Sandman.

JUNIOR

Get up.

SANDMAN

Whatchoo' mean, "Get up"? Who you think you're talkin' to, nigger?

Junior nods towards Max. Sandman looks over and shakes his head disapprovingly.

JUNIOR

Talkin' to you. Now get out of the chair.

As Max steps to the table, Sandman begrudgingly gets up giving Max a hard look. Junior stands to greet him.

JUNIOR

Sit down, Max. I want you to meet somebody.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

JUNIOR (continued)
(calling over)

* Harry! Bring the gadget! *

A tall white guy (HARRY) with long flowing hair and a thin mustache looks up from a table. Junior waves him over.

JUNIOR

* Remember Charlie's Club, Max? Your daddy played here couple times. Charlie turned it into rock and roll joint 'while back but he still keeps Monday night open for us. *

Just then, Harry sits down next to them.

JUNIOR

* Harry, this is Max Washington. Max this is Charlie's boy, Harry. *

Max shakes Harry's hand but his eyes keep roaming, looking for Amy.

JUNIOR

Harry here plays synthesizer. That's his group up there. Now listen to this wild idea. Tell him, Harry.

Just then, the group on stage finishes and everyone applauds. Then, Harry leans in and speaks. He's a strange fellow with quirky idiosyncrasies. He's pale and lean and constantly sucks on a piece of his long hair. Max half listens, looking around the place.

HARRY

* Junior and me been talkin' 'bout mixing tap and rock. Nobody thinks of doing it. Why? Can't hear it. Now....take a look at this. *

He puts some wired tap shoes on the table. Max looks at the

HARRY

* I'm riggin' pickups underneath the taps. I'll send'em through my system and...bam! You'll hear it from here to Harlem. Then man, dig this. We feed it through the synth and you can even change the sound to anything you want. I mean... *

(getting strangely

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

 excited)
 ... anything!
 (back to earth)
 You follow me?

Max nods.

 HARRY
 We're the house band. We could work
 you in during regular hours. You
 sing?

Max is about to answer when Junior chimes in.

 JUNIOR
 Yeah, he sings. Great voice.

Just then, the Drummer and conga player start playing a vamp.

 MAX
 Hold it. What are you talkin' about?

 JUNIOR
 Talkin' about the future, Max. We're
 talkin' 'bout gettin' tap out of the
 damn museum. During the week this
 place is filled with kids that don't
 know nothin' about what we do. We
 gotta show 'em, and we gotta show 'em
 to today's music. I saw you do it
 yesterday. Before that it was only
 in my head. Now you're back, all we
 got to do is put it up there.

 MAX
 And what do I get when I go up there?
 What do you split? Few hundred a
 week? Come on, Junior.

 JUNIOR
 Whatcha' make ain't the point.
 Listen to me now.

Junior dramatically sells his point.

 JUNIOR
 You, Maxwell Washington, are going to
 bring tap dancing back.

Junior awaits the big response. Max doesn't give him one.
 Max has heard this a million times. Just then, MUSIC
 INTERRUPTS and several FEMALE DANCERS fill the stage.

64. DANCE ROUTINE

* Amy leads the dancers in a "Shim-Sham" number. As the dance *
 continues she goes off the stage spotlighting the other
 * women. Max watches her go toward the bar and follows. *

65. BAR

* Max stops behind Bob, who is talking to Amy at the bar. Max *
 waves trying to get Amy's attention. She spots him and
 * frowns. Amy tries to ignore him, listening to Bob, but soon
 Bob notices her looking behind him and turns around.

AMY

Excuse me, Bob. This is my friend
 Max Washington.

(to Max)

Max, this is Bob Wyeth.

MAX

* Hello, Bob. *

* Bob gives Max the once over and isn't impressed. He's a bit *
 on the snotty side.

BOB

* Pleasure. *

* He turns right back to Amy and continues to talk, ignoring *
 Max. Max won't take the snub.

MAX

* I hope I'm not intruding. I just had *
 to come back and tell my dear friend
 Amy how much I enjoyed her
 performance.

(to Bob)

Is this woman a dancer?

BOB

Yes she is.

MAX

And attractive, wouldn't you say,
 Bob?

BOB

I certainly would.

MAX

And you, Bob. Are you a hooper?

CONTINUED:

BOB

No, I'm a...

AMY

(annoyed)

Bob is a Broadway director, Max. I'm helping him cast his show. Now...

MAX

And that's a tap show? *

AMY

That's right. *

MAX

So let me get this straight, you're a Broadway director doing a tap dance show but you don't know how to tap dance. How do you do that, Bob? *

AMY

Max!

Amy looks at Max angrily. Max smiles innocently.

BOB

No, that's a valid question.

(to Max)

Last year I directed a play about suicide and I've never done that either. Imagination, Mr. Washington. Imagination.

MAX

(goofing)

Touche, Bob. Touche. Now if you can excuse us for just a second...

He moves past Bob and takes Amy by the hand.

MAX

(to Bartender)

Bartender! A drink for my friend. Bob here...

(to Bob)

...we'll be right back.

Max walks away with Amy in tow.

AMY

What do you think you're doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:(2)

MAX

Let's get outta here. There's a nice little restaurant 'cross town.

Amy stops.

AMY

* Am I missing something, Max? Didn't I make myself clear last time we talked? Besides I have to be here. This isn't just for fun. I'm working with Bob. *

MAX

Bob'll be fine. He can just imagine that you're here.

66. ON JUNIOR

He watches them talking from his seat in the front. He looks around at the stage and gets an idea.

57. BACK TO SCENE

He turns back to Bob.

MAX

Bob. This might take a little longer than I thought. Family business. Here...

(he holds out some money)

...grab a cab.

Bob is not amused. He doesn't take the money and looks over at Amy.

BOB

Goodnight, Amy.

He starts to walk away.

AMY

Wait, Bob.

BOB

That's alright, I'll see you tomorrow.

Amy turns to Max, angrily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY

Great, Max. I've been trying to get him down here for two months to see some real tap and you go and scare him away. Jesus.

Just then, they are interrupted by the lights fading, a fanfare, and Junior stepping to the stage with microphone in hand. The AUDIENCE APPLAUDS. Max and Amy look over at him.

JUNIOR

Some of you kids been asking us old timers where we got our moves. Well, we stold 'em.

Some laughter.

JUNIOR

Stold 'em from each other. See you steal from enough people you wind up finding your own style. Get your own hook. Something that sets you apart. But there was one man we could never figure out where he stold his material. That's cause he was an original. That was the great Sonny Washington.

People applaud. Max listens with mixed emotions. Amy looks over at him to check out his reaction.

JUNIOR

Now you all know Sonny's name 'cause of the school. But most of you are too young, you never seen Sonny's moves. Well, there's someone here that can show you, if we can get him up on stage. His son, Max Washington!

Junior points towards Max. The spotlight turns and searches for him. It hits Max and the audience applauds.

Max tries to stay cool with a little laugh. He shakes his head no, refusing to go on. The applause intensifies. Amy watches him curiously.

MAX

(to Junior)

Thanks anyhow. Maybe another time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUNIOR

* Come on, Max! *

MAX

* (thinking up an excuse)
Listen... I don't have any shoes. *

* Junior turns to the crowd. *

JUNIOR

* Anybody have a pair of shoes for
Washington? ** Half of the crowd either raises their hands or their shoes.
Junior eggs him on. Amy turns to him. *

AMY

* Do this for my old man, Max. *

MAX

* Alright. I'll do it. But you and I,
Tomorrow night, seven o'clock. *

Amy sighs. *

68. CLOSE ON SHOES - LATER

Max's hands tie a pair of tap shoes. The CAMERA RISES to his
face as he looks out towards the audience. All eyes are on
him as they await his performance.

MAX

(to himself)

Shit.

Max stands up. He does some simple shuffles to get the feel
of the shoes. He walks to the microphone. He starts off a
little nervous.

