

THE COTTON CLUB

**BY
WILLIAM KENNEDY
and
FRANCIS COPPOLA**

SHOOTING SCRIPT

August 22, 1983

FADE IN:

1 EXT - HARLEM - DAY: HARLEM HISTORY MONTAGE

The 1880's. The MAIN TITLE and CREDITS begin. .

Original arrangement of "Mood Indigo."

A VIEW of a Harlem boulevard. Well-dressed white families, wives with babies in carriages. Raw recruits with broomsticks train for World War I. People cheer.

Buildings showing signs for sale or rent; many signs as the neighborhood changes.

NEW VIEW

Soldiers returning from the war. People cheer. The fashions change as we move into the 20's.

Some well-to-do black families. Family photographs, doctors, lawyers and businessmen in motor cars. People buying apartments and homes. Whites resist with signs and solidarity meetings.

INSERT -- Real estate advertisement selling to negroes.

Wealthy blacks finally buy into the neighborhood. Lower classes begin to occupy the houses and apartments.

Caribbean blacks set up numbers gambling. The betting becomes popular.

BLACK POLITICIAN addresses mostly black group on streetcorner. Marcus Garvey type, in uniform, steps out of open limo to address a back-to-Africa meeting.

VIEW OF HARLEM BOULEVARD

Now a black neighborhood. Black wives with babies in carriages.

Throttle down to a raffish form of life: speakeasies, pool room, bookie joint, crap game, and end with numbers bank where we see BUMPY RHODES and MADAME QUEEN who are supervising half a dozen men tabulating columns of numbers, talking on phone, taking other numbers. Sign on wall says: "Yesterday's figure was 607" (hand-scrawled). Another sign says "Today's figure is..."

NIGHT FALLS

Black night clubs, social clubs, jazz joints, dance halls are abundant. Raucous jazz MUSIC here.

NARROW DOWN TO:

2 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DIXIE POV COTTON CLUB

Lenox and 142nd again. The MESSIAH, a tattered Harlem character, walks down the street, barefoot.

MESSIAH

...The wages of sin is death.

He brings our VIEW to the northeast corner as MICHAEL "DIXIE" DWYER approaches alone. He carries cornet case and clothing bag. Fedora pulled down a bit over right eye, casting his face in shadow.

DIXIE'S POV:

In front of the Cotton Club. People in evening clothes are getting out of taxis and limousines. The taxi drivers are fighting for space on the line for the Cotton Club. Two CABBIES jockeying for a spot in line ram each other like two fighting bulls. Dixie watches, and shakes his head affectionately.

DIXIE

Chocolate Harlem, sweet Harlem.
Harlem, I got your number down.

The black doorman, HOLMES, a tall and powerful ex-fighter, is letting most people pass, but stops a couple and looks carefully at the WOMAN, who is dark haired and dark complexioned, and the MAN, blond and rich.

CLOSE ON HOLMES

Grim and serious, as Dixie watches.

HOLMES

This lady look like a colored lady to me.

MAN

She is nothing of the sort.
She is white. Pure Spanish blood.

WOMAN
I was born in Barcelona.

HOLMES
Don't they have no colored
folk over there in Barcelona?

MAN
This is most insulting.
I want to see the manager.

People getting out of a car catch Holmes' attention. This
is JACK "LEGS" DIAMOND and a gorgeous brunette, who are
preceded and followed by two THUGS, henchmen.

CLOSE ON DIXIE

Impressed by the flashy gangster.

DIXIE
Good old Harlem.

HOLMES.
Welcome to the Cotton Club,
Mr. Legs Diamond, you looking
mighty good. Evenin' to
you too, pretty lady.

DIAMOND
I saw Jack Johnson downtown.
He sends his best.

HOLMES
(laughs)
Jack Johnson want no part of
Holmes. Holmes put him flat.

DIAMOND
How'd you do it?

HOLMES
Short left, loopin' right, he's
down, don't know what hit him.

DIAMOND
Keep punchin', Holmes.

Holmes turns back to face the man and woman, who decide to
take taxi that new arrivals are stepping out of. Dixie
comes even with Holmes, leans on the canopy pipe.

DIXIE

Hey, Holmes. Where can I
hear some music? And don't
tell me upstairs.

HOLMES

Dixie, greatest music in the
world up there.

DIXIE

Greatest jazz is down the street,
Holmes. How come you're hustlin'
for the ofays?

HOLMES

The fays pays, man. That's
why I work for 'em. Who you
workin' for? Heard you was
on the road.

DIXIE

Still working for number one,
blowin' my horn. Band fell
apart in Kokomo and I come
all the way home on a bus,
pinin' for Harlem.

HOLMES

Got your story, Dixie boy.
But here come a customer.
Just step aside and give the
folks with money a chance
to spend it.

DIXIE

Holmes, you're a rascal.

HOLMES

And I'm payin' my bills with
all that rascality.

Dixie walks down Lenox Avenue. The VIEW NARROWS to CLOSE
SHOT of his cornet case.

3 EXT/INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: UBANGI BOMB

CLOSE GROUP

Dixie playing the cornet in jam session. He's the only
white in the band. CAMERA FINDS white customers among
mostly black crowd.

VIEW ON THE BAR

The jam session over, Dixie approaches the bar. BUMPY RHODES, the owner, is checking the register.

DIXIE

...Lot of the pale trade since I was here last, Bumpy. They know what they're listenin' to?

BUMPY

Nah. They come to look at the jungle folks.

(suddenly angry)

But I can't get in down the street at the Cotton Club to hear the Duke play. Can't get past that blue admiral on the door.

Two girls, VERA CICERO and MYRTLE FAY arrive and walk past Dixie, showgirls out after hours. Dixie's interested.

DIXIE

(to Bumpy)

Some of your traffic, they don't need to know what they're hearin'.

JAM SESSION again. Dixie plays piano this time, trying out an idea.

VIEW ON A JAZZ FAN, DUTCH SCHULTZ

Leaning forward, interested. He's sitting with two men, ABBADABBA BERMAN, and a SULLEN MAN.

SANDMAN WILLIAMS comes by, selling numbers.

SANDMAN

Hey Dixie, where you been?
I owe you money for six weeks.

DIXIE

I hit?

Sandman takes out roll of bills and gives Dixie \$120. He puts it in cornet case.

SANDMAN

Cash, man. Money is tight and my pocket's full of your cash.

DIXIE
How's your numbers career,
Sandman?

SANDMAN
Hell, you know that ain't my
career. I'm a hoofer.

CLOSE ON DANCING FEET IN THE SPOTLIGHT

VIEW ON BAND

Back in a jam session. Sandman dances to some
improvisational jazz.

SANDMAN
(sing-song)
Hey, did you have that dream
last night? What's the lucky
number gonna be?

He exits, selling numbers again.

JAM SESSION.

Dixie again sitting in, two horns in the band now. They get
into a duel of eight-bar solos, both good, but Dixie wins.
Dixie sets horn on chair, moves away from band. As he
passes table with three men Dutch stops him.

DUTCH
Hey, buddy, you play nice horn.
Buy you a drink?

Dixie has his eye on Vera, but he yields, sits with Dutch.

DUTCH
That trumpet guy, you beat
him bad. He oughta be put away
for larceny. All those riffs,
he just lifted 'em from King
Oliver.

Dixie is impressed by this line.

DIXIE
You heard Oliver play?

DUTCH
I caught him at the Savoy.

DIXIE

I missed that. But I got every record he ever made. (pause) You know he oughta still be playin' but he lost his teeth. "A horn man with no teeth, he ain't no horn man at all," is what he said.

DUTCH

Why didn't he buy new teeth?

DIXIE

(laughs)

He was dead broke.

VIEW ON ABBADABBA

He's watching Dixie.

ABBADABBA

I bet a horse named Gideon's Trumpet. Your name Gideon?

DIXIE

No.

ABBADABBA

Good. The jockey was a Cuban who could hold an elephant away from a bale of hay with a pair of shoestrings. The horse fades and I drop a grand.

DUTCH

For chrissake the man's a musician, not a jockey. (to Dixie) You make a livin' with that horn?

DIXIE

I'm eatin' but I'm not gettin' fat.

Abbadabba, silently bored by this talk, turns his eye again to the two girls. They again give him the cold shoulder. Vera is delightfully drunk.

DIXIE

(to Dutch)

You want the women over here?

DUTCH
They don't want to join us.

DIXIE
Sure they do.
(to the girls)
Hey, whataya sittin' over
there for? Why don't you
come over here so we can take
your breath away?

The girls laugh among themselves, then pick up their drinks
and come over. Dixie stands up and Dutch stares at him in
disbelief.

DUTCH
How'd you do that? What kinda
signal you give?

DIXIE
I let 'em know there's love in
the air.

Vera and Myrtle arrive, giggling, carrying their drinks.
Vera is tipsy.

VERA
(to Dixie)
What am I gonna sit on?
Wait a minute. Don't answer
that question.

DIXIE
Just don't sit on the best
part of your personality.

ABBADABBA
Let me guess your names.

MYRTLE
It's Myrtle and no cracks.

DUTCH
Myrtle, turtle, what's the
difference. You both look
nice.

VERA
(handling Dutch's tie)
You ought to go to Sulka's for
your shirts and ties.

DIXIE
(Valentino)
Well, how do you like
us so far?

Vera sits down and spills her drink on Abbadabba who backs up and tips table, knocking two drinks into lap of Dutch.

VIEW ON THE DOORWAY

TWO POLICEMEN enter, walk slowly, without obvious purpose, toward center of club. Black patrons watch them with hostility. Musicians nudge one another. If this is a bust it's an odd one.

VIEW ON THE TABLE

Dixie and the others are trying to sort out the confusion of the spilled drink. One policeman proves to have a pistol in his hand, the other one has a small, homemade bomb and rolls it at Dixie's table. The girls, not yet seated, scream and fall behind the next table.

Abbadabba falls toward the girls. Dixie shoves Dutch out of range of the bomb, which is rolled at him. Dutch is grazed by a pistol shot from exiting cop as Dixie shoves him with a flying block. They are blocked behind the next table when the grenade goes off.

The sullen man gets the brunt of the explosion, and his arm is badly ripped. All this has taken place in a few seconds. Dutch has a pistol in his fist now but nothing to shoot at.

DIXIE
What the hell was that all
about?

DUTCH
Some people don't like me.

DIXIE
Who are you?

DUTCH
Dutch Schultz is what they
call me.

DIXIE
That explains things.

DUTCH
(sincerely)
I'm your Dutch uncle from
now on, pal. I owe you a
big one.

The sullen man's arm is dangling by a bit of torn muscle and skin. Abbadabba is down but only winged, and looking up Myrtle's dress. Both girls are sprawled on the floor in terror.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He is brushing himself off, and goes to Vera and Myrtle, helps them up. Vera starts to laugh.

VERA
Pow! They do that here
every night?

DIXIE
Come back tomorrow and find
out. You all right?

VERA
I think I sprained my ear,
or fractured my brains. My
head feels crooked.

DIXIE
Can you walk?

VERA
I'm very swoozled.

She tries, wobbles, almost falls. He grabs her arm.

VERA
Where's Myrtle?

VIEW ON MYRTLE

She is being consoled by Abbadabba. Vera sees that.

DIXIE
You wanna go home? Or maybe
you wanna go to a hospital
and have your brains checked?

VERA
I don't let anybody get
personal with my brains.

DIXIE
How about your ear?

VERA
That either.

He leads her out of the club.

4 EXT - VERA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT: ENTER VERA'S AFTER BOMB

Vera and Dixie get out of cab. He pays, holds her arm and helps her up steps. She staggers, almost falls.

5 INT - VERA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT: DIXIE PUTS VERA TO BED

The two enter, Vera finds light, Dixie leads her to sofa and lowers her gently. She half collapses, but is awake.

DIXIE
What's your name?

VERA
Vera. Like in very-very,
Cicero, like in Latin. You
ever study Latin?

DIXIE
I was an altar boy.

VERA
I'm really very kaffloey,
if you know what I mean.

DIXIE
You drank too much, and on
top of that they blew you
up.

VERA
A girl should never mix
hooch and bombs.

DIXIE
I'll put you to bed, if
you want.

VERA
You'd probably get personal
with my ear.

DIXIE
Against my rules.

He helps her to bed, helps her take off her skirt and blouse, leaving her in her slip. He's keeping arm's length.

DIXIE
Get under the covers.

VERA
I can't sleep with all this harness on.

She tries to undo bra, can't manage it. He helps her, then makes sure her slip straps go back where they belong.

DIXIE
You do the stockings.

She gives him a sarcastic look, as she undoes her first garter.

VERA
Quit being an altar boy and give a little girl a hand.

Dixie undoes second garter, helps her peel off stockings, unsnaps and pulls off garter belt, rolls her into bed.

VERA
Hey. I liked the way you played your trumpet. You sounded like Gabriel.

DIXIE
It's a cornet. Gabriel plays the sax.

VERA
Whatever it is, don't go home with it and leave me alone.

Dixie nods and puts out light. He looks over her living room, which is full of pictures of people making movies. He sees a very young Vera in many framed photos. He reconnoiters, finds a pillow, lies on couch, falls asleep.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

- 6 INT - SANDMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY: SANDMAN WAKES UP
Sandman wakes up. His brother Clay is still asleep.

SANDMAN

Wake up...

CLAY

Shhh. Don't make noise.

SANDMAN

The audition...

CLAY

Quiet.

- 7 INT - WILLIAMS APT. - DAY: WILLIAMS' DISCUSS BOMB

FOLLOW SANDMAN

to kitchen, where he sits down in front of coffee and toast.
His mother, NORMA, is having breakfast, reading the paper.

NORMA

Didn't you say you were
dancin' at a jam session
at the Ubangi last night?

SANDMAN

Yeah. Why?

