

"THINGS TO DO IN DENVER
WHEN YOU'RE DEAD"

By

Scott Rosenberg

FADE IN:

AN OLD MAN

in tight CLOSE UP. A talking head. He looks frail, ashen, a dying man's pallor. His voice is a rasp.

OLD MAN

... you can't be happy with who you are, until you've satisfied some very basic requirements: success in whatever area is important to you (love, business, family); a fulfillment of the fantasies you had as a child, whatever those fantasies may be; and, and most importantly, you can't be happy with who you are, who you've been, if you haven't treated your fellow man with anything but an uncommon decency. Decency. Because after you're gone, your money goes to other people, your house, your cars, another man comes and marries your wife, the kids fall in love with strangers. But if you've been decent, if you've been good, how you are remembered, cannot be sullied. Cannot be changed --

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Wider now - we see the Old Man is propped up on a hospital gurney, being videotaped by CUFFY - a fastidious gay man in his mid-30s. The Old Man explodes into a gale of ugly coughs and Cuffy clicks off the camera.

CUFFY

Very nice, Mr. Jergen. Take a rest now and we'll continue. Cindy, get Mr. Jergen a glass of water, would you?

CINDY, twentysomething, fetches the old man some water.

The door to the studio opens and a young COUPLE is ushered in by

JIMMY THE SAINT

35, handsome, blue-black Superman hair, smooth Italian suit. Despite the polished veneer, traces of the street still creep through --

JIMMY THE SAINT

... in here, we'll find Mr. Jergen doing a taping. My associate, Randall Cuffland, follows a carefully composed
(MORE)

JIMMY THE SAINT (cont'd)
list of questions, which he poses to Mr. Jergen and which Mr. Jergen's loved ones will be able to access after he's gone -

Jimmy The Saint nods to Cuffy, gives the thumbs-up to Mr. Jergen and takes the couple into another room.

INT. ROOM

Where a BOY, 17, sits with a TECHNICIAN before a video monitor.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)
In here, we'll find Stevie. Stevie's father passed away - pancreatic cancer (a quick killer, we had to move rapidly) - at a time, late adolescence, when Stevie needs him most. So, now, Stevie wants his father's advice on any number of wide-ranging issues - he comes back here... What's going on, Stevie?

STEVIE
I really love this girl at school. And she wants nothing to do with me --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Unrequited love. Truly a thorny thing to muck your way through. Without strong male guidance, no less --

Jimmy The Saint nods to the Technician, who consults a logbook and punches up some numbers on a VDT terminal.

Tapes whirr. Then, on the monitor, a sickly-looking MAN appears.

MAN
... uh, girls. I dunno. This is - uh, hey, when you chase a dog it runs. Treat 'em like shit. That's what I did. I was in love with your mother for years. She wanted nothing to do with me. One day I said "fuck it". I told her I didn't wanna have anything more to do with her. Bing-bang. She fell for me. We were married two months later. Treat 'em like dirt. They come running.

Stevie looks less than enthused at this advice. Jimmy The Saint chuckles to the couple and ushers them out.

JIMMY THE SAINT
Of course there's no guarantees that a
(MORE)

JIMMY THE SAINT (cont'd)
 dying man is a sure source of sage
 advice, but it's comforting
 never-the-less --

They have come to the reception area of this place.

INT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE ENTERPRISES

or so the sign above the RECEPTIONIST's desk says. It is a
 few leased suites of offices and electronic equipment...

YOUNG MAN
 Thank you. We'd like to think about it.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Of course, of course. How old is your
 father?

YOUNG MAN
 63.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 And he has... ?

YOUNG MAN
 Diabetes. But his condition has taken a
 severe turn for the worse --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Time is of the essence. How many
 grandchildren are there?

YOUNG MAN
 Eight all together.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Surely they'll benefit from a
 patriarch's advice. Maybe not now,
 maybe not tomorrow, but someday soon.
 It's something to consider...

The Young Man nods. The Young Woman looks ill. Jimmy shakes
 their hands...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Oh, and please, take our brochure --

He grabs one off the receptionist's desk. A glossy fold-out.
 The young couple leave. Jimmy The Saint loosens his tie.

INT. BACK OFFICES

Two desks, a few file cabinets, a coffee machine. Jimmy The
 Saint comes in. Cuffy is there, at his desk, going over

invoices.

CUFFY

Any luck?

JIMMY THE SAINT

He seemed into it. She looked like she was gonna launch lunch all over Mr. Jergen --

CUFFY

What are we doing about May rent?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I dunno, Cuffy. What do you want me to say?

CUFFY

So I won't ask about the payroll --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Maybe we can let Julie go. It's not like the phone actually rings or anything --

CUFFY

What do you think of this? For the newspaper ad.

Cuffy takes a large cardboard ADVERTISEMENT MOCK-UP out of its wrapping. It says "AfterLife Advisement - Just Because They're Gone Doesn't Mean They Can't Guide." Jimmy The Saint stares at it.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Who came up with that?

CUFFY

I did.

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's terrible.

CUFFY

Why?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's clunky.

CUFFY

Clunky?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's fuckin' clunky, Cuff.

CUFFY

What's clunky? What do you know about clunky?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know clunky. That's fuckin' clunky. It's terrible. I thought you people were supposed to be good at this kind of shit --

CUFFY

"You people -- ?"

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah, you people, Cuff. Homosexuals. You people. Every fag in the world is good at this stuff, I gotta wind up with the one that's clunky --

CUFFY

Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's stinks, Cuffy. It blows. You wanna pay May rent? You wanna keep Julie on? Come up with something better than that, man --

Jimmy leaves the office. Cuffy stares at the mock-up.

CUT TO:

EXT. DENVER, COLORADO - DAY - BEGIN CREDITS

as we get the quickie tour of the "Mile High City" clenched within the thundering shadows of the Rocky Mountains --

RAPID SHOTS

of the South Platte River; the shimmering skyscrapers of 17th Street; the Union Stockyards; The Colorado Capital; Elitch Gardens; Mile High Stadium; Stapleton International Airport...

We take it from the macro to the micro. Note a SALOON: "The Silver Naked Lady" and a NIGHTCLUB in the seedier section: "The Lazy Bird". Also, take in an ice cream shoppe: "Thick 'N Rich". Eventually, as the CREDITS come to an END, we'll settle on

A SCHOOLYARD

Recess. CHILDREN run around, swarming the jungle gym, the see-saws, the slides. Kickball is played on a small field.

A FIGURE watches the playground from the other side of a chain-link fence. He is 24, doughy, crazy-eyed. His name is BERNARD.

At once, Bernard scales the fence, his chubby body, surprisingly lithe.

He drops into the playground. Wanders over to a group of CHILDREN playing four-square. He looks dazed.

NEW ANGLE - A TEACHER - The Recess Monitor, whistle around her neck, sees Bernard.

BERNARD

walks on. Play stops. Children stare. One little GIRL fronts him.

LITTLE GIRL

What do you want, doofus?

Bernard says nothing, he reaches out to her. Sausage fingers scrabbling for her tiny, pre-pubescent breasts...

The girls screams.

From across the playground, the teacher blows her whistle. It's strident squeal taking us to the

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH ICE CREAM SHOPPE - DAY

An old, bald, black man - MALT - in paper hat and ice cream whites, is the proprietor here. Everything is a sparkling formica, the tables and chairs wrought iron, like the malt shops of yore...

JOE HEFF, 67, white hair and moustache, a bent-nosed dandy, sits in a booth opposite two YOUNGER MEN. Joe Heff talks. Joe Heff always talks, taking time out only to spoon coffee ice cream into his mouth.

JOE HEFF

... In them days, you wanted a piece of quim, you knew where to go. You left the wife at home, you hit the spots. Go out with a Big Noise guy. A fuckin' cake-eater. Before you can say beef bayonet, you got a bangtail on your arm, sweet as Dutch cheese. Now, you got your fuckin' AIDS, you got your fuckin' raised feminist consciousness, you got your fuckin' movements. Too many movements, you ask me. The only good

(MORE)

JOE HEFF (cont'd)
movement is a bowel movement... Hey,
look who's here -- Jimmy The Saint...

Jimmy The Saint has walked in. He nods to Malt, who immediately goes to work making him a vanilla frappe. Jimmy takes a seat at a side table. Joe Heff sits down.

JOE HEFF
What's the word, Jimmy?

They "shake hands" - which, for them, is placing their right hands up and flat against each other...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Give it a name. What's going on, Joe?

JOE HEFF
Heard about this thing? Fuckin' Bernard?

JIMMY THE SAINT
What about him?

JOE HEFF
I knew the kid was lunchy. Not this lunchy. Fuckin' kid. They catch him at a schoolyard. Fishin' for saplings --

JIMMY THE SAINT
No shit?

JOE HEFF
Disgraceful. They should neuter this fuckin' kid. They should cut off his puny testicles and feed 'em to the squirrels...

JIMMY THE SAINT
It's a brain thing, Joe, with Bernard.
It's not a balls thing...

JOE HEFF
Give it a name. It's all a balls thing, Jimmy. Anything you can say, is a problem, in a man, is a balls thing...

Malt brings over Jimmy's shake. Jimmy takes a sip, allowing the cool confection to soothe his burning belly. Joe Heff notices.

JOE HEFF (CONT.)
Still got the ghastly guts there, Jimmy The Saint? How's business?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Lousy. We need a quick injection of
cash or we're through --

JOE HEFF
Yeah? That's a bad rhythm, Jimmy. I
could - if you want - talk to some
people --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Forget it.

JOE HEFF
Recidivism.

JIMMY THE SAINT
Boat drinks.

Jimmy raises his frappe glass. Joe Heff toasts it with his
cup of ice cream.

JOE HEFF
Boat drinks.

Jimmy finishes his glass. Gives Joe Heff another flat-palmed
handshake... And leaves the shoppe.

Joe Heff goes back to the two men in the booth.

JOE HEFF (CONT.)
Jimmy The Saint. Flatbush Avenue. Went
to seminary school. Lost the calling.
In his day, the bitch's bastard --

CUT TO:

EXT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE OFFICES - DAY

Jimmy gets out of his car. Two nasty-looking MEN - GUS and
ELLIE wait out front.

GUS
Jimmy The Saint --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Hello, boys --

ELLIE
That's a nice suit. Versace?

JIMMY THE SAINT
No --

ELLIE
Oleg Cassini? Armani? Hugo Boss?

JIMMY THE SAINT

(to Gus)
What's with this?

GUS

Ellie's P.O. said he needed a hobby...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Fashion is his hobby?

GUS

He tried making his own pasta... It didn't move him...

ELLIE

Three-button ventless. I like that, Jimmy. Classy. 'Course you gotta have the build for it. Gus and me, we couldn't get away with it. We're too boxy. We're more single-breasted, two button guys.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah, well...

GUS

He wants to see you, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What for?

GUS

What can I tell you? He says: "Gus, I want to see Jimmy The Saint." I say: "Boss, Jimmy The Saint ain't mixin' it up, no more." He says: "Gus, I want to see Jimmy The Saint." Here we are. The point of me arguing any more, seemed, uh, specious...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nice... Don't tell me: your P.O. said you needed a hobby, too...

ELLIE

Gus is reading the dictionary...

JIMMY THE SAINT

When did he want to see me -- ?

ELLIE

Now.

GUS

Anon.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nice...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALGONQUIN ESTATES - THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

An ultra-moderne manse of glass and steel, beneath a cluster of huge red sandstone rocks.

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOME

Jimmy The Saint waits in the lushly-appointed den - walls covered with angular modern art - with Gus and Ellie. We should also notice the number of RAMPS throughout the house.

A metallic WHIRR precedes the arrival of

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

as he is only referred to. The Man With The Plan is a QUADRIPLÉGIC and he moves with the help of his fully-tricked-out PUFFER WHEELCHAIR - which he operates by blowing into a tube.

The Man With The Plan is mid-60s, with cruel eyes and a snapping mouth. In his day, he must have been an imposing figure, but the years in the chair have atrophied the bulk into a physical specimen with all the bluster of a bag of laundry.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Long time, Jimmy. You don't come around.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I been busy --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Right. You're a citizen now, huh? A legitimate businessman? I heard about your endeavor. Some kind of support group thing for dying fags or something?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Something --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You always were a liberal fuck, Jimmy. That's why I liked you. I spend all my time with these two fuckin' jabones and my village idiot son. I miss my wife, Jimmy. Remember Cynthia?

JIMMY THE SAINT

She was a special lady --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Thank God she never had to see me like this. Lookit you. A citizen. I like it. I bet you're not even strapped. I bet you don't even got your shin onya?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nope. That would violate my parole --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You fuckin' liberal. You're gorgeous. He don't even pack his shin. You're a gorgeous man. You gotta lady?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Naw --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Gorgeous man like you. It's cos you're hanging around with the breeders, Jimmy. You into that yet? You bitin' the pillow?

JIMMY THE SAINT

No.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You will. It's a liberal thing. One day you're saving the rain forest, the next you're chuggin' cock. Am I wrong?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I dunno.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You're ill-at-ease --

JIMMY THE SAINT

A little --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You believe this? Jimmy The Saint. This boy had pills like a fuckin' bison. Big balls. Now, he's a citizen:--He don't wanna spend time with a poor old cripple. Rap on the real to me, Jimmy. What is it?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm just not doing it anymore.. I'm trying to be my thing. I'm not at it. And I don't want to be.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

And you think by my wanting a meet, so
(MORE)

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (cont'd):
 you might be at it again. Your
 weakness, I think, is what you fear.
 Not me. You're afraid you might be
 tempted, huh?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Whatever --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Whatever. Yeah. Whatever.
 (beat)
 What I got to say to you is thick,
 Jimmy. The trouble is large. The topic
 is thick. I gotta rap on the real to
 you, Jimmy. Can you hear me out?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Yeah. At most.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 At most. That's all I ask. Did I take
 care of you? Did I look out for you,
 when you come here? During the days?
 Did I not? Were you not pissin' Stoli
 and shittin' Beluga in them days? Were
 you not?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Yeah.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 An now you're nervous in my presence.
 Now you hem and haw like a man with a
 paper ass in a flamethrower factory.
 Jesus Christ. I, my friend, am a victim
 of great disappointment in you --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Talk to me --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 I'll talk. The trouble is large, Jimmy.
 The topic is thick.
 (to Gus)
 Bring me this --

Gus brings over a beverage set-up - a straw attached to an IV
 tree which allows The Man With The Plan to drink.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 I want peace. I'm ass-fixed to this
 chair. I'm tired, I'm old, I got sores.
 I shit in one bag, Jimmy. I piss in
 another. All I want is quiet. My
 (MORE)

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (cont'd)
jabones. One thinks he's Roget, the
other thinks he's Calvin-The-Breeder-
Klein. I'm tired, Jimmy. I want quiet.
I got a nurse... Call the nurse --

Ellie presses a button nearby. In seconds, the NURSE, a
beautiful twenty-five year old blond, appears.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (CONT.)
Hello, darling. Nod to my friend, Jimmy
and excuse us --

The Nurse nods and leaves the room.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (CONT.)
She's a fuckin' ten, Jimmy. She's a
planet unto herself. She can't nurse
worth shit. Everyday my piss bags
explode in her clumsy fingers. But
she's a ten. I keep her on because,
although I can't feel it, I know I have
erections in her presence. You
understand the picture, Jim? Do you
need further clarification?

JIMMY THE SAINT
I understand.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Good. Then you'll understand when I say
this: Bernard. Bernard. He's my boy.
My flesh, my blood. He's all that's
left of my Cynthia. And he's a fuckin'
barnyard bahoo. He's a gargoyle. He's
as crazy as any shithouse rat, sniffin'
the grout. The other day, they catch
him in the elementary school playground,
grabbin' itty-bitty-tittie.

JIMMY THE SAINT
They take him in -- ?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
They take him in... But I got my mallet,
Hathaway. You remember Hathaway, big
Irish Mickey mallet with the nose?
Hathaway takes cares of things for me.
But that ain't it. The Long Arm has
never been the problem. It's Bernard.
On account of I know why he's the way he
is --
(beat)
You remember Meg? --

Jimmy The Saint nods. And, as The Man With The Plan talks,

we'll allow his narration to take us to:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - LOS ANGELES - DAY

A young couple, mid-20s, pack their VAN for a trip. The man - BRUCE - is short and good-looking. The woman - MEG - is pretty, in a simple, clear-featured way...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (O.S.)

Meg was Bernard's high school sweetheart, you know. They kept it up through college, until she met this beat, Bruce. Studying to be an orthodontist. She busted up with Bernard. Has to be three years now. Moved to L.A. with this beat, Bruce.

Bruce kisses Meg goodbye. He gets in the van and drives off. She watches him go.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DENVER - NIGHT

Bernard walks alone along the empty rain-swept streets.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (O.S.)

Bernard's never been the same. I understand part of this was inevitable. Being the son of me. He lacks initiative. But since this Meg thing, his behavior has got worse --

Bernard comes upon a DERELICT. Bernard grabs the bum, hauls him into an alley - proceeds to kick the shit out of him.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

The end of the scene from earlier. Bernard grabbing the little girl... the teacher blowing her whistle... a male GYM TEACHER, a JANITOR, the PRINCIPAL, all grabbing Bernard. Little KIDS swarming over him... Chaos...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (O.S.)

... and now this thing at the schoolyard. It's a fiasco --

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Bernard is processed. A LIEUTENANT - HATHAWAY - with a ground sirloin nose - gives Bernard the sneaky peek.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (CONT.)

Thank God that Irish mallet, Hathaway, is on my pad... I'm out of things, Jimmy. I want peace. But I got Bernard.

EXT. HIGHWAY ON-RAMP - LOS ANGELES -- DAY

Bruce at the wheel of the van.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (O.S.)

My intelligence tells me this beat, Bruce. He's coming to Denver. To meet Meg's folks. Maybe ask their permission to marry the little bangtail. Meg's flying to meet him here after he does the asking. Spend the weekend. Party up. Have a good time --

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOME

The Man With The Plan finishes his tale --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (CONT.)