(CONTINUED)

MAX

Sonny was known as the King of Rhythm. He didn't care about anything but the sound. He was all down there.

He nods towards his feet.

MAX

Junior's wrong about one thing. My dad stold his stuff just like everybody else. But he didn't steal it from other dancers. He had a secret.

Max looks out into the crowd. They are all attentive. His confidence has returned.

MAX

I can't show you here. Come on.

Max walks off the stage and heads for the front door. Everyone gets up and starts to follow. He passes Amy.

MAX

You still have that red dress? The one with the...

He motions with his hands indicating he wants to see some cleavage. She shakes her head. Everyone follows Max out of the place.

69. EXT. CLUB - MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

Max followed by Amy, Junior and the rest of the audience exit the club. Max steps out into the street and looks back at the crowd. Cars and taxies whiz by in the background.

MAX

This is where he stold all his stuff.

Max turns around and gestures into the air.

MAX

Manhattan. The city. There's music in these streets. Listen.

Max points to a grating covering a manhole in the middle of the street. As vehicles pass over the metal slab, the tires make a rhythmic sound.

MAX

You hear it?

(CONTINUED)

54.

CONTINUED:

Max turns to see everyone listening. Now he imitates the sound with his taps.

Amy watches, curiously. As Max gets into the routine she sees a new Max. A Max with more than just a slick line. A Max with talent. Talent not only to dance but to communicate.

MAX

(to crowd)

Come on. Go for it.

And now the crowd picks up on the step. Fifty people, young, old, start to tap right on the streets of New York City. Max watches them dance. Slowly but surely he totally loses all his inhibitions.

Another sound, an arrhythmic CAR HORN HONKING, begins and Max adds that to this evolving routine. The musicians look out the window and start to pick up the flow of the routine. They start to play.

70. THE ROUTINE

The dance should feel spontaneous and unrehearsed. Max leads the dancing crowd in front of a nearby construction sight where he taps up a stack of two by fours.

More sounds enliven the rhythm. A subway rumbling beneath them, a car skidding, a kid running. The crowd spreads out, discovering more sounds, more rhythms, dancing away. Some slow, some fast. Soft shoes and acrobatics mixed together. A whirlwind, mayhem.

Finally, Max does a few steps that everyone begins to pick up on. Soon, the entire group is doing the same step. Max jumps into the back of the bed of a parked pick-up and continues the dance. He jumps from the back and concludes the routine as the truck starts to pull away.

Max gives some high fives to the dancers. Smiles, laughs, hugs. Junior looks over at Sandman and gives him an "I told you so" look. Harry excitedly ad libs some lines about how all those sounds could be put through his synthesizer.

Max turns away and sees Amy who smiles. He looks at her with coy aloofness and repeats the "cleavage" notion with his hands. She shakes her head.

CUT TO:

OMIT 71-72

* 72A. INT. MAX'S ROOM - CLOSE ON TRUNK - DAY *

* A clothing trunk opens. There are several expensive suits hung inside. Max looks them over. Just then, Howard comes into the room carrying a large suitcase, stacking it with some other luggage. *

HOWARD

* Think you got enough stuff, Show Biz? *

* Max ignores him. Howard waits a moment and then heads for the door. *

HOWARD

* You ready? *

MAX

* I'll be right down. *

* Howard exits and Max looks through the trunk. Expensive ties, jewelry, shoes. then he opens a door and pulls out a picture of him and his dad. He looks it over. Just then... *

NICKY O.S.

* Let's go, man! *

* Max puts the picture away. *

CUT TO:

73. EXT. JEWELRY MART - MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

As the MUSIC CONTINUES we are close on jewelry. Lots of it. Display after display.

SEVERAL SHOTS of jewelry signs. We look down an eight story sign reading DIAMONDS to the street below. Howard's car pulls up.

A reflection of the sign in the window disappears as Max rolls down the window and looks up at the building.

* 74. INT. CADILLAC - DAY *

HOWARD

Eighth floor. Window in the corner opposite the "D" in the Diamond sign.

* Max looks up the building. He spots the window. He follows a path from the window, down the sign, along a ledge right above the car. Nicky watches Max and smirks. *

CONTINUED:

NICKY

* Francis told us about how you screwed up that last time with your dad croaking and all. Too bad. If you take this gig you don't have like a sick mother I should worry about, do ya'?

MAX

* I'm not doing the gig, Nicky.
(to Howard)
Okay. It's not too bad. You got an inside man?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

* Yeah, the owner. *

MAX

* Good. Have him leave the window open, get the safe combination. You'll need to check out the guard shift. It'll be about ten, fifteen minutes. Go about two a.m. get someone to go straight up the diamond sign. What's the pick up? *

HOWARD

Uncut. About five hundred grandworth. We get two seventy-five, the owner of the place gets the rest plus the insurance. You get twenty percent of our cut.

NICKY

* That's over fifty thousand bucks in fifteen minutes. That's a lot of dirty dishes. Show Biz. You sure you're out? *

MAX

(unsure)

* Yeah. *

HOWARD

* Well, listen, Francis told us to keep the gig open so you can think about it. Okay? *

* Max thinks about it. *

AMY (O.S.)

Five, six, five, six, seven, eight...

CUT TO:

75. INT. SONNY'S REHEARSAL HALL - DUSK

A class of nine, ten and eleven year old girls and one nine year old boy. The BOY, ANTHONY, is standing in the corner not paying any attention. Amy watches the class.

(CONTINUED)

76. EXT. SONNY'S - STREET

* Max, dodges traffic as he hustles across the street. He's
 * dressed up in his new cloths, looking good. He stops in
 front of the flower shop. Again, picking a single rose from a
 bunch, he whistles to the owner and places payment in with
 the other roses.

77. SONNY'S STAIRWAY

He takes two steps at a time.

78. LOBBY

* Max confidently walks into the lobby. He looks through the
 * rehearsal hall window and catches Amy's eye. She checks her
 watch and starts towards the door. Max looks over at Louis
 who is sitting behind the desk. He takes a fresh deck of
 cards out of his pocket and throws it to Louis.

MAX

* Here. Throw that other deck away
 * before I take all your money. The
 * Knick game, Friday night. Thirteenth
 * row. Hide 'em.

* Louis puts the tickets under his hat and opens the pack of
 * cards. Just then Amy comes out the door.

AMY

* Max, my classes are running late.
 * You wanna do this some other time?

MAX

* Forget that, honey. We had a deal.
 * Go get dressed, I'll watch the class.

AMY

* You?

MAX

* Yeah, me. I can watch a damn class.
 * Now go on!

* Amy sighs and apprehensively heads for the staircase. Max

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Max apprehensively looks at the class as Amy heads for the staircase. Max goes to the rehearsal hall door and turns back to see Amy watching him.

AMY

Go 'head or we'll be late.

Amy turns and heads up the stairs. Max goes into the rehearsal hall. Louis, having heard this, slides his chair closer to the doorway so he can observe Max.

79. REHEARSAL HALL

The sweet innocent children are gathered in the middle of the room. They stop chatting and look over at Max as he walks in.

MAX

Hi.

Max looks over and spots a rather stuffy, middle aged FEMALE PARENT reading a book in the corner. The Parent looks up.

MAX

How's it going, hon?

The Parent is somewhat offended and goes back to her book.

MAX

(to class)

Amy had to go so I'm taking over the class. Let's see what you got. And five, six, seven, eight...

He continues to snap his fingers as they start to dance. Max looks over the class and spots Anthony in the corner. He isn't dancing.

MAX

Hold it. Hold it. What the hell's wrong with you back there?

FIRST GIRL

That's Anthony. He doesn't dance.

MAX

(to Anthony)

You don't dance?

ANTHONY

(shyly)

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Whatcha' doing here, then?

SECOND GIRL

His mom makes him come.

MAX

Well as long as you're here, why
don't you give it a try?

ANTHONY

No.

MAX

Why not?

ANTHONY

'Cause dancin's for girls.