NORMA

How come you didn't say nothin'
about that bomb?

SANDMAN

What bomb you talkin' about?

NORMA

They throw a bomb at you and
blow off a man's arm and you
still doing the soft shoe?

SANDMAN

(looking at the paper)
I was gone.

NORMA
Them bums. They're just bums,
blow a man's arm off like that.

From another room Clay Williams enters.

CLAY
Whose arm got blown off?

NORMA
You didn't hear the bomb
either?

INSERT: Headline plus photos of Schultz and Flynn brothers,
Joe and Jim.

"THREE WOUNDED IN CLUB SHOOTOUT"
"Dutch Schultz Target of Flynn Brothers"

SANDMAN o.s.
(reads)
"...Police said the bombing was
another skirmish in the beer war
between Dutch Schultz and..."

8 INT - LUNCHEONETTE - DAY: DIXIE/VINCE DISCUSS BOMB

VINCE DWYER passes the same article to his brother Dixie,
who is eating ham and eggs.

VINCE
(reading)
...the Flynn brothers for control
of Harlem beer distribution.
(to Dixie)
Where were you? You saw the bomb
coming.

DIXIE
With Schultz. I saved his
ass. Shoved him down behind
a table.

VINCE
You saved the Dutchman's ass?
No kiddin'?

They exit.

9 EXT - STREET - DAY: DUTCH NEEDS APES

MOVING SHOT

Vince and Dixie walking.

VINCE

Listen, think about it. You saved the Dutchman means that the Dwyer brothers are in.

DIXIE

(affectionately)

In where, you sap?

VIEW ON ED POPKE

He's crossing the street, having seen Vince and Dixie. He is a small shifty-eyed young hoodlum, not well-dressed.

ED

(whistle)

Wait up, Vince.

(to Dixie)

Hey, you're some big time hero. The Dutchman's tellin' people you saved his life.

VINCE

Get in line. I got rakes on that Dutchman.

DIXIE

What the hell is it, you two wantin' to work for a bootlegger?

VINCE

Hey, brud, he needs guys like us. We don't grow on trees.

DIXIE

Nah, you swing from 'em, you ape. (to Ed) You too, punk.

VINCE

Listen, he needs apes.

10 INT - WILLIAMS APARTMENT - DAY: WINNIE PRACTICES STEP

WINNIE WILLIAMS, 15, comes into breakfast, sulking.

SANDMAN
Let me see your combination,
Win.

WINNIE
It's awful, I hate it.

NORMA
You don't hate it. You love it.
It's gonna make you win that
contest.

SANDMAN
You gonna do it?
She does it.

SANDMAN
You still rushin'. The
time's not right.

NORMA
Do it nice, girl, practice
if you wanna get to the
Cotton Club. Let me show
you.

Sandman and Clay exit, as Norma demonstrates what a Cotton
Club "showgirl" looks and moves like. Clay and Sandman
exit.

11 EXT - HARLEM STREET - DAY: WILLIAMS' DISCUSS AUDITION

Sandman and Clay walking down the street.

SANDMAN
We got to make our audition
number stronger. The fays in
the Cotton Club know what they're
lookin' for.

CLAY
What' does 'stronger' mean?

SANDMAN
Those white folks gonna look
us over, they want excitement.

CLAY
Sandman, you try giving white
folks what you think they
want pretty soon you got no
blood left.

SANDMAN

What are we gonna do? We
gonna do the Ultima and
the soft shoe?

CLAY

If we're gonna do the soft
shoe, then we ought to do
the four numbers instead of
the three, because then we'll
have the childless number...

12 EXT - HARLEM STREET - DAY: BROTHERS CROSS

Sandman and Clay continuing conversation along sidewalk.
They and Dwyer brothers and Ed Popke cross paths. Dixie and
Sandman greet one another with an offhand gesture.

13 EXT - DWYER APARTMENT - DAY: VINCE SAYS HE'S MARRIED

Street in front of the house, ad lib departure of Ed Popke
across the street as the Dwyer brothers go up the stairs.
Vince grabs Dixie's arm as they start up steps.

VINCE

Listen. Big news. I didn't
tell you yet. (pause) I
suddenly... got married.

DIXIE

What! When? Who to?
(shakes head)
You tell me you want a job
with Schultz but you don't
mention you got hitched?

14 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - DAY: TISH WELCOMES DIXIE HOME

LETITIA "TISH" DWYER, mother of these two, is in kitchen in
work clothes, spotted with paint. Paint cans on the floor.
Ladder against wall, newspapers on floor to catch drips.
She sees Dixie come in, drops brush in paint can, hands
covered with paint. She holds them in front of her.

DIXIE

Whataya say, Tish. You got
all dressed up to welcome me
home.

TISH

Michael, I oughta punch you right in the nose. You were in town all day yesterday and you didn't even call.

DIXIE

It's a long story. Don't make me tell it. Throw your arms around me and ruin my suit.

VIEW ON HALLWAY

Down from bedroom area comes PATSY, Vince's bride.

VINCE

This is her, Dix. Patsy, this is my big brother.

Patsy is wrapped in a knee-length kimono with very little underneath it. She reaches over to shake hands with Dixie; Dixie kisses her on the cheek and her robe falls open, exposing most of her chest. Dixie tries not to notice.

TISH

Patsy, go get some clothes on. I told you not to walk around the house this way.

Patsy pouts, turns around and goes into bedroom. Dixie turns to Tish.

DIXIE

Why is she in my bedroom?

Tish is abashed. Vince is medium-hangdog also.

TISH

Vince and Patsy couldn't live in his little room. And you were on the road till god knows when. So I told them to take the big room till they got a place. I wasn't sure what your plans were.

DIXIE

It's okay, Tish. Take the bedroom, kids. All I need is a bed.

VINCE

Thanks Dix. Ma, you know,
that bombing last night at the
Ubangi, Dixie saved Dutch
Schultz's life last night.
It's in the paper.

She looks.

TISH

What'd you do that for?

Vince follows Patsy to the bedroom.

15 INT - VINCE'S ROOM - DAY: VINCE AND PATSY BEDROOM

Lying on the bed is Patsy. She looks very young, maybe
almost high-schoolish. She throws off the sheet and reveals
self in only panties, which she starts to take off.

PATSY

Close the door, Vince.

Vince closes the door, unbuttons pants.

16 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - DAY: TISH & DIXIE DISCUSS FINANCES

TISH

You save any money from
your band tour?

DIXIE

I got some new clothes, new
case for my horn. Not too
much cash.

TISH

Michael, are you ever going to
make sense out of that music?
You go on and on and you wind
up broke in Kokomo. You should
play the music that people want
to hear.

WE HEAR the sound of bed squeaking and bodies rhythmically
bouncing against the wall.

TISH

(nodding at the noise)
Don't you love the way
they converse?

DIXIE
(remembering)
I got cash. \$120. I hit
the number.

He opens the cornet case and shows her the money.

TISH
Well, let's go out on the
town. The whole family.

She puts on his hat and dances with him.

DIXIE
We'll do it Saturday. We'll
even take Vince and his cupcake,
all right?

TISH
Why not? She's the life of
the party. Listen to her
repartee.

The wall banging and bed bouncing continues.

17 EXT - COTTON CLUB - DAY: EXIT AUDITION/SEE LILA ROSE

The Williams Brothers, Clay and Sandman, are coming down the steps. At the foot of the steps, sweeping the sidewalk, is Holmes, the doorman, in everyday clothes.

CLAY
You were showing off. It really
ticks me off when you do that.
No sense of being a team.

HOLMES
You boys thinkin' you made
it into the big time up
there today?

SANDMAN
They loved us, Holmes.

HOLMES
Quit runnin' numbers now, and
quit peddlin' G-strings.
Big money here we come.

CLAY
We'll see.

Clay walks off without a goodbye. Sandman gives him a screw-you gesture. Sandman sees LILA ROSE coming toward club. She is so beautiful that he runs to her.

SANDMAN
Can you help me, I'm having
a heart attack.

LILA ROSE
You look real sick, all
right.

She keeps walking. Sandman watches her go, awed.

HOLMES
(amused)
You fell off the edge, Sandman.

SANDMAN
I'm climbin' back on.

He runs upstairs after her.

18 INT - COTTON CLUB STAIRS - DAY: SANDMAN/STARK ON STAIRS

At top of steps he encounters HERMAN STARK, club manager. Stark's presence stops him, and wistfully Sandman watches Lila Rose go backstage.

SANDMAN
Oh, Mr. Stark, sir. I couldn't
wait. Do we get the job or don't
we?

Stark looks at him grimly.

STARK
What do you think?

SANDMAN
I think we'll be the greatest
dance team in history.

STARK
Everybody liked you. You'll
go in the next show.

SANDMAN
You white folks are so smart.

19 EXT - LENOX AVENUE - DAY: SANDMAN ON NUMBERS BEAT

Sandman is on the street, moving happily like a dancer, on his beat to pick up numbers. He goes in and out of stores, restaurants, stops on front stoops to talk to people. He writes numbers on a pad, takes their money, and moves on.

SANDMAN

Hey Mo, whataya like today?

MO

Thanksgivin's comin', so they say. 527 always comes up Thanksgivin'.

At the next store, to a buxom middle-aged woman.

SANDMAN

(winking)

I want your business, Ada.

Ada gives him the money and a smile as he writes her number, 527.

ADA

You give me a call.

Sandman looks at her number.

SANDMAN

Hey, you on 527 too?

ADA

Sandman, don't you even know 527 come up three Thanksgivin's in a row? And you call yourself a numbers runner.

SANDMAN

That ain't what I call myself.

20 EXT - BARBERSHOP - DAY: SANDMAN SEES NUMBERS LIMOS ARRIVE

Sandman walks past a barbershop, stops a moment.

HIS POV:

Limos arriving, BIG JOE ISON, MARCIAL FLORES, CASPER HOLSTEIN, SPANISH HENRY, and then, a man of a different caste: BUB JEWETT, black man with bodyguard. He emphasizes difference between gamblers and a killer. They enter and walk through door at back of shop.

A barber, JOE, exits the barbershop.

SANDMAN
That's half the money in Harlem.
What's going on back there?

JOE
Ain't you heard? White mob's
movin' in on the numbers
bankers.

SANDMAN
Which mob?

JOE
I don't remember, but I
think the last name begins
with Schultz.

21 INT - JAZZ SPEAKEASY - NIGHT: SOL APPROACHES DIXIE

EXTREME CLOSE SHOTS

Musicians sucking on reefers.

A jam session -- piano, trombone, clarinet, trumpet and
drums. Moody and slow. Real jazz.

DIXIE'S POV:

A strange man sitting at the bar is looking at him
signalling him with his hand to come with him.

VIEW ON DIXIE

The jam session.

VIEW ON DIXIE

Looks again.

SOL WEINSTEIN approaches him.

SOL
You're Dixie Dwyer?

DIXIE
So I am.

SOL
The Dutchman's got a job
for you. He says you
play the piano in addition
to that bugle. Is that right?

DIXIE
I do indeed.

SOL
He wants you to play at a
party.

DIXIE
For how much?

SOL
A hundred and fifty.

DIXIE
That's a lot for some piano
playing.

SOL
He owes you one.

DIXIE
When does he want to pay?

SOL
Right now.

Dixie considers the offer, nods okay. He takes the
mouthpiece out of his cornet and puts the horn in the case.
He leaves with Sol.

22 INT - CAR - NIGHT: DIXIE/SOL DRIVE TO HOTEL

Dixie and Weinstein in car.

DIXIE
What do they call you?

SOL
Nobody calls me anything.

DIXIE
Not even your mother?

SOL
I never had a mother. They
found me in a garbage can.

Dixie, mellow on weed, wonders if that's funny.

23 INT - HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT: DIXIE AND SOL CORRIDOR

Sol is beside Dixie as they move out of elevator and past assorted hoodlums on guard in hallway and in front of doors to suites. We see Abbadabba in front of one door.

DIXIE
What kind of party is this,
all these, uh thugs.

SOL
You never been to a party
like this one.

DIXIE
Maybe I don't wanna go to
this party.

SOL
You do wanna go.

DIXIE
I'm glad one of us can make
a decision.

24 INT - HOTEL SUITE #1 - NIGHT: DUTCH TELLS DIXIE ABOUT VERA

Dutch is looking out the window at the street, Broadway lights. Dixie sees his brother, Vince and Ed Popke at the far end of the room, guarding another door.

DIXIE
(to Vince)
What are you doing here?

VINCE
They came and got me. I
think I got a job.

DUTCH
He's on the payroll. I got
too many Jews. We need
some Irishmen. Keep a balance.
So whataya say, lucky boy?
Did you bring your horn?

DIXIE
You didn't say you wanted the
horn. All I brought was my
piano.

TWO SHOT

Dutch likes the joke. Puts his arm around Dixie's shoulder.

DUTCH
Listen, I got a lot to do
tonight and I got this girl
comin'. She sings, got her
own music. You read music,
right?

DIXIE
Read it, write it, play it,
sleep with it.

DUTCH
You play for her, don't sleep
with her. Keep her company
for a while. I got some shitty
business to do and then we'll
have a party. I like you.

Dixie gulps as Dutch moves away.

BIG FRENCHY DEMANGE and OWEN "OWNEY" MADDEN enter room and
talk briefly. JOE FLYNN enters with TWO BODYGUARDS, shakes
hands with Madden and Frenchy.

NEW VIEW

Dixie sits down at the piano and begins a tune with great
flourish.

VIEW ON MADDEN, FRENCHY, FLYNN

Madden looks at watch.

MADDEN
Time, gentlemen.

They leave the suite. Dixie looks after them.

25 INT - HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The group moves down corridor. Dutch and Flynn's henchmen
wait in the hallway, glowering at one another.