This can't happen, Jimmy. They can't marry. The beat, Bruce, he needs to be scared off. Meg loved Bernard for 7 years. She can learn to love him again. I got the screaming abdabs here, Jimmy. You gotta clear this for me --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What do you want done?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

It's just an action, not a piece of work. You look green. You want a drink? Ellie get him some seltzer. Put some guys together. A small crew. A few of the old boys. You'll need maybe four. Get 'em together. I'm payin' top wage. Most of those guys are dead on their feet broke. They'll do it.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Do what?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Catch this creep comin' in. Out on the highway, before he gets to Meg's. Brace him. Give him the unholy spook. Make up a story. Tell the truth. I give a shit? But make it so's he'd sooner fuck the fryolator than propose to Meg --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Why me?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

You're high and dry, Jimmy. I know this. You got the nice suits, the
(MORE)

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (cont'd)
 seventy dollar haircut, but you're
 takin' a dump on your video business. I
 gotta call in the note. I don't wanna
 call in the note, but I gotta call in
 the note. You ain't no entrepreneur,
 Jimmy. You ain't no citizen. You can
 dress a jackal up in a polka dot clown
 suit and make it juggle balls on its
 nose, but it's still a jackal, Jim.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I can't.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 You gotta. Or else I gotta get ugly on
 the note --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I do this, I'm clear on the note -- ?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Near clear. We'll draw something up.
 You'll be near clear. It's a one-shot
 deal, Jim. No wet work. Bully the kid.
 Brace him. I'd use Gus or Ellie, but
 they lack the finesse. I'd bet you a
 yard, Bruce winds up with his entrails
 scattered over the Interstate... Cut me
 a huss on this, huh? Do it for Cynthia,
 may she rest in peace. Do it for the
 old days. Do it for your fag business.
 Do it for whatever reason, you can find
 in your heart to make it acceptable.
 Just do it. Ah, look, here's Ellie and
 he's brought you some seltzer...

CUT TO:

INT. "THE SILVER NAKED LADY" - SALOON - NIGHT

A trendy spot. The DEE-JAY spins top 40. Sawdust on the
 floor. Mining motif. YUPPIES and SKI BUMS share the bar,
 the dance floor, the lounge.

Jimmy The Saint sits at the bar with Cuffy. They nurse
 beers. Cuffy is drunk.

CUFFY

It was a good idea, Jimmy. It was
 always a good idea. It's one of those
 things, were it to catch on, we'd be
 called geniuses. Pioneers. But when it
 fails. We're dopes. Schmucks. It's
 like the stapler. What if the stapler

MORE!

CUFFY (cont'd)
 failed? What if people felt the paper clip was sufficient? That guy - that stapler inventor - he'd be a schmuck. But now - nooo, he's a hero...

Jimmy isn't paying attention. He looks down the bar - to where three GIRLS chat it up. One of the girls, late 20s, is knock-down-drag-out dreamy. She looks like she just escaped from the tire swing in a Mountain Dew commercial.

CUFFY (CONT.)
 I'll tell you: the stapler inventor - he'd be nothing without the guy who invented the staple remover. Staples were too permanent. Left no room for error. But along comes the staple remover guy and fa-foom! You got a product worthy of the ages...

Jimmy The Saint takes his beer and moves down the bar, leaving Cuffy to sputter on about office equipment...

Jimmy leans right in to the side of the girls, basically sticking his nose into the conversation. One of the girls snarls at him:

GIRL #1
 Help you, pal?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I'd like to talk to your friend --

The girls look at each other, incredulous.

GIRL #1
 What are you, new? We're in the middle of something here...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 It'll just be a minute...

GIRL #2
 Take a hike --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Can we let her make the decision?

The other two girls smile. Sure.

GIRL #1
 Kick it, Dagney. Tell him to bail --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Dagney. Tremendous name.

The girl of Jimmy's desire - DAGNEY - gives him a cursory once-over...

DAGNEY

What do you want?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Just a word. I saw you from over there, where I'm talking to my very sad friend, Cuffy --

Dagney looks to Cuffy, in all his cherubic melancholy.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

-- and I said, I'm going to have a word with that girl. It was an impulse...

GIRL #2

Good impulse. Now impulse back to Cuffy.

JIMMY THE SAINT

If Dagney says so - I will...

GIRL #2

Dagney?

Beat. Dagney sizes him up. He is cute. Then:

DAGNEY

So... ?

GIRL #1

Dagney --

DAGNEY

He just wants a word...

JIMMY THE SAINT

In my office...

Jimmy gestures to further down the bar. Dagney picks up her margarita and moves there. Jimmy shoots the girls a triumphant gloat...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

My name is Jimmy. I got one question, Dagney (what a name. I worship that name). One simple, impulsive question: are you in love?

DAGNEY

Excuse me?

JIMMY THE SAINT

At this present time. Are you in love?

DAGNEY

Why?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Because if you are, I won't waste your time, not being a guy who would ever impede on another man's happiness. So, if you are, I'll choose to sublimate my grandiose dreams and return to lonely, pathetic Cuffy. However, if you are not, presently, in love, I will ignore the dagger-like glares of your envious cohorts and continue my rhapsody. Because, Dagney, you are - if I may say so - the bee's knees...

Dagney stares at him a beat. Is he for real? She giggles.

DAGNEY

You're a trip...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yes, I am. Air fare included...

DAGNEY

Does this rap ever work?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Alas. It did. In the old days. A fellow like me could wield power with such words. Now, I rarely try it. Now, I'm a victim of our times. There is, I fear, a dearth of romance in these times. Think about it. Impulsive behavior is bad behavior. You haven't answered my question...

DAGNEY

I forgot it.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Are you in love?

DAGNEY

Well, there is someone...

JIMMY THE SAINT

But...

DAGNEY

We date. We see each other on Saturdays. He's crazy about me.

JIMMY THE SAINT

As he should be. You glide. It's a very attractive quality...

DAGNEY

I glide?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You glide. Most of these girls, they plod. You glide... Does he make you thump?

DAGNEY

Excuse me?

JIMMY THE SAINT

This guy? Chip?

DAGNEY

Alex.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Same thing. Alex. Does he make you thump. When you think about him, you can't eat, can't sleep, wonder what he's saying, who he's seeing, what he's eating...

DAGNEY

No.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Girls who glide need guys who make them thump...

DAGNEY

Is there like a hidden camera around here?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Have dinner with me --

DAGNEY

Aren't we the sultan of segue...

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's a beautiful month. Just dinner.

DAGNEY

You gonna make me thump?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Or die trying...

Dagney looks at him. He holds out a pen and cocktail napkin. Beat. She glances to her friends, who are imploring her to take leave of the cretin. At last, she sighs. Giving in to the Fates... She takes the pen and napkin and scribbles her phone number.

DAGNEY

I know I'm going to regret this --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Only if you're lucky...

CUT TO:

AN OLD WOMAN

Talking head. Being videotaped (we assume) for AfterLife Advice.

OLD WOMAN

... the beginnings are always the best... when you first start to explore each other, to learn... when you watch the phone like it was the TV, waiting for it to ring... when you wake up in the middle of the night and wonder what they're wearing... that insanity... that heartsick insanity... it always fades... but, God, while it's happening, it's like nothing else in the world... It's like freedom and sunshine and chocolate all rolled into one big, uncontrollable ball...

CUT TO:

EXT. HAPPY TRAILS TRAILER PARK - DAY

A scattering of double-wide trailers and aluminum-roofed carports... Dirty CHILDREN run about...

Jimmy The Saint walks with an enormous, bearded hulk of man - Franklin Chyser, 39, who goes by the moniker

FRANCHISE

Franchise looks grizzly but is actually Teddy... tattoos cover his wide, once-muscular arms, tremendous gut hanging over his waist like a front porch... Southern drawl...

FRANCHISE

I dunno, Jimbo. I'm dug in here. We're managing the park now. I do some odd-jobs. Repairs. They pay me a little, free rent... We're dug in...

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's a one-shot deal, Franchise. An action. Not a piece of work. We're in, we're out. We brace the kid, we're done...

FRANCHISE

Give it a name. Why you need a crew?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Safety in numbers. The Man wants to pay the freight, who am I to argue?

FRANCHISE

I got more'n myself to think about. I got Dodie now. And my three ankle-biters. You see 'em?

Franchise gestures to three FAT CHILDREN splashing in the mud of a drainage sump...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Cute kids...

FRANCHISE

I'd like to give 'em more. Sometimes - I think - I stayed in The Life, I'd be able to give 'em more. But my last bit, man, I tellya... This was all I thought about the whole time locked-down...

They have come to Franchise's trailer. His wife, DODIE, a pale, thin woman who appears to be in a constant state of terror, hangs clothes on a line.

FRANCHISE

Dodie, you remember Jimmy The Saint?

Dodie nods. Blinking. Proceeds to hang Franchise's canopy-like boxers...

Franchise clomps inside. Jimmy goes to Dodie.

JIMMY THE SAINT

How are you, Dodie?

DODIE

While Samson was away, his wife's father gave her in marriage to another man - when Samson returned and learned of this, he was so enraged that he again vowed vengeance against the Philistines.

She nods nervously and disappears around back. Franchise comes out of the trailer with two cans of Pepsi...

JIMMY THE SAINT

What's the matter with Dodie?

FRANCHISE

What?

JIMMY THE SAINT

She just went off about Samson and the Philistines --

FRANCHISE

Whenever anyone from the old days comes around, she always goes off about Samson and the Philistines --

(beat)

Boat drinks...

He raises the Pepsi.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Boat drinks...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise walks along the street. A GIRL - 23 - dressed in jeans and halter top, junkie thin, spiked-hair thrashed from too many rinse jobs - is in their faces. This is LUCINDA...

LUCINDA

Jimmy, what's up -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm busy now, Lucinda --

LUCINDA

You stake me for a cup of coffee?

FRANCHISE

Fuck off, Lucinda --

LUCINDA

Look at you. Fat Shit Franchise. You still alive? I thought you were doin' a stretch in County...

FRANCHISE

I escaped.

LUCINDA

Jimmy, hook me for a cup of java?

FRANCHISE

What's the matter, business down? Your spread ain't sellin' on account of you don't take care of the merchandise...

LUCINDA

Fuck you. Jimmy, huh? Jimmy knows I'm sweet on him. Jimmy...

Jimmy gives her a few dollars.

LUCINDA (CONT.)

Jimmy's my boy. We're gonna - someday -
have a love child. Am I right? Jimmy?
Hey. I gotta split. The pussy posse's
been rollin' this neighborhood. Bustin'
everyone... Later!

Lucinda bounces down the street, the bills clutched in her
fingers...

FRANCHISE

You shouldn't go contributing to her
collapse, Jimbo...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Give it a name... Lucinda'll be dancin'
in the breeze long after you and I are
takin' The Dirt Nap... Here we are...

For they have come to

EXT. SUPERSTAR BIJOU

A run-down adult movie theatre. Most of the bulbs in the
marquee are out, so the blinking lights create little more
than a sparkling diorama of nonsense.

INT. SUPERSTAR BIJOU - PROJECTION ROOM

The projector - old and noisy - spews its nasty celluloid
into the theater. The projectionist - a 52-year-old Greek
named

OLDEN POLYMEROS

dirty and balding, with tufts of hair sprouting at
inopportune places all over his body, changes film reels. We
should note that Olden is MISSING several FINGERS and there
are small SCABS over much of his epidermis. Which is why
they call him PIECES...

FRANCHISE

You still got that disease, Pieces?

PIECES

Cut the shit with that. It's Olden. My
name is Olden. Always with that
"pieces" shit. Have a little respect --

FRANCHISE

Sorry, babe. They haven't figured it
out yet?

PIECES

No. In fact, I lost a toe the other day. Believe that shit? A toe. I found a croaker downtown, diagnosed it as a circulatory problem. A fuckin' circulatory problem. I'd kill the bastard, but I can't get my hands around a shin...

Jimmy looks around the decrepit confines of the projection room...

JIMMY THE SAINT

This is a bad beat, Olden --

PIECES

Tell me about it. Give it a motherfuckin' name. You do your time, you make a oath to go the right and rigid. And you wind up all day long breathin' stale semen smells and losin' motherfuckin' toes... Aw, now, lookit this --

Pieces has spied something in the theatre. He grabs a FIRE EXTINGUISHER off the wall and takes the stairway down --

Jimmy and Franchise watch as

INT. THEATRE

A Vaseline and raincoat type - REGS - is dancing with Mother Fist And Her Five Daughters, eyes glued to the screen --

KA-FLOWWWW!

He is covered in a belch of carbon dioxide FOAM. Pieces stands above him, fire extinguisher and all...

Pieces returns to the projection room.

Dags shivers. But cranks on...

INT. PROJECTION ROOM

Pieces comes back in, hangs the extinguisher on the wall --

PIECES (CONT.)

Fuckin' maggots... That guy's got a wife and three kids...!

Pieces sits down hard. Drinks cold coffee from a Thermos.

JIMMY THE SAINT

You in?

PIECES

Fuckin'-A, Jimmy. I use the money to get me a legit croaker. Diagnose my malady on the up and up. 'Fore I lose my dick. I gotta tell you, though, I'm fallin' apart here. I don't know how much good I'll be to you...

JIMMY THE SAINT

We're having a skull session tomorrow night. At The Thick 'N Rich. You can make it?

PIECES

I'm already there, baby --

Jimmy The Saint puts up his hand in the pressed-palms salute. Pieces responds, then holds his hand out for Franchise, who is a little hesitant to touch Pieces...

PIECES

You're breakin' my heart here, Frankie --

Franchise reluctantly presses palms. He looks queasy.

CUT TO:

A FEMALE STRIPPER

all flesh and sinew. She writhes in the middle of the dark room, in the glow of a single spotlight, dancing to a mambo beat. High, fake breasts unshakable despite her movements.

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

The Man With The Plan sits in his wheelchair, chomping on a thin Havana cigar... He watches the stripper... beads of sweat freckle his wide brow...

WIDER - we see that Hathaway, the Irish cop, is here as well. He is naked... He looks to The Man... who nods...

Hathaway crawls across the floor to the stripper... his pale Irish ass gleaming in the harsh light of the spot...

Hathaway licks at the stripper's cherry red pumps, his hands scurrying over her calves, her thighs, her pubis mound...

The stripper dances on, oblivious to the drooling cop...

The Man With The Plan watches on, bellowing cigar smoke, eyes aglow with the fires of the pit...

CUT TO:

INT. PASCOCELLO BISTRO - NIGHT

A crowded, red-carpeted dinner house. Candles and chianti and they make the Caesar right at your table.

Jimmy The Saint, resplendent in silk suit, sits across from Dagney, who couldn't look more lovely were she ascending the heavens...

DAGNEY

The clientele at Vail is more upscale.
So you make great tips on private
lessons --

JIMMY THE SAINT

You must be a fabulous skier --

DAGNEY

I get down the mountain --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I never done it in my life, believe
that? The only skis in my neighborhood,
were the Polish couple down the hall --

Dagney laughs. Jimmy pours her some more wine - Brunello di Montalcino, 1977. A nice bottle.

The MAITRE D' - a smiling man in a tux - comes over to their table. He yanks Jimmy up and hugs him, kissing him wetly on the neck.

MAITRE D'

Jimmy Toz! Lookit this! You don't come
in anymore. You find a better joint?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Naw, Sally. I've been a homebody --

The Maitre D' - SALLY - looks at Dagney. Bows deeply.

SALLY

I had a girl like this - I'd be a
homebody too... Mercy, mercy me...

The WAITER comes over, wielding steaming trays of chicken, pasta, eggplant, zuppa di mussels... Sally pours some wine into their glasses, snaps a finger and an ACCORDION PLAYER - who'd been serenading another table - comes over... Begins to play...

SALLY (CONT.)

For the return of Jimmy The Saint...

And Sally begins to SING. Dean Martin's "You Belong To Me". Dagney, almost in spite of herself, is loving this... Jimmy shrugs...

JIMMY THE SAINT
I'm gettin' pretty heavy LADY AND THE
TRAMP vibes, how 'bout you -- ?

He winks and attacks his food. Sally sings on...

CUT TO:

EXT. DAGNEY'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

They walk to the entrance. Beat.

DAGNEY
The Maitre d' - Sally - he called you
Jimmy The Saint. How come?

JIMMY THE SAINT
You'll understand in a few short minutes-

DAGNEY
What?

JIMMY THE SAINT
I could look at you - no fooling - just
stand here and look at you (not to take
anything away from your charm, your wit,
your personality, because they're all
tied in), just gaze... Forever... I
wouldn't have to do anything else... All
of my other bodily functions would take
care of themselves. You are - I think -
a thing to be amazed by... Am I coming
on too strong... ?

DAGNEY
No. You're right on. Somewhere between
Romeo Montague and Ted Bundy --

JIMMY THE SAINT
A fella's gotta have himself some heroes -

He smiles. She returns it in kind. Beat.

DAGNEY
You want to come in?

JIMMY THE SAINT
More than I want the ascot to come back
into style... But... I don't think I
will. Not tonight --

He kisses her hand. Bows slightly. And walks off into the

darkness of the avenue... Dagny watches after him...

DAGNEY
Jimmy The Saint. Right...

CUT TO:

A CORPSE

propped up against a wall. Male, late 50s, wearing his Sunday best.

Whack! Whack, whack, whack! A series of blows pummels the corpse --

INT. CARLOTTI'S FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The corpse is being used as a PUNCHING BAG!! A stocky MAN - fair-haired, red-cheeked, decidedly psychopathic - CRITICAL BILL - uses the cadaver much like Rocky Balboa did those sides of beef all those years ago.

Critical Bill wears heavy bag gloves, sweats, a towel around his neck. And he goes to town on the body. We can hear bones crunching...

Caskets, urns, jars of embalming fluid fill the spacious basement.

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise enter...

FRANCHISE
Critical Bill! What the fuck are you doing -- ?

Critical Bill wipes some sweat from his brow. Shrugs. He has traces of a Southern drawl.

CRITICAL BILL
Workin' out. Don't bother him much --

FRANCHISE
Why don't you have some respect for the dead, man?

CRITICAL BILL
I knew this guy when he was alive. He was a mammy-rammer... He don't mind much --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Old Man Carlotti know you do this?

Critical Bill shrugs again, sheepish....

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Look. We're doing an action for The Man With The Plan... Small time... Good for five yards... Night's work... You want in?

CRITICAL BILL

Five yards? I guess. Yeah. Okay...

FRANCHISE

You still crazy, Bill? Cos if you still crazy, I say fuck it... I say you stay here and beat up on the deceased... We don't need you --

Critical Bill takes the stiff from its hook on the wall...

CRITICAL BILL

I ain't gonna be changin' into somethin' else, Franchise... I'm what I am... Back of beyond, right? Just like always. I'm in the back of beyond...