Max walks closer to the boy.

MAX

For girls, huh? What do I look like?

Anthony looks him over suspiciously.

MAX

Don't say it, man. I'll put you in
the hospital.

* Anthony looks away. Max looks back at Louis. Max starts
towards the door. *

MAX

* You wait there. Rest of you practice
that routine. *

* 80. LOBBY - ADJACENT REHEARSAL HALL *

* Max spots Louis dribbling a basketball in an adjacent
rehearsal hall. Louis dribbles between his legs. *

MAX

(whispering)

* You know this routine in here? *

LOUIS

It's kindergarten stuff.

MAX

Show the kid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS
What are you talking about?

MAX
You still got tap shoes, right? Show
the kid how to do the routine.

LOUIS
(laughing)
You show him.

MAX
You're his age. He may try it if he
sees you do it.

LOUIS
Forget it. What's with you? You
always said it was a waste of time.

MAX
Yeah, so now I'm telling you
different. Go ahead man. You show
those women, they're going to dig it.

LOUIS
I said, "no".

Louis walks back into the lobby and plays with his new deck
of cards.

MAX
Listen now. I helped raise you. I
changed your damn diapers. Now I'm
not asking you anymore. I'm telling
you.

Louis doesn't buy it. He looks at him as if to say, "give me
a break." Max knows the tactic didn't work. He points to
the cards.

MAX
Okay, one time around. If I win you
show the kid the routine and watch
the class while I take your mom to
dinner.

LOUIS
And if I win?

Max takes out a crisp twenty dollar bill. Louis considers
the bet. He flip-flops the cards and lays them out. Max
takes his time. The new unmarked deck is impossible to read.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Max looks into Louis' hopeful eyes as he scans the cards with his hand. When he puts his hand over the middle card Louis' little face gives it away. He picks up the ace and smiles.

MAX

Put on the metal.

Louis is pissed.

CUT TO:

81. STAIRCASE

Junior gives Amy last minute instructions as she heads downstairs.

JUNIOR

Just ask him. Don't give him no hard sell or he's libel to bolt.

AMY

Okay. Pop. Okay.

82. FIRST FLOOR LOBBY

She stops dead in her tracks as she looks in the rehearsal hall window. Not only is Anthony clumsily trying to do the routine, but it's Louis who's leading him. Max walks around the room, counting out, watching them dance.

Louis is real good. As he does the routine he notices that the girls are watching him, whispering to each other. He's starting to like what he's doing.

Max looks out the window and catches Amy's eye. She smiles. Finally, the whole class comes in on the final bars of the routine and it ends. Max gives Louis a high five.
ROMANTIC THEME BEGINS as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

83. EXT. SUNNY'S - NIGHT

They grab a cab. MUSIC CONTINUES.

DISSOLVE TO:

84. EXT. RESTAURANT - MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

A taxi cab pulls up in front of a elegant restaurant. Max gets out, holds the door for Amy, and hands the Driver some money.

He plays it big time for Amy with all the charm and flamboyance he can muster. She's holding back, but the charm is getting to her. The Doorman nods and opens the door. ROMANTIC THEME MUSIC CONTINUES AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

85. INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A WAITER moves across the floor of the ornate interior of the restaurant. This is swank. This is expensive, even for New York. The Waiter stops in front of Max and Amy's table delivering their meal. They are already into a bottle of wine. Amy smiles as the Waiter takes off the silver top revealing her meal. Max smiles, knowing that she's pleased. The MUSIC CONTINUES AS WE:

DISSOLVE TO:

86. INT. RESTAURANT - ON MAX AND AMY - LATER

Their meals are finished and they are sipping the last of the wine.

MAX

* He's getting real big. Maybe play *
some ball. Didn't you tell me his
daddy was over six feet

AMY

* Something like that. *

MAX

* Whatever happened to that guy you *
were tight with? What was his name?
Phil? Joe? Ralph? That was it.
Ralph. Weren't you going to marry
him or something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY

I was thinking about it. Didn't work out. Ralph was a good man. Solid, hard working...

Max finds the description boring and snores. Amy sees it and pointedly directs the description to him.

AMY

...responsible.

(Max smiles)

All he wanted was a wife. Someone to be there for him. He didn't want a dancer. He didn't understand that at all. Besides Louis hated his guts.

Max smiles and she laughs. She studies Max.

MAX

The kid's got style.

AMY

Yeah. I tried to make it work. Gave up some of my classes but...Dancing's too much a part of me. It's what I am. What about you, Max? What are you going to do?

MAX

With what?

AMY

Your dancing.

Max doesn't want to hear it. He motions to the Waiter.

MAX

What are you talking about?

AMY

Junior thinks you're back he wants to work with you.

MAX

Junior's wrong.

AMY

Something's going on, Max? What is it? Let's go, let it out. I saw you in the street. Your hoofin' is real sharp. You've been practicing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAX

Maybe.

AMY

Whereabouts?

Max pauses, not answering.

AMY

I'm asking you where about...?

MAX

(interrupting)

Sing sing.

Amy is caught off guard. Max sees it and tries for some comic relief.

MAX

Chez Sing Sing.

He tries to laugh it off.

AMY

Prison? That's where you've been?
What happened?

MAX

I screwed up. I got careless. It was really my dad's fault. I had to work the night of his funeral. I was a little high, and...

Amy sighs.

MAX

They gave me a year.

AMY

Jesus, Max. And where does the dancing fit in?

MAX

That's not my dad's fault that's because of a guard named Browder. Fat, nasty guy. Hated me 'cause I wouldn't take his shit.

Amy starts to see the pain that he went through in prison.

MAX

I was doing alright for a while.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:(3)

MAX (continued)

* Just trying to get through it. Parole was coming up. Then one day Browder says I took a spoon from the mess hall. I didn't take a spoon. He knew it. He could have frisked me but that's not what he wanted. He just wanted me to break. I just stared him down. *

* Amy listens attentively as Max relives this bad experience. *

MAX

* Then he said he was going to report it. That meant I'd lose my parole. That did it. He turned around to leave... *

* Max delights in this part. But there's real pain underneath. *

MAX

* ...and I jumped the bastard. I beat the holy crap outta' him. They threw me in a box they call Purgatory and gave me six more months. So, there I was in this hole. I knew I'd blown it. I stared up at the ceiling and...my head started spinning. My heart was pounding. And then I couldn't breathe. I was losing it. And just when I was about ready to scream, I heard this beat. *

* Max looks at Amy and snaps his fingers. *

MAX

* It was deep inside. Way deep. Didn't know what it was. Just this steady beat. And then I looked down at my feet and they were moving... tapping. Like they were doing it by themselves. I got up and started to move. I started feeling okay. So I kept it up. I got some shoes. And as long as I kept dancin' I was fine. *

* He thinks about that time. He drifts then catches himself. *

MAX

* I guess I got used to it. I need to pound some wood from time to time. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

* Amy suddenly smiles and laughs. *

* MAX
What's so funny? *

* AMY
I can't believe this. *

* MAX
What? *

* AMY
I never thought it'd happen. *

* MAX
Is this something I should know
about? *

* AMY
You don't even get it do you? You
probably don't even know why you
asked me on this date. *

* MAX
I wanted to eat. *

* AMY
You wanted to tell me that you're
back. It took them throwing you in a
dungeon but you're finally back.
Junior was right. *

* MAX
Hold on, Amy. I'm not back to
nothing. *

* AMY
Liar. *

* MAX
Don't go calling me names now.

* AMY
You're a liar and I can prove it.
Come on.

* MAX
Where we going?

* AMY
Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Max plunks down some money and they're off.

DISSOLVE TO:

87. EXT. BROADWAY THEATER - NIGHT

* The marquee is ablaze with the latest Broadway Musical. *
BROADWAY MUSIC BEGINS.

88. INT. BROADWAY THEATER - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

* Max and Amy enter the backstage door. The MUSIC CONTINUES in *
the background. WORKERS and TECHNICIANS scurry about.