26 INT - HOTEL SUITE #2 - NIGHT: PEACE CONFERENCE STARTS

Table arranged for four people: Dutch, Flynn, and Madden take seats. Frenchy stands. The bodyguards remain in hall.

MADDEN

...Because of you two jackasses,
we got twice as many cops in
Harlem as we had three days
ago. This is not good for
business.

27 INT - HOTEL SUITE #1 - NIGHT: VERA TELLS DIXIE HELLO SUCKER

MEDIUM CLOSE ON PIANO

The sheet music for "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea" appears suddenly.

VERA o.s.

I like it fast.

Dixie looks up.

HIS POV:

Vera Cicero, beautiful, dressed to the nines.

DIXIE

The little girl.

VERA

The altar boy.

DIXIE

How's your ear?

VERA

Perfect pitch. How's your lip?

DIXIE

Delicious. Want a taste?

VERA

I'd better not. I'm driving.
Why are you here?

DIXIE

Obviously to play while you sing.
Dutch is a great organizer, isn't
he?

Dixie and Vera are hanging out together, listening to music.
He reaches for her and they dance.

DIXIE

Do you pay your own rent?

VERA

Oh boy. It takes one to know one.

DIXIE

What do you do? You're not in the movies anymore.

VERA

I was a kid star and one day I stopped being a kid and they never asked me back. Now I sing. And tell a few jokes.

DIXIE

Tell me a joke.

VERA

Hello, sucker.

28 INT - HOTEL SUITE #2 - DAY: PEACE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

The peace conference goes on.

DUTCH

...One of his fuckin' guys threw a bomb at me. I don't know why I'm not dead.

FLYNN

He hung my brother by the thumbs. He's a goddam sadist. Bughouse bastard.

MADDEN

Here it ends. You're here because you both agreed to this truce. And it is a truce. Tomorrow is a business day. Clear?

Neither Flynn nor Dutch speak or move.

MADDEN
Is it clear?

He looks at Flynn, who nods, then at Dutch, who does, but barely.

MADDEN
Shake hands.

They don't and he grabs their hands and locks them, holds them. He releases them gradually as he delivers this speech.

MADDEN
In the next room, gentlemen,
is food, drink, music and the
best looking women available at
any price in New York. Sample
these things and try to
remember that this is why we
work so hard -- to live the
way kings and princes live
in this world.

29 INT - HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT: ABBADABBA TELLS JOKE
Abbadabba, bored, looks up and asks Vince a question.

ABBADABBA
Hey, mick, what do you do
with a rhinoceros with three
balls?

VINCE
I don't know. You shoot him?

ABBADABBA
No. You walk him and pitch
to the hippopotamus.

The hotel room door opens and the conferees come out and head toward the party.

30 INT - HOTEL SUITE #1 - NIGHT: VERA SINGS FOR DUTCH

Dixie and Vera are dancing away from the crowd. Dixie dances her behind a curtain, kisses her.

VERA
I like it. Are you rich?
(pause, kisses him again)
Forget I asked that.

DIXIE
Not the kind of line I forget.

She breaks away, a little worried about appearances.

VIEW ON DOORWAY OF SUITE

Dutch enters with entourage, goes to the bar and gets himself a drink. The Flynns hang back until Dutch clears away from the bar. Dixie and Vera stop dancing and join Dutch.

DIXIE
Is there peace in the world?

DUTCH
I shook his hand. I
shoulda cut it off.

DIXIE
Cool down. You'll overheat
and ruin your shirt.

DUTCH
You two remember one another?

VERA
We're trying.

DUTCH
You look like a beautiful
doll. (turning to Dixie)
You know that tune? Play
it for me. Sing it, Vera.

Dixie goes to radio, and turns it off. He goes back to piano and plays "Oh You Beautiful Doll." Dutch takes Vera's arm and dances.

VERA
(as they dance)
Are you calming down? I've
never seen anyone as angry
as you just were.

DUTCH
I'll be all right. But when
I think of that son of a
bitch...

He grits his teeth in anger.

VERA
Don't think about him. Think
of something lovely, like my
career. Can you really help
me open a club?

DUTCH
I can get anything I want in
this town. I pay all the right
politicians.

VERA
Politicians don't run night
clubs.

DUTCH
You got a lot to learn, kiddo.
(looks at Dixie)
I like you.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He goes over to the piano, noodles with the blues. Dutch
and Vera sidle over.

VERA
That sure is low-down.

DIXIE
You think this is low-down, you
just keep hanging around.

With his eyes he indicates Dutch when he says that. Vera
gets it but it goes over Dutch's head.

DUTCH
(to Vera)
Sing something. Dixie'll back
you up. Listen to him.

DIXIE
(to Vera)
You know "Between the Devil
and the Deep Blue Sea?" Love
to hear you sing that.

VERA
(retaliating)
See if you can keep up with
me.

Dixie goes into it, Vera sings it. Dutch is ecstatic,
falling in love, a swift obsession. Dixie observes this.

VIEW ON JOE FLYNN

He is watching also from across the room, noting Dutch's
behavior.

MADDEN
Food is ready, folks, help
yourself in the suite across
the hall.

31 INT - HOTEL SUITE #3 - NIGHT: JOE FLYNN MURDER

A vast spread of food, salads, cakes and pies, a huge chunk
of beef. Behind the table BLACK CHEFS are serving.

Madden, Frenchy, Flynn and Dutch enter, Vera and Dixie
following.

FRENCHY
Owen did all right bringing
you guys together.

Dutch turns to Frenchy, plate in hand.

DUTCH
We got some territory settled,
is what we did. We ain't
together.

FRENCHY
We know what we got. I'm sayin'
if Owen Madden was President we
wouldn't have all that baloney
goin' on in Europe.

FLYNN
What I like is we keep the
fuckin' Jews where they belong.
Keep the Jews and the niggers
where they belong and we're
all right. Jews are nothin'
but niggers turned inside out,
anyway.

VIEW ON DUTCH

He puts the plate down and in the same instant reaches across the buffet table. He grabs the carving knife out of the servant's hand, and in a swift turn shoves Frenchy aside and plunges the knife into Flynn's chest. He pulls it out, plunges it in again, then again. Blood spurts out of Flynn's throat. Dutch is maniacal.

The whole thing happens too fast for anybody to have stopped it. Electric behavior. He stands up from the murder, looks at Flynn, dying. He stabs him again, stands up, then stabs again, and yet again. This time Frenchy puts a pistol to the Dutchman's head.

FRENCHY

That's enough, Dutch.

DUTCH

Yeah. That's enough.

All are stunned into disbelieving silence by the suddenness and horrendousness of what they have just witnessed. A silence, then Dutch puts the knife back on the table.

VIEW ON MADDEN

He looks at Flynn, dead, looks at Dutch, looks at Frenchy and gestures with his head to one side. Frenchy clears the room of all except Dutch and his two friends, Dixie and Vera.

MADDEN

Somebody ought to cut out your brain and pickle it. You're the craziest son of a bitch I ever knew.

DUTCH

I-I-I get excited. He knows I'm Jewish.

DIXIE'S POV:

On Frenchy's signal, two men come and lay bedspread on floor, roll Flynn into it and carry him off. Dixie and Vera have not moved. Dutch is still by the table.

DUTCH

Blood on your rug.

MADDEN
You got it on your brain.

DUTCH
Owney, I'm sorry.

MADDEN
You're bloody fuckin' sorry
as a human being, Dutch.
Bloody fuckin' sorry.

DUTCH
I can make it all right
with the blood.

VIEW ON DIXIE. HIS POV:

Dutch walks to the doorway, sees a fearful black bellboy. Dutch grabs his arm, walks him to where Flynn's blood has stained the rug. Dutch reaches in his pocket and hands the man a hundred dollar bill. Frenchy follows Dutch's moves with pointed pistol.

DUTCH
Nothing against you, buddy.

He then punches the black man full on the nose, knocking him down. He lifts him by the collar, face on the floor, and lets his nose bleed on the rug.

DUTCH
Get him to a doctor. He's
probably got a broken nose.

Madden is watching like the old man of the mountains.

MADDEN
Bloody fuckin' sorry human
being.

Dutch turns around and looks at Dixie and Vera.

DUTCH
(concerned)
I'm sorry I did this to you.

ANGLE ON DIXIE AND VERA

Backing away together, in fear.

32 EXT/INT - DUTCH'S CAR - NIGHT: DRIVE HOME AFTER MURDER

Dixie is driving. Vera's in the front seat, Dutch in the back. He fidgets with a pistol, nervously. They are all trembling.

DIXIE
I'll take her home.

DUTCH
You're a smart guy. She's smart too. You're smart.

Dutch nervously takes his pistol out of his shoulder holster, holds it in his hand throughout the rest of this scene.

DUTCH
You two. Jesus Christ
I'm sorry about that.

The gun is mesmerizing Dixie.

DIXIE
Listen. Flynn almost killed
the two of us that night too.

DUTCH
(cheering up)
That's right. The bastard
bombed all of us.

He straightens visibly, thinking it out.

DUTCH
You'd never tell what you saw.

DIXIE
You don't need even to think
about that.

DUTCH
Don't get lost, either. I
wanna know where you are.
(to Vera)
Hey, kid, sit up. Don't worry
about it. I got the fix in.

VERA
Whatever you say, Dutch.

Dutch looks at pistol, then at Dixie, puts it away.

33 EXT - HOUSE - NIGHT: DUTCH BACKING INTO SHADOWS

DIXIE'S POV:

Dutch backing into the shadows, looking at them.

DUTCH
(barely hear him)
...numbers on my accounts.

DISSOLVE:

34 INT/EXT - DUTCH'S CAR - NIGHT: DIXIE & VERA DISCUSS MURDER

Dixie and Vera in front seat.

VERA
I never saw anything like it.
I can't stop shaking, my whole
body.

DIXIE
Nobody ever saw anything like
it. You didn't see the pistol.

VERA
What pistol?

DIXIE
All the way here he had his
pistol in his fist, figuring
out whether to kill us.

Vera breaks down with fear. Dixie stops the car.

VERA
He likes me. He doesn't want
to hurt me.

DIXIE
How does he know what he wants?
He's a madman. I mean he sat
there pointing the pistol at me
and talking to us like we were
the best of friends.

Vera sits up, bewildered, shaking her head, shaking away
mystery.

VERA
What if we ran away?

DIXIE

We'd be dead in a week.

VERA

He wouldn't hurt me. I never did anything to him.

DIXIE

We'll put that on your tombstone.
"She never did anything to him."

Vera can't take it. She gets out of the car.

DIXIE

I'm sorry. I thought you were this tough tomato with the jokes. I'm sorry.

He gets out, goes to her. Holds her.

DIXIE

I'm sorry. (pause) I think it's all right tonight. I think he calmed down. Maybe we ought to go someplace together and stay away from where we're supposed to be. Let him cool down.

VERA

(thinks it over)

That wouldn't help. You're right. You can't run.
(pause) But I really do think he likes me. He said it so many times.

Dixie looks at her with ambivalence: he's enthralled by her looks and her presence, but is also put off, mystified.

DIXIE

That much trust in him isn't good for you. He's the kind of guy wants to own you.

VERA

I want to go home. Do you remember where I live?

DIXIE

I remember.

They get into car.

35 INT - CAR - NIGHT: VERA ASKS DIXIE TO SIT UP WITH HER

As they go:

VERA
Can I talk you into sitting
up with me again?

DIXIE
Not this time.

36 EXT/INT CAR/VERA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT: DROP OFF VERA

He stops in front of her house. Smoldering moment as they
look at each other.

VERA
Why won't you come in?

DIXIE
You don't belong to me.

She gets out without a response.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

37 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: PATRONS ENTER

Cars arrive; excitement builds. The sophisticated white
PATRONS stroll by Holmes and enter the Cotton Club.

Negro RESIDENTS gather to gawk from a distance at the fine
cars and the exclusively white clientele as they approach
the club.

38 EXT - BACK ENTRANCE (ALLEY) - NIGHT: ENTERTAINERS ENTER

Entertainers and musicians enter, some hanging around,
smoking. The Williams brothers arrive. JOE, the old man at
the stage door greets them.

JOE
Welcome brothers, welcome to
the Cotton Club.

They enter.

39 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT: BACKSTAGE PREPARATIONS

MOVING POV:

The cubicles, the showgirls getting ready, the famous entertainers, musicians, etc., backstage life. The entertainers are all black.

NEW VIEW

DUKE ELLINGTON discusses something with DAN HEALY, the manager. ELIDA WEBB, the choreographer, is talking to the girls.

40 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DWYERS ARRIVE COTTON CLUB

MOVING VIEW

Here come the Dwyers, rushing, late, in their Saturday night best, which is, except for Dixie's, none too good. Dixie, Vince, Tish and Patsy, walking. They greet and pass Holmes with a nod, though Vince is suspicious of all blacks in positions of authority.

CLOSE ON DIXIE

Happy to take his mother to hear Ellington, but still preoccupied with the nightmarish events of last night. He looks across the street.

HIS POV:

Sol Weinstein, tailing him. Annoying.

41 INT - COTTON CLUB STAIRS - NIGHT: DWYERS GO UP STAIRS

Dwyers go up stairs, rubbernecking at pix and posters on the walls. Dixie dances up the last few steps with his mother.

42 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT: LAST MINUTE PREPARATIONS

Seasoned entertainers in last minute preparations before the show. We SEE the backstage details leading up to showtime.

MEDIUM VIEW

Giddy teenaged chorus girls excited as they check costumes. One sips whiskey from a musician's flask, very wary.

43 INT - COTTON CLUB KITCHEN - NIGHT: KITCHEN PREPARATIONS

The food being prepared. The "porter-style" WAITERS. Very polite and deliberate. The chef is Chinese, named LING. The HEAD BUSBOY is taking bets on the side, wads of cash between his fingers.