He drops the corpse into a casket... Slams down the lid... Looks at them, shit-eating grin spread over obdurate John Wayne Gacy features...

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise exchange uneasy looks.

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Joe Heff sits in his booth with the two young men...

JOE HEFF

They call him Critical Bill cos he never went up against a guy, Bill didn't put the guy in critical condition at the very least... Lunchy as a motherfucker. Back in the days, Bill'd clip a guy, disembowel 'em, take the guts back in a doggy bag for this miserable little pit bull he kept. Name of Nigger Knocker. Another hardguy chief - for payback - put out a paper on the hound. No shit. A blue-chip contract. Cos everyone knows killin' Critical Bill is doin' his lunchy ass a favor. So they put out a paper on the hound. Bill comes home one day, Nigger Knocker is sittin' on the floor, lookin' good, eyes open, but he ain't movin'. Bill gives him a biscuit. Nigger Knocker don't budge. That's on account he's been stuffed.

(MORE)

JOE HEFF (cont'd)
 Professionally taxidermied. Bill took
 it hard. Still has the dog. Don't feed
 it nobody's guts anymore though --

At another table: Jimmy The Saint, Franchise, Pieces and
 Critical Bill drink frappes and scheme...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 ... so we got him comin' in on Highway
 70 at about 1 AM... Pieces - excuse me -
 Olden's gonna thieve some uniforms...
 and a grill-flasher we can attach to my
 Buick, make it look like an unmarked...
 Olden and Bill'll pull the kid over...
 Franny and I'a'll be in the freight
 car - you bring him there. Then we
 brace him...

PIECES
 You got someone to keep the peek -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Funny you should mention that. Here he
 is now --

They look to the front door. To where a tall, thin, BLACK
 MAN in blue coveralls - with "Lew's Pest Control" stencilled
 onto the breast - has entered. EARL "EASY WIND" DENTON...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Everybody knows Easy Wind...

EASY WIND
 Lookit this. Lookit this... All the pig
 brothers from the days... Fat
 Franchise... Pieces Polymeros... Jimmy
 The Saint... and...
 (Easy Wind stops)
 Nobody said nuthin' about this booyah --

CRITICAL BILL
 Nobody tol' me I was gonna be humpin'
 with no inky dink...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Easy, boys... Easy...

EASY WIND
 Naw, Jimmy... I'm sorry... I can't roll
 that stroll... This fuckin' cheeba... No
 way...

FRANCHISE
 You boys used to be close...

EASY WIND

Till we got our asses locked-down
together... In the basement at Marion -
Critical Bill here was a major league
fecal freak --

PIECES

A what -- ?

CRITICAL BILL

Easy Wind spent his whole jolt rapin'
kids --

EASY WIND

Better 'n bein' a fecal freak --

PIECES

A what -- ?

EASY WIND

A fecal freak. A brown boy. A
motherfuckin' shit-eater...

CRITICAL BILL

You mammy-rammin' niggerboy shine --

Critical Bill leaps across the table at Easy Wind... the
table crashes and they go rolling about on the floor in a
shower of ice cream and chocolate syrup...

Critical Bill's blade is out... At Easy Wind's throat... Easy
Wind's Smith & Wesson Airweight is out... At Critical Bill's
temple. When --

-- both men ARE SPRAYED!!! THEY SCREAM!!!

Malt stands over them with a SELTZER BOTTLE and SPRITZES them
like you would to separate two humping dogs...

Critical Bill and Easy Wind howl as the spray sears their
bodies...

EASY WIND

ARGGHH! What the fuck's in that bottle,
Malt?

MALT

Battery acid, dickhead. And you muck up
my store again, I'll give you some more--

Critical Bill and Easy Wind get to their feet, their skin raw
and red where the acid splashed... Franchise rights the
table...

EASY WIND

. Brown boy --

CRITICAL BILL

Baby-raper...

They go for it again... The others make to break it up...
Malt sprays his acid... Chaos rules...

JOE HEFF

watches all. Spooning ice cream into his mouth... Smiles to
his companions...

JOE HEFF

Old friends gettin' together... Brings a
tear to the eye, don't it fellas... ?

CUT TO:

AN OLD WOMAN

Talking head. AfterLife Advice.

OLD WOMAN

... love is the grout. Love is the
caulking. Two people - they're like
tiles. Bathroom tiles. Love is the
grout. No, no. Sex. Sex is the grout.
Sex is what keeps it together. Sex is
the grout. Love is the caulking. No,
no. Oh, gosh. Love can exist without
sex. But sex cannot exist without love.
No, no. That's not really true either,
is it? I'm afraid I'm not very good at
this, dear...

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The VAN drives along this desolate stretch of Route 68.
BRUCE (the short, dental student we first saw during The Man
With The Plan's narrative) at the wheel... The Allman Bros.
jam softly on the stereo...

FLASHING LIGHTS in the rearview... Flashing from the grill of
a Buick...

BRUCE

Shit...

Bruce looks at his speedometer. He was going 55.

He pulls over.

The Buick comes to a stop behind him. Critical Bill and
Pieces, dressed in D.P.D. blues, step from the car...

CRITICAL BILL
License and registration --

BRUCE
What was I doing wrong?

CRITICAL BILL
License and registration --

Bruce fumbles in his wallet and glove box... comes up with the papers... Critical Bill barely glances at them...

CRITICAL BILL (CONT.)
You wanna step from the vehicle, son --

Bruce studies them. Critical Bill, oddly composed, somehow malefic. Pieces, perspiring, uncertain, twitchy.

BRUCE
Why?

CRITICAL BILL
Son, step from the vehicle, 'fore I step you from the vehicle...

EXT. RAILROAD STATION

Abandoned. Not far from the highway. In a ramshackle FREIGHT CAR, Jimmy The Saint and Franchise wait.

FRANCHISE
Where the fuck are they?

JIMMY THE SAINT
It's early yet --

FRANCHISE
Mebbe we should give 'em a shout --

He holds up a WALKIE-TALKIE...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Not yet. You could screw the pooch --

FRANCHISE
Damn. I never used to get this nervous.

EXT. HIGHWAY

A few hundred yards behind Bruce's van, Easy Wind keeps the peek in a cancerous Dodge.

EXT. HIGHWAY - BRUCE'S VAN

The same tableau. Critical Bill and Pieces stand outside the van's window...

BRUCE
Can I see some ID?

PIECES
Now, son --

BRUCE
I've heard about guys impersonating
cops. Shaking people down. Just let me
see some ID. I don't like the way your
uniforms fit --

CRITICAL BILL
You're breakin' laws now, boy --

BRUCE
What's your badge number?

PIECES
C'mon, fella. Just be easy about--

BRUCE
I don't think you two shits are cops. I
think you're punks...

Beat. The two men are stunned at the stones on this kid.

PIECES
We're cops --

BRUCE
Then let me see some ID. Officers.

PIECES
Listen, kid --

CRITICAL BILL
Naw, I'll give 'em some ID... Here's
some ID, son --

And Critical Bill takes a wallet from his pocket and MASHES
IT into Bruce's face... at the same time, ripping open the
van door and hauling the diminutive Bruce from his seat...

PIECES
Christ, Billy, Jesus -- !

CRITICAL BILL
Motherfuckin' little road weasel --

Critical Bill thrashes Bruce around... crunching his head
into the side of the van... whipping him about... Pieces
tries to intervene...

INT. EASY WIND'S CAR

Easy Wind sees it all through his binocs.

EASY WIND

Got-damn... Surprise, surprise, Billy tripped a brainwire...

EXT. BRUCE'S VAN

Pieces tries to calm Critical Bill, who continues to thrash little Bruce...

PIECES

C'mon, man, stop --

CRITICAL BILL

Who is this little butterboy? I'm not a cop? I'm not a cop, ain't I? I'll make a believer outta him... Damn right, I will... You believe me now, dwarf boy? You believe me now?

He holds Bruce up against the van. Blood streams from Bruce's nose and mouth... He looks vaguely shocked, but still, dimly insolent...

BRUCE

I believe you to be a big, dumb, stupid man --

PIECES

Oh, God --

Critical Bill blinks twice. Swallows. Looks at Pieces. A tic in Critical Bill's left eye does the mambo...

The walkie-talkie in Pieces' pocket squawks... Easy Wind transmits...

EASY WIND (O.S.)

What the fuck, boys? Let's go -- !

INT. FREIGHT CAR

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise pace. When they hear Easy Wind's transmission, they exchange an uneasy look --

FRANCHISE

Shit.

INT. HIGHWAY - THE VAN

Pieces takes Critical Bill by the arm.

PIECES

C'mon, buddy... Let's go --

Critical Bill won't budge. He continues to stare at Bruce who, stupidly, meets his glare...

BRUCE

Dumb fuckin' cracker --

Critical Bill howls. A diaphragm-depth, banshee howl... and, in a nanosecond, there's a flash of steel in his right hand... and he SWIPES at Bruce's throat... with a knife that seems to open of its own accord...

And Bruce goes down... a geyser of blood boiling up from his slashed carotid... pumping through his fingers...

Pieces wails. Critical Bill stands over the dying Bruce... Stomps on his balls for good measure... And then:

VOICE (O.S.)

What the hell is going--

Startling both men... and, in dizzying SLOW-MOTION, Pieces RIPS HIS .44 from its shoulder-holster... whirling toward the voice... inside the van... FIRING...

BLAM!

The bullet shatters glass... enters the way back of the van... hitting forehead. Right between the eyes...

Beat. A car door opens and closes. Easy Wind comes running up to the van...

EASY WIND

What the fuck -- ?

Critical Bill and Pieces have come to a realization that sickens the both of them...

PIECES

Oh my god --

CRITICAL BILL

Now, how the fuck does she go and sleep through the whole goddamn thing -- ?

PIECES

Ohmygodohmygodohmygodohmygod --

Easy Wind sticks his head in through the shattered window... Into the back of the van...

INT. VAN

where a pretty YOUNG GIRL lay on the floor, smashed slug winking at Easy Wind from where it's embedded above the bridge of her nose --

He looks back to his associates...

EASY WIND

Don't tell me: this is Meg --

All the color has drained from the faces of Critical Bill and Pieces. But before we can marvel at their albino angst, we

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. FREIGHT CAR

CHAOS. Critical Bill and Easy Wind carry in the bodies of the dead couple... Pieces is beside himself, hysterical...

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise are aghast...

Easy Wind drops Meg's body and charges for Critical Bill. The two go down, rolling on the ground, pounding at each other...

Pieces weeps... fresh blood seeps from the sores on his face...

Jimmy The Saint merely stands over the bodies...

Franchise goes over to the fighting men... He hauls them apart like they were made of gauze, hurling them away from each other...

PIECES

We're dead... We're so fuckin' dead it ain't even funny... We're dead...

EASY WIND

The fuckin' booyah! The fuckin' brown boy... He cut that boy's throat... For no good goddamn reason...

CRITICAL BILL

Don't matter. We wouldn't a paid no penalty for that dead boy... But the twist is a whole other story... An' I didn't kill no twist... He did --

He points to Pieces...

PIECES

Jesus... Jesus, Mary and Joseph the carpenter...

FRANCHISE

Jimmy -- ?

CRITICAL BILL

He killed the twist... He shot the twist...

EASY WIND

You started it, brown boy --

FRANCHISE

Jimmy -- ?

PIECES

Fuck me... Fuck me forever....

EASY WIND

You been and gone and done it...

PIECES

Burn me down and bag my ashes...

CRITICAL BILL

Motherfuck...

FRANCHISE

JIMMY -- !

And now Jimmy The Saint is roused from where he'd been staring at the dead Meg...

He looks at the others. And for the first time, Jimmy The Saint looks like he left all his cool in the pocket of his other suit...

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOUSE - SAME NIGHT

Gus and Ellie have just finished telling him. A low keen rumbles from deep within The Man With The Plan. He begins gnashing his teeth, snapping them, snarling...

It is the only way he can express physical rage... He gnashes his teeth, bellows like a clubbed walrus, twists his head from side to side...

His goons can only watch.

CUT TO:

INT. CARLOTTI'S FUNERAL HOME - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Where Critical Bill works. Pieces sits on the couch, chain-smoking Luckys. Easy Wind paces nearby. The bodies - shrouded in blankets - lay like lumpen coal to the side of

the room.

INT. OFFICE

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise speak with HENRY CARLOTTI, 72, whom the boys call BORIS CARLOTT, because of both his profession and his resemblance to the long-gone horror film star.

BORIS CARLOTT

You have any idea how long it's been since I used a box like that -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You must have one lying around...

BORIS CARLOTT

I do. It's memorabilia. I wasn't planning on using it...

JIMMY THE SAINT

We're into one here, Boris... You gotta help us out...

They follow him out of the office, past Pieces and Easy Wind, into the

INT. WORKSHOP

where Critical Bill did his work-out. Boris walks them over to a mahogany CASKET, which looks larger than a normal one.

Boris pops a clasp hidden in the middle of the coffin and slides the top to the side. Now we see what it is: a double-decker casket! There's a FALSE BOTTOM - big enough to stow bodies in...

BORIS CARLOTT

You know how it works? The legit corpse goes on top here... Your whacks go in the bottom. The bereaved family never has a clue that their beloved is sharing his final resting place with a couple of hit vics...

FRANCHISE

It'll be heavier 'n hell. What about the pall bearers -- ?

BORIS CARLOTT

They'll be very impressed with the weight of quality wood we utilize here at Carlotti's...

JIMMY THE SAINT

You got a burial tomorrow -- ?

BORIS CARLOTT

Yes, I do. Thomas Donahue. A dry cleaner...

Beat. Jimmy considers.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Let's do it...

BORIS CARLOTT

Wait a second, James. So you know. I wasn't planning on sinking this box. It's a museum piece. Joe Bananas hisself, at his funeral parlor in lower Manhattan, taught me how to make a box like this. I wasn't plannin' on sinkin' it --

JIMMY THE SAINT

How much?

BORIS CARLOTT

A lot, James. A lot...

Beat. Jimmy looks at Franchise. Looks at the box. Sighs.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sink it, Boris. Sink the fuckin' thing --

CUT TO:

EXT. SALVAGE YARD - NIGHT

Aisles of dead cars, piled up high. An elephant graveyard of automobiles.

Critical Bill speaks with a RODENT of a man in blue coveralls. He gives the man some money.

The man gets behind the wheel of Bruce's van. He drives it into a COMPACTOR PIT...

Critical Bill turns his collar up against the wind and begins to walk out of the yard. Behind him, we can hear the sounds of the van being mashed into a tight little cube of steel.

CUT TO:

A TALKING HEAD

a MAN - perhaps 60. He has difficulty talking, some kind of respiratory failure...

MAN

... walk the walk. The life you lead is the life you'll have led. If you're miserable every day, then you'll have led a miserable life. If you're happy every day. You'll have led a happy life. Don't waste a minute. Every minute unhappy is a wasted minute. Because you never get the minutes back. At the end. There's no storage. No accrual. Like vacation time. The mad minutes don't get saved. They just get lost...

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Franchise, Pieces, Critical Bill and Easy Wind sit in a booth, speaking quietly.

FRANCHISE

... the thing of it is... I don't see how it's our fault... his intelligence says she wasn't supposed to be in the goddamn van... how we supposed to know?

PIECES

What does that mean? Do you think that means anything to him?

EASY WIND

Give it a name. Use your loaf, Franchise. That ain't holding no air. It's over --

CRITICAL BILL

Bagpipe that shit, man. I ain't going down. No way, no how --

Malt comes over and delivers milk shakes to the men. They stop speaking until Malt leaves...

EASY WIND

I knew this was a bad rhythm. For stupid money, too. All this for five yards. Five yards is stupid money --

The door opens. Joe Heff walks in. He looks at them, somewhat sadly... He nods to them and slides into his regular booth, opposite his regular companions.

FRANCHISE

Maybe somethin' ll. shake. Maybe Jimmy'll make somethin' shake...

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOUSE - ENTERTAINMENT ROOM

Oak wainscoting. Wide-screen TV. Pool table. Jimmy The Saint before The Man With The Plan.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

An action, not a piece of work. I said that. Did I not say that?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It was a fuck-up. Bill Dooley. He's unstable. It was a bad call-out...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

A bad call-out? A bad call-out! I heard Sirhan Sirhan, during one of his parole hearings, saying he made one mistake. "I only made one mistake," the nappy, little sand nigger said. ONE MISTAKE! That one mistake changed everything! Bobby would have been President. There would be no Watergate. There would be no recession. No energy crisis. Believe me, I hated that butterboy, RFK, more'n anyone. But ONE MISTAKE! ONE MISTAKE? Things'd've been apples and rice, with Bobby in the White House. One mistake. That dirty goombah who biffed me? That dirty little goombah, whose flesh and bone has been eaten and shat out by a family of rats, now long dead. He made one mistake too. Bet he'd say that. His one mistake rooted me to this chair. And he did that for money. One mistake, yet I shit in a bag and have to pay someone to scratch my faggot-fuckin' nose. A bad call-out... ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's--

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Bernard doesn't know. I'm keeping it that way. They're down as missing persons. That's good. Hathaway'll do what he can. But you and I, Jimmy, you and I got a whole box of bad to discuss.

JIMMY THE SAINT

The whole thing was--

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

The whole thing was what it was. Maybe it was my mistake, thinkin' a bunch of old timers could come back and do an action. Maybe so. Don't matter, Jim. Rap on the real. A thing goes sour, it gotta be sweetened. You five fuckin' bahoos. You gotta be sweetened --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sir --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Don't "sir" me, Jim. You gonna beg? You gonna get down on the knees a your pretty suit and grovel?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You asked me back in --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Now I'm takin' you out --

Jimmy looks to Gus and Ellie. They avert their eyes.

JIMMY THE SAINT

So that's it. These two are gonna come after me. Garrote me in my sleep? Shoot me at the movies? Stab me in a crowded restaurant?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Never. Never ever. Not these two. And not that way. Buckwheats. Buckwheats, Jimmy. For you. For your miserable band of misfits. Buckwheats. Or maybe not. Maybe I decide to be a stand-up guy and forget the whole thing. Or buckwheats. Buckwheats or no. Live with that, Jimmy The Saint. Live with that. Let that be your placenta, Jim. Put on the feed bag and suck at what little is left... Pray to the God you abandoned back in Brooklyn. Do what you gotta do...