* MAX *
What is this?

* AMY *
This is the show I'm casting. Come
on.

89. STAGE WINGS

They stop in the wings of the theater and look out on the
stage. There, warming up, talking, and stretching, are
TWENTY DANCERS, waiting for the OVERTURE TO END.

AMY
Look out there, Max. Look what they
got on their feet.

* He looks out at a sea of tap shoes. A couple of the DANCERS *
wave hello to Amy and she waves back.

AMY
This thing's been going for three and
a half years.

* Right then, the curtain comes up, the MUSIC CRESCENDOES and *
the DANCERS BEGIN.

AMY
Tell me you're not a dancer. Tell me
you can't feel that.

It's old smaltzy Broadway but it has a real energy to it.
The CAMERA MOVES IN ON MAX as he feels the energy.

CUT TO:

90. EXT. BROADWAY THEATER - NIGHT

The CROWD streams out of the theater. People smile having had a good time. Max and Amy walk into FRAME.

MAX

I didn't feel that.

AMY

You're such a liar.

MAX

(disgustedly)

That's what they call tap dancing on Broadway?

AMY

Okay, Max. But five years ago there was nothing. All I'm showing you is that there's work. Junior's got ideas, that company in there's going on the road. Tomorrow we're putting together a whole new line...

Max laughs as they walk away around the corner.

* 91. EXT. SONNY'S - NIGHT *

They slowly walk to a stop in front of Sonny's.

AMY

What's so funny?

MAX

I can just see me in the goddamn line. And then what? A club date here and there. Teachin' a class or two?

* Amy sighs. *

MAX

I can't do that, Amy. I won't go through my whole life with nothing. I'm not my dad.

AMY

Your dad was a good man, Max. *

MAX

Yeah, he was a good man. Good ol' Sonny Washington. There's always a big smile waiting for you on the

(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX (continued)

* Sonny Side of The Street. That man *
could smile. Even when we were stone
broke and he was delivering birthday
bouquets, as long as he was dancing
he was smiling. Even when they
laughed at him he just kept smiling.

Max reflects. His anger fades and his pain slowly emerges.

MAX

* I hated that smile. *

Max takes a deep breath.

MAX

* My mom, she was smart. She saw the *
bad times coming, latched onto
someone with some real cash, and,
"whoosh", she was gone.

Max tries to laugh it off but it hurts.

MAX

(scoffingly)

* I'm not like him, Amy. I can't be *
one of those old men up there still
dreaming about tap coming back and
being a star again. It's over! It's
been over for thirty years. You
wanna be a star, just get enough
money right now and they'll treat you
like one. All you need are the
dollars.

AMY

And where do you get the dollars,
Max?

* Max has talked himself into a corner. He turns away from her. *

AMY

* Come on. Give it up. Somehow you *
gotta a second chance. You're just
too stubborn and angry to see what's
right in front of you. Those dollars
of yours aren't important.

MAX

* Didn't you have a good time tonight? *
Don't you like to go out, get nice
things? Things you can't have when
(more)

(CONTINUED)

Revised: 3/5/88

69B.

CONTINUED:

Max is enjoying himself. Crash! Crash! Crash! Crash! The
THEME MUSIC BUILDS AND BUILDS and we:

CUT TO:

93. INT. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS - CLOSE ON TYPEWRITER - DAY

Max's name is spelled out along with his number and vital

CONTINUED:

statistics. THEME MUSIC KEEPS BUILDING. CAMERA WIDENS to reveal Mr. Deneen at his desk.

DENEEN

So, we had a bad day did we,
Washington?

Max drums his fingers on the chair.

DENEEN

Maybe the restaurant business isn't
your cup of tea.

Max smirks.

DENEEN

City needs to see a pay check. That
means honest labor. No paycheck and
this office starts to put on the
squeeze. You don't want the squeeze,
Goof-ball. Now come on we gotta
figure out what you can do. Think
about it. You must be able to do
something. Everybody in the world
knows how to do at least one thing.

As Deneen continues the CAMERA PUSHES IN on Max, cornering him. Life is forcing him into a choice. As THE CAMERA moves into his eyes we begin to hear TAP DANCING over the THEME MUSIC.

MAX

(softly)

I can tap.

DENEEN

What was that?

The tapping gets LOUDER AND LOUDER WITH THE THEME MUSIC.

MAX

I said, " I can tap dance!"

THEME MUSIC CUTS OUT as we:

CUT TO:

94. INT. BROADWAY THEATER - DAY

There are at least two hundred people tap dancing in unison. It makes the opening scene in "All That Jazz" look small.

95. EXT. BROADWAY THEATER - ALLEY - DAY

A hassled assistant, BRIAN, looks over a sea of out-of-work dancers filling the alley and spilling out into the street. He stands by a sign reading, BROADWAY MELODY 1988, OPEN AUDITIONS SIGN IN HERE.

BRIAN

Okay. Fifty-five through seventy.
Backstage.

(to woman calling him)

Hold on to your legwarmers, Sheila,
your group's next.

96. INT. THEATER - DAY

The finalists of the last group head off stage as a new group is herded on. They quickly start the simple routine as they pick up the steps from the ASSISTANT CHOREOGRAPHER at the front of the stage.

Bob, Amy and some other assistants watch from the audience at the new group as the Assistant goes through the line, hand over each of their heads. Mercilessly, Bob's thumb drops and dancers are weeded out.

Amy watches as the Assistant goes down the line. A BLACK GIRL, A YOUNG GUY, A YOUNG CHINESE WOMAN, A SHORT FAT GUY, and...Max??

Amy does a big double take. She can't believe it. He makes the first cut and continues to dance as she gets up and heads slowly towards the stage.

She stops at the foot of the stage just as he spots her in the audience. He looks at her defensively. She smiles.

MAX

Don't look at me like that. I needed
a job. That's all.

She tries not to smile but it comes through.

CUT TO:

97. INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - CLOSE ON CHAMPAGNE-NIGHT

as the cork is popped and Max brings the bottle into the dining room. Amy holds some glasses and Max pours. Most of the oldtimers are there. Junior and Sandman are noticeably absent.

Everyone's talking over everyone else. Laughter. Louis takes

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

a glass of champagne.

MAX

* That's enough, Louis *

AMY

* He's alright. It's not going to kill him. *

* Just then, Junior and Sandman walk into the apartment taking off their coats. *

JUNIOR

What's going on?

ARTHUR

* Max got in that show Amy's workin' on. *

It's clear from Junior's expression that he doesn't like the idea. He looks over at Amy who is laughing and talking with Max and some of the old timers. She turns to him and her smile fades when she sees Junior staring at her with that same expression.

AMY

(to herself)

Oh, shit.

Junior motions for her to join him. She leaves Max talking to the others and Junior leads her into the hallway. They stop.

JUNIOR

What's going on, girl?

AMY

(innocently)

What do you mean?

JUNIOR

* You know what I mean.. You were suppose to get the boy to work with me not in no stupid damn show. *

AMY

* It's a job, Pop. *

JUNIOR

It's a job. Fine. I got no...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUNIOR (continued)

problems with dancers gettin' a job. But that boy ain't your normal dancer. He's special. That's a real hooper. The hooper needs freedom, needs his space. He can't work if he's on a leash. You might as well cut the man's balls off. He was suppose to work with me. You know that. So why the hell'd you get him in that show?

AMY

He came on his own, Pop.

JUNIOR

Well, I'm going to talk to him then.

Junior starts towards Max but Amy puts a hand on his shoulder, making him turn back to her.

AMY

You're not going to do a damn thing. Max tried out for a show today. You know how big a step that was for him? He did something positive for a change and it worked. Look at him, he's feelin' good about it. Don't take that away from him. I know you got things you wanna do but think about him, Pop. Think for a second what Max needs. Christ, at least he's dancin'.

JUNIOR

(derogatorily)

Dancin'!