44 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: COTTON CLUB I

At the top of the stairs Dixie and family meet Kid Griffin and are introduced to the spectacle of the Club. Big number.

VIEW ON DIXIE

Really impressed with the club's sophistication.

45 VIEW ON THE COTTON CLUB REVUE

The "High Yaller" girls.

46 VIEW ON DWYERS IN CLUB AISLE

They are being seated at worst table in the house because of Vince's surly attitude; Kid Griffin hovering.

VINCE

This is the best table in the house?

GRIFFIN

The best we can do for you, my friend.

VINCE

We're in a corner. You ain't no friend of mine.

GRIFFIN

(understated)

Hallelujah!

TISH

That's him. I remember Owney. Could you tell him Tish Dwyer would like to see him?

Griffin nods, exits.

VIEW ON DIXIE

DIXIE

Who?

TISH

Over there. Owney Madden.
Now he knows about commercial
music. They call him Mr.
Broadway.

DIXIE

Did you know him?

TISH

(reflectively)

He was the first man I went
out with after your father
left.

VIEW ON MADDEN

Kid Griffin convey's Tish's message. Madden, is busy with
Frenchy, looks to Dwyer table, comes down.

MADDEN

Well, well. A pleasure
to see you again.

He's not sure he remembers all that he should about her.

TISH

Owney, I read about you all
the time. I want you to meet
my son Michael. He's a marvelous
musician, a jazz cornetist, and
I think you should hire him
for one of your jazz clubs.

DIXIE

I didn't know she was gonna say
this. She's being a mother, Mr.
Madden. Now that she's said it
I admit it. I'm marvelous. You
wanna put me to work?

Madden is amused, but recognizes him.

MADDEN

Gimme twenty minutes to
think about it.

47 VIEW ON THE COTTON CLUB REVUE

"Sentimental Gentlemen From Georgia."

48 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

VIEW of same act from backstage.

The two new dancers are being led around backstage. Sandman's trying to get a glimpse of Lila Rose, and both are awed by the activity backstage.

49 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON FRENCHY

Sitting in a corner booth of the club, the management's special corner. He comes out of the booth, opens office door.

50 INT - MADDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON OWNEY MADDEN

Listening.

FRENCHY

Owen, the Dutchman just come in.

MADDEN

Not here. Upstairs.

51 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON DUTCH AND FRANCES

Kid Griffin seating them at ringside table. Frenchy comes by after they're seated.

FRENCHY

You don't see what you want you just ask for it.

DUTCH

Bring me the moon, Frenchy.

FRENCHY

It's up on the roof. If you
got a minute, Owen wants to
show you his pigeons.

Dutch gets up and leaves with Frenchy.

52 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Sandman confronts Lila Rose as she comes offstage. There is
tremendous electricity between them.

SANDMAN

I gotta see you. After the
show.

LILA ROSE

No.

SANDMAN

Tomorrow, then. You've gotta.

LILA ROSE

At the Mighty Abyssinian
Church at ten.

They can't help themselves; they kiss. Lila Rose's eyes
widen as she sees someone behind Sandman. Mike Best, huge
and hamfisted, puts a hand on Sandman's shoulder, almost
crushes it. He gestures with a "get out."

SANDMAN

(angry)

Hey, I'm just a dancer tryin'
to get ahead.

Best shoves him aside.

BEST

Watch your act around here,
nigger.

53 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON MADDEN AND FRENCHY AND DUTCH

Madden is talking. Very softly. Very significantly. Dutch
smiles, and as they leave:

FRENCHY
(pointing)
Owen, look.

THEIR POV:

SOL WEINSTEIN, Dutch's bodyguard, his hands in his pockets,
watching the show.

MADDEN
Death Yiddish style.

54 VIEW ON THE COTTON CLUB REVUE

"Freeze and Melt" is the tune.

55 VARIOUS VIEWS

Ellington first, then details on the orchestra. Everybody
is watching the show.

VIEW ON GLORIA SWANSON AND CELEBRITIES

Waiters and guests fussing over them.

56 VIEW ON THE SHOW

"White Heat" finale. All performers are involved.

57 CLOSE ON DIXIE AND TISH

Dancing in a crowd.

TISH
How do you like your red
hot Mama?

DIXIE
The old man was nuts to take
off.

MADDEN
Remember. Owen Madden can
help you make your music more
commercial.

Dixie notices Vera walking with one of Dutch's hoods.

VIEW ON TISH AND DIXIE DANCING

CLOSE ON VERA

Smiles at Dixie.

VIEW ON VINCENT AND PATSY

They are dancing, trying to find orifices.

VIEW ON THE ORCHESTRA

58 EXT - COTTON CLUB ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Frenchy leads Dutch to the pigeon coop.

DUTCH

What is this with pet pigeons?
I used to catch 'em and cook 'em.

FRENCHY

Don't tell that to Owen..

They approach Madden at the pigeon coops.

MADDEN

You embarrassed me very badly
last week.

DUTCH

One of those things that
can't be helped.

MADDEN

But restitution must be made.
It's a law of the church, it's
a law of the land, and it's my
law.

Dutch nods.

MADDEN

I thought I'd leave it to
you, what kind of restitution.
But I realized you're such
a cheap son of a bitch you
wouldn't satisfy my sense of
right and wrong. And so,
Dutch, I want either \$25,000
in cash, now, on the table,
or \$10,000 a month for the
next four months. The first
offer is the bargain. I know
you love a bargain.

DUTCH
(after pause)
That's fair. I owe you.

MADDEN
Sometimes you're a big man,
Dutch.

DUTCH
You know how I got that big?
I ate a pigeon every day
when I was a kid.

He looks at Madden.

59 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Dixie is talking casually with Vera. They look like two jazz age sophisticates. The VIEW MOVES CLOSE and we can HEAR. Their talk is not as nonchalant and amusing as it seems.

DIXIE
Have you talked to him yet?

VERA
He's hoping his wife will
leave early. He wants me to
go meet him if she does.

VIEW ON FRANCES FLEGENHEIMER

Watching impatiently for her husband to come back.

VERA
He said -- he said to be sure
you talk to him before you go.

DIXIE
I'm with my family. I don't
want to talk to him now.

VERA
Do yourself a major favor and
don't rile him. You know what
happens when he gets riled.
Talk to him.

Dutch returning, sees Dixie and Vera.

DUTCH

How you doin', cornet boy?
This is my lucky boy.

Dutch moves back to his table, Dutch and Vera following.

DIXIE

People got to be lucky
when they hang out with you.
Listen, Dutch, meet my mother,
Tish Dwyer, one of the great
white mothers in this world.

TISH

How do you do. Do you get
bombed often?

DUTCH

It's pickin' up.

Tish strokes Dixie's hair. He pushes her away, embarrassed.
She's tipsy, having the time of her life. So is he.

DUTCH

It's good I ran into you.
I been thinkin' about a guy
with your talent. I need
some help.

DIXIE

Musical help?

DUTCH

I wanna get a new look.

Dutch wants to laugh, but doesn't dare. Tish is cracking up
and Dixie.

DUTCH

My wife says I'm a slob.

Dutch makes head gestures by Dixie.

DUTCH

I don't give a shit.

DIXIE

Not my line of work, Dutch.
I'm a musician. Your life's
too exciting for me.

DUTCH
I'll pay you two hundred a
week.

Dixie says nothing. They have moved off the dance floor and
are standing together, Tish to one side.

DIXIE
Let's go have a smoke and talk
about this. Tish, can you find
your way back to the table?

TISH
I'll be all right, honey.

Dutch and Dixie go through club and down front stairs to
street.

60 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DUTCH OFFERS DIXIE MUSIC JOB

Standing outside the entrance.

DUTCH
(sincerely)
Listen, mick, I been looking for
a sheik like you. Somebody to
represent me and my beer in the
new Harlem nightspots. I got
big plans for Harlem, and they
could include somebody who knows
jazz, who can talk to Louis
Armstrong, and Bix Beiderbecke,
tops guys like that, black and
white.

DIXIE
No guns, no bombs? Just music?

DUTCH
Just music. Three hundred dollars.

He puts the cash in Dixie's hand.

DUTCH
In advance.

Dixie holds money, uncertain, not quite smiling.

61 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

A stream of CHORINES comes down from dressing rooms. Sandman singles out Lila Rose and follows her descent. He emerges from invisibility, she sees him, he stops.

SANDMAN

Be careful what you do
to my heart.

LILA ROSE

You're in love, are you?

SANDMAN

I haven't been able to eat
or sleep since late this
afternoon.

LILA ROSE

Too fast, you shouldn't fall
so easy.

SANDMAN

All I want to do is marry
you and take you away from
all this.

LILA ROSE

Are you crazy? I practically
just got here.

SANDMAN

Well, me too. Let's never be
separated.

Lila Rose makes an entrance for:

62 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON THE SHOW

"Dinah/Creole Love Call": Moon shines in back against a
nighttime sky on the Bayou while six Scarlet O'Hara's and
six gorgeous showgirls sing and dance.

63 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON SANDMAN

Watching the show from backstage.

64 HIS POV:

Lila Rose in "Creole Love Call."

65 VIEW ON SANDMAN

Falling in love.

66 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON THE AISLE

Dwyers are leaving, Dixie last in line. As they pass a table GLORIA SWANSON stands up and bumps into Dixie. They maneuver, apologize. She looks at him, he at her. Zonk.

SWANSON

You're a very beautiful person.

DIXIE

You're more beautiful than I am.

SWANSON

You should be in pictures. You have a chance when you are gorgeous.

DIXIE

I can't miss.

SWANSON

I think not.

67 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Beautiful SHOWGIRLS emulating a sexy, sensuous atmosphere. CAMERA MOVES IN on a beautiful GIRL, naked, with her BACK to CAMERA putting on her panties.

CLAY

Where y'all rushing to?

TURQUOISE

Daddy's just come in from out of town.

HONEYSUCKLE

Thought he was dead?

TURQUOISE

He is.

They all laugh.

CLAY

Well at least put your clothes
on. It's cold out there.

TURQUOISE

Don't matter. They're coming
right off.

They all laugh.

Sandman and Lila Rose are in a corner together. She's all
business.

LILA ROSE

I told you not tonight.

SANDMAN

I don't take no for an answer.

LILA ROSE

(stops)

You better believe me and
right now you better leave
me a-lone.

She strides out, away from him, past the bubbling Cotton
Club entertainers. He watches.

68 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

MOVING CLOSE VIEW (PANAGLIDE)

Wandering with Dixie as he leaves the Cotton Club.

SUBJECTIVE VIEW:

Fragments of the people he is involved with pass in and out
of view. A bit of Tish, Vera, Dutch, Madden, etc.

Moving toward the orchestra, Ellington. CLOSER AND CLOSER
to him, until we:

DISSOLVE:

69 INT - CHURCH STAGE - DAY: COMMUNITY REHEARSAL

Sandman enters for his appointment with Lila Rose, who, along with other Cotton Club performers, is there teaching five dancing CHILDREN and helping the church put on a community show. STEPHANIE ST. CLAIR, "MADAME QUEEN," is one of the organizers, along with seven other black SOCIETY LADIES. The PASTOR is also there, talking to Madame Queen.

After the rehearsal, Sandman rushes to Lila Rose.

SANDMAN

You still mad at me?

LILA ROSE

I was never mad. You just need to respect my private life. (smiles) I know you and your brother got hired.

SANDMAN

They paid attention. You gonna pay attention to me too?

LILA ROSE

When you stopped me on the street I said, this man is gonna take a piece of my life.

SANDMAN

You said that? You knew it too? Let's get married now instead of havin' lunch.

LILA ROSE

Married? No chance. I'm goin' up in this world. I want real parts, Broadway, the money.

SANDMAN

That's white show business.

LILA ROSE

That's where it is, Sandman.

SANDMAN

(ad lib)

Is there a piano player here?

He sings "Tall, Tan and Terrific." They do a Lindy. When they finish:

SANDMAN
C'mon. I gotta show you off.

They exit.

70 EXT - CHURCH/STREET - DAY: WALK TO HOOFER'S CLUB

Sandman and Lila Rose walk arm in arm.

SANDMAN
We'll get an act together --
we'll go arm in arm to collect
all that jack.

71 INT - HOOFER'S CLUB - DAY: HOOFER'S CLUB DANCE

They enter into this social club, tables with men playing cards. Radio is playing jazz music. SUGAR COATES is playing blackjack with ANOTHER HOOFER. Sandman, holding Lila Rose by the hand, goes to Sugar.

SANDMAN
(to Sugar)
Sugar, I want you to marry
me.

SUGAR
I'm already married.

SANDMAN
You're the president of this
club. You're just like a ship's
captain, you can perform the
ceremony. And I need it now,
Sugar. Can't wait no longer.

SUGAR
(to Lila Rose)
You take this man to be
your lawful wedded husband,
you a whole lot crazier than
he is.

LILA ROSE
He moves fast.

SANDMAN

Not as fast as Sugar. Sugar
is so fast he's gone
before he even gets there.
Taught me all I know.

(to Sugar)

Listen, man, I want you to
see this little girl dance.

SUGAR

Now you're talking.

At the mention of dance, interest perks up in others in the
club. Sugar throws in his cards, stands up. Somebody goes
to the piano. People look at Lila Rose.

LILA ROSE

I don't want to perform.

She's a bit ill at ease among strangers. The piano man
plays something and a woman at the far end of the club
stands up and starts to dance, great stuff. Another dancer
moves in.

DANCER

I'm gonna take it.

Dancer moves to the center of the dance area as the woman
fades to the side, and he does his stuff. We are now in the
"challenge," where each dancer will try to outdo the
previous. They talk to one another with lines like these:

DANCERS

Gimme a little of that...
Not yet, I got one comin'
for you... Follow this...