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Jimmy The Saint and Franchise watch as the PALL BEARERS struggle with the double-decker casket. A few other MOURNERS have to lend a hand, hauling the heavy load from the hearse to the grave site:

Critical Bill drives the hearse. Boris Carlott, overseeing

everything, gives a nod to Jimmy and Franchise.

And, in PRE-LAP, we HEAR:

JOE HEFF

Buckwheats is a whole other animal. A guy orders a buckwheats hit, it don't just mean take a guy out. It means take a guy out in the most painful way imaginable. It means this ain't business, this is settin' an example. It means the vic should suffer.

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Joe Heff talks to his two cronies, gobbling ice cream all the while.

JOE HEFF (CONT.)

To inspire others not to fuck-up like this. It's nuance. One popular buckwheats is to shoot a guy up his ass. Yeah. Ba-bing. A slug up the ass, you don't die so much as writhe for a good fifteen minutes... Then you die. It's the equal of - I think - crappin' white hot razor blades... If there are worse ways to go out, nobody's ever let me know --

CUT TO:

INT. "SILVER NAKED LADY" - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint sits alone at a table, working on a club soda. He watches Dagney, across the room, talking to a good-looking MAN in his late 20s.

Dagney laughs at something the man says. She sees Jimmy. Says something to the man and walks over. Jimmy is subdued.

DAGNEY

Hey --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Hey --

DAGNEY

What are you doing?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Having a club soda. For my money, the most refreshing beverage going --

DAGNEY

Did you ever drink?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sure. It was never a problem. But I associate it with a time of life I'm rather proud of abandoning... Who's that?

DAGNEY

Who?

JIMMY THE SAINT

The good-looking fellow who's making you laugh. Is that Chip?

DAGNEY

Alex.

JIMMY THE SAINT

He must be very funny --

DAGNEY

No. Actually he's not --

JIMMY THE SAINT

He got a very endearing game-show host look about him. Does he have his own game-show... ?

DAGNEY

You and I only went out that one time, Jimmy -

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know. It was very nice. Qualitatively, for me, it was like five dates and a long weekend...

DAGNEY

You wanna get out of here?

JIMMY THE SAINT

What about Chip?

DAGNEY

Chip'll deal...

CUT TO:

INT. DAGNEY'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

Funky but chic. Framed Warren Miller-style photos of extreme skiers... Floor-to-ceiling bookshelves crammed with everything from Rimbaud to Jackie Collins...

Jimmy The Saint and Dagney are on the couch, kissing... She breaks it...

DAGNEY

Are you okay -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah. I dunno. Why?

DAGNEY

You seem - I dunno - distant...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I am distant. Right now. I'm circling the runway... But I'm coming in...

He leans back into her... kissing her long and lovely...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Timing is everything. You can go years without a Dagney - like a man armed with only a fork, in a land of soup - then you see one. Then you meet one. And then...

DAGNEY

And then what?

Beat. He looks at her...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Light me. And I'll burn for you --

INT. DAGNEY'S BEDROOM

Jimmy The Saint and Dagney make love. Tangled, nasty, urgent. Breath and body. Jimmy attends to her like a drowning man would a lifeboat. Grasping for the rescue. Gasping for the joy...

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Joe Heff rappin' on the real...

JOE HEFF

You wanna take care of business, you can't do it in close. You don't shit where you eat, you understand? You got close business, you call in an out-of-town doer. I hear tell, The Man With The Plan, he's got a bit of business, he's made a call. Heard he called in a fella --

And as Joe continues his tale, we'll go to:

INT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

A silver bullet of a bus comes to a pneumatic-hiss-stop. The door opens and out steps

MISTER SHHH

thin, frail, fox-faced, bolo tie, porkpie hat. He looks like he could do your books, if he wasn't so scared of making a mistake.

JOE HEFF (O.S.)

-- From El Paso. They call him "Mister Shhh" on account a he don't say much... Can't even look you in the face... Won't say five words unless you beg him...

A BUSINESSMAN walking by, bumps into Mister Shhh... The businessman curses... Mister Shhh draws into himself...

JOE HEFF (O.S.)

He's a turtle. I woulda called him that. The Turtle. He's a turtle.

Mister Shhh tries to flag a cab. They all ignore him...

At last, one does stop, but two FRAT KIDS jump in before Mister Shhh can... He doesn't protest. Merely sighs, shoulders sagging, and begins to walk to town...

JOE HEFF (O.S.)

The most lethal contract killer west of the Mississippi... Say he's clipped over 200 believers... and made some millions of dollars... gives it all to this home for deformed children in San Antonio...

Walking along, Mister Shhh passes a scrub lot. In the lot, a trio of DIRTY WHITE BOYS have cornered a black YOUTH... Broken bottles, jagged edges, pointed at the black kid. Racial epithets hurling...

JOE HEFF

Gotta a real taste for it. A real knack.

Mister Shhh walks up to the imbroglio... One of the white boys fronts him... Mister Shhh reaches out, brushes the boy's throat... and in seconds, the boy is on the ground, body squirming like a slug in a salt flat...

The second boy rushes Mister Shhh. Same fate.

The third guy runs off, urine stain spreading across the front of his tight jeans...

Mister Shhh smiles bashfully to the black kid... And walks off... Leaving the black kid to watch him go, the two white punks bucking and writhing in the dirt around him...

CUT TO:

INT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE - BACK OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy The Saint goes over the bills. A shadow at the door. It's Pieces...

PIECES

Hello, Jimmy. I have a minute -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sure, sure. Come in --

Pieces sits down... He's well-dressed for the first time - the suit is shabby, but at least it fits...

PIECES

Jimmy... I just wanted to, uh... I been thinkin'... I been thinkin' about this guy... he was my neighbor, next door... the apartment next door... A few years ago... He was a postman. Or a milkman. Some kinda man. A citizen... Never married. No kids. A sweet guy. And he got a cancer... A bad one... He was dyin'... His sisters came... His nieces and nephews... Guys from the job... But I been thinkin' about him... thinkin' how if in his last days, as he lay in bed starin' at the ceiling in that shitty little apartment, knowin' he was dyin'... was he sorry he never did nothin'? Was he sorry he never did the foxtrot with a 2000-dollar-a-night hooker in a Paris nightclub? Or that he never bet his last dime on a longshot nag, knowin' it would break maiden... Never saw the world... Never let the world see him, you know? Poor bastard.

Pieces coughs...

PIECES (CONT.)

Jimmy... We did the things... In them days... I remember ballin' three broads at Tommy Gunfire's wedding in Miami... and still goin' back to the motel and jerkin' off... I remember New Years in Florenza with Toby The Blue Nose and his brothers, Lou and Guppy, and the Princess of Somewhere was hackin' up the

(MORE)

PIECES (CONT.) (cont'd)
 lines in the back room... Toby's
 bringin' up the vino from his cellar -
 we musta drunk 112 bottles that night...
 And takin' out Eddie Corrado's yacht
 with, I swear, a bangtail looked like
 exactly Tuesday Weld... Forget about
 it...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Listen, man, we're not at--

PIECES
 What I'm sayin' - I think, Jimmy - is I
 don't have any regrets... I won't stare
 at the ceiling, you know? Yeah, I
 coulda been a better old man to my
 kids (God knows where they are -
 scattered over the globe) - and I coulda
 not whacked Sissy around those first few
 years like I did... And maybe it woulda
 been better not to pull so much time...
 But shit, Jimmy, we did the things... We
 did the things... I'm ready, Jimmy... I
 can look back... It still makes me
 laugh.. Them days... I had a snap-brim
 hat - you walk into a joint, forget
 about it... Fuckin' cake-eaters... Balls
 fulla buckshot... Christ...

Pieces smiles with the memory...

PIECES (CONT.)
 I'm all right. That's what I just
 wanted to say to you, Jim. I'm all
 right --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 You're all right?

PIECES
 Yeah, Jimmy. I'm all right.

Pieces gets to his feet, pats Jimmy's arm --

PIECES (CONT.)
 You take care now, hear -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Okay, Pieces, uh, sorry, Olden...

PIECES
 No... It's okay... Goodbye, Jim --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Olden -- ?

PIECES

Yeah?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You really do the foxtrot with a 2000-dollar-a-night hooker in a Paris nightclub?

Pieces smiles archly.

PIECES

What do you think?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Goodbye, Olden --

And now we see it: Pieces carries an old felt snap-brim HAT... He puts it on... Adjusts the brow... Nods to Jimmy.

PIECES

Goodbye, Jimmy --

And walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Jimmy The Saint walks along, hands buried in his pockets, chewing his lip. A man in trouble.

He comes across Lucinda crossing on the corner. One side of her face purple and lumpy like a basket of plums.

JIMMY THE SAINT

What happened to you?

LUCINDA

Nothing.

JIMMY THE SAINT

What happened?

LUCINDA

What's it to you? You got some crinkle, Jimmy? For a cup of joe -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Tell me what happened to your face --

LUCINDA

Bad beat. Real uptown daddy rich butterboy... Turns out he's a freak. A fuckin' beer bottle beat. When I say Lucinda don't take no beer bottles into

(MORE)

LUCINDA (cont'd)
her great wide open, guy goes wiggy...
Punches me out... Does what he pleases
with the beer bottle anyhow... Then
alley-whips me - no shit. Didn't pay
dick.

JIMMY THE SAINT
What did Spoon say?

LUCINDA
Spoon's gone. Narcs took him away
Tuesday...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Where is this guy?

LUCINDA
Jimmy --

Jimmy takes her arm. Rage bubbling up in him like club soda
on the moon.

JIMMY THE SAINT
Take me to him. NOW -- !

INT. SUPERETTE

Jimmy rushes in... Stalks to the COOLER. Selects a bottle of
Budweiser... Then he sees a LONGNECK bottle. Takes that
instead...

LUCINDA
Jimmy --

Jimmy pays the cashier. Florid.

EXT. 17th STREET HIGH RISE

Jimmy and Lucinda enter the building, swarming with WORKERS.

INT. HIGH RISE - ELEVATOR

Jimmy and Lucinda ride up with the well-heeled BUSINESS
TYPES.

Jimmy's face is ruby; he clutches the brown-paper-bagged
bottle - its neck peeking above the lip of the bag like a kid
outside the left field fence...

INT. ARMSTRONG & HUNTER, CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

Plush office space. Jimmy goes to the RECEPTIONIST. A few WORKERS give the shabby pair an indelicate once-over.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yes.

(to Lucinda)

What's his name?

LUCINDA

He never said.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Lucinda --

LUCINDA

He never fuckin' said --

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Keep your clogs on, honey --

LUCINDA

Jimmy, this is nuts...

Jimmy yanks her along and they storm into the offices...

RECEPTIONIST

Hey --

She gets on the phone.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT.)

Security...

INT. OFFICES

Jimmy hauls Lucinda... opening doors, offering up the surprised BEAN COUNTERS for Lucinda's perusal. She shakes her head and they move on --

INT. BOARDROOM

A staff meeting in progress. Fifteen SUITS around a long, mahogany table.

The door opens. Jimmy and Lucinda stand there. She scans the room --

LUCINDA

Him.

She points to a 40ish MAN in a 2000 dollar suit.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Him?

Lucinda nods. The man stands - shocked to see her.

MAN

What the hell is the mean--

Before he can finish, Jimmy's got him by the power tie and is yanking him out of the room.

The other suits leap to their feet, too stunned to react. Lucinda shrugs to them.

INT. HALLWAY

Jimmy drags the beat down the hall. PEOPLE pop out of offices...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Where's your office?

The beat, choking, points to one further down the corridor.

OUTSIDE THE BEAT'S OFFICE

his SECRETARY eats an ICE CREAM SUNDAE. Jimmy shoves the beat into his office, grabbing the sundae off the secretary's desk. Slamming the door behind him.

INT. BEAT'S OFFICE

Jimmy locks the door. He tosses the guy against his desk, belly first...

MAN

What the fuck is--

JIMMY THE SAINT

Shaddup. Shaddup, you maggot --

Jimmy rips the beat's belt off his pants and wraps it around the dude's neck, like a bridal. He yanks down the beat's pants.

POUNDING at the door. Jimmy sticks his mouth into the guy's ear.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)
 When you abused that girl, you forgot
 one thing, maggot --

Jimmy plunges the neck of the beer bottle into the ice cream
 sundae, lubricating it with the creamy confection...

MAN
 (choked gasps)
 What thing -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 No deposit, no return...

THHHWRPPPPP!

And Jimmy shoves it where the Charmin goes...

EXT. THE BEAT'S OFFICE

The CROWD can hear his SCREAMS. Lucinda, sickened, smiles to
 herself never-the-less...

As more SECURITY GUARDS arrive, now with a battering ram,
 Lucinda slips away, leaving the offices unnoticed...

CUT TO:

INT. FRANCHISE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint, Franchise, Critical Bill, Easy Wind and Joe
 Heff work on a case of Chivas... Indeed, this is the first
 bit of drinking we've seen any of them do...

FRANCHISE
 So he just dropped the charges? Even
 though you buttfucked him with a bottle
 of Budweiser?

EASY WIND
 Jimmy Bud-fucked 'em...

JOE HEFF
 I hope you had the decency to take the
 cap off first --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 The alternative would've been nasty.
 The guy had a wife, a kid, a mistress...

FRANCHISE
 A wife and a mistress. That's
 hard-livin' --

JOE HEFF

There was a day, I had me more mistresses than wives...

EASY WIND

There was a day, I had me more white women than black women...

CRITICAL BILL

There was a day I had me more freckles than scars...

EASY WIND

(to Franchise)
What about the best you ever had?

FRANCHISE

The best I ever had?

EASY WIND

Yeah. The one that stands out. When you think of fuckin' I know you don't think of that crazy bitch you call a wife. Who you think of - you think of fuckin' -- ?

FRANCHISE

Venus Ping. No question.

EASY WIND

Venus what?

FRANCHISE

Venus Ping. Little Chinese girl. Used to work at Tang Dynasty? On Second Avenue? A little popcorn fart of a girl. But, man. I did her in the phone booth of the joint... Downstairs... I'm laying pipe and she's screaming in that sing-song voice they got - like cats down the fuckin' disposal.

JOE HEFF

Venus Ping. Sounds like the luncheon special. Can I get that Venus Ping with the soft noodles, Ma'am -- ?

FRANCHISE

Give it a name. She was fine. Venus Ping. Wonder where she's at?

EASY WIND

What about you, old man?

Joe Heff stumbles to his feet, lurching drunkenly to the eight-track tape player... He changes tapes... Soon Sinatra

croons high and fine about "Witchcraft."

JOE HEFF

Francis Albert. Francis Albert was
playin' when I had me the finest piece
of nook this land has ever seen. Met
her on Mulberry Street. Italian girl.
Eyes like a gypsy, mouth like a
werewolf. Etta Covino. Banged her
once, loved her forever. When she came,
she shouted out the alphabet... I'm
serious... "a,b,c,d,
(breathless)
e - f - g,
(screams)
H! OH, GOD! H! IJKLM! NNNNN! OH
FUCK! NNNN...
(smiles)
Etcetera...

The others are impressed.

EASY WIND

Damn --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Amazing --

JOE HEFF

Yeah. Had another who screamed the Book
of Leviticus, but it wasn't the same --

FRANCHISE

Wonder why not --

EASY WIND

What about you, butterboy?

CRITICAL BILL

I dunno her name. She had one of them
purple faces, though. One of them -
what do you call it - port wine stains -
on her face. Big one. Blueberry Bitch,
we used to call her... She worked on a
pig farm down from the youth shelter I
was raised at. Big ol' titties. She
was only fifteen. I was about the same.
We used to do it all day long, in her
daddy's barn. All fuckin' day long.
I'd come out of there, I'd have a big,
chap mark right above my crotch. From
all that rubbin' and friction --

JOE HEFF.

She gave you your own port wine stain...

CRITICAL BILL

Yes, I imagine that to be true --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Wonder where she is now?

CRITICAL BILL

She got kilt not long after. Some crazy
uncle of hers - who was also givin' it
to her. She stopped puttin' out - he
stabbed her dead...

EASY WIND

Now see, there's the trouble with bein'
poor white trash --

Beat. They sip their Chivas. "Witchcraft" ends, segueing
silkiy into "That's Life."

JOE HEFF

What about you, Jimmy The Saint?

JIMMY THE SAINT

This one now --

A chorus of boos and tossed pillows, cups...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm serious.

FRANCHISE

Fuck you --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Arrright. This chambermaid once. At the
Riviera in Vegas... She came in to do
the beds, wound up doing the guest...
Her name was Ilsa. She was from Norway.
Blue eyes, blonde hair. Her face
belonged on the side of a coin, I swear.
After the second night, I was ready to
marry her, green card her lovely ass...
But that was when I was mixing it up for
Maxie Cohn. And he was real insane
about me taking out his daughter --

JOE HEFF

Sheila Cohn -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah --

JOE HEFF

Very ugly girl --

FRANCHISE

Big time. I'd fuck you, Joe, and your wrinkly ass 'fore I'd throw one in Sheila Cohn --

JIMMY THE SAINT

She was a needy girl. Very promiscuous, despite her limited physical attributes.

FRANCHISE

Very. Very fuckin' promiscuous. Bitch had more pricks in her than a second-hand dart board...

JIMMY THE SAINT

We were engaged --

JOE HEFF

No kidding?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Give it a name. Maxie was insistent. He liked me. I was - and I say this with the full complement of modesty - the most urbane of the men he associated with at the time --

JOE HEFF

You should be very proud. Those assholes'd cut your throat just to hear the gurgling noises...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Maxie was insistent. Lucky for everybody, Sheila plunged into a major depression, OD'd on Seconal and currently spends her days in a sanitarium on Long Island --

JOE HEFF

Crazy, ugly, slutty bitch --

CRITICAL BILL

What happened to the maid?

EASY WIND

Yeah. Ilsa --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I still got her. When things get heavy, I break her out. We make love for hours, then she cleans the room, leaves a mint on the pillow... It's perfect.

EASY WIND

Really. What happened to her?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Maxie Cohn married her. Only she goes
by the name Natalie now --

JOE HEFF
Natalie Cohn?

FRANCHISE
Natalie Cohn was Ilsa?

EASY WIND
Natalie Cohn was a motherfuckin'
chambermaid?

JOE HEFF
At the Riviera -- !

FRANCHISE
You fucked Natalie Cohn -- !

Jimmy smiles, shrugs. Sips his Chivas. The others are
stunned.