It's a stand off. Junior huffs and flops into his easy chair, away from the rest of the party. Amy rejoins Max. Max looks over and spots Junior. Max whispers something to Amy, takes a glass of champagne and walks over to Junior. Amy watches apprehensively. Max squats down next to him.

MAX

Hey! I got in this candy-assed show today.

JUNIOR

I heard the story.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAX

Yeah. They got a solo number in the second act. Pays a little more. Figure I'd get that, show 'em some stuff.

JUNIOR

That's just fine.

He hands him the glass of champagne. Junior doesn't look at it.

MAX

Drink this.

JUNIOR

Drink it yourself.

MAX

Come on.

JUNIOR

I ain't drinkin' any of your cheap champagne -- get a headache.

Max puts the glass on the table next to his chair and leaves. Junior looks back at Max who rejoins Amy. They're having a good time. Junior looks over at the glass of champagne. When he sees Max isn't looking, he grabs it and takes a swallow.

DISSOLVE TO:

98. EXT. SONNY'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

A few of the oldtimers leave the place. Some GERSHWIN PLAYS ON A RECORD PLAYER in the background.

* 99. EXT. SONNY'S ROOFTOP - CLOSE ON RECORD PLAYER *

* as the Gershwin record spins. Max places another album on top of the turntable. Amy stands in the background. *

ROOFTOP STAIRS

* Louis sits alone on the stairs finishing off the bottle of champagne and looking past the record player through the rooftop window. Amy is showing Max a step. Just then, Junior leans in the door and spots Louis. *

JUNIOR

Bedtime. *

Louis keeps looking. He's tipsy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

* They falling in love again, Junior? *

JUNIOR

* That's none of your business, now
let's go. *

He takes him by the shoulder and turns him towards the door.
Junior takes a look out at Max and Amy. Louis stops at the
door.

LOUIS

Junior?

JUNIOR

I'm coming.

Junior joins Louis, takes a final look at his daughter and
closes the door.

100. EXT. SONNY'S ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Amy does a simple step while Max watches sitting on a table.

AMY

Now you try.

MAX

I can't believe you're trying to
teach me how to tap dance.

AMY

I'm not trying to teach you how to
tap dance, I'm teaching you the steps
to the damn number. Now go ahead.

Max sighs and hops off the table. He starts the simple steps
and then in the middle breaks into some hard stomping
complicated steps.

AMY

Hold it. What are you doing?
You're stomping around like you wanna
break through the damn roof. Easy,
light.

She shows him.

MAX

That's not my style.

AMY

Well, that's the way he wants it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks up close to her.

MAX

Well, maybe I'll just have to show...
(derogatory)
... "Bob" how it's really done.

AMY

Oh, great. This is a set piece, Max.
Five different dancers have done it
the same way for three years. You
gotta do it like everyone else.

He puts his arms around her.

MAX

I don't do it like everyone else.

* He holds her and they sway. *

AMY

You think you're so cool, don't you?
One week in New York City and the
man's got a Broadway show. People
paid us good money for lessons so
they could get in that show. And you
do it without any. What am I suppose
to tell them? Hmm?

MAX

Tell them I that I slept with the
teacher.

* He holds Amy tighter. Amy holds back a little. Just then,
the next record comes on. It is the Fred Astaire number,
"Cheek to Cheek". Amy smiles. *

AMY

* You put this on? *

Max smiles. Amy listens and smiles.

AMY

* It was a good routine, wasn't it? *

MAX

Great routine. The black Fred and
Ginger. Another one of my dad's lame
ideas forty years too late.

AMY

Wasn't lame. It was romantic. I was
so excited. There I was, fresh from
St. Louis, dancing partner of Sonny
(more)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY (continued)

Washington's famous son Maxwell. You looked so handsome in your tuxedo.

MAX

I did, didn't I.

AMY

Too bad we never got a chance to perform after all that work.

MAX

That was my fault. Well, come on now. Give me one more chance.

Max smiles and sweeps her along with the music.

101. THE DANCE

He does a comically overacted impression of Astaire that gets Amy laughing. After a few steps he dances over to her.

MAX

Come on.

Amy, still laughing, picks up the step and now they're both doing the old Astaire-Rogers routine. It's a little clumsy at first but they're two pros and they talk through the steps, remembering them as they go.

As they get into the routine, they start to enjoy it, to appreciate the steps. It stops being a corny take off.

They dance slowly in front of the glowing neon signs. The cluttered rooftop becomes the perfect setting. The magic of the musicals takes over real life for this special moment.

They dance into each other's arms. They embrace. And now the dance becomes something very different. Something that they didn't do back in the old days. It becomes sexy. Their bodies intertwine. The steamy scene seems incongruous to the music.

They kiss. As their passions take hold, Amy breaks away, needing to clear her head. She walks away into the rehearsal hall.

102. REHEARSAL HALL

Amy walks into the darkened rehearsal hall. Max follows, takes her hand and turns her around. They kiss passionately. Amy turns and heads for the door. She pauses. Max figures it's over. She grabs the door knob and closes the door, locking it. Max smiles. They move towards each other and embrace.

Max and Amy start shedding their clothes. The neon outside the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

hall throws colorful light onto the pair. The mirrors show an endless picture of Amy and Max making love -- an infinite number of bodies, moving, clutching.

The love making is hot and sweaty and real. The MUSIC builds as they continue to make love. They end on the sofa in the back * of the room.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

* 103. INT. REHEARSAL HALL #1 - CLOSE ON MAX - MORNING. *

as he stares past CAMERA. He reaches across revealing Amy, peacefully sleeping in her bed. He puts his fingers close to her skin and traces the line of her shoulder carefully keeping a little distance so he won't wake her up.

It gives him a comforting feeling. A good feeling. So good it scares him. He's a man who hasn't accepted love for many years. Now it's right in front of him.

Just then, he hears a knock on the door. He walks through * the hall and looks out the door

LOUIS

* Some guy across the hall for you. *

MAX

* Thanks. *

* Louis, knowing his mother's in the room, gives Max a look. *

* 104. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY - DAY *

* Max tucks in his shirt and looks into the window to Rehearsal Hall #2. There, standing in the middle of the hall, combing his greasy hair in the cracked mirror, is Nicky. Max frowns and walks into the room. *

105. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Nicky turns, spotting Max in the mirror.

NICKY

Hey!

MAX

(coldly)
What are you doing in here?

NICKY

* I was thinking of taking some lessons. What do you think? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicky does a few silly steps. Max looks out the window and spots Louis looking in at the two. *

MAX

Outside.

He starts towards the door and Nicky follows.

106. STAIRCASE

Halfway down the staircase they pass Junior as he is walking up. Max and Junior exchange a look. Max takes Nicky by the collar and hurries him down the stairs and shoves him towards the front door. Howard is there. Junior stops near the top of the staircase and listens in on their conversation. *

(OMIT 107)

NICKY

Hey!

MAX

You don't go in there! You got that? You put your foot in that door again, I'll cut it off.

NICKY

Fine. Show-biz. I didn't know this was St Patrick's god-damn Cathedral. Now what about the job? *

Junior listens. *

NICKY

You have Francis eating your shit, buying you five hundred dollar suits, but you still look more comfortable in the apron and the soap suds as far as I'm concerned. You pushed-out, man. *

HOWARD

Shut up!

(to Max)

What's the deal, Max. Francis wants to know if you're in or out. *

Max thinks about it. *

NICKY

Well? You staying in this hole or what you little... *

Max has had enough of him he goes for the guy. Nicky pulls a gun. Max freezes. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICKY

* Come on, man. Let's have it! *

* Howard pulls his gun on Nicky. *

HOWARD

* You gonna kill someone, you do it
when I'm not around. *

* Nicky puts the gun down and leaves. Howard gives Max another
look and leaves. Max thinks to himself and turns, spotting
Junior looking down at him. Junior turns and heads up the
stairs. Max sighs. *

(OMIT 108)

CUT TO:

109. INT. BROADWAY THEATER - CLOSE ON TAP DANCING FEET - DAY

as a group of a dozen people dance in unison. WIDEN ANGLE to
reveal the line of dancers on stage. Max is in the second
row doing the simple routine.