And when a dancer is particularly great:

DANCERS

All right, do it, do the
step... You're tryna hurt
me.

Lila Rose loses her timidity and dances and knocks everybody
out. Sugar and Sandman do their great stuff.

SANDMAN

(to Lila Rose as
Sugar is dancing)

This man taught me everything
I know. Now I want him to
teach me everything he knows.

When Sugar does something terrific:

SANDMAN
You almost made it...

SUGAR
This is one I been practicin'
for a long time...

He does a miracle.

SANDMAN
Do it like you don't need
the money. I want it...

He dances and now it's Sugar's turn to comment.

SANDMAN
I'm gonna step on it...
I'm gonna twist this one off...

SUGAR
You have just created
history.

DISSOLVE:

72 INT - HOOFER'S CLUB - DAY: SUGAR REMINDS SANDMAN HE'S LATE

The MUSIC is subdued, nobody dancing. People again at the things they were doing before Sandman arrived. He is at a table with Lila Rose. Romantic MUSIC.

SANDMAN
When you gonna give me
that piece of your life?

LILA ROSE
Maybe never. I could be
wrong.

SANDMAN
Come with me now. I'll get
a room and you can check
me out.

LILA ROSE
No way... no way.

SUGAR
(at another table)
Hey, Sandman, ain't you
runnin' numbers today?

SANDMAN
Today and every day.

SUGAR
Ain't you a little late?

Sugar looks at the clock. It is two-twenty.

SANDMAN
Hol-eee shit... I gotta
run, baby. I am late, so
damn late. You gonna let
me see you again?

LILA ROSE
You save your money and
take me out Monday after
the show.

SANDMAN
I have died and gone to heaven.

He looks at the time, panics and runs out.

73 EXT - HARLEM STREET - DAY: SANDMAN RUNS DOWN STREET

Sandman running. We see Winnie running behind him, trying
to catch up.

WINNIE
Hey Sandman, Sandman, will
you wait up! Dalbert!

SANDMAN
Don't call me that around here.
Wait, Winnie, I got misery.

74 INT - BARBER SHOP - DAY: SANDMAN RUNS THRU BARBERSHOP

In the shop are a SHOE-SHINE KID, FIVE BARBERS, CUSTOMERS
waiting, RUNNERS coming in and out. All are black. Sandman
enters.

FIRST BARBER
Hey Sandman, you late.

SANDMAN
Never mind that, you be careful
with that man's ears, Charlie.

Sandman enters through door. Winnie coyly peeks in, looking for somebody.

75 INT - MADAME QUEEN'S NUMBERS BANK - DAY: SANDMAN LATE
WITH NUMBERS

Large room full of tables and desks, fifteen people working on columns of numbers, counting money, talking on phones. Bumpy Rhodes is beside desk of Madame Queen.

VIEW ON DOOR TO BANK

SANDMAN

I'm late.

MADAME QUEEN

You're later than late.

SANDMAN

I got dancin'.

MADAME QUEEN

I want to hear about that.
Wanna show me your steps?

SANDMAN

What can I say? Kill me?

He holds out wrists, turns head to side, closes his eyes.

BUMPY

We'll tell you when we
wanna kill you. Right now
we wanna see just how bad
you messin' us up, high
steppin' fella.

Sandman delivers his book to man at desk next to Madame Queen. He looks it over, checks numbers rapidly.

MAN

He's got these startin'
with five.

Tension with Sandman.

SANDMAN

You got the first number
already?

BUMPY

Five.

SANDMAN

Oh shit.

BUMPY

Thanksgiving season, man.
Everybody's heavy on 5-2-7.
And you got two of 'em giving
us ten dollar bets. You know
we gotta lay off that kind
of money and you go on dancin'
someplace. What ails you,
Sandman? You got a banana
brain?

SANDMAN

(clearing throat)

No way out?

Madame Queen speaks in precise language.

MADAME QUEEN

No need to do anything now, Sandman.
We can't lay this off now. You
know that. We can't do anything
but eat it. You go home, Sandman,
and figure out a way that this is
never again, in your life, going
to happen to you. We will be in
touch with you when the number
comes in and we will let you know
what the mortgage is. You dig,
Sandman?

Sandman nods, exits.

76 EXT - LENOX AVENUE - DAY: WINNIE SAYS BUMPY LIKES HER

Sandman walking, abjectly, Winnie walking with him.

WINNIE

They're mad because you were
late. I know all about it.

SANDMAN

You keep that quiet, hear?

WINNIE
Did Bumpy yell at you?

SANDMAN
None of your business.

WINNIE
I'm in love with Bumpy.

SANDMAN
What are you sayin'? He's
an old man and you're a kid.

WINNIE
He's not old. He's handsome
and smart.

SANDMAN
How do you know he's smart?

WINNIE
I see him readin' books.

SANDMAN
Lotta dopes read books too.

WINNIE
Bumpy's no dope. Everybody
says he's the smartest man
on the street. And he likes
me. I can tell how he looks
at me.

SANDMAN
(excited)
You're too young to know how people
look at you. You stay away from
gangsters or you gonna wind up in
trouble. 527, shit.

WINNIE
What do you need money for?

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

77 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DEPRESSION

INSERT: the program:

"SCENE ELEVEN: A Cabin in the Woods."

DISSOLVE:

We SEE FORTY FEET dancing in swirls, like gathering storm clouds. CAMERA PANS UP to twenty showgirls.

VIEW ON THE STAGE

The set is uncommonly simple--a log-cabin backdrop and a single lamppost. LILA ROSE leans against the lamppost, a lone deep-blue spotlight on her. She sings alone. "Stormy Weather." Then George Dewey Washington and the choir sing responses to her choruses. With the help of special lighting effects, the female dancers are blended into the tableau as storm clouds.

CLOUD WIPE:

78 DEPRESSION MONTAGE:

- a. ELECTRIC SIGN: "STOCKS CRASH, WALL STREET PANICS!"
- b. A BILLBOARD: "... NOTHING CAN STOP THE U.S.A. -- FORWARD AMERICA" A BREADLINE BELOW THE SIGN.
- c. INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW on a man in a beautiful coat with an expensive fur collar. He turns, it is Dixie. He goes to the jamming musicians, leaves a tip.

- d. COCKTAIL SHAKER.
- e. INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Dixie is at the Cotton Club, practicing his Charleston steps and whistles. He looks.

HIS POV:

Vera, alone, beautiful. In a moment, Dutch joins her. Her eyes avoid Dixie's.

- f. DIXIE GAMBLING BACKSTAGE. LOSING, RECKLESS.
- g. DIXIE AT JAM SESSION. CAN'T MAKE INTRICATE CORNET FINGERING. GETS FRUSTRATED AND HAS DRINK, AS SESSION GOES ON.
- h. INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT
CLOSE on Lila Rose -- "Stormy Weather." Girls as storm clouds.
- i. DIXIE WALKING QUICKLY, VIEW TRACKING WITH HIM. FETCHES CIGARETTES TO DUTCH. VERA WATCHES, SMOKING.
- j. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
- k. GIRLS LAUGHING.
- l. DIXIE DRIVING FOR DUTCH.
- m. VERA LAUGHS, MAKES A FAN OF PAPER MONEY. PEEKS FROM BEHIND IT.
- n. SANDMAN PRACTICING, SUGAR COACHING.
- p. SHOES TAPPING SUPERED OVER CALENDAR LEAVES FALLING AWAY.
- q. DIXIE DANCING ELEGANTLY WITH FRANCES. DUTCH LOOKS OVER PROUDLY.
- r. CLOSE ON DIXIE LISTENING TO JAZZ. HE SEEMS HAGGARD, FOR ALL HIS SUCCESS. MUSICIANS ASK HIM TO JOIN THEM -- HE DECLINES.

79 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DIXIE PASSES BY HOLMES
CLOSE MOVING VIEW ON DIXIE .

Walking, talking to himself, distracted. He passes Holmes.

HOLMES

Hey, Dixie. Bad times don't seem to bother you. You looking prosperous.

DIXIE

Don't believe everything you see, Holmes.

He continues on. The Messiah passes by.

MESSIAH
Repent your sins.

DIXIE
Move on, Messiah.

Dixie wanders on.

DISSOLVE:

- 80 EXT - HARLEM - DAY/NIGHT: NUMBERS WAR MONTAGE
- a. CLOSE ON VINCE DWYER. A smart looking hood, (grew mustache like Dixie). Forging Dutch's way into Harlem.
 - b. MACHINE GUNS FIRING. SUPERED WITH:
 - c. NEWSPAPER HEADLINES COMING OFF THE PRESS:
"Harlem Numbers Racket Invaded"
"\$6,000 A Day Collections Shrink to \$685"
"Dutch Schultz Muscling in on Negro Banks"
 - d. SCHULTZ'S ATTACKS ON THE NUMBERS BANKERS. JEWETT ON HIS SIDE NOW.
 - e. FACES OF THE INDIVIDUAL BANKERS BEING CONFRONTED BY SCHULTZ IN PERSON.
 - f. VINCE, ED POPKE, AND HOODS APPLY PRESSURE.
 - g. VINCE DWYER AND GANG ATTACK BLACK GANGSTERS.
 - h. SCHULTZ IN CAR INTIMIDATING CASPER HOLSTEIN WITH JEWETT.

- 81 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: STORMY WEATHER APPLAUSE
- "Stormy Weather" reprise and applause. Lila Rose and company take bows.

- 82 EXT - STREET - NIGHT: DIXIE WILL GET SCREENTEST

Dixie, drunk and disheveled, is playing his cornet while weaving down the street. A COP approaches him. Sees he's drunk, pissing on street.

COP
Now, you can't be doin'
that on the street.

DIXIE
Now why not?

TWO MEN who look like detectives walk by.

FIRST MAN
Wait one minute.

DIXIE
What'd I do?

SECOND MAN
We're with Allied Studios.
We're looking for some real
character types.

FIRST MAN
You're perfect. Don't change
anything.

He gives Dixie a card.

FIRST MAN
Call if you're interested.
Three dollars a day and a
box lunch.

COP
You drunks have all the luck.

Dixie looks at card, shrugs.

83 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: NOT WELCOME AT UBANGI.

MEDIUM VIEW

Negro entertainers of a darker and more basic type than work at the Cotton Club. Extraordinary talent. Dixie enters and despite the general feel of the depression and people, Dixie seems affluent, though somewhat dissipated. He's with some black girls.

CLOSE ON DIXIE

Smiling, greeting people.

NEW VIEW

They just aren't as receptive to him any more since his employment with Dutch. He sits at the bar, trying to order rounds. The black girls pay a lot of attention to him.

BUMPY
What are you doin' with that
Dutchman, Dixie?

DIXIE
You asking me to leave?

There is a very slight lull in the entertainment and small crowd. These people are used to anything flying loose.

BUMPY
(walking away)
We miss you at the jam sessions.

84 MADAME QUEEN'S NUMBERS BANK - DAY: NUMBERS BANKERS MEETING

527 is on the blackboard. A disaster for all black bankers, who can't cover the Thanksgiving number.

HOLSTEIN
Who can cover their hits and
who can not?

CLOSE ON MADAME QUEEN

Shaking head no.

MADAME QUEEN
What can you cover?

HOLSTEIN
Nineteen.

MADAME QUEEN
You need eleven. I was hurt
too. I can't give you much.

HOLSTEIN
Anything is a help.

MADAME QUEEN
Three.

HOLSTEIN
I need another eight.

Madame Queen nods.

HOLSTEIN
Where do I go to get it?

MADAME QUEEN
Anybody but the Dutchman.

DISSOLVE:

85 INT - MADAME QUEEN'S NUMBERS BANK - DAY: JEWETT OFFERS GUNS

Madame Queen is dressed differently, new people in the room. We're at a table with several numbers bankers, plus BUB JEWETT, who is of a different order from the bankers. He's a gangster, they are gamblers.

MADAME QUEEN
We're here because Mr. Jewett says he can protect us from the white invader.

JEWETT
I know how the Dutchman thinks. I see him operate with the Flynns. You meet a gun with a gun, and I got all the guns anybody ever need.

HOLSTEIN
I want no part of guns. I'd leave the numbers business.

FLORES
Question isn't guns. It's politics. You connected to Jimmy Hines and Tammany? They control the police, and that's the power.

JEWETT
(smiles)
Me and Jimmy is good friends. I shine his shoes.

BUMPY
(contemptuous)
We need a better connection than that.

JEWETT
(angry)
I come to do you a favor. That man is leanin' on you. You wanna lean back or no?

He looks each of them in the eye. All looks return to Madame Queen, who understands the response without words.

MADAME QUEEN

Mr. Jewett, I think we'll pass
on your offer. We are not
interested in going to war.

JEWETT

You don't know you already
lost the war.

86 EXT - VERA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT: DIXIE PICKS UP VERA

Dixie pulls up in Dutch's Dusenbergs, same clothes but not as
spiffy; a bit seedy, maybe even a little drunk, or high on
reefer. Vera is waiting behind her gate.

DIXIE

My favorite lady of long ago.
Whatever happened to you?

VERA

Same thing that happened to
you only it looks like I
handled it better. You look
terrible.

DIXIE

I look great. It's what I
look at that's not so great.

VERA

Then quit lookin', sucker.
Where's Dutch?

DIXIE

He can't make it tonight.
I'm your escort. I will do
absolutely anything for money.

He opens both car doors, gives her a choice of where to sit.
She gets in back.

87 INT - DUSENBERG - NIGHT: DRIVE VERA TO UBANGI

Vera in back, Dixie driving. He listens and watches Vera in
the rear view mirror.

VERA

And we'll get drunker and drunker,
and drift about night clubs so
(MORE)

VERA contd.
drunk that we won't know where
we are, and then we'll go to Harlem
and stay up all night and go to
bed late tomorrow morning and
wake up and begin it all over
again.