JIMMY THE SAINT
What about you, Easy Wind?

CRITICAL BILL
I can answer that. His name was Rico
and he was doing a zip-five for armed
robbery.

EASY WIND
Fuck you, dodunk --

Easy Wind leans back, lights a cigarette... smiles...

EASY WIND
Her name was Natural - that's what they
called her... She was the kind, you saw
her walkin' down the street, you were
depressed for days... You were - why
can't I ever get some of that? I met
her in this joint up around 112th. The
Cat Claw Club. She was so cool. She
smoked clove cigarettes through one of
them holders --

FRANCHISE
Sounds like a horrorshow --

EASY WIND
Yeah, right. Whatever you say. You -
and I can say this with confidence -
ain't ever even laid eyes on a girl this
fine. Not in your whole fat life. She
was candy. She was God's orgasm, Jack -

JOE HEFF

Cut the shit --

EASY WIND

She was delicious. I spent the night rappin' her. I'm buyin' drinks and haulin' out some of my best moves. To insure, positively, that she wouldn't slip through my fingers, I even brought out the heavy lumber - the one where my wife and four babies died in a car accident and now I was left to wander this sad old world by myself...

FRANCHISE

Christ...

EASY WIND

We had a good time at the bar. And I asked her if she'd like to accompany me to the GasHouse... On account of Frank Morgan was playin' that night, and if my lines were just to get her juiced, the sultry stylings of that bad man's sax'd close the deal... Besides, I knew all my homeboys'd be there... and I needed them to see her.

CRITICAL BILL

That's insecurity on your part --

EASY WIND

Damn. When I say you have a shit-eatin' grin, I can say it right on, fecal freak. You wanna hear this or not?

FRANCHISE

Yeah, let the man finish, Critical Bill -

CRITICAL BILL

Go on --

EASY WIND

... so we walked in there.. Me and.. Natural. And, I swear, the place came to a standstill... they were like who is this fine-lookin' couple? And my homeys were - shit, who's Earl Denton got on his arm? And even Frank Morgan himself played a special tune for Natural. An improv thing that he was inspired to riff just at the sight of her...

JOE HEFF

Superb...

FRANCHISE

What happened next? You fuck her?

EASY WIND

I didn't put my hand in my pocket once that night. Folks bought us drinks. The manager moved us to a table closer to Frank... Four or five other sweet-lookin' barbecues gave me their phone numbers... It was paradise...

FRANCHISE

You bump her bones -- ?

CRITICAL BILL

You cook her -- ?

JOE HEFF

Jing-jang -- ?

They are all looking at him expectantly --

EASY WIND

Naw. Nothin' like that --

FRANCHISE

What?

EASY WIND

Nuthin' like that. I'm tellin' you - she was so fine. She was so perfect. She shoulda been on a canvas, hangin' in some museum. I didn't have to mug her ass. I didn't have to. Bein' with her. Bein' by her side, was greater than any fuckin' I could ever do...

FRANCHISE

Aw, man --

JOE HEFF

Now there's a story with no climax --

CRITICAL BILL

No shit --

FRANCHISE

Christ. I feel like being on a nude beach with just my relatives. Talk about unfulfilling --

EASY WIND

Jimmy?

JIMMY THE SAINT
I'm down with you, Easy Wind. Don't
listen to these creeps. What you had,
was sublime --

FRANCHISE
Sublime this. Bet the bitch had a
dick --

CRITICAL BILL
Give it a name -- !

Critical Bill gives Franchise a high-five... Easy Wind raises
his glass in toast...

EASY WIND
To Natural --

Franchise raises his...

FRANCHISE
To Venus Ping --

Joe Heff raises his...

JOE HEFF
To Etta Covino --

Critical Bill raises his...

CRITICAL BILL
To The Blueberry Bitch...

They look to Jimmy The Saint. At last, Jimmy raises his --

JIMMY THE SAINT
To Dagny --

The others don't notice. Glasses collide. Chivas is
guzzled. And we'll

CUT TO:

A COUPLE MAKING LOVE

hot, sweaty, nasty, staged love. To a cheesy score. It's
porno love. For we are in

INT. SUPERSTAR BIJOU - NIGHT

where Pieces works. The theater is a quarter full of dozing
bums and wide-eyed raincoat types... REGS, the perv Pieces
doused, watches the screen, rapt.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH

Pieces eats his dinner - a chicken leg and a cup of coffee - and flips through a racing sheet... The projector whirrs on nearby...

At once, Pieces looks up... Someone has entered the booth...

Pieces is calm, resigned, circumspect. He even nods.

WOOMP!

The silencer's bullet cleanly cleaves Pieces throat...

Mister Shhh slips back into the shadows...

Pieces flops forward, in front of the projector's xenon arc lamp --

INT. THEATER

-- and suddenly, the copulating couple on-screen are bathed in a rich, viscous crimson, as Pieces' blood is projected onto the screen...

Several in the crowd gasp and turn up to the projection booth.

Dags' eyes go wider, his grin enormous. He flogs himself with an even more insane fervor...

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY THE SAINT'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Jimmy gives a drunk Easy Wind a ride home.

EASY WIND

... I gotta do it, Jimmy. I gotta go under, man --

JIMMY THE SAINT

We're not at that point yet, Easy. We can still do some talkin' --

EASY WIND

Maybe you ain't at that point. You're The Man's homeboy... He likes you. Me he don't owe shit... I go under... I'm safe -

JIMMY THE SAINT

How you gonna go?

EASY WIND

Baby Sinister, man. I was up by there the other day. He understands my situation. And he got a thing against The Man. He says he put me under, not cause he likes me, but 'cause he's into gettin' The Man all crossed up...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Baby Sinister is crazy --

EASY WIND

So's The Man With The Plan, man. They all fuckin' crazy, Jim. That's how they got to be Big Noises --

Jimmy pulls the car to a stop before a low-rent housing development.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I don't think we're at that point yet --

EASY WIND

I go under. Then I'm beyond the rabbit-proof fence, man. No one touches me.

There's a high-pitch JINGLE. Jimmy's car phone. He picks it up. Listens. His eyes show pain. Hangs up...

JIMMY THE SAINT

That was Joe... They got Pieces...

EASY WIND

What?

JIMMY THE SAINT

At the movie house... He's dead...

EASY WIND

And to think we weren't at that point yet...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Earl --

EASY WIND

You can ease yourself into a body bag, Jimmy The Saint... Not me...

Easy Wind gets out of the car... closes the door... He looks back in... reaches for the press-palmed handshake... And he's gone...

CUT TO:

A TALKING HEAD

A WOMAN, early 40s...

WOMAN

... talk about what's compelling - how about this - how about that one doctor's appointment can change your whole life. You can be thinking about two million things: about work, about the man your dating, your family, the state of the world, the new Kevin Costner picture... Then all of a sudden, you feel a lump... Or you get a pain... Or you feel fatigued... Go to a doctor... And, in the course of a single office visit, everything changes... You tell me there's a worse word in the English language than "malignant". I don't think so... I really don't think so...

CUT TO:

INT. SKI SHOP - DAY

Jimmy The Saint hovers behind a rack of parkas. He's watching Dagny - in her saleswoman togs - pitching Goretex bibs to an Asian COUPLE --

He walks over to them...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I have the same pair... Wonderful product... I'm a faller... Can't help it. Been skiing for years, but I'm a faller... I used to get so wet... Not anymore... Not since I bought this brand...

MAN

I hate getting wet --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I did too. Then I bought this product... And now, I'm as dry as the desert...

MAN

It's very expensive --

JIMMY THE SAINT

So isn't gangrene surgery --

MAN

Excuse me -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You gotta buy if you wanna stay dry --

The man considers. Speaks to his wife in their native tongue.

MAN

We'll take two --

DAGNEY

Great --

Dagney gives them the bibs...

DAGNEY (CONT.)

Just bring them to the front and they'll ring it up --

The couple leave...

DAGNEY (CONT.)

I've been trying to make that sale for a half hour...

JIMMY THE SAINT

You're not a closer...

DAGNEY

What are you doing here?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I woke up this morning with a Dagney jones... I needed a fix. This is what ski instructors do in the off-season?

DAGNEY

Those who can't afford to go to Europe -

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'd like to see you tomorrow night -- I know, I know... Saturday night... It's a big leap... But I'm ready to make it --

DAGNEY

I wish you'd asked earlier --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Date with Chip?

DAGNEY

Alex. I hadn't heard from you - I couldn't give him a valid reason why not... I mean, we're not exactly seeing each other, are we?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I see you --

DAGNEY

I'm sorry, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

No. Go out with him. It's okay. But make this the last time. Tell him you found a new fellow. A hero. A man you can hang onto tonight and every night...

DAGNEY

Really?

JIMMY THE SAINT

You do it or I'll do it. I'll challenge him to a fight after school...

DAGNEY

No, no. Please. I'll do it...

The Asian couple walk by, bibs in bags...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Thank you. Come again... Stay dry...

They nod to Jimmy. Walk out. Dagney laughs...

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Jimmy The Saint sits in a booth with Joe Heff and Critical Bill.

JOE HEFF

... it's a steak au poivre... and this guy is putting pepper on it! So, we're all sneezin' until-- Oh, shit. Mooncalf alert --

Jimmy and Critical Bill look to the door to the malt shoppe. Bernard, The Man With The Plan's simple son, has entered.

Bernard looks about the place. Spies Jimmy. Heads over.

BERNARD

Jimmy... Jimmy The Saint... I talk to ya for a minute -- ?

Jimmy looks at his companions. Tentative. He shrugs.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sure, Bernard. What's up?

BERNARD

In private, Jimmy. No offense.

Joe Heff gives him the "none taken" look. Jimmy slides from the booth, into another, further down... Bernard joins him.

BERNARD (CONT.)

I'm very upset, Jimmy.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know, Bernard. I heard about Meg --

BERNARD

It's unbelievably sad. It's - it's - it's a heartbreaker... I don't know what to do. My letters come back RETURN TO SENDER... I sent her flowers. They came back. Dead.

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's a tragedy...

BERNARD

Jimmy The Saint. Don't go taking this the wrong way, okay? But - but... When you used to work for my dad... I always thought you were the coolest. Smooth. Dad used to say that: "Jimmy The Saint, he's a smooth guy."

JIMMY THE SAINT

Thanks, Bernard --

BERNARD

Kind of my hero, sort of. Haw, am I blushing?

JIMMY THE SAINT

No --

BERNARD

I feel like I am. I just, uh, need some advice. To get through it. I love her, Jim. I just want to talk to her --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know --

BERNARD

I just want to hear her say: "Bernard, I'm happy now. I love this guy. I'm happy now." If I could hear her say that, I'd get on with my life. I really would. I love her so much, her happiness is more important to me than my happiness... You understand... ?

Jimmy looks to Joe and Critical Bill, who are watching his booth...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Of course, Bernard. That's very noble of you --

BERNARD

Thank-you...

JIMMY THE SAINT

She'll turn up. And you'll be able to talk to her... You'll see...

BERNARD

Yeah. I guess. Thanks, Jimmy...

Bernard gets to his feet... He sniggers... He seems almost happy...

BERNARD (CONT.)

I like that. That thing you said: about being noble. I could be noble. You're noble. I could be noble. Hey, you wanna go bowl a few strings some night?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sure --

BERNARD

Diamond Mike Ettler owns the Fairplay Lanes. On Brownville? He used to work for Dad... He gives me shoes for free...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'll call you. We'll bowl a few frames....

BERNARD

Great. Thanks again, Jimmy The Saint...

Bernard pumps Jimmy's hand vigorously. And leaves the shoppe.

Jimmy looks over to Joe and Bill... He sighs...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LAZY BIRD LOUNGE - NIGHT

An east side bar/nightclub. Its sign - a garish, neon Toucan with a highball glass and a cigarette, flicks one wing, beckoning all to enter...

INT. THE LAZY BIRD LOUNGE - NIGHT

Disco lights and smoke haze. A predominantly black crowd. Steady mobbin' cool brown Superfly-types... All the men look like Isaac Hayes, all the women Pam Grier...

Holding court at a rear table, sits

BABY SINISTER

the Big Noise among the black syndicate in the Colorado area. Baby Sinister wears an EYE PATCH, baggy Alexander Julian suit, and rope-soled espadrilles. He fancies himself Black Truth in The White Lie...

BABY SINISTER

... cry all they want... By the year 2000, every city will be black... Thanks to the FAX, the modem, the conference call, Federal-fucking-Express, The Beast will be able to conduct his business from his home in the white suburb, leaving the cities a great, wide, war zone fulla Nubian brothers...

One of his strongarms, an enormous man named HOUSE, comes up to the table...

HOUSE

Man here to see you --

BABY SINISTER

Whozzatt -- ?

HOUSE

A ofaginzy... Spooky-ass fuck --

BABY SINISTER

What's he want?

HOUSE

Says he wants to see you --

BABY SINISTER

Jack 'im up then bring him over --

House leaves. Baby Sinister turns back to his table.

BABY SINISTER (CONT.)

An ofay in here. You gotta admire his pills though, don't you?

The table laughs. The laughter dying in their throats when House brings over Mister Shhh... still in his shabby suit, bolo tie, porkpie hat.

BABY SINISTER (CONT.)
Do I know you, Sylvester?

MISTER SHHH
No --

BABY SINISTER
Then what the fuck you mean by coming in here to my place of leisure and fronting me for a piece of ear -- ?

MISTER SHHH
I'm looking for Earl Denton --

BABY SINISTER
Earl Denton --

MISTER SHHH
A.k.a. Easy Wind...

BABY SINISTER
A.k.a. Easy Wind. What the fuck? Hear this boy? A.k.a. my dick, Uncle Salty!

Baby Sinister looks to his table, who laugh on cue --

MISTER SHHH
Easy Wind. You know him --

BABY SINISTER
I know Easy Wind. He's what we call a Link Negro... likes to run with The Beast - but when there's a bit of trouble, he come home to his proper... What you want with Easy Wind -- ?

MISTER SHHH
Business...

And now Baby Sinister gets it... He looks closely at Mister Shhh...

BABY SINISTER
You gotta be dickin' me... You the out-of-town shooter -- ?

MISTER SHHH
I need to find Earl Denton --

Baby Sinister gets to his feet... Into Mister Shhh's face --

BABY SINISTER
And you'd just wander in here - all unprofessional-like... Not having any respect for me and mine. Like some kind
(MORE)

BABY SINISTER (cont'd)
 of fuckin' Terminator 2... ! What do
 you think, we just gonna give him up?
 You think that? I'm your house nigger?
 I'm just gonna gleek up ol' Easy Earl?

Nothing from Mister Shhh... Baby Sinister sticks a long,
 narrow finger into the contract killer's face --

BABY SINISTER (CONT.)
 You got some pills onya, ofaginzy... But
 you way out of control on this one --

And now the place has gone quiet... House is joined by
 several other strapping strongarms in blousy suits...

BABY SINISTER (CONT.)
 You done lost your point of reference on
 this one, Sylvester... You so far on the
 Jersey side, you ain't never goin' home.
 This is Baby Sinister territory... I
 rule. I don't even like Easy Wind
 Denton... I'd as soon wax his ass, as
 look at him. But you comin' in here
 like this - your head's so far up your
 ass, in two minutes you be whistlin'
 outta your belly-button, ya dumb fade...

Baby Sinister grabs Mister Shhh by the throat...

BABY SINISTER (CONT.)
 You knockin' on mine, junior jigjag--

He shoves Mister Shhh against the back wall but, with an
 almost supernatural ease, Mister Shhh re-maneuvers things, so
 before we can blink, he's behind Baby Sinister, one skinny
 arm around the kingpin's throat. The strongarms make to rush
 him but --

MISTER SHHH
 No! Please. I'm a skilled
 professional. With a simple flex of
 this muscle, I will snap your friend's
 neck like a breadstick.

BABY SINISTER
 (garbled)
 Don't listen to him -- shoot the fuck --

MISTER SHHH
 Anyone who shoots me will be responsible
 for the death of Baby Sinister --

BABY SINISTER
 Shoot him -- !

Mister Shhh plucks a huge nickel-plated AUTOMATIC from House's hand... Through it all, he remains tight-lipped, stoic, his voice barely above a whisper...

MISTER SHHH

I need to find Earl Denton. You people have hidden him somewhere. I need to find him --

From the side, a STRONGARM rushes forward.

STRONGARM

Fuck you, Beast -- !

BLAM! Mister Shhh guns him down...

Chaos ensues. Pistols fire. Bottles are hurled. Tables overturned.

Mister Shhh, using Baby Sinister as a shield, fires back into the crowd...

Bullets snap into skin, pulverize bone, excoriate organs...

This is Gunfight At The Ofay Corral...

PATRONS flee the exits... Women scream...

Mister Shhh is an expert shot. Hoodlum blood is spilled everywhere...

Soon the fighting ceases... the smell of cordite hangs thick in the air...

Mister Shhh releases Baby Sinister, who drops to the floor, riddled with slugs...

Whimpers fill the void... The club is all but empty, save for the dead and wounded...

Mister Shhh walks up to one man in particular. It is House and he's been gut-shot...

Mister Shhh points the gun down to House's face...

HOUSE

Please... I got children...

A sound from nearby... A jacker reaching for his piece...
BLAM! Mister Shhh erases him. To House:

MISTER SHHH

A choice. Tell me where Easy Wind Denton is or you can tell it to the worms...

House looks up at him, horrified. Mister Shhh shrugs blankly. He hasn't even broken a sweat. And perhaps this scares House more than anything yet.

Because House nods.

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint sips his frappe. Lucinda drinks coffee across from him...

LUCINDA

You never thought about bein' a dad?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Never.

LUCINDA

Cos I think about bein' a mom. A lot. I think I could quit The Life. I think so. It would - you know - inspire me...

JIMMY THE SAINT

How you gonna support the kid? I don't know if anyone told you, but IBM is having a hiring freeze --

LUCINDA

Fuck you. You don't think I could get a job?

JIMMY THE SAINT

No.

LUCINDA

Whatever. I'd like to have your kid --

JIMMY THE SAINT

You've mentioned that --

LUCINDA

You have the shit. You have strength. You have decency. You have a nice ass -

JIMMY THE SAINT

Who needs strength and decency when you have a nice ass -- ?

LUCINDA

Exactly. I know when I'm ovulating. We could make it happen, no shit --

Malc comes around, clearing dishes.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Malt, Lucinda wants my baby. Think I should give her the seed -- ?