Amy walks down the row checking the dancers making
corrections where need be. She spots Max and smiles. He
smiles back, but he's confused.

DISSOLVE TO:

110. STAGE - LATER

The dancers are taking a rest. Max, wiping his face with a
towel, looks to the front of the stage.

CONTINUED:

Amy is tapping in front of another DANCER showing him a routine. Bob and his entourage sit in the middle of the audience making notes.

Once the Dancer has gotten the routine down, he steps to the front of the stage and Amy watches him from behind the piano player. Amy spots Max and nods for him to get in line for the tryouts. Max nods.

DISSOLVE TO:

111. THEATER - LATER

Amy leans over to Bob at his seat in the audience. He is finishing his lunch, gulping some coffee.

AMY
This is my friend, Max.

Bob looks up on the stage. Max leans down next to the Piano Player, talking to him, giving him instructions.

BOB
(snottily)
I remember your "friend", Amy. I let him in the line, isn't that enough?

AMY
Come on, give him a shot. He's the best dancer in the building.

Bob considers Amy's request.

BOB
(calling out)
Next!

Max steps from the Piano Player to the middle of the stage. Amy walks towards the stage.

BOB
Just follow Amy, she'll...

MAX
(interrupting)
I know it. Let's just go.

Max's tone is confrontive. Bob doesn't like his attitude and Amy can see that. Bob nods to the Piano Player.

The MUSIC BEGINS and Max begins the routine as choreographed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is a simple number to a simple soft shoe song. Max is breezing through it when he looks over at the Piano Player and nods.

The Piano Player goes into a faster paced rendition and Max improvises some great steps. Bob and his group take notice. So do the other dancers as they turn from their other conversations and look over at Max. Amy watches apprehensively.

Now Max is in his own world. Spinning, tapping, using the stage. He ends on a twirling step to the APPLAUSE of his fellow dancers.

Bob looks at Max and the other dancers. Amy looks back at Bob and smiles but he remains stone faced. The applause slowly dies down and Max looks out toward Bob. He slowly leans to the microphone.

BOB

(to pianist)

What is this, Ray?

PIANO PLAYER

The guy wanted to show you something.

BOB

Well, I'll decide when we change the music, alright?

A hush falls on the stage. Amy sighs. Bob obviously feels that his power has been compromised and he's not about to lose control.

MAX

It wasn't his fault, man. I asked him to do it.

BOB

Stick to the routine.

Bob turns his back.

MAX

Thought you might be interested in seeing what the real stuff looks like.

Bob turns back to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOB
(cold, snotty)
Real stuff? And what my friend,
do you think we've been doing?

Max doesn't like this guy's attitude. The snotty, condescending way about him makes Max's temperature rise. Amy sees it coming.

MAX
This? This is bullshit.

Now we're in a real confrontation. Everyone silently watches this duel.

MAX
This isn't real tap dancing. They didn't even dance like this in the thirties. Not the good ones.

Everyone looks at Bob for his response. Slowly, he leans toward the microphone.

BOB
Well, we're not interested in the good ones. We're interested in the same kind of dancing that has made this show a success for the past three years. I know we all appreciate the little history lesson...

Some of the dancers and Bob's entourage chuckle. Max doesn't appreciate the joke. Amy knows he's steaming but there's nothing she can do about it.

BOB
... But for now, either you do our "bullshit" or you can do your trade out in the streets.

Max just stands there, glaring at the guy. He looks over at Amy who pleads with him with her eyes.

BOB
Well, my friend?

MAX
The name's Washington.

Max walks slowly to the middle of the stage. He spots a couple dancers smiling, whispering.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BOB

Ray. The original routine this time.

Ray starts to PLAY the music. Max starts the simple routine.. Bob watches him: Max tries to look away. Bob brings the microphone to his lips.

BOB

Okay. This is a musical. What about a smile?

Max stares down at him. He doesn't smile. Amy looks at them anxiously.

BOB

A little personality. Let's go. Smile..

Max still won't do it. Bob sighs and looks around at the others. It is quite tense. Amy turns away.

BOB

How about it? One teeny weeny smile. Is that possible?

Max slowly, agonizingly cracks a little smile. Bob looks at him triumphantly. Then, Bob interrupts the routine.

BOB

Alright. Thank you.

The MUSIC stops. Max comes to a halting stop. He watches as Bob walks down the aisle towards the stage staircase.

BOB

(to Amy, through P.A.)

Wrong type. Next!

Max is humiliated. He looks down at his feet, around to the other dancers. They turn away, embarrassed for him. He spots Amy who tries unsuccessfully to reassure him with a little smile.

Bob walks up the staircase to meet a Stage Designer holding out some fabric. He glances at the stage where Max hasn't moved.

BOB

Next, please. Thank you, my friend.

Max doesn't budge. His anger is mounting. Bob turns to the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Designer. The next dancer walks up next to Max. Bob turns back and spots Max.

BOB

Off the stage.

Max just glares at him. Bob has had enough. He walks over to Max. Amy sees things really getting out of hand.

BOB

I said, OFF, THE, FUCKING ST...

Bob doesn't get another line out as Max takes one step toward him and grabs his shirt. He twists the collar back and drives him down onto a table.

Coffee cups and papers go flying. The flimsy card table crashes to the ground with Bob lying on his back and Max standing over him hanging onto his collar. Amy starts towards the stage.

AMY

Max! No!

The Dancers and workmen stop. They gasp at the violent confrontation. The Designer steps toward Max but one angry look makes him retreat.

Max holds the frightened director down with one hand and grabs the microphone with the other. He holds the mike over his head like a weapon ready to smash down on Bob's face.

Amy arrives and grabs his arm from behind. He is just about to wrench his elbow away when he sees that it's her.

AMY

No. Max, please...

Max is still ready to bust. He looks down at Bob who closes his eyes...whimpering. Max shakes with anger. He looks back at Amy, at the fear in her eyes, then around to all the astonished, scared dancers and technicians. He looks around at the theater. He doesn't belong here.

Max slowly loosens his grip. He straightens up, dusts off his shirt, and heads out the exit. Amy looks down at Bob angrily. She turns and goes after Max.

112. EXT. BROADWAY THEATER - ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Amy opens the backstage door and spots Max at the mouth of the alley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMY

Max!

He slows down as she runs up to him.

AMY

Max.

He looks away.

AMY

Listen. It's okay. The guy's a jerk. He's...

MAX

I can't believe this. Was I really thinking I could come back to all this shit? What the hell am I doing here?

AMY

Don't, Max. It's my fault. This is the wrong place for you. I should have...

MAX

Look. I gotta go. I got some real work to do. Go back to your show.

AMY

I don't deserve that.

Max looks at her, his anger is replaced by his own self-loathing.

MAX

You never did, Amy.

He turns and walks up the street. She loves him and feels responsible.

AMY

Max!

He picks up his pace. He puts on his shades and walks away. The old standard, SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET begins as Amy watches him walk away.

CUT TO:

113 EXT. NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE - SUNSET

A giant red sun sets behind the city. The MUSIC CONTINUES.

114 INT. SONNY'S - REHEARSAL HALL #1 - SUNSET

* Henry plays the piano and Bunny sings the song in a slow *
* soulful rendition. Harold and his wife dance slowly in the *
corner.

115 SONNY'S ROOFTOP

Amy stands at the edge of the roof looking out at the sunset.
Junior walks out the door and joins his daughter. He looks
across the rooftop and spots Louis hanging out. Watching
over his mom. Junior turns to Amy.

JUNIOR

We're eating pretty soon. Sandman's
threatening to make Spaghetti Alfredo
again.

* Junior sees she's upset. He puts an arm around her. *

AMY

* I blew it, Pop. He wasn't ready. I *
pushed him too quick...