She looks out the window.

VERA
You're going the wrong way.
The theater's downtown.

DIXIE
We're not going to the theater.
I keep you company, but in my
ballpark.

88 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: VERA IMITATES DIXIE

Dixie and Vera at a table near the band, which is playing
up-tempo tune. Dixie visibly happy. Vera is not as unhappy
as she makes out; music is reaching her.

VERA
Have you given up talking?

DIXIE
I never know what to say to
you. I don't know who you
are.

VERA
I know all about you. I can
imitate your walk, and the
way you dangle your cigarette.
(she imitates him)
You have been watched.
(pause) A girl needs somebody
in her imagination. (pause)
Do you mind?

DIXIE
It's like working nights in
somebody's dream.

VERA
Sometimes they're pretty hot
dreams.

DIXIE

I know some things about you.
How you dangle your cigarette.
(he imitates her)
How you look when you make
love.

VERA

When did you see that?

DIXIE

Ever since the night I put
you to bed.

DISSOLVE:

89 EXT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: SOL LOOKS IN UBANGI

Sol Weinstein gets out of car, goes to club door, looks in,
sees Vera and Dixie at table. Watches. Doesn't go in.

DISSOLVE:

90 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: BAD JAM SESSION

Dixie gets up from table and goes to band, which is
regrouping. He talks to trumpet man, SAM.

DIXIE

Hey, Sam, lemme blow a couple
of tunes, give your lip a rest.

Sam looks at him in a way that is non-committal, but not
very friendly. Other band members give him the fish eye, no
big welcoming hand as in the old days.

DIXIE

(to Sam)

Can I borrow your horn? I
got my own mouthpiece.

Sam nods, hands him horn, without mouthpiece. Walks off
without speaking. Dixie faces CLARINET MAN.

DIXIE

What's the tune?

CLARINET MAN

You'll figure it out.

They go into a tune, up-tempo, Dixie plays okay for a while,
then misses a few notes. Band members eye one another.

DISSOLVE:

91 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: THE DUTCH DISEASE

Dixie and Vera dancing.

DIXIE

They treat me like I got leprosy.

VERA

It's known as the Dutch disease. I had a case of it too.

DISSOLVE:

92 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: MADAME QUEEN/DIXIE NOT FRIENDS

Dixie alone at table, Vera goes off to the ladies room. Madame Queen, who has been observing Dixie and Vera from the end of the bar, comes over.

MADAME QUEEN

We wonder what you're doing here, cornet man. Friend of the Dutchman is no friend of ours.

DIXIE

You mean I gotta choose sides?

MADAME QUEEN

You don't have to do anything, trumpet man. Neither do we.

DISSOLVE:

93 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: APACHE DANCE

Vera and Dixie, he now in sullen mood. The magic is off their relationship. Band is playing.

VERA

Let's dance, or something.

Dixie looks at her, and they get up with a few other couples on floor.

DIXIE

You know, I used to make a living dancing in tea rooms when I was eighteen.

VERA

Tea rooms.

DIXIE

Powdered old ladies came in for tea and paid me to put my arms around them and waltz them off their feet. I got two bucks for an afternoon. There was extra money for night work, if you could stand it.

VERA

Could you?

DIXIE

Sure. Look at me tonight.

Vera slaps him during the dance. He considers the slap, then returns it, knocking her across the dance floor. She falls in a graceful way. Dancers back off the floor to follow the thrust of this event. She gets up, her mouth bleeding. Dixie reaches for her, she tries to avoid him, he grabs her arm, yanks her. It has the elements of an Apache dance, seems choreographed. She tries to break away, he grabs her by the shoulder and her dress rips. This is a challenge to her. She rips the rest of it, exposing some of her body. Audience hoots and hollers. The sight of and sound of this reaches Dixie and he realizes where he is and what he's done. He goes to her in a different way.

DIXIE

Okay, that's enough. I'm sorry.

VERA

Sure you are.

DIXIE

It wasn't you, it was me. Let's get out of here. I gotta breathe.

She relents, lets him take her out.

VIEW ON SOL WEINSTEIN

He is standing inside the door, arms folded. He has watched the whole episode. Dixie and Vera do not see him as they go out.

94 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dixie and Vera entering, very quietly. Vera is disheveled. Her dress badly ripped.

VERA
Isn't it crazy to come here?

DIXIE
It's crazy to go anywhere.
But you can straighten yourself
up. Did I hurt you?

VERA
I think you broke my jawbone.
Ever think of becoming a boxer?
She sits at kitchen table. He goes into his bedroom and
finds one of Patsy's dresses, comes out with it.

DIXIE
Try this for size. My
brother's wife. She's your
size.

Vera stands up, holds dress against herself, looks right.
Dixie moves into kitchen, takes down two glasses, opens
refrigerator. They sit at kitchen table, and Dixie pours
lemonade and raises a toast.

DIXIE
To anything.
He leans forward to kiss her and almost knocks her off her
chair. Noise. They have been talking in whispers.

TISH o.s.
Is that you, Vincent?

DIXIE
It's Michael, Ma. It's okay,
go to sleep.

VERA
(smiling)
Michael.

The ice is really broken now. They're comfortable with one
another. He leans over and kisses her.

VERA
Where do I change.

DIXIE
(points to his new room)
Be my guest.

95 INT - DIXIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT: LAY ON SINGLE BED

Vera goes into room, Dixie follows, puts on bedside light. She turns her back to him, points to buttons on back of dress.

VERA

Can you give a little girl
a hand?

DIXIE

I wonder if this is my real
job in life, taking off your
clothes.

VERA

You think of a better one?

DIXIE

Not at the moment.

He lays her down on his single bed, begins to make love to her. After a while:

DIXIE

You feel like you're on
your honeymoon?

VERA

It's better than that.
Honeymoons are never this
dangerous. If he came in
now he'd kill us right here.

DIXIE

Keep him out of it.

VERA

Who?

DIXIE

(laughs)

You never stop telling jokes.

VERA

I don't feel very funny, Dix,
that's the god's truth. I feel
like things are better than
they've ever been for me, but
all wrong.

They go on making love.

DISSOLVE:

96 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - NIGHT: DIXIE SAYS HE'S QUITTING

They are still entwined, not making love.

DIXIE

I'm quitting the Dutchman.
No more running after his
cigarettes while he strokes
you. No more waiting in the
car while he does whatever it
is he does to you.

VERA

Whatever he does.

DIXIE

I quit.

VERA

How do you quit? You're the
one said he'd kill you if you
ran.

DIXIE

I was in the wrong place one
night. So what.

VERA

Where would you go?

DIXIE

Anyplace. Miami and watch the
dog races. Hollywood maybe.
For three dollars and a box
lunch. What's the difference
what I do, as long as I'm
something besides Dutch's...
(pause)

VERA

...nigger. You're a tough guy.

DIXIE

I get tough when I think I'm
in love.

VERA

You think you're in love.

DIXIE

Yeah. What do you think?

Vera cries and embraces him.

VERA
Flies in my brain. I can
shoo them away if I want.

DIXIE
Come with me.

VERA
I don't know.

DIXIE
You don't have to put up with
it. Just let's go. Right now.

VERA
How far would we get?

DIXIE
When we get to the moon we'll
worry about that.

DISSOLVE:

97 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - NIGHT: TEA & TOAST WITH PSYCHOPATH

They are quiet, holding one another.

DIXIE
You know how I think it is?
There's never really a way out.
No way to be right. You look
for this way up, that way, and
every way you look there's
thugs, hoodlums, guarding the
door. Who does it straight is
what I want to know. You want
to be straight but there's no
goddam straight in this world.
There's only the way over the
edge, out and down. You do
whatever you can, that's how I
see it. But some things you
don't do. (pause) You don't
watch a murder and then come
home and fuck your friend who
loves you and then leave him,
and go home and wake up in the
morning and have tea and toast
with the psychopath. You don't
do that. (pause) Do you?

VERA
It seems I do.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He nods slowly.

DIXIE
Listen. I'll see you one more
time before I leave. I'll ask
again. (pause) Just once.

DISSOLVE:

98 INT - DWYER APARTMENT - NIGHT: NOT REAL LIFE - IT'S JAZZ

VERA
Is the honeymoon almost
over?

DIXIE
I think so.

VERA
Will we live happily ever
after?

DIXIE
I don't think so.

VERA
No. (pause) That's not
how it goes in real life.

DIXIE
This isn't real life.

VERA
What is it?

DIXIE
Jazz.

FADE OUT:

99 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: VINCE WRECKS UBANGI

Jewett comes in, backed by Vince Dwyer and his boys. They
are taking over club. Madame Queen does the best she can to
hold on but Jewett makes move against her guys. Fight
breaks out, customers panic.

VINCE

Stay in your seats and shut up
or you'll be corned beef hash.

Bumpy returns in time and fight ensues in which Bumpy beats Jewett off, and stabs Jewett's man. Vince and boys destroy club.

100 INT - CLUB - NIGHT: DIXIE HITS HIGH NOTE

A jam session. Dixie goes for a high note, can't make it. Tries again, makes it. All MUSICIANS nod approval. Dixie plays in session, like the old days. A FRIEND comes in and whispers a message. Dixie leaves in a hurry.

101 EXT - STREET - NIGHT: VINCE & ED PICK UP DIXIE

Dixie is waiting on the street. Vince and his friend Ed Popke are in a car, pick him up.

102 INT - CAR - NIGHT: DIXIE SEES VINCE WOUNDED

Vince is wounded.

DIXIE

What's this? Have you gone nuts?

VINCE

If I'd said I was wounded,
you wouldn't have come.
I needed dough for a doctor.
I can't go to a hospital.

DIXIE

Of course I'd have come.
A hundred is all I got on
me. I oughta break your
head.

Dixie grabs him forcefully.

VINCE

Hey, leggo, Dix, it hurts.

He loosens.

DIXIE

How'd you get it?

VINCE

Fightin' the niggers. The Dutchman don't pay me enough to do this.

DIXIE

You're crazy to be in this deep with him. Get the hell out before they kill you. And get the hell out of Harlem.

103 INT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: DUTCH/EMMA/VINCE AT CLUB

It's the opening of the club. Dutch is showing his mother EMMA FLEGENHEIMER around. Lila Rose passes by.

EMMA

Who's that one?

DUTCH

She's a singer. She's great. Wait'll you hear her.

EMMA

Where do I sit?

DUTCH

Good table, Mama. The best. There. You want that one?

EMMA

How much is the cover charge?

DUTCH

Ten dollars.

EMMA

It's too much.

DUTCH

Mama.

VIEW ON VINCE DWYER

He stands in doorway of club. Dutch sees him and they make eye contact. Dutch seats his mother at the table, the only customer in the house, goes to Vince. Together they go in hallway.

VINCE

I came here because I can't
get near you at the garage.
I wanna get what's due me.
It was me and Eddie got the
niggers to pack it in.

DUTCH

You did all right. What
are you looking for?

VINCE

I don't want a raise. I
want a percentage.

DUTCH

Percentage? Are you crazy?
You're on the payroll. That's
all there is, that's all there's
gonna be.

VINCE

That's it? That's what I get?
For what I did?

DUTCH

You oughta have a raise. I'll
give you another fifty a week.
(he smiles)

VINCE

Fifty bucks.

Dutch is silent; burns at Vince's sullenness.

DUTCH

Careful mick, you don't like it,
go into business for yourself.

VINCE

That's a good idea.

He gets up slowly, leaves. Emma is at her table, many other
tables filled, four piece honky tonk band playing Tin Pan
Alley music. Dutch sits down and people greet him: Hi ya,
Dutch.

EMMA

They shouldn't call you Dutch.
You're not Dutch, you're German.

DUTCH

Kids used to call me Dutch,
Mama. It stuck.

EMMA

So unstick it. Let them call
you German Schultz, they want
to call you something.

DISSOLVE:

104 INT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: VERA'S OPENING SPEECH

Dance floor is crowded, band playing, postage stamp dance floor is crowded. Some socialites in crowd, but it looks to be rowdier than the Cotton Club audience, more mobsters of a low order, tourists.

Vera is wandering through small crowd, talking to people. When song ends she goes to center of dance floor, sits leaning over back of chair, and delivers her rap. We see Lila Rose in evening gown, sitting and passing with new friends.

VERA

(her own style)

Hello, chumps. I hope you're enjoying yourself out there tonight in our new club. I'm Vera Cicero, a one of a kind girl, and I'm still trying to find out what kind... we got some fancy folks here tonight... There's Tough Tommy over in the corner, Tommy's from Brooklyn, and he wears socks every Tuesday and Thursday... and there's Walter Winchell down front, who won't take off his hat, and Arthur Flegenheimer, our guest of honor. He's Emma's little boy, and a proud mama is here with him tonight.

Emma applauds.

105 EXT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: SANDMAN/LILA ROSE OUTSIDE VERA'S

Sandman waiting, looks at photo of Lila Rose with a new name: "Angelina: Lovely Songbird." Lila Rose comes out.

LILA ROSE

How'd you find me?

SANDMAN

You might be white but you
ain't invisible. What time
you through?

LILA ROSE

Midnight.

SANDMAN

I'll be here.

106 INT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: DIXIE PLAYS AT VERA'S

Dixie comes in front door of club, checks his hat, has his
horn with him. He wends his way through the club; he's near
dance floor when Lila Rose comes on. She starts to sing
"Them There Eyes" in very slow tempo, a love song.

DIXIE'S POV:

Vera's table. Vera is with Dutch and his mother, where she
sat after introducing Lila Rose.

We HEAR cornet obbligatos.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He begins to answer Lila Rose's lyric with obbligatos. He
upgrades the band.

VIEW ON VERA'S TABLE

She instantly knows that he's come for her. Dutch sees it's
Dixie, breaks into a smile.