MALT

Jus' what we need in this world - the unholy offspring a you two baggage smashers. That kid'd be the antiChrist, I tell you that. 666 all over his body.

LUCINDA

What do you know? You're a soda jerk. With the emphasis on JERK --

Lucinda laughs at her own jape.

MALT

That's a funny one, Lucinda. I ain't never heard that one. You should forget bein' a ho' and become a comedienne -- ! Soda JERK! Haw, haw! Gosh, li'l girl, you're funny.

He snorts and cackles back to his side of the counter. Lucinda, somehow, thinks he's being sincere and she smiles proudly. Jimmy drains his shake.

CUT TO:

EXT. THICK 'N RICH - LATER - NIGHT

Malt closes up. Jimmy The Saint is with him.

MALT

G'night, James --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Sleep well, Malt --

Malt limps up the street. Jimmy goes to his car. To find Franchise waiting there --

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

What's up, Frankie -- ?

FRANCHISE

Give it a name, Jimbo --

They press palms... Franchise appears nervous --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What's wrong -- ?

FRANCHISE

Nuthin'. Uh. We're takin' off for a while, man --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What do you mean?

FRANCHISE

Me and Dodie. The kids. Givin' up the trailer. Leavin'...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Where you going?

FRANCHISE

I'd just assume not say, Jimbo. No offense. But you never know what could happen --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Frannie --

FRANCHISE

Jimbo, the rest a you ain't got no one. I got a family. I got a world to protect here... Dodie's cousin's in with the Aryan Brotherhood... and I know some of them guys from the inside... We'll be safe with them...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Good move, Franchise. The Aryan Brotherhood. Your three kids'll grow up fine with a bunch of Nazis as role models --

FRANCHISE

You should leave too, Jimbo. You stay here - you're terminal...

Beat. Nothing from Jimmy. Franchise reaches into his pick-up, takes out a beer...

FRANCHISE (CONT.)

I ain't ascarded a dyin', Jimbo. I really ain't. It's the things I'd miss, I don't feel like missin', is why I'm gonna put it in the wind. I don't feel like knowin' all this shit still goes on after I'm takin' the dirt nap... The things I'd miss, Jimbo? Christ doing cartwheels, boy. You know how much I love it when it rains in the summertime? The way cold milk tastes after an Oreo cookie? Jackie Bisset in the goddamn DEEP - with the wet t-shirt? God, Jimbo, how can you imagine not seein' that again?

Beat. Franchise bolts his brew.

FRANCHISE (CONT.)

Or sometimes - on Saturday nights - after dinner, Dodie takes the kids to the flicks... I'll got out with a couple of my biker buds... But before I go out, gettin' ready and stuff... I'll work on a twelve-pack of Coors and play my old records. Loud. AC/DC. Sabbath. Led Zep. Deep Purple. MACHINE HEAD, remember that one? Alice Cooper. And it takes me back, boy. To bein' a kid. --- To Bersy Cronenworth in the back of my old man's Dodge Dart... drunk as skunks... "My Woman From Tokyo" crankin' outta the 8-track. Stoppin' the world... The whole car stankin' of her quim... Damn... I love that. I love listenin' to those tunes, slammin' those brews, waitin' for my bros to pick me up for a few racks of stick, thinkin' about bein' a teenager... Give it a name, hoss.. It's the little things. I can't die, Jimbo. Not after all the shit I survived... Not now. Not lovin' life like I am now... Havin' kids, man... I gotta know how they're gonna turn out... If I raised 'em right an' all... Can't do it... Can't...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know Frannie --

FRANCHISE

There were days... Those first few days locked-down... fish row... when the niggers and the spics'd come-a-callin', that I did feel like dyin'... Prayed for it... Damn right. This one booyah - giant fuckin' yard-runner, they called him Kong - used to crack an egg on his dick 'fore he'd slide it into your bunghole... For lubrication. He'd make you steal the egg from breakfast. Come up to you - say, get me an egg at breakfast... Then you knew it was your turn, that you were gonna get done that night... When it was my time, when Kong told me to get the egg, I spent the day figurin' on how I'd kill myself. Kill myself sooner'n let him do me... Then I had a mind-changer. Fuck that. I had the egg waitin' for Kong that night, when he comes to my bed to crack it...

Franchise pauses. Opens a fresh brew...

FRANCHISE (CONT.)

Kong comes to my bed... dick out... I grab it... One foot on his belly for leverage... Kong screamin' abdabs - I tore it off... Tore it right fuckin' off, Jimbo. Used my fingernails to do the sawin'. Tore it right off... So's I got a fistful of Kong's dickie... He's suckin' floor... Blood everywhere... And I cracked that goddamn egg... And put it in the hole... Musta stung like a mammer-jammer, cos Kong's screamin' just got worse, which I didn't think was possible...

(beat)

Next day, Kong's homeboys were treatin' me fine... Like DING DONG THE WITCH IS DEAD, right?

(beat)

I survived Kong, Jimbo. Kong and worse. No way my goin' down now... Not with the weatherman callin' for rain and my little Frankie Junior gonna be Christopher Robin in the sixth grade WINNIE THE POOH... No way, Jimbo... No fuckin' way --

CUT TO:

INT. SILVER NAKED LADY - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint sits at a table, getting loaded...

At once he sees, at the bar, The Man With The Plan's men, Gus and Ellie, with a pair of LADIES... Jimmy shouts to them:

JIMMY THE SAINT

Hey, Gus! Hey, Ellie!

Gus and Ellie turn. When they see him, their faces go slack.

ELLIE

Hey, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Hello, pig brothers! What's goin' on?

ELLIE

Nothin'.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Beautiful girls you got there! They know you two are a pair of low-rent goons?

ELLIE

Jimmy --

Jimmy staggers to his feet, coming over to them --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Do you, girls? You know Ellie, here, once, with his bare hands, killed an English professor from the University of Boulder. Just choked him to death, cause the prof was late with a payment or some equally egregious offense --

GUS

Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Egregious! Good word, huh, Gus?

GUS

Good word, Jim --

Jimmy throws an arm around one of the girls.

JIMMY THE SAINT

You are lovely. What you wanna hang out with these two mooks for? You like the smell of blood?

GUS

Enough, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Tell 'em about Pieces. My buddy Olden Polymeros. They called him Pieces on account of he had a skin condition, like leprosy, only not as malefic. You like that word, Gus? Malefic. You goofy booyah. You like that word -- ?

GUS

Lemme talk to you a minute, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

No. I wanna talk to your ladies --

LADY #1

They don't wanna talk to you, fuckface -

JIMMY THE SAINT

Wow! Where'd you find these gals, Gussy? Buckingham Palace? Such poise, such grace, such elegance --

GUS

C'mere --

And Gus drags Jimmy bodily to the back of the joint. Into

INT. BATHROOM

where he shoves him against one wall.

GUS (CONT.)

Cut the shit now, Jimmy, ya hear?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Vituperation. There's a word for you, Gussie. Spell it, define it, use it in the present indicative --

GUS

Listen, to me: Easy Wind's gone --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know that --

GUS

I mean he's gone. He's dead. The niggers gave 'im up. He was shot in Bakersfield.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Bakersfield --

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. DUMPSTER - ALLEYWAY - BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA - DAY

Easy Wind, deep in the garbage. Still alive. Moaning. A crimson stain spreading out over the back of his chinos...

At the mouth of the alley, Mister Shhh pitches pennies with some of the neighborhood KIDS... one eye on the dumpster...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SILVER NAKED LADY - BATHROOM

Gus continues to brace Jimmy The Saint.

GUS

He's gone, Jimmy. First Pieces, now Easy Wind. Took twenty minutes to die. He suffered like you wouldn't fuckin' believe... The Man's gonna do ya all. What the fuck, Jimmy? Get out. Go --

JIMMY THE SAINT

. Go. You want I should go?

GUS

You gonna stay here and die, Jimmy?
Like a fuckin' dog in the street? Like
Easy Wind. A bullet up the ass, you
don't die for twenny minutes -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Easy Wind. Why's this happening?

GUS

'Cause this is it. Lemme explain it to
you cosmically, Jimmy.- There's this
earth, we're on it, and surrounding it
is this big force. This big force of
death. Eventually, the force gets in.
You try as long as you can to keep it
out, but eventually it gets in. You
follow?

JIMMY THE SAINT

These are rainy days, Gus --

GUS

Get out of Denver, you fuck --

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Ramshackle, tumbledown. Could be condemned. Jimmy The
Saint, still a little drunk, walks unsteadily up a darkened
stairway. The plaster walls are rotting...

Jimmy The Saint knocks on the door to Room 2...

Crashing sounds from the other side. Shuffling noises...

CRITICAL BILL (O.S.)

Whozzatt -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's me, Bill. Jimmy --

The door's peephole darkens. Then:

CRITICAL BILL (O.S.)

Jimmy. Okay. Jimmy.

Metallic sounds. Chains. The door opens. Critical Bill
stands there, in camouflage fatigues, stocking cap, carrying
a sawed-off shotgun...

CRITICAL BILL (CONT.)

Come on in, Jimmy --

Critical Bill holds the door aside, allowing Jimmy to enter

INT. CRITICAL BILL'S ROOM

A bomb blast in a junkyard. Stacks of lumber, old tires, piles of newspapers and magazines. Empty soda cans, pizza boxes, frozen food tins. Cartons of unopened perishables. Bottled water.

The windows have been blackened. And above each, a POLEAXE is trigger-rigged - so that any tension on the glass, will cause an axe to swing toward the intruder...

Piles of ammo. Pistols, blades, a sub-machine gun... This is a virtual compound...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Bill?

CRITICAL BILL

Yeah --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What the fuck are you doing?

CRITICAL BILL

He comes-a-callin'. I'll be ready --

JIMMY THE SAINT

When's the last time you went out?

CRITICAL BILL

Couple a days. I quit workin' at Carlotti's...

Something catches Jimmy's eye: in one corner - THE STUFFED PIT BULL - Nigger Knocker. The taxidermist captured him poised for a leap, face in full-snarl, growling for eternity....

JIMMY THE SAINT

You wanna get something to eat?

CRITICAL BILL

I'm not real keen on leavin' here. You hungry? I fix you up something.

Critical Bill goes to a carton.

CRITICAL BILL (CONT.)

I got beans. I got corn. I got spinach. Salt-free. I got some beef stew. How 'bout I fix you up some beef stew, maybe some hard rolls...

JIMMY THE SAINT

That's okay, man. Really.

Jimmy sweeps a pile of filthy shirts off a bean bag chair and sits down... Critical Bill opens a can of tuna and, using his fingers, eats it straight from the can.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

They got Easy Wind --

CRITICAL BILL

I know.

JIMMY THE SAINT

You know?

CRITICAL BILL

I got this kid - keeps the peek for me downtown. He told me. They did him buckwheats, man. Up the ging-goo. Took him a half hour to die...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I heard only twenty minutes --

Beat. The distinction is nebulous...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Pieces wasn't buckwheats...

CRITICAL BILL

Pieces wasn't a nigger --

Beat. Critical Bill finishes his tuna. Jimmy checks out the arsenal --

CRITICAL BILL (CONT.)

You roddeed? I could hook you up --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm cool --

CRITICAL BILL

You should be roddeed, Jim. Give it a name --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'll take my chances. I was never a real champ with the gat. Anyone comes for me, I won't be able to shoot my way out of it --

CRITICAL BILL

Don't say that shit. That's bullshit. You ain't strapped, you trapped, Jimmy.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Give it a name --

CRITICAL BILL

Easy Wind. He was a fuck. A real chungo dinge. But I kinda liked him anyhow. Even though he jumped crazy on me all the fuckin' time. And when he started roundin' me on that fecal freak stuff. It was lies, man --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I know --

CRITICAL BILL

Not lies like you think. Not out and out lies. I mean - I ain't no brown boy - but there was one time --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I don't wanna hear this, Billy --

As he speaks, Critical Bill picks up a long, lethal blade, brass knuckles handle - he begins to whittle a dowel...

CRITICAL BILL

At Marion. Especially in the fuckin' basement. You gotta prove yourself. You don't, you're hosed. This one skull offered me five centuries to do it --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Do it?

CRITICAL BILL

Eat it, man. Not a lot. Just a little piece --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Bill... Please...

CRITICAL BILL

I'm sayin' Easy Wind was a lyin' chungo, but mebbe on this he wasn't really lyin'. Cos I did it. For a small nickel, see he leaves that part out. Five yards, man. And it's only a little piece of shit. Didn't even have no taste. Spongy.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Jesus, Bill --

CRITICAL BILL

It don't make me no fecal freak. It's a one-time deal thing. Give me some geezo juice around the basement. And five yards. What the fuck? You might do it yourself --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah. Sure. I might. Anything's possible.

CRITICAL BILL

Easy Wind just shouldn't a oughtta go sayin' shit without, uh, without...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Qualifying it --

CRITICAL BILL

Yeah. That's it, Jim. Without qualifying it. Nigger just a trashmouth. He could get hisself kilt he don't watch out...

Jimmy The Saint looks at him. Critical Bill is so deep into the bug basket he doesn't even note his own gaffe.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - OUTSIDE JIMMY'S BUILDING - THAT NIGHT

Jimmy parks his car. Gets out. He thinks he sees someone in the shadows... ducks down behind his car...

Sweating now, he holds his breath... He quietly opens his car door, reaches in, takes out a sawed-off baseball bat... Waits.

The figure lurches out of the inky darkness of the alley. It's a BUM, guzzling off a 40 ounce...

Jimmy exhales... tosses the bat back into the car and closes the door. Only to bump into

HATHAWAY

The Man With The Plan's bought-and-paid-for cop.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Jesus... You scared the shit outta me --

HATHAWAY

Horrible way to go through life, ain't it, Tosnia? Like a bug caught in the
(MORE)

HATHAWAY (cont'd)

bathtub. It got two choices - it goes down the drain - or it stays atop and gets gooshed.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Your metaphors are scintillating --

HATHAWAY

Shut your bazoo. I'm here with a message --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What's that?

HATHAWAY

Leave. Screw. Get outta town. Do that, you get a reprieve --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Why?

HATHAWAY

Listen you fuckin' no-good, he's givin' you a break - you should oughtta take it.

JIMMY THE SAINT

He isn't givin' me a break. He wants to see me run. Then he does me elsewhere. Like Easy Wind --

HATHAWAY

You have sentimental value to him. He likes you. You're the son he never had.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Your problem, Hathaway, is that you been getting things on the tin for so long, you don't know what it's like to try...

HATHAWAY

Don't be a chump. Leave town. Tomorrow morning. At sparrow's fart, I was you.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Or else...

HATHAWAY

Or else buckwheats, junior --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'd sell my sack to the swap meet to be wearing a wire right now --

HATHAWAY

Yeah. Like you could touch me --

Hathaway laughs heartily. Then he plunges a fist into Jimmy's guts. Just for sport. He walks on up the dark street --

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

Don't be a ding. Leave town --

Jimmy sinks to the pavement. Hathaway is gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CHURCH - COURTYARD - DAY

Jimmy The Saint walks with FATHER PUCIARELLI - a white-haired parish priest from the old neighborhood.

JIMMY THE SAINT

It was like - if I remember that day - the sacristy bells; the pillar paschal candles; the altar torches... I was up there - on the bubble... Ready to take the vows... I looked out - into the congregation - and there was my mother. Jesus. Whew. She had a crucifix pressed to her lips. She was beaming. She was absolutely beaming. Nothing else mattered. This was it. Her son was about to be ordained. It was the highlight of her everything. It was the tops of her pops, Father... It was it all...

FATHER POOCH

Why do you take anything away from that?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I don't. But God. I mean - maybe she could've wanted grandkids. Maybe she could've wanted a daughter-in-law to talk to --

FATHER POOCH

What upsets you -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I dunno. Why was it so important? Another priest in the family. Her brother's a priest. Her cousins. Why was it such a big deal for her boy to be one?

FATHER POOCH

But it never happened --

JIMMY THE SAINT

And she never recovered... I remember leaping offa that altar, bolting down the apse out of the side door. And running the 14 blocks to Bleeker Street, where Eddie Big Head put me to work calculating the weekly vigs on his five-point loans cos none of the mooks in his employ knew how to multiply...

Jimmy smiles weakly. Father Pooch remains stone-faced. Beat.

FATHER POOCH

What are you going to do, James?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I don't know. Harvest mangos. Raise cattle. What am I supposed to do? What am I good at? I talk. I talk and I try to get through it... And now all of a sudden I got this thing... Jesus... You ever wonder why?

FATHER POOCH

Why what?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Just why. Just why, Father. Why - in the belly of it all - we gotta put up with so much... Wouldn't it be easier just to roll over...

FATHER POOCH

Would you be happy rolling over?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'd like to be drunk for two weeks, padre. Stay loaded. Goodbye cruel world. Since this began? I been through nine kinds of Hell. Why? What I ever do -- ? Now, I got this girl... First girl in a long time meant something more to me than just tits and teeth - Uh, excuse me, Father --

FATHER POOCH

Never mind. Go on --

JIMMY THE SAINT

First girl in a long time. But it's like I'm dying. I'm a dying man... So what's the point in starting anything?

FATHER POOCH

You're a good person, James. You should take some comfort in that. Most aren't. Deep down - you're a good person.

JIMMY THE SAINT

So. What do I do?

FATHER POOCH

Go on. Keep going on. What else is there to do -- ?

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Jimmy The Saint drinks his frappe. Joe Heff enters, excited, slides into the booth...

JOE HEFF

You hear?

JIMMY THE SAINT

What?

JOE HEFF

You didn't hear?

JIMMY THE SAINT

What, Joe?

JOE HEFF

He left town --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Who?

JOE HEFF

The shooter. He's gone --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yeah, so?

JOE HEFF

No. I mean, he's gone. He's gone. He left. You're out of it --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What -- ?

JOE HEFF

He left. I was just talking to Barry Barnum, who was talking to Lou Brophy, who had dinner with Gus last night.

(MORE)

JOE HEFF (cont'd)
 He's gone. Congratulations, Jimmy.
 You're free and clear. The Man called
 off his dog. You're outta it...

And, in celebratory PRE-LAP, The Gibson Brothers' "CUBA"
 sounds up on track as we

CUT TO:

INT. "THE CASTILIAN CLUB" -- GLENDALE -- NIGHT

A bang tango joint full of mambo kings and degenerate line
 dancers... Jimmy The Saint and Dagney, dressed to the eyes,
 are out on the dance floor... boogeying to the tune...