JUNIOR

Don't you worry. He'll be back.

* Amy leans her head on his shoulder and cries. Louis gets *
upset seeing his mother cry.

OMIT 116

116A.EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - SUNSET

As the SONG CONTINUES we see Max walking on the banks of the
East River overlooking the Brooklyn Bridge. He holds his tap
shoes in his hand. He pounds them against the river wall and
throws them into the water.

117 INT. SONNY'S - SUNSET

* Bunny finishes the song. Harold and his wife dance slowly in *
* the corner. Harold slowly grabs his wife's ass, she swats *
his hand away as the SONG ENDS and we:

FADE OUT:

CONTINUED:

MAX

I'll be right back.

Nicky and Howard nod. Max looks over at Sonny's. Most of the lights are out. He turns towards the Clark and spots Louis sitting on the ledge, shuffling his cards.

MAX

What are you doing here?

LOUIS

We going to the game tomorrow?

MAX

I got some work to do. Go with Sandman.

Max goes inside. Louis watches him.

119. STAIRCASE - HALLWAY

Max walks up the stairs and stops at the door. He notices that it is ajar. He pushes it open.

120. MAX'S APARTMENT

Junior sits in the dark on his bed.

MAX

Whatchoo doing in the dark, huh?

Junior stands up.

JUNIOR

I got a proposition for you. First of all this Broadway happy feet bullshit...we forget about that. Now you come back to Sonny's, give this dancing idea of mine a shot and...

Max can't believe this old man. Max goes to the closet, takes off his tap shoes and puts on some sneakers.

MAX

Listen to me, Junior. I made a mistake coming back here. You understand? I'm leaving tomorrow.

JUNIOR

(stubbornly)

You ain't leavin'. Harry just sent me a demo of the song you're going to

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNIOR (continued)

* do. We'll work on that about a week, *
put it up there on the stage, and...

MAX

(angrily))

* Did you hear me? I said I'm leavin'!
By this time tomorrow I'll have *
enough money to get out of this hole,
forget about all this shit. I'm not
doing your thing, Junior. I need
more than what you got.

JUNIOR

Here, I got ten, twenty, twenty two
bucks. What do you need, Max?

He throws the money on Max's bed.

JUNIOR

* You got a building 'cross the street *
that's all yours if you want it.

He walks up to Max who turns away.

JUNIOR

* You got a home and people that love *
you. How much is that worth, Max?
How many jobs you gotta pull to get
all that?

Max won't answer.

JUNIOR

If your daddy was here, he'd tell ya
to...

MAX

* If my daddy was here he'd tell me to *
take your offer. But he liked being
poor. As long as he had Sonny's,
you could spit in his face and he'd
come up with a smile. He didn't mind
being a failure.

Max turns away.

JUNIOR

* A failure? That's what you thought *
of your daddy? Sure he didn't have
much of anything, but he died a happy
man. You know why? 'Cause he knew
(more)

(CONTINUED)

JUNIOR (continued)

He was good.

Max listens starting to understand his father better from Junior's speech.

JUNIOR

* How many people make it through life knowing they're good at something? *
And your daddy wasn't just good, he was the best. Maybe they took away all the money and the fame, took away all the work but they could never take away those legs of his. They could never take away his pride. And that's why he could smile. That's no failure there, son.

Max slowly puts on his jacket and heads for the door.

JUNIOR

I was with your dad a couple days before he died. He told me two things. First he said, "Junior, tap ain't never going to come back. Not like it was. But don't tell Sandman. He'll just get pissed." *

(he chuckles and sighs)

Then he said, "But, my boy will come back." *

* Max listens quietly at the doorway. Junior smiles, thinking of his old friend. Max looks out the door avoiding Junior's eyes. *

JUNIOR

* We'll start up tomorrow. Ten o' clock sharp. *

* Max leaves. *

CUT TO:

121. EXT. CLARK HOTEL - NIGHT

* Max walks out the Clark and heads for Nicky's car. Louis sits to the side. *

MAX

* See you later. *

* Louis gives him a cold stare. Max flicks his hand toward Louis. *

MAX

* Take a bow. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis still doesn't respond. *

NICKY

* Let's go, man. *

* Max takes one last look back at Louis as Junior exits the hotel. Louis doesn't look back up. Max gets into the car. Louis is starting to cry. He grips the cards in his hand angrily. *

122. INT. CAR - NIGHT

* Max sighs as the car takes off. *

NICKY

* The kids coming. *

* Max looks through the back windshield and spots Louis racing after the car. Louis angrily throws the deck of cards towards the car. They fly into the air. *

MAX

(to Nicky))

* Keep going. *

Max is clearly upset.

123. EXT. CLARK - NIGHT

Louis watches the car go down the street. He takes a few deep angry breaths.

CUT TO:

124. EXT. JEWELRY BUILDING - NIGHT

Establishing SHOT.

125. INT. CAR - CLOSE ON PLANS - DAY

Nicky looks out the front window at the marquee. Howard checks his watch.

WIDEN ANGLE as all three of them look out the window to the side door. Max is in the back. He leans back as Nicky and Howard talk about the plans.

Max puts on some overalls over his clothes. He looks very hard, determined. Just then, we hear a SOUND. Max looks out the side window and spots a loose grating on the street.

Vehicles run over the grating making a RHYTHMIC SOUND. Max tries to ignore it, even though it reminds us of the routine he did earlier. He turns around putting on the other glove but the SOUND distracts him again. Nicky calls his name twice before he responds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

What?

NICKY

Curtain, Show-biz.

*

*

*

Howard hands a gun over the front seat.

*

HOWARD

If you don't wanna go to jail
anymore. You might wanna take this
along.

*

*

*

Max takes the gun and puts it under his belt. He exits the
car.

*

126. EXT. JEWELRY STORE - NIGHT

Max takes a ladder out of the van and props it up against the marquee. He pretends to be working on changing the letters on the marquee as he scales the ladder.

He pauses at the top of the ladder as he hears some CARS HONKING. The rhythm makes him pause. As the car horns stop, he steps on top of the marquee.

127. JEWELRY STORE LEDGE

Max tight rope walks the ledge off the second story. Max pauses in the middle of the walk as he hears another sound, THE SUBWAY RATTLES ALONG underneath a grating. The rhythm now blends into some car HONKS and the GRATING SOUND. Max shakes off the intrusive sounds and stops in front of the eight story sign that reads: DIAMONDS.

128. JEWELRY STORE - DIAMOND SIGN

Max looks up the Diamond sign, checks to see if everything is clear and starts climbing. He scales the giant letters. Halfway up he encounters a defective light that BUZZES adding to the SOUNDS OF THE CITY. He pauses, shakes it off and continues up the sign.

129. JEWELRY STORE - EIGHTH FLOOR

Max gets off the sign and climbs through the open window into the corner office as the SOUNDS OF THE CITY fail to pull him back.

130. INT. EIGHTH FLOOR OFFICE

Max gets in the office and closes the window shutting out the SOUNDS. He takes a deep breath.

131. INT. SEVENTH FLOOR HALLWAY

TWO SECURITY GUARDS check through the hallway below him and one fits a key into a lock. They start up the staircase and we now see the sign that reads, EIGHTH FLOOR.

132. OFFICE

Max looks out the window and down the hallway. The coast is clear. He takes out a slip of paper and heads for a safe in the corner of the room. He reads the combination. The CLICKING OF THE NUMBERS makes him pause. Finally, he opens the door.

Inside the safe is a sparkling array of diamonds. Max grabs them all and throws them in a bag.

133. EIGHTH FLOOR HALLWAY

The Security Guards head down the hallway. They shine their lights into the rooms on either side.

134. OFFICE

Max backs out of the safe and against a Water Dispenser. The water bottle almost falls but he is able to balance it back into place. But in doing so, the water begins to slowly drip out of the faucet.