DUTCH

That son of a bitch Dixie.
Has he got style or has he
got style? I like him.

VERA

He's got it all right.
(sotto voce)
But what are we gonna do
with it?

EMMA

How come he's all by himself?

Song continues.

107 EXT - BACK OF CLUB - NIGHT: SOL WATCHES AT VERA'S

Back of club we see Sol Weinstein, always haunting Vera.

108 INT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: VERA INTRODUCES DIXIE

Lila Rose is taking bows, Vera gets up and takes microphone.

VERA

All right. You know a singer like Angelina that looks the way she does, comes along once every thousand years. And that cornet from left field, he's every ten thousand... Dixie Dwyer.

Eyes go to Dixie.

VERA

We're gonna take a look at Vera's Follies now, all six of 'em. Look but don't touch... Give the little girls a great big hand.

Band begins and the SIX CHORUS GIRLS come on and start to kick and bounce in their scanties. Vera walks over to Dixie and they talk.

109 INT - VERA'S CLUB - NIGHT: RAID ON VERA'S

It's a raid. Cops push in past the doorman. This is not just a speakeasy raid. They want selected people.

COP

Be quiet and stay in your seats.

Cops grab Dutch, Dixie, Sol Weinstein, eight or ten other hoodlums.

110 INT - COURTHOUSE LOCKUP - NIGHT: KISS VERA THROUGH SCREEN

Dixie and Dutch and some street people: bums, dipsos on the nod, rat-faced thieves, bunched in a cell. A screen separates group from women in next cell. This isn't really a cell, just a lockup. Prisoners wait arraignment. Dixie is talking to Vera through wire. Dutch cowers in corner, visibly ill, maybe wondering whether he's going to vomit.

VIEW ON VERA AND DIXIE

Separated through the screen.

DIXIE

(to Vera)

Funny how it works out. I wanted to take you away, and along they come and take both of us.

VERA

I loved the way you played.

DIXIE

It was them eyes I was playing to.

He places his palm lightly on her face, the screen between his hand and her face. Their fingers fit through the holes in the screen and they touch their fingertips.

DIXIE

What are you gonna do?

VERA

Kiss me, Dix. Kiss me.

He kisses her through the screen mesh. Dutch sees this. His eyes narrow, he nods his head.

DIXIE

(breaking from the kiss)

And so I asked you, one time.

He and Vera look at each other.

DISSOLVE:

111 INT - COURTROOM - NIGHT: DUTCH AND DIXIE COURTROOM

Dixie and Dutch are almost shoulder to shoulder waiting their time before the judge. LAWYER is beside Dutch. Awkward.

DIXIE

(eyeing lawyer)

Know where I can get a good lawyer, Dutch?

DUTCH

Why should I do anything for you, you son of a bitch.

DIXIE
You know why they're booking
me?

He waits for Dutch to answer, gets no response.

DIXIE
The Flynn case.

Dutch turns white. Then he hardens.

DUTCH
That old turkey?

DIXIE
They had me in once on it just
after it happened. I don't know
why they keep calling me in for
something I never saw.

Flickers of a smile at one corner of Dutch's lips. Dutch is
summoned, goes before magistrate. His lawyer goes alongside
bench, whispers in magistrate's ear. Magistrate is
impressed.

MAGISTRATE
You are charged with operating
a numbers racket in violation
of section X of the penal code...

VIEW ON DUTCH

His eye on Dixie, who is next.

MAGISTRATE
You are hereby released in the
custody of your lawyer to await
a hearing.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He stands before the magistrate. Dutch's lawyer also speaks
on his behalf.

MAGISTRATE
You are to be held as a material
witness in the murder of Joseph
Flynn... released in custody of
your lawyer to await a hearing.

112 EXT - STREET - DAY: DIXIE TELLS DUTCH HE'S LEAVING

Dutch and Dixie walking alone.

DIXIE
I'm gonna leave, Dutch. This
life is wrong for me. You
know that.

VIEW ON DIXIE

He stops walking. He forces Dutch to stop because of the
unknown element in this relationship all of a sudden. Dutch
looks at him as if he were a snake.

DUTCH
I could cut your heart out.

DIXIE
What for? For Vera or
because I want to leave?

DUTCH
You take your pick.

DIXIE
I asked her to come with me.

DUTCH
I used to think you were smart.

DIXIE
And now I'm not because I
level with you? What do you
want to be, Ghengis Khan, for
chrissake? You want to run
everybody's life forever?
Don't you ever give anybody
in this life anything except
grief? (leans over) Whataya
gonna do now, kill me? How
many people can you kill,
Dutch?

VIEW ON DUTCH

He has no answer.

113 INT - HOTEL REGISTER - NIGHT: SANDMAN/LILA ROSE REGISTER

Sandman and Lila Rose run down a hotel staircase.

CLERK

(sternly)

We don't accept mixed couples.

SANDMAN

We ain't mixed, we're colored.

She looks very white indeed to the clerk.

CLERK

(to Lila Rose)

What color are you?

LILA ROSE

My mother was white, my father was black, so what does that make me?

CLERK

Room 428.

He hands them a key.

114 INT - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT: SANDMAN/LILA ROSE LOVE SCENE

Sandman, Lila Rose enter, kiss. He holds her as they talk.

SANDMAN

Lotta people really believe you're white.

LILA ROSE

I was white for six months before I met you, workin' for a lawyer. I told you I had a private life.

SANDMAN

Why'd you do that?

LILA ROSE

Because I can.

SANDMAN

So what?

LILA ROSE

Nobody lives for you and nobody dies for you. The lawyer paid me twice the money the Cotton Club paid me. And Vera pays me five times that -- she don't say if I'm white or colored. I'm just a singer, and that's the way I like it.

SANDMAN

Vera's doorman won't let me in to hear you sing. I can't pass. Not Sandman.

They separate. Tension.

LILA ROSE

Hey. You gonna start a race riot or you gonna make love to me?

Sandman overcomes his funk, embraces her again.

SANDMAN

(slowly)

I'm gonna love you so much you're gonna turn into a flower... this is the greatest night in the history of the world and we're gonna turn one another inside, outside, and upside.

She undoes his shirt.

LILA ROSE

Sandman, you know how to do anything except beat your gums?

They go at it, softly, lovingly.

115 INT - WAREHOUSE HIDEOUT - DAY: CEMENT KIMONO

Vince and his mob. Large glass pane windows. Phone rings. Everyone attentive.

PATSY

Maybe that's Ed.

VINCE
(on phone)
What? Who?

He hangs up, quizzical.

VINCE
What the f...

PATSY
Who is it?

VINCE
It was Weinstein. He says
Ed's comin' back.

Suddenly a metal oil drum crashes through the window. Everyone jumps for cover. The drum is full of hardened cement, but sticking out of the top of the cement is the head of Ed Popke.

CLOSE ON POPKE.

There is a bullet hole between his eyes.

VINCE
I'll burn that Jew Weinstein
in hell! Gun him down!

116 EXT - STREET NEAR COTTON CLUB - DAY: BABY KILLING

Cotton Club personalities, Sandman, etc. are giving out baskets of food. A parked baby carriage is in front. Car with Vince's berserk thugs roars around the street.

MOVING VIEW ON SOL WEINSTEIN

He is standing in doorway of bookie joint with a YOUNG GIRL, up to no good.

VIEW

The Cotton Club celebrities: Sandman, Cab Calloway, etc. giving out food to the depression-stricken folk. Lots of ad libs as they try to cheer the poor up.

VIEW ON MOVING CAR

Hoods spray the scene with machine gun fire from car. Children are shot, Weinstein not injured, protects himself with young girl, ducks into doorway below street level.

117 MONTAGE OF HEADLINES superimposed over Vince looking at himself in mirror.

"Rewards Offered For Baby Killers"

"Giant Anti-gangster Rally Called"

"Most Hated Outlaw Since John Wilkes Booth"

"Breweries Raided in Harlem and Bronx"

"Schultz-Dwyer War Rages"

"Gangster Links to Politicians, Cops Revealed"

"The 'Mad Dog Mick' Hunted"

118 INT - CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT: VINCE AND DIXIE GOODBYE

Dixie, carrying horn case, comes up the stairs and looks for room number. Finds it. Door opens a bit and a gun barrel comes out at him. He laughs.

DIXIE

I'm Vince's brother.

Gun retreats, door opens, Dixie is ushered in to room where four men and Patsy are waiting, all with guns either in their belt or on the table; extra guns (machine gun, sawed off shotguns), on top of buffet.

VINCE

You got your horn.

DIXIE

You got a lot of guns.

Vince motions to one of the gang to get people into other room and leave them alone.

VINCE

I wasn't in the car when those kids got it, Michael. Mad Dog, for chrissake. I mean I want that goddamn Dutchman but I wouldn't shoot a kid.

DIXIE

What are you gonna do?

VINCE

Go upstate, maybe. Connecticut.
Who knows? But I need a stash
so I can lay doggo a while.
(pause) How's Ma?

DIXIE

You read Winchell this morning?
He calls you the town's Al Capone.

VINCE

He said they're bringin' in
Chicago shooters to get me.
Good luck.

(pause, emotional)

Play that blue tune I used
to like. The slow one.

Dixie sits down and plays for Vincent. It is like playing
Taps at Arlington Cemetery. Dixie nods, stands up.

VINCE

Does everybody hate me?

DIXIE

They don't know you. They hate
shootin' a kid. That wasn't you.
I remember you and me getting shot
at once. Joe Snyder. With an air
rifle. We ran like hell and he
never hit us.

VINCE

I remember that.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

119 EXT - LENOX AVENUE -- NIGHT: WINNIE LATE FOR SHOW

Norma and Winnie are hurrying along. Winnie looks very
childlike in her absence of makeup, and kid clothes.

NORMA

I am so upset with you. They're
very strict with the Cotton Club
Girls. Where you been when you
should be gettin' ready?

WINNIE

Let it go, Mama.

They approach the Cotton Club entrance. Holmes looks at Winnie as they go in.

HOLMES

How come you're not dressed up, Winnie?

Winnie waves him off, Norma shakes head at Holmes, which says: It's not my fault, nothing I can do.

120 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: COTTON CLUB II

Two dozen gangsters and their women are sitting at far ringside and in end booths, watching the show. We see LUCKY LUCIANO, Madden, Frenchy, JOHNNY RAO, TRIGGER MIKE COPPOLA, others. These are the only patrons. Rest of club empty.

VIEW ON DUTCH AND VERA

She is dressed beautifully, Dutch is dressed as well as can be expected. They aren't speaking. Vera deflated.

DUTCH

For chrissake, show a little life.

VERA

Look who's talking.

Cab does the full routine of "Kicking the Gong Around," authentically recreated.

121 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Crap game going on.

MALE DANCER

Lightweight house tonight.

SANDMAN

Private party. They may look lightweight, but their pockets weigh a lot.

VIEW ON HERMAN STARK

He has discovered crap game.

STARK
All right, break it up. We're
here to work, not get rich.

Game breaks up.

122 INT - COTTON CLUB KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stark to Ling the chef. Big doin's.

STARK
Get this and get it right.
Mr. Luciano will have the
frivolity sandwich. Three
orders moo goo gai pan for
Mr. Costello, Mr. Madden, and
the Reck brothers. Johnny Rao
will have steak, rare.

LING
And what about Mr. Schultz
and his lady?

STARK
(odd smile)
Let them eat cake.

123 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON THE REVUE

A private showing of the Cab Calloway Revue. Cab is a
terrific entertainer, giving it everything he's got, but the
two dozen gangsters are not cracking a smile.

The VIEW shows us their faces, intercut with the faces of
the Cotton Club talent: Cab, Sandman, Winnie, the
musicians, etc.

CLOSE SHOTS

Lucky Luciano, Trigger Mike Coppola, Johnny Rao and his
brother.

Weinstein and Abbadabba at table next to Dutch.

ABBADABBA
(to Weinstein)
You never played the horses,
did you?

SOL
(deadly serious)
I used to race rats when I
was a kid.

VIEW ON THE STAGE

Sandman does an a cappella tap solo.

124 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Sandman talking to propman about the staircase. Clay sees
this, comes to him.

CLAY
You got your solo?

SANDMAN
Shake my hand. Be understanding.

CLAY
I'm shakin' you loose. Your
whole show is solo from now
on. I don't wanna dance with
your ego for the rest of my
life.

SANDMAN
(hurt)
I'm tryna make it for all of
us, Clay.

Clay turns, walks off.

125 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON BOOTH

Madden is sitting with LUCIANO, who's face is in shadow.

LUCIANO
Any news on the mick?

MADDEN
(shakes head)
I hear you're worried about
Schultz.

LUCIANO
He's a hot head, ambitious.
This is a new thing, our
thing. You can't do business
with hot heads.

126 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Backstage frenzy is intensifying. CHORUS GIRL and Winnie talking, Winnie has become a beautiful, mature-looking young woman, the transformation from little girl is extraordinary.

CHORUS GIRL
You like that drummer man?

WINNIE
I got somethin' better than
a drummer.

CHORUS GIRL
Be a pal and get this note
to him, will ya?

127 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON CHORUS GIRLS ON STAGE

They enter onto the stage. They go through their dance, and when our chorus girl reverses and is facing the band she and DRUMMER lock eyes. He nods at her, she smiles, keeps dancing.

128 INT - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Winnie and Norma are in a corner, arguing.

NORMA
You're not going out, girl.
I say you're not.

WINNIE
Mama, I'm too big to be
told how to live my life.

Sandman's and Winnie's mother and UNCLE are backstage. Clay is there too, and there is still friction between him and Sandman.

Winnie is complaining about the deplorable conditions of the club backstage, they have to pay for food, ruined costumes, colored patrons can hardly get into the club, and are sometimes denied use of main toilet.