Jimmy waves a 70 dollar bottle of champagne, filling up the
 glasses of those dancing along with them...

EXT. "THE CASTILIAN CLUB" - BALCONY

A great view of the Rocky Mountains from up here. Jimmy and
 Dagney sit at a table, sipping their champagne... flushed
 from dancing...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Whoo-hoo! I haven't danced like that
 since New York --

DAGNEY
 You're in a good mood tonight --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Why not? It's a brand new morning,
 dolly. You and me against the world --

DAGNEY
 Can I tell you something? You won't get
 mad?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 What's that? Only thing you could tell
 me tonight that would make me mad was
 that you're really a longshoreman from
 Long Beach, your name is Mac, and your
 love for me has convinced you to go
 ahead and complete the operation --

DAGNEY
 Alex - last Saturday night - he, uh, he
 sort of...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 What?

DAGNEY

He asked me to marry him --

JIMMY THE SAINT

He did?

DAGNEY

Yes --

JIMMY THE SAINT

To which you said --

DAGNEY

Lemme get back to you --

Jimmy slaps his thigh... Howls...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Hoo-hee! Let's get back to him! Right now! "I'm sorry, young Alex, young Chip, but I cannot marry you, as I am smitten by a dashing raconteur named James Michael Tosnia who they call Jimmy The Saint and who moves me in ways that I always felt a girl should be moved... yet couldn't understand why none of the mouth-breathing nudibranchs I was dating could do it..." Come on, let's go -- !

He grabs her by the arm --

DAGNEY

Jimmy - no --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Come on! Come on!

(sings)

"Cuba! Ra-da-da-da-da Cuba!"

He leads her over to the payphone, deposits coins --

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

What's the number -- ?

DAGNEY

Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Dagney. Dagney, honey, sweetie. Look at me. Look at me. I'm your vehicle, baby -- I am... I'm the man with the plan... Me and you. Hoo-dee-hoo -- !

(beat; winks)

Now, what's that number -- ?

CUT TO:

INT. DAGNEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

Dagney, asleep in his arms, Jimmy stares at the ceiling. Maybe it's a trick of the light, but it looks like there's a beatific smile on his face...

CUT TO:

INT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE - DAY

Jimmy The Saint enters the offices, to find Cuffy deep in conversation with a stiff-looking MAN...

CUFFY

James! James Tosnia, this is Harold Timlin. Harold is with the leasing company --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Harold! Harold The Creditor! How are you, sir?

HAROLD

Quite distressed actually, Mr. Tosnia. You are seriously in arrears...

JIMMY THE SAINT

No, no. Wrong guy. Mr. Cuffland here, he is seriously "into rears" not me - I'm a boob man...

Cuffy winces. Harold hasn't a clue... Jimmy sits down at his desk, opens a drawer... takes out a checkbook...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Tell me what I owe, Harold The Creditor. And I'll fill in the numbers...

Jimmy smiles. Cuffy couldn't be more surprised. Even Harold The Creditor didn't think it would be this easy...

CUT TO:

INT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE - LATER

Harold walks out of the offices, folding the check into his pocket...

INT. OFFICE

Cuffy eyes Jimmy, suspicious...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Don't worry about it. It's my
 "fuck-you" money. I keep it around. I
 believe in this place, Cuff. I just
 woke up believing in it. We can make it
 work. I think we should change the
 name, though. THE BRAND NEW MORNING
 CENTER. What do you think? It's
 optimistic, metaphoric, and at the same
 time, splendidly obtuse...

..... CUFFY
 What's gotten into you -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Cuffy, when you first came to me with
 this idea, I was looking for a change.
 We're homeboys, so I thought I'd throw
 in with you. You're the gay brother I
 never had. Now, now that I'm finally
 with the program, you're nervous. What
 is it with you?

CUFFY
 THE BRAND NEW MORNING CENTER?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Yeah. It's about promise, Cuffy. The
 promise of going on... What do you
 think?

CUFFY
 I dunno. I sort of like it --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 There you go --

CUT TO:

INT. FAIRPLAY LANES - DAY

The bowling alleys are crowded with league play. Bernard
 bowls alone --

JIMMY THE SAINT (O.S.)
 Spot me twenty pins, sailor -- ?

Bernard turns. Jimmy The Saint is there, in shoes and shirt.

BERNARD
 Jimmy -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Let's play, amigo --

If Bernard's grin were any wider his ears would touch.
They bowl.

INT. FAIRPLAY LANES - LATER

Jimmy and Bernard eat cheeseburgers...

BERNARD

I am feeling a little better. I mean,
you gotta get better. You can't stay
down...

JIMMY THE SAINT

How's your dad... ?

BERNARD

He's arrright. He's been in a crappy
mood, but he's getting better, too. You
should come around --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Maybe I will. We gotta do this again
sometime, Bernard --

BERNARD

That'd be swell, Jimmy The Saint. No
foolin'. Swell with a capitol "S".

CUT TO:

EXT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Jimmy The Saint, a true spring to his step, comes walking up
to the malt shoppe, only to see Joe Heff waiting outside, a
grim look on his face...

As Jimmy nears, everything SLOWS DOWN and we'll take it,
ever-so-disoriented, to

EXT. TRACT HOUSE DEVELOPMENT - MELBOURNE, FLORIDA - NIGHT

A car pulls up to one tract house. Dodie Chyser and her
three fat children climb out, back from their Saturday night
picture show...

There are a dozen HARLEYS parked here... Several enormous,
long-haired HARD SHELLS, muscles covered with SWASTIKA TATTS,
wait out front...

Dodie runs for the house -- one of the Aryan Brothers stops
her, but she wrests free of him, through the front door --

The fat little kids weep...

INT. TRACT HOUSE

Dodie enters... sees A BODY on the floor - another Aryan Brother - quite dead...

Things are still SLOW, fuzzy, surreal... as Dodie, followed by the brothers, explores the small pre-fab house...

A twelve-pack of Coors on the living room table...

Dodie creeps into the bedroom... and there he is

FRANCHISE

on the bed, belly slit from groin to sternum, sheets dyed a gruesome arterial red...

Dodie screams, collapsing into the arms of an Aryan Brother --

And now we can hear it, coming from an 8-track player, on perpetual play - Deep Purple's SMOKE ON THE WATER...

CUT TO:

EXT. THICK 'N RICH

Jimmy leans heavily against the glass front...

JIMMY THE SAINT

So he didn't leave town for good. He just left to do Franchise...

JOE HEFF

It seems to be roundin' out that way --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Franny --

JOE HEFF

I'm thinkin' - and don't go gettin' sussy on me, Jim - I'm thinkin' maybe you should just go to the Feebs. Give the fuckin' show away --

JIMMY THE SAINT

What? The FBI? You want me to eat cheese on this, Joe? You?

JOE HEFF

I know. But it's cause you're my boy. Give it a name.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I can't do that. I can't eat cheese,
Joe. Not anymore. Franchise. Fuckin'
Franchise --

JOE HEFF

It's not a bad idea, Jimmy. You didn't
shoot anyone. You'll get a zip-five.
Be out in two --

JIMMY THE SAINT

How long you think I last in there, Joe,
before some 19-year-old down boy
gut-cuts me for a carton of smokes and
the promise of a night watchman job at
one of The Man's racetracks when he gets
out -- ?

JOE HEFF

I dunno, man. What? Either way you're
on the spot. I just don't wanna see
nothin' happen to you, Jim... I've known
you and your family since Christ left
Chicago --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I gotta go see him --

JOE HEFF

You don't gotta do that. Use your loaf,
Jimmy. You don't gotta do that --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I gotta go see him. I'm alone in this,
Joe Speakeasy. I gotta go --

CUT TO:

A TALKING HEAD

an older man - perhaps 70 - talks into Cuffy's camera.

OLD MAN

... when you're 10, life is wonder;
when you're 20, life is complicated;
when you're 30, you realize life is
madness; when you're 40, you agree to
make the best of it; when you're 50,
you regret the compromise of 40, and you
make everyone miserable with your
caprice; when you're 60, you go back to
the mindset of 40, back to the
compromise, back to the fold, back to
the egg... And when you're 70, you
realize life is nonsense. It's 70
years. That's all

OLD MAN (cont'd)
 it is. 70 years! In the grand scheme
 of things, one life is nothing. One
 life is a mustard burp. Momentarily
 tangy, then forgotten into the air...

CUT TO:

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gus opens the door to Jimmy The Saint...

GUS
 Aw, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I need to see him --

GUS
 No way, Jimmy. No way --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Lemme in, Gus. Lemme see him. Let him
 know I'm here. He'll see me --

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S STUDY

The Man With The Plan eats dinner, his nurse feeding him veal
 marsala and ratatouille... The cop, Hathaway, hovers nearby,
 watching the nurse's sculpted ass and drinking a scotch...

Gus leads Jimmy into the room... The Man With The Plan chews
 with his mouth full, the nurse sprayed with vivers...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Jimmy Toz -- !

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Hello --

Hathaway starts to frisk Jimmy.

GUS
 I already did it --

Hathaway smiles at Gus - obviously these two don't groove on
 each other - and does it anyhow...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Forget it! Jimmy ain't no gun guy.
 What, he's gonna scrag me? Jimmy The
 Saint? Haw, haw!

(MORE)

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (cont'd)
 (to the nurse)
 That's enough, sweetie. Take the night
 off. Go rent a video --

The nurse clears away the plates and leaves the room with
 Gus.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (CONT.)
 You didn't listen to my big Irish mallet
 when he said leave town -- why's that?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Leaving town didn't help Franchise or
 Earl Denton --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 It woulda helped you, Jim --

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I can't spend the rest of my life
 looking over my shoulder --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Rather spend it lookin' at the roof a
 your casket -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Let's deal --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 What kind of deal -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Whatever you say. I just want to
 live --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Jimmy. Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy. Father
 Pooch called me. Speakeasy Joe Heff.
 Even Malt - that bald-headed moolie runs
 the ice cream shoppe - he used to take
 care of my cars - even he called.
 Pleadin' your case. Funny, huh? Your
 references. But that ain't what it's
 about, Jim.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 What is it about?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 When I was first given Denver, I was
 disgusted. Denver? Buncha fuckin' cows
 and mountains. The altitude. What's to
 be had in Denver? How about L.A.?

(MORE)

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN (cont'd)
 Reno? I'll take fuckin' Dallas! But
 Denver? The only thing I knew about
 Denver, Jimmy, was John Elway... And him
 I'm not too crazy for, either. But that
 was what was givin' to me. I took it.
 We're doing well. We've managed well.
 Business is good. Things are good...
 It's not about references, Jim. It's
 about a way of conducting myself. To
 grab hold here, I had to do things to
 excess... Between the niggers and the
 muds... there's a lot to be taken care
 of. A lot to prove...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 We can make a deal --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 There's no deals, Jim. Everything's in
 short supply. There's no deals.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I met someone... Not that this would
 mean anything to you, but I'm all out of
 options here. A girl.

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Good for you. A man needs something
 when he ain't got nothing to hang onto -

JIMMY THE SAINT
 And I'm seriously thinking - for the
 first time ever - of going that way.
 The old Mom-Dad-Buddy-and-Sis route.
 I'll leave. I'll move to Switzerland.
 Some ski place (she skis. You should
 see her - break your heart). I'm
 seriously gone. I just want a
 guarantee... I don't wanna get hurt... I
 don't want her to get hurt...

A snort from across the room. Hathaway...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Get on your knees...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 What?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
 Get on your knees, Jimmy...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I can't do that...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Get on your fuckin' knees or you don't
even leave here, let alone go to some
ski place...

JIMMY THE SAINT
If I do...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
You get on your knees, then we talk --

Jimmy shoots Hathaway a look. The cop is all smiles...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Why you doin' this -- ?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Cause I'm a fuckin' maggot! Cause I'm
rooted to this chair so I'm even more
mean and nasty than normal. Cause I got
pressure sores, Jim. And they leak pus.
Now get on your knees -- !

JIMMY THE SAINT
No --

Hathaway comes over and slugs him. And Jimmy is on his
knees.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)
Arrright. There. You happy? Now what?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Now get on your belly --

JIMMY THE SAINT
What?

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Get on your belly --

JIMMY THE SAINT
I ain't gonna beg --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
Get on your fuckin' belly -- I can send
the boys out with thirty vials a rock
and your little quim's address. Round
up eight crackhead niggers to gang-rape
her, if they wanna pipe up... Rape her
so long and hard, she won't ever ski
again... Get on your fuckin' belly,
Jim --

Hathaway watches, eyes twinkling...

JIMMY THE SAINT

I can't --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Your belly, Jim --

Beat. Jimmy considers. He's sweating. A mess. At last.
Jimmy slides down to his belly...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Beg for your life, Jim --

JIMMY THE SAINT

No --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Beg for your miserable fuckin' life, Jim --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I beg I die --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Beg you fuck -- !

HATHAWAY

Beg, asshole -- !

JIMMY THE SAINT

No --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Beg me or I'll let you suck my dead dick
in return for your life --

JIMMY THE SAINT

NO -- !

HATHAWAY

Beg -- !

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

BEG -- !

HATHAWAY

BEG, FUCK -- !

JIMMY THE SAINT

Noooo -- !

Tears boil up in Jimmy's eyes, the sweat runs deep --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN

Take my dick out, Hathaway --

Hathaway chortles...

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
TAKE IT OUT -- !

Hathaway makes to move to The Man's fly, but Jimmy crawls over to The Man With The Plan's chair, touching the steel foot-flaps...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Please, sir... Please, let me live... I
wanna live... Please... I'll do anything
for you... anything you say... Please
... let me live... Please...

Jimmy, weeping now...

The Man With The Plan blows into his puffer tube. The wheelchair pitches forward, one wheel rolling over Jimmy's HAND... pinning him to the floor... Jimmy cries out --

THE MAN WITH THE PLAN
You scumbag. Didn't you learn nothing
from me? Never beg. Never ever fuckin'
beg...

And, WHUMP! Hathaway kicks Jimmy in the side... Again... And one more time -- the wheel crushing his hand to the ground, the toe of Hathaway's wing-tip crunching his ribs, his kidneys...

INT. THE MAN WITH THE PLAN'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM

Gus and Ellie sit here, listening to the brutal noises. Gus reads Webster's Collegiate Edition, Ellie reads GQ...

CUT TO:

INT. DAGNEY'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

Dagney puts ice packs around Jimmy's sides, which are now an ugly Rorschach of blacks and blues...

DAGNEY
You didn't see their faces -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Nope. But there were three of them.
And they were white.

DAGNEY
How much did they get?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Only about forty dollars --

DAGNEY

Jeez. All this for forty dollars. They should have just asked for it.

JIMMY THE SAINT

What makes you think I would have given it to them -- ?

DAGNEY

Don't tell me you would have fought them for it? For forty bucks? You're not a macho schmuck like that are you?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nah. I guess not --

She goes to the kitchen to fetch more ice. He watches her. She really is something.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

You know there are certain guys. A certain type of guy, that would - for forty dollars... for less... for ten cents... fight even though they were guaranteed to lose...

DAGNEY

Yeah, well, we have a word for those guys, Jimmy - and it's "asshole."

JIMMY THE SAINT

How about this? To a certain kind of person, a certain kind of man, what it all is, what it's all for - is boat drinks --

DAGNEY

Boat drinks... ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yes. As a means to keep you going. It's popular among certain subcultures. Prison, for example. It's a common toast in prison. You know: a vision of how it's gonna be when you get out...

DAGNEY

Why boat drinks?

JIMMY THE SAINT

It's an ideal. An image. A paragon. At the end of a long, bad life, there you are - you and your friends. Aboard a big cabin cruiser. Somewhere in the Florida Keys. Fishing. Cruising the

(MORE)

JIMMY THE SAINT (cont'd)
islands. Laying in the sun. Wearing
flowery shirts. Having boat drinks...

DAGNEY
Boat drinks. It's sort of silly...

JIMMY THE SAINT
Why?

DAGNEY
Like that's the perfect world? The
ultimate goal? Having drinks on a boat?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Right. What's silly?

DAGNEY
C'mon, Jimmy...

JIMMY THE SAINT
I don't understand what's silly --

DAGNEY
Forget it.

JIMMY THE SAINT
Explain it to me. What's silly?

DAGNEY
Why are you starting a fight?

JIMMY THE SAINT
What's your fantasy, Dagney? The Swiss
Alps? A roaring fire? A cableknit
sweater? Some big, blonde, Nordic
fuckhead feeding you strawberries and
Remy Martin and talking about today's
moguls... ?

DAGNEY
You're getting warm. But I prefer the
French Alps --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Your problem - way I see it - is you're
incapable of grasping anything but your
own simple-minded dreams. Anything that
doesn't remotely happen to make you
moist is immediately invalid --

He gets to his feet, tearing off the ice bags, putting on his
shirt and coat --

DAGNEY
Jimmy, I was only kidding --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Forget it. All this time, I tried to overlook it - but the truth is you're a very shallow person --

DAGNEY

You're serious -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Yes --

DAGNEY

I'm shallow? Your bottom-line, end-of-the-road, pie-in-the-sky Utopia is laying on your ass drinking rum, and I'm shallow?

Beat. Jimmy looks at her. Then:

JIMMY THE SAINT

I can't talk to you anymore. You're a person I can't talk to anymore --

He heads for the door. It hurts to walk.

DAGNEY

Where are you going?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Home. I'm going home. I'm gonna light a fire, put on a sweater, and eat some strawberries. Jealous?

And he's gone. She stares at the spot where he just stood. Amazed.

EXT. DAGNEY'S BUILDING - SIDEWALK

Jimmy comes out of the building. He stops. His face says it all. He purposely started a fight with her. And he's sick about it. He sinks to the stoop.

CUT TO:

INT. SILVER NAKED LADY - LATER - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint, at the bar, cooling down with a bourbon neat, an ice water back.

Lucinda breezes by, a JOHN trailing her --

LUCINDA

Hey, Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

Hey --

She leans down into him...

LUCINDA

I'm ovulating, sugar. You ready?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Not tonight, I have a price on my head --

LUCINDA

You got two days. Then we gotta wait a whole month --

She kisses his ear and walks out, the John following --

SOMEONE sits down in the stool next to Jimmy. Orders a virgin strawberry daiquiri. Jimmy looks at the newcomer. It is

MISTER SHHH

and he nods to Jimmy The Saint.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nice night --

Mister Shhh nods. Studies Jimmy.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

What?