Max notices the sound. It reminds us of the drip in his jailcell at the beginning of the film. He slowly backs up and sits down on the floor. He watches the drips as they slowly plop onto the floor. He looks at the diamonds and back at the drips. The SOUNDS OF THE CITY now start up again.

135. HALLWAY - OFFICE (INTERCUT)

As the SOUNDS OF THE CITY BUILD, the Security Guards get closer and closer to the room Max is in.

Max looks at the drips. He now begins to snap his fingers to the rhythm. He closes his eyes and breathes deeply.

The Security Guards close in on the room. They shine their flashlights through the window but the blinds are drawn. Just then, they hear some CLICKING FROM INSIDE. They draw their guns and the First Guard fiddles with his keys. Finally he puts one in the lock and opens the door as the SOUNDS OF THE CITY MUSIC CRESCENDOES.

The Security Guards slam open the door, guns drawn. But nobody is there. Max is gone. The CLICKING NOISE is just the curtain pull swaying from the wind against the open window. The Security Guards holster their guns.

* 136. INT.CAR *

Nicky checks his watch.

NICKY
He should be down.

Just then, they look out the front window and spot Max walking down the sidewalk away from them. They look at each other and Howard starts up the car. *

* 137. EXT. STREET - NIGHT *

Max walks along the sidewalk as the car pulls up alongside (more) *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

him.

NICKY

Hey! Quick, get in!

MAX

Nope.

NICKY

What do you mean, "nope". You gonna walk home with five hundred thousand dollars worth of rocks in your pocket?

MAX

I didn't take it, Nicky.

NICKY

What?

They pull over Nicky jumps from the van and stops in front of Max.

NICKY

What happened? The Guards catch you? The safe jam? What?

MAX

Naw.

Nicky looks at him and figures it out.

NICKY

You pussied out. I knew it. I could see it all the way. You did, didn't you. You pussied...

* Max grabs him by the collar and pushes him against a nearby wall. Nicky goes for his gun but Max is quick to knock it out of his hand. Max takes his gun from his belt and shoves it up against Nicky's nose. It looks like he is about to kill him. But then Max just smiles, uncocks the gun, and kisses Nicky on the nose. *

MAX

So long, Nicky.

Max walks away. Nicky disgustedly wipes his nose and yells after Max. Max just smiles and walks away as MUSIC COMES IN and we:

CUT TO:

138. EXT. SONNY'S - CLARK HOTEL - DAY

Sonny's stands in the morning sun. Max walks out of the Clark Hotel, his tap shoes slung over his shoulders. He checks his watch.

139. INT. SONNY'S - FIRST FLOOR REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

Louis stands in a rehearsal hall and looks out the window. He spots Max looking at the building.

140. LOBBY - REHEARSAL HALL - FIRST FLOOR

Louis runs through the lobby and taps on the glass to the rehearsal hall. Amy turns around and spots him. Louis gestures for her to look through the window. She walks through her class to the window and looks out, as Louis runs to the stairway and yells up.

LOUIS

Junior.

Amy spots Max across the street.

141. ROOFTOP

Junior sits next to his dying plants, listening to his walkman. Sandman taps him on the shoulder and points towards the street. Junior looks out and smiles.

142. EXT. CLARK HOTEL - DAY

Max is about to move towards the street when Francis's limo pulls up to a stop.

143. QUICK CUTS

Junior, Amy, Louis watch apprehensively.

144. BACK TO SCENE

The back window goes down and Francis looks out at Max. Francis gives him a big smile.

FRANCIS

Maxwell.

Max slowly moves over to him and squats down at the window.

FRANCIS

The boys tell me that you're moving on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAX

Yeah.

FRANCIS

Too bad. It's a waste. You let 'em get to you, Show-biz. You let 'em scare you.

Max sighs. Just then, Francis chuckles and opens the door. Max spots a PRETTY GIRL in the back.

FRANCIS

Ah, get in. Stop foolin' around. We'll forget about last night. Come on, we'll go find you a nice place out of this swamp. What do you say?

Max thinks it over.

145. ON AMY - HER POV (INTERCUT)

She looks out the window.

From her view, Max can't be seen behind the limo. Suddenly, the door slams shut and the limo takes off. Max is still there. He gets up from his squatting position and heads across the street.

Amy turns back into the room as a flood of emotion wells up in her.

146. EXT. SONNY'S - DAY

Max stops at the flower shop, grabs another rose and heads into Sonny's.

147. INT. SONNY'S - STAIRCASE - DAY

Louis stands on the staircase near the first floor. He looks up to see Max coming back and stares at him angrily.

LOUIS

You staying now?

MAX

Yeah. You better get a new deck. I'm going to need some cash.

Max passes him and Louis smiles.

148. FIRST FLOOR - STAIRWAY - REHEARSAL HALL

Max stops in front of the window. Amy is in with a new class. She turns from the window and spots him. Max's expression says it all. He's sorry. He's in love. They meet in the lobby. He hands her the rose, she tosses it over her shoulder and they embrace. Some of the DANCERS give a little HOOT.

Louis watches from the lobby. He's still at that age where a kiss is pretty drippy. Max and Amy kiss. They look into each others eyes. Amy's are full of tears.

MAX

Come on.

* 149. STAIRWAY *

They walk up the stairway hand in hand.

150. THIRD FLOOR LOBBY - REHEARSAL HALL #1

They lean into the Rehearsal Hall. The Old Timer's are playing cards. Junior is not one of them.

MAX

Where's Junior?

SANDMAN

Across the hall.

Max and Amy walks across the lobby. Max takes a peek in the door of Rehearsal Hall #2.

151. REHEARSAL HALL #2

Junior sits in the middle of the room. He taps his feet impatiently. He spots Max at the doorway. The cantankerous old man won't smile.

JUNIOR

You're late.

Max smiles. Junior turns and puts on the ghetto blaster. ROCK MUSIC BEGINS. Max walks in the room and closes the door. The CAMERA PANS from the closed door to the smiling, knowing picture of Sonny Washington.

CUT TO:

(OMIT 152) *

153. EXT. ROCK CLUB - NIGHT

* The ROCK BEAT continues as we ESTABLISH the front of the club. Dozens of people mill around the entrance. INT. ROCK CLUB *

* The group performs. Harry is on the synthesizer. A crowd of young people dance to the MUSIC. Amy, Junior and Louis sit to the side with the other Old Timers. *

* Max steps to the microphone as the spotlight hits him flush in the face. He used to do this all the time but that was almost thirty years ago. *

* OMIT 154 - 157 *

158. THE ROUTINE

* His voice is strong. The song is moving the audience around the dance floor. He sings the verses and now it's about time for the tap solo. He backs away from the microphone. He looks up and spots the old-timers looking down at him. He glares over at Junior, Amy and Louis for encouragement. *

The band breaks and Max begins. The first steps are simple. The TAPS ring out through the speakers. The kids in the audience sense something different on stage. Some crane their necks to get a look at what's going on.

Max jumps from the stage into the audience. They clear a path for him as he takes over the floor. And now some of the synthesized SOUNDS are added: screams, gunshots. And then Max is back on stage singing another verse.

Amy and all see the positive reaction in the crowd. So does Max. He's back. He's confident. He ends the song with some fancy footwork. And on the final beat he lands with the SOUND of a giant explosion.

As the SOUND of the explosion FADES, we are SUPER CLOSE to Max as he looks up to the crowd to see their response. Finally, the audience begins to applaud. They loved it.

Max straightens up out of his crouch. He sighs heavily and smiles.

9. ANGLE ON MAX - AMY - JUNIOR

He jumps from the stage and gives Amy a big hug. Then they walk over to Junior. He looks at Max poker faced.

CONTINUED:

JUNIOR

Your left foot's still weak.

He turns and walks away. Max smiles and turns to Amy. They
kiss. Louis watches them suspiciously and we CUT TO:

BLACK - END CREDITS - ROCK AND ROLL AND TAP

ROCK AND ROLL -- AND TAP

END CREDITS.