The uncle, a self-styled "sportin' man" makes a few remarks to Stark about conditions.

A bit of rough stuff from Best, who thinks uncle is threatening them. He pushes uncle into men's room.

BEST

You wanna use our toilet, then
use our toilet.

He manhandles the uncle in the bathroom, giving him a dose of the toilet. Consternation. A furious Sandman gets his family out of the Cotton Club.

129 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Tish Dwyer comes up to Holmes, who is standing in front of club entrance, blocking it.

HOLMES

(shaking his head)

Sorry, Ma'am, private party
tonight. Club's closed.

TISH

I just want to see Mr. Madden.
He's a friend of mine. Tell
him Tish Dwyer.

HOLMES

I'll see what he says.

130 EXT - DRUGSTORE - DAY: PULL UP TO DRUGSTORE

Vince gets out of car, three of his men and wife stay in it. While they are waiting, second car pulls up behind it, parks, TWO MEN get out.

131 INT - DRUGSTORE - DAY: KILLING OF VINCE

The two men enter drug store. From under a raincoat one of the latter reveals a machine gun. His associate calms patron and owner of store. Man with machine gun opens fire, catches Vince in phone booth. His wife comes in, screaming.

132 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Tish is nearing top of stairs. Madden comes to meet her. Tish gets a look at the gangsters, knows it is strange. Madden takes her to corner booth near his office.

TISH

I knew you'd see me, Owen.

MADDEN

Any time, Tish.

TISH

I'm here about Vincent. I know what's going on about him.

MADDEN

(nods)

Everybody knows.

TISH

Do something about it, Owen.

MADDEN

There's no way, Tish. I hate to say it, but he can't get well, if you know what I mean. He went too far. People sometimes go too far and they can't get back.

VIEW ON THE CLUB

A MAN arrives and goes to table where Frenchy is sitting. He whispers in Frenchy's ear, and Frenchy turns to Dutch and says something. Dutch tells Luciano. Waiters start popping corks from champagne bottles, pouring it. Toasts are raised.

VIEW ON VERA

She suddenly realizes they're toasting death of Vince Dwyer. Madden is leading Tish out of the club. In the background we hear Dutch raise a toast.

DUTCH

Here's to one dead dog.

133 INT - COTTON CLUB STAIRS - NIGHT

Tish goes down stairs alone as more corks pop.

134 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Cab Calloway does "Minnie the Moocher."

135 INT - BLACK SPEAKEASY - NIGHT: STAY BLACK AND DIE

Sandman, Sugar Coates and Bumpy are at a bar together.
Blues in background.

SANDMAN

What am I supposed to do,
just take it and say nothing?

SUGAR

What can you do about it?

SANDMAN

Beat on him. Kill him.

BUMPY

(laughs)

What world are you livin' in,
Sandman? You think I'm gonna
kill Madden's man? Take on the
most powerful white mob in the
city? You get Madden on your
ass you really got somebody on
your ass.

SUGAR

There's only one way you can
get even with Mike Best, Sandman.
He ain't no more than a fire plug.
Piss on him, just like a dog.
Leap over him.

SANDMAN

Leap over where?

SUGAR

What kind of leaps you know?
Dancin'!

SANDMAN

Would you dance over a guy
shoves a man's face in the
toilet?

BUMPY

Maybe I'd kill him, Sandman.
Maybe I'd dance around him.
But I'm no dancer, Sandman,
I'm a pimp and a gambler and
a thief. I got no talent to
dance myself where I wanna go,
and I won't work Pullmans
for nickels and I ain't goin'
back to Africa and run around in
my underwear. I can't get my
foot in the door of the Cotton
Club where my people are the stars,
can't get in because I'm black.
I gotta do two things in this life:
I gotta stay black and I gotta die.
White people haven't left me nothin'
but the underworld. That's where I
dance, Sandman. Where do you dance?

VIEW ON SANDMAN'S FACE

TWO SHOT ON BUMPY AND SUGAR

They're staring him down.

VIEW ON SANDMAN

SANDMAN

I'm gonna kill him with my
tap shoes.

136 INT - SCREENING ROOM - DAY: HOLLYWOOD SCREENING

VIEW ON SILVER SCREEN

We SEE Dixie in white fedora hat beating up on two big
thugs, like Dutch or Owney have done in real life.

Four typical 1930's movie EXECUTIVES talk while they watch.

J.W.

What's the kid's name?

SOLLY

Dixie Dwyer.

J.W.

This is the first guy you sent
me since we started talkies
doesn't sound like a soprano
and look like a fruitcake.

SOLLY

He's the real thing, J.W. He
could become the next big...

J.W.

(interrupting)

He can't act but he looks great.
Was he really a gangster?

SOLLY

So they say.

J.W.

Put him under contract and get
him out here. First thing we
do is change his name...

DISSOLVE:

137 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: SANDMAN'S TAP DANCE

MEDIUM VIEW ON SANDMAN

Spotlight snaps on. Tremendous applause, insofar as his
talent has made him a big, big star.

He begins a tap dance improvisation, with no band. There is
so much applause and whistling, that several fights break
out over the noise ruining Sandman's taps. Finally, it
becomes silent, and we hear the taps.

DISSOLVE:

138 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: SANDMAN DOWN STEPS

Sandman proudly strolls down the Cotton Club steps, taking
up as much space as possible. He tips Holmes grandly.

SANDMAN

I feel like a stroll through
Harlem.

139 EXT - STREET/MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT: SANDMAN PASSES POSTER

INSERT TIGHT SHOTS

Sandman strolls, signing autographs, talking to journalists.
He pauses by movie theater, poster of Dixie and another man,
both in fedoras, starring in "Mob Boss"; lines extending up
the block of people waiting to get in.

140 INT - UBANGI CLUB - NIGHT: SANDMAN AND CLAY REUNITED

Clay Williams is doing a number at the Ubangi. In comes Sandman, girls, and fawning swells. Someone recognizes Sandman, others ask for autographs. Madame Queen looks, shakes her head, and fawns too -- making sure there's press coverage.

SOMEONE

Hey, Sandman, welcome to the club.
Everything's on the house for the
king of the Cotton Club.

SANDMAN

What I deserve, but I there's
also Cab.

Laughter. Clay stops his dance when he sees his brother.

CLAY

Harlem's most famous dancer
just walked in. I haven't
seen him in a very long time.

They do their old number and embrace in tears.

CLAY

My brother, the great Sandman
Williams.

141 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: C.C. III

CLOSE ON DIXIE - HIS POV:

Lila Rose has arrived on the arm of Charlie Chaplin, whom somebody recognizes. Charlie does his little tramp's walk for gawkers. Lila Rose confronts Holmes the doorman square in the eye and he recognizes her. He says nothing, doesn't stop her. He smiles. As she passes:

HOLMES

You lookin' mighty good
tonight, pretty lady.

Dramatic VIEW on Lila Rose as she passes up the stairs.

142 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

A thin young man in black tie approaches Frenchy and Herman Stark. This is TED HUSING. He leads another YOUNG MAN who is carrying what looks like a large radio.

HUSING
(melodious voice)
I'm Ted Husing. Where do
we set up the equipment?

FRENCHY
How 'bout over there.

HUSING
(indicating engineer)
He has to be near me and I'm
ringside.

STARK
Over here, Mr. Husing.
Absolutely no problem.

VIEW ON VERA

With spotlight. Mistress of ceremonies on Celebrity Night.

VERA
Everybody's here for Celebrity
Night, everybody who's somebody.
If you're not somebody, you're
not here.

She introduces many of our characters, as well as Dixie, who she didn't know would be there.

VERA
...There's Babe Ruth over there,
only hit two home runs and
a triple today, slacker...
(heavy applause)
And there's Will Rogers, who never
met a man he didn't like until
he met the waiters in my club...
and I'll go on later when we get
all you somebodies up here to do
your bit. But now I want you to
see the hottest dancer in America
-- the pride of Harlem -- Sandman
Williams.

143 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: MONTAGE

WALTER WINCHELL DOES HIS TAP DANCE, HAT ON.

- a. RITZ BROTHERS.
- b. BABE RUTH HITS FUNGO -- WITH PAPER BASEBALLS.
- c. CHAPLIN TWIRLS HIS CANE AND SNAGS VERA, MAKES HER SKIRT RISE.
- d. JOAN CRAWFORD DOES A CHARLESTON WITH WALTER WINCHELL.
- e. DIXIE DWYER, PROTOTYPE OF THE MOVIE GANGSTER. PHOTOGS WANT A PICTURE OF HIM WITH GUN.
- f. TED HUSING BROADCASTING THE SHOW.

144 INT - PALACE CHOP HOUSE - NIGHT

Dutch gets up from table, goes to men's room. Two men come in front door and tell bartender to lay down. Guns drawn.

145 INT - PALACE CHOP HOUSE - NIGHT

The two shooters kill Abbadabba and his associate. They can't find Dutch.

146 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

Sandman comes on, does his big number which kills everybody. Then:

SANDMAN'S POV:

Lila Rose with Charlie Chaplin. He is showing her how he made the bread feet in "Gold Rush." Lila Rose sees Sandman.

VIEW ON SANDMAN

Dancing for her.

CLOSE VIEW

Fork into buns, walking.

147 INT - PALACE CHOP HOUSE - NIGHT

Tall gunman checks men's room, sees Schultz, shoots him.
Dutch makes it to the table; slumps over it.

148 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON MADDEN'S BOOTH

Big Frenchy comes in, tells Charlie and Madden there's a
phone call. All three go to Madden's office.

149 INT - MADDEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Madden takes up phone, and hears the word: Dutchman is
dead. He shakes hands with Luciano, others in party.

MADDEN

You know, Charlie, I'm goin'
back to jail.

LUCIANO

Why you gonna do a thing like
that?

MADDEN

Just a little parole violation,
Charlie, but it's not a bad excuse
for gettin' outa this racket.
Posterity plaits no new laurels
for the gangster. His mug shot
gathers dust in ancient files.

He reaches over and fingers Luciano's lapel.

MADDEN

There's a lot of ambition in the
New York mob these days. (pause)
You know what I mean? The Irish
don't always know when to quit,
but some of us learn as we go.

Frenchy walks over to Madden who is at his desk and sits
alongside him.

FRENCHY

My watch broke, Owen. Can
I borrow yours?

MADDEN

Whataya need a watch for?

FRENCHY
I need to know what time it
is, Owen.

Madden takes pocket watch out and hands it to Frenchy. It
is attached by a chain to Madden's vest pocket. Madden has
to lean over to let Frenchy read the time.

FRENCHY
The watch is slow.

MADDEN
It is like hell. It never
loses a minute.

FRENCHY
The goddamn watch is slow.
It's not worth twenty cents,
this watch.

He lays it on the desk and smashes it with a paperweight.
Madden is stunned.

MADDEN
My watch... what the hell...

Frenchy stands up, gives Madden back his chain.

FRENCHY
(furious)
Where the hell is my five
hundred dollars?

MADDEN
(stunned again)
Am I nuts or is he out of his
mind?

FRENCHY
The son of a bitch borrowed
five hundred from me in 1928
to buy a radio and I never
saw a nickel of it.

Madden is at a loss to comprehend anything.

FRENCHY
Now he's going back to jail
and where the hell is my five
hundred? I don't even have
the radio.

MADDEN

I never owed you a nickel as
long as I live you crazy
bastard. And this watch...

He holds the smashed watch, and it dangles in smithereens.
Frenchy takes a package out of his inside coat pocket and
gives it to Madden.

FRENCHY

Bon voyage, Owen.

Madden opens it.

MADDEN

A platinum watch.

They embrace. Luciano is vastly entertained.

150 INT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT

VIEW ON WINNIE - Doing "Ill Wind."

During which word of Dutch's death is spreading.

Sandman approaches table with Chaplin and Lila Rose. There
is talk of going over to another club, since Small's
Paradise show is just starting. Lila says she's staying.
Charlie teases her that she's going to break his heart, but
the show biz group finally leaves. Sandman and Lila Rose
kiss, and are reunited.

LILA ROSE

There's only one Sandman.

151 EXT - COTTON CLUB - NIGHT: DIXIE/VERA FAREWELL

Two cars, Dixie's and Vera's park on either side. Wind.
They're well dressed, and it's the Depression. People envy
their cars, clothes.

VERA

The big star.

DIXIE

You beat me to that. Nobody in
New York doesn't know Vera Cicero.

VERA

They'll know you even in
Albany. You can play your
horn now whether they want
you to or not.

DIXIE

They got me my own parlor car.

VERA

You goin' someplace?

DIXIE

Goin' west, young lady. Guess
they need mob bosses out there.
I'll ask you again. You wanna
come along?

VERA

Nah. Take the little girl out
of town, who is she?

DIXIE

She'd be the star in any town.

VERA

You say that to all the stars.

DIXIE

We never did make much of a
couple, did we?

VERA

Are you kiddin'? They'll write
books about us.

DIXIE

You think they'll write in
the Dutchman?

VERA

Sure. They'll call him King
Kong. (pause) You know we
split weeks ago. I tried
to tell you he didn't kill
little girls.

DIXIE

I'm gonna leave you, Vera
as in Very Very. I'm not
going to listen to any more
(MORE)

DIXIE contd.
of your jokes. (pause)
That's maybe the saddest
thing I've ever said to
anybody.

Vera chokes up, embraces him.

VERA
Flies in my brain. They
won't go 'way.

DIXIE
They'll go 'way in a while.
You know I'll miss you like
I never missed anybody in
this world before.

VERA
Do me the biggest favor you
ever did for me, will you
kid? (pause) Kiss me on
my lovely lips and don't
say anything.

They clinch, get into their cars and drive off in opposite
directions. A little colored BOY is tap dancing for
nickels.

THE END

A ROBERT EVANS PRODUCTION