MISTER SHHH

You look like you're in pain --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I got in a fight with my girlfriend. And my boss. And my boss' lackey.

MISTER SHHH

Three fights in one night --

JIMMY THE SAINT

And I'm not a fighter by trade --

MISTER SHHH

What are you?

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm a businessman. What about you?

MISTER SHHH

I am also a businessman.

JIMMY THE SAINT
We got a couple of businessmen here --

MISTER SHHH
Yes --

Joe Heff has entered the joint. When he sees Jimmy and who Jimmy is talking to, he nearly has an embolism...

Joe says something to a WAITRESS, slips a finiski in her hand and walks off.

The waitress comes over to Jimmy...

WAITRESS
You have a phone call. At the payphone --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Really -- ?

MISTER SHHH
Maybe it's the girlfriend --

JIMMY THE SAINT
More likely it's the boss. Excuse me, friend --

Mister Shhh nods. Watches Jimmy head to the back --

INT. PAYPHONE

Jimmy picks up the phone. Joe Heff grabs him.

JOE HEFF
You fuckin' baggage smasher! You any idea who you were just talkin' to -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Joe! Jesus, what are you doing?

JOE HEFF
That guy? That guy? You know who that guy was?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Who?

JOE HEFF
The guy. The shooter. From El Paso. Mister Shhh.

JIMMY THE SAINT
That guy is Mister Shhh?

JOE HEFF
That's right --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Get the fuck outta here --

JOE HEFF
Give it a name. I'll bet he was gonna
do you in the club. Do you here and
now... Jesus...

JIMMY THE SAINT
He's like a quiet little guy --

JOE HEFF
Right --

JIMMY THE SAINT
He drinks virgin strawberry daiquiris
for chrissakes... I think you're wrong,
Joe --

JOE HEFF
You deserve to get waxed --

JIMMY THE SAINT
He drinks girl drinks --

They walk back to the main bar, peek around the wall --
But Mister Shhh is gone. Joe shakes his head.

JOE HEFF
Stupid butterboy --

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)
He drinks girl drinks --

CUT TO:

DARKNESS.

We're not sure where we are. Until a MATCH erupts. Critical
Bill's mad hatter face aglow in its flame.

INT. CRITICAL BILL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Critical Bill holds his breath. He hears noises from
outside. From the fire escape.

He hunkers down, his Colt .357 Python revolver in one hand...
Smith & Wesson Airweight in the other...

The window is jimmied. Then slides open...

And Critical Bill switches on the lights...

Just as the poleaxe SWINGS HOME!

And Mister Shhh SCREAMS --

The axe buried neatly into his chest and left shoulder --

But it's his left hand that packs the 7.65 mm New Nambu pistol.

And it blazes... at 24 rounds per minute.

Critical Bill returns fire...

But bullets smack into his legs, shattering bone and Critical Bill crumbles... guns still firing...

Mister Shhh capers backwards... using a pile of tires as cover... blood streaming down from the seam of his wound... the axe handle sticking out like a displaced erection...

GUNFIRE rings loud and true... Critical Bill's room a virtual free-fire zone...

CRITICAL BILL

Give up, mammy-rammer -- ? I got enough
in here, we can play all day -- !

Mister Shhh offers his reply in the form of a fresh volley of bullet-work...

This should play as absurdly insane... the two savages blasting at each other from some five feet apart...

Critical Bill winces as Nigger Knocker takes a slug and explodes in a shower of dust and stuffing...

Mister Shhh continues to fire, though he's weakened from the loss of blood...

Critical Bill - his pants red and squishy like transfusion bags - is also losing light...

Both men continue to exchange gunfire, though the reports are further apart...

At last, Mister Shhh collapses to the floor...

Critical Bill, sluggish, crawls over to him, through the refuse...

SIRENS wail in the distance...

Critical Bill drags himself to within inches of Mister Shhh...

He sticks his gun in the hit man's face...

BLAM!

Mister Shhh, with his last bit of energy, fires a neat one into Critical Bill's heart... Mister Shhh smiles weakly. The victor.

Critical Bill, stunned, tries to say something, but he's already dead... his eyes roll up into his head... and he COLLAPSES --

-- Onto Mister Shhh. Onto the axe hilt. Plunging it further into Mister Shhh. Cleaving him.

Killing him.

We'll admire this tableau for a beat. A lot of blood, a lot of decimated junk, the hairy remnants of the freeze-dried pit bull.

And Critical Bill and Mister Shhh. Entwined like lovers. All that menace, deservedly dead...

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Jimmy The Saint and Joe Heff in their booth of choice.

JIMMY THE SAINT

You ever think maybe it's over? Maybe now - with the shooter gone... He'll just give it up.

JOE HEFF

You ain't really that stupid, are you Jim? You were always gonna be last. You were the ringleader. You put it together. And now you gone and begged? That seals it. Even if he wanted to let you roam, you beggin' - it's a blot...

JIMMY THE SAINT

He made me beg --

JOE HEFF

C'mon, man. You were locked-down. A guy makes you clean his house, you do it? No. You tell him to fuck hisself and, even if he gets tough, kicks your ass, he still respects your pills.

JIMMY THE SAINT

Whatever --

JOE HEFF
 So just cause Mister Shhh is gone -
 don't mean shit. I hear the Montirez
 Brothers - out of Albuquerque - have
 been called in --

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DENVER CITY LIMITS - DAY

An old Chevy pick-up truck drives along - three Mexican
 BROTHERS inside the cab... Pancho Villa lip pieces, Lee Van
 Cleef sneers, Charlie Manson eyes...

They drive on into the city proper and we

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH

Jimmy and Joe in their booth.

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Maybe I do him --

JOE HEFF
 What?

JIMMY THE SAINT
 Maybe I do The Man. Take his crippled
 ass out --

JOE HEFF
 Listen to you. Rap on the real, junior.
 You ain't no tough guy. Even if you
 were - you can't get to him now. Not
 after his "accident". If he isn't with
 those two jabones, he's got that Irish
 douchebag... The security around the
 place is insane. Forget it...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 I'll do something...

JOE HEFF
 You'll die like a man... That's all you
 can ask for now, Jimmy The Saint...

JIMMY THE SAINT
 You're always talking, Joe. You ever
 hear what you say?

JOE HEFF
 Give it a name...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nobody talks like you anymore, Joe Speakeasy. You're like from another planet... The last hard guy... Go get married or something.. Get a job in a pet store. Learn how to play the clarinet. There's gotta be more to it than sittin' around here crackin' wise and talkin' about the old days. The old days sucked, Joe. They sucked worse than these days. Malt, am I right?

Malt shrugs, making a sundae. Jimmy gets to his feet.

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

The old days sucked, Joe. The new days suck. Way I see it, it all sucks --

JOE HEFF

Now you're sore --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm not sore. I'm gonna die like a man, Joe. Being dead's gotta be a whole lot better than spending the rest of my years eating ice cream and listening to you talk like some kind of fuckin' museum piece -- !

And Jimmy The Saint is out of there.

Joe shrugs, gets up. Slides into the booth, across from the two men we've seen him talking to before.

JOE HEFF

I don't know what he's schemin', old Jimmy The Saint. But he gotta know: the blood runs when the time comes... First rule of The Life... The blood runs when the time comes... Why fight it?

CUT TO:

INT. AFTERLIFE ADVICE - DAY

Cuffy sits with a young MAN, 31, before a VIDEO MONITOR.

On-screen, a rail-thin MAN, also early 30s, in hospital gown and hot, red, K.S. lesions, speaks into the camera.

MAN ON SCREEN

I only want you to be happy. You can't mourn me forever. If you've met someone else - if he truly, dearly makes you
(MORE)

MAN ON SCREEN (cont'd)
 happy - for God's sake, Mark - go for
 it! The last thing I want is for you to
 be miserable. I'm gone. I'm never
 coming back. Not in this beautiful
 body, anyhow. Go to this new guy. Love
 him like you loved me. And, if he loves
 you half as much as I did, then you're
 set... Please. Please, please, please,
 don't feel guilty. Let go. What you do
 now with your life embodies the spirit
 with which I've lived mine. Let go and
 continue. I may be dead, Mark - but
 that doesn't mean you have to be...

The man beside Cuffy - MARK - is weeping. Cuffy, too, is
 filling up.

And, watching from the doorway, Jimmy The Saint is
 stone-faced, impassive. Miserable.

CUT TO:

INT. "SILVER NAKED LADY" - NIGHT

Dagney is with a cluster of her friends...

Jimmy The Saint enters, sees them... For the first time in
 our tale, he looks truly shabby...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Dagney --

DAGNEY

Jimmy -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Which one is Alex -- ?

DAGNEY

Jimmy --

ALEX

I'm Alex --

Jimmy grimaces. The kid is strong and good-looking. He and
 Dagney could have their own talk show...

Jimmy grabs Alex with one hand, Dagney with the other...
 drags them over to a quiet side of the club...

DAGNEY

Jimmy, what are you doing? Are you
 drunk?

JIMMY THE SAINT
No, I'm not drunk. I just came from
somewhere. I got this --

He takes a RING BOX out of his pocket. To Alex:

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)
I don't see the impropriety in this.
Maybe you do. What do you do, Alex?

ALEX
I instruct. With Dagney at Vail --

JIMMY THE SAINT
You got any better prospects than that?
Any future plans?

ALEX
I was hoping to go to law school --

JIMMY THE SAINT
Great... Either way she winds up with a
crook --

DAGNEY
Jimmy, what's going on?

He hands the ring box to Alex.

JIMMY THE SAINT
Here. It's a ring. I bought it. It's
a good one. A little over two carats.
VS1 or something up there. Near
colorless... I want you to give it to
Dagney...

ALEX
You're buying my engagement ring?

JIMMY THE SAINT
Yeah. So?

ALEX
That's a little odd, isn't it?

Beat. Jimmy stares at the kid.

JIMMY THE SAINT
I dunno. Is it? You want it?

DAGNEY
Jimmy --

The two men stare at each other... Perhaps Alex can sense the
desperation in Jimmy's eyes --

DAGNEY (CONT.)

Alex --

-- because, finally, he takes the ring box.

ALEX

Thank you --

Jimmy nods. Alex looks at both of them.

ALEX (CONT.)

If you'll excuse me a moment --

He walks away. Dagney whirls on Jimmy.

DAGNEY

What the hell is going on?

Jimmy takes her hands...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Dagney...

DAGNEY

What are you doing? What are you playing?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Dagney...

DAGNEY

I don't even like you anymore, Jimmy. I don't think I ever did. You kidnapped me. I was talking to my girlfriends, you swept through here, talking the talk, and ever since then I don't know what's what. I don't even know what you do for a living really. Or how old you are. Nothing.

JIMMY THE SAINT

I'm just like everybody else, Dagney. But I need you more than everybody else...

DAGNEY

This thing with the ring --

JIMMY THE SAINT

There are so many guys out there, who'd love the shot to bring you paradise... love to spend the rest of their days with you... show you sunshine and rain... bring you dreams...

DAGNEY

Jimmy -- you're doing the talking thing again --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I can't do it. I want to. I want to so bad. From the center of me, to the center of you. I'm sick, Dagney. I saw the doctor. I'm a sick man.

DAGNEY

Sick how -- ?

JIMMY THE SAINT

They tell me I'm dying. They tell me I gotta give you back to everybody else --

DAGNEY

Jimmy --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I gotta go, Dagney. I gotta run. I can't cry here. Not in The Silver Naked Lady. It would be bad for my reputation. I gotta go.

DAGNEY

Jimmy, wait --

JIMMY THE SAINT

I love you, Dagney. I think I really do. I think - if given possession of your soul - I could have made it smile.

He kisses her... Dagney is crying now...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Be happy --

And he's gone. She watches him go, weeping.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRPLAY LANES - NIGHT

Bernard walks from the bowling alley...

A car pulls up alongside him. Jimmy The Saint.

JIMMY THE SAINT

You need a ride, Bernard?

BERNARD

Jimmy! Ellie was supposed to pick me up but he's late. I can go with you, sure. Serve him right for being tardy. Hee, hee!

Bernard gets into the car. Jimmy drives off...

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jimmy The Saint pulls the car into the scrub lot...

BERNARD

What are we doing here, Jimmy?

JIMMY THE SAINT

Nothin'

Jimmy's eyes are cold. Face set.

BERNARD

Something wrong -- ?

Jimmy shakes his head. Stares out the windshield.

BERNARD (CONT.)

Jimmy -- ?

Jimmy whirls on Bernard, THRUSTING THE KNIFE deep into the younger man's belly...

Bernard howls, as Jimmy slides the blade up his torso, gutting him like a bass...

Bernard stares at Jimmy, helpless, mournful, betrayed...

Jimmy reaches over, opens the passenger door... shoves Bernard out...

Bernard is dead before he hits the dirt...

Jimmy drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Lucinda crossing on the corner. Jimmy pulls up...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Get in --

INT. LUCINDA'S FLOP HOUSE.

Lucinda pays no mind to the blood soaking Jimmy's suit...

She's naked in no time, stripping him down...

Jimmy climbs on top of her... enters...

LUCINDA

It'll be a beautiful baby, Jimmy. Girl
or boy, I'll name it after you --

Tears stream down Jimmy's face... as he thrusts onward...
into the abyss... and we

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. THE CRESTWAY HOME - SAN ANTONIO - DAY

A large manor over ten rolling acres that has been turned
into a hospital...

A CROWD is gathered for a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the
dedication of a new wing...

A MAN is at the mike...

MAN

... and we hereby christen the new
recreation wing after its primary
benefactor, whose loss we mourn, and
whose portrait shall hang in the front
entrance...

And The Man tears the brown paper off a large canvas --

MAN (CONT.)

The Jonathan Schaeffer Rec Room...

And we see the portrait on the canvas. It is Mister Shhh!

And now we see that most of the crowd is made up of CHILDREN.
And most of the children are missing limbs or have one limb
too many; are hunchbacked, Siamese twinned, dwarfed,
beveled, gnarled or elephantine. DEFORMED...

MAN (CONT.)

... if you'll cut the ribbon, Timmy --

And one BOY with three arms lurches toward the dais,
clutching a scissors in one clawed hand --

Timmy cuts the ribbon.

And the twisted multitude cheers and chortles, keens and caws...

ANGLE - THE PORTRAIT. A reticent Mister Shhh. Still the stoic.

And, in PRE-LAP, we hear:

JOE HEFF (O.S.)
... don't believe that shit... nobody
ever carried a gat in an instrument
case... That's Hollywood... You didn't
need to hide it! In them days, you
carried it proud... What were they gonna
do? Arrest you!

CUT TO:

INT. THICK 'N RICH - DAY

Joe Heff sits before two NEW MEN... He's replaced his old audience...

JOE HEFF (CONT.)
... this is how we shake hands... we
press palms up flat like this...

He demonstrates with one of the men...

JOE HEFF (CONT.)
You know why? On account of - when we
were locked-down - in the visitor's room
there was that clear plastic divider
that separated you from your visitor...
That's how you touched 'em hello and
goodbye... Pressed palms... See that?
It's nice, no?

Malt comes by with a dish of coffee ice cream... He scowls at Joe's verbosity and walks away...

JOE HEFF (CONT.)
I ever tell you guys about Jimmy "The
Saint" Tosnia? From Flatbush? In his
day, the bitch's bastard...

CUT TO:

A SILVERY CORAL ISLET

golden bars of sand, mangrove trees. The sky and the water
in contest for which is more turquoise.

EXT. FLORIDA KEYS - DAY

A 60-foot CABIN CRUISER lolls peacefully in the water... the warm Gulf Stream breeze tickling its flags...

Jimmy The Saint reclines on the deck... basking in the sun...

The sounds of a BLENDER whirring, makes him open his eyes...

And there's Franchise, dropping pineapple and banana into the blender... and adding plenty of Myers Rum...

Pieces and Easy Wind play checkers nearby...

Everyone is tan... healthy... their Hawaiian print shirts waffle in the wind... Francis Albert croons on the stereo...

Critical Bill fishes over one side... His pit bull, Nigger Knocker, barks at his heels...

FRANCHISE

We got boat drinks -- !

And Franchise serves them all, in long, tall, dewy glasses, replete with little umbrellas...

They raise their drinks...

JIMMY THE SAINT

Give it a name --

And they take big sips... But then Nigger Knocker's barking is becoming more intense... And it's because Critical Bill has hooked a big one. A monster...

And as they all run over to help him reel it in, their laughter rising high and joyful, we PULL OUT, taking a wider view, taking it all in, when suddenly, in desultory PRE-LAP, we hear:

JIMMY THE SAINT (O.S.)

... and most of all, you gotta remember, it's not a perfect world. It's harder than Chinese math... But, as cold as it seems, you gotta have a little faith...

CUT TO:

A TALKING HEAD

This time the talking head is Jimmy The Saint. He looks pale, ashen... Speaking into Cuffy's camera...

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

Have a list. Come up with a list of
(MORE)

JIMMY THE SAINT (CONT.)

what's important to you... The ten things most important to you... No one satisfies all ten. It's impossible. If you can satisfy five or six... You're near there. You're on your way. To your perfect world. You were on my list. You were number two with a bullet. I never realized it. It took a lot of things to happen for me to realize it. Now, I do. My doin' this... It's given me a perfect world. I thank you for that, kid. Really. I do. Remember. I love you. I'll always love you...

Beat. Jimmy stares into the camera. Sighs...

And, somewhat incongruously, Jimmy Buffett's jaunty "BOAT DRINKS" sounds up on track...

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

MUSIC CONTINUES. Boris Carlott oversees Bernard's funeral. The procession makes its way to the grave site.

The Man With The Plan puffs along... Hathaway... Gus & Ellie... Joe Heff... Malt... all in attendance... Father Pooch presides...

It is a very somber affair indeed... though the MUSIC would seem to tell us otherwise...

EXT. STREET CORNER

CONTINUE MUSIC. Lucinda walks along... A car pulls up alongside her... propositioning... She flips the guy off...

Lucinda's packin' life - she don't play that shit no more...

EXT. HIGHWAY - MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - MOVING

CONTINUE MUSIC. Dagney and Alex. Dagney's diamond winking in the sun. Heading back to Vail. For another season...

Because, after all, if you truly want to be happy, there's one thing you have to do:

Get out of Denver...