

"MIDNIGHT COWBOY"

by

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Based on a novel by

James Leo Herlihy

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FADE IN:

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

A Susskind-type MODERATOR is speaking into camera:

MODERATOR

Tonight we'll discuss a subject most of us seem to consider either bad taste or frivolous or funny. But if our experts are right, we face what might be called a masculinity crisis. Every fourth American man uptight, threatened by the increasing sexual demands of American women...

EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW - DAY

An IRATE WOMAN speaks into camera:

IRATE WOMAN

They always put it that way, but well, all it means, you know, is every fourth American woman's never satisfied. That's it. I never am -- have been, you know...

EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW - DAY

A COOL WOMAN speaks into camera:

COOL WOMAN

This, this image of the, the man eating woman. It isn't our increasing demands. I think it's the shrinking American male...

EXT. SIDEWALK INTERVIEW - DAY

A SAD WOMAN speaks into camera:

SAD WOMAN

No, I never had, well, whatever it is you call it. But the hours he works, I can't blame him...

INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY (TEXAS) - DAY

wife, Full frame -- a scandal sheet picture of a sex-starved  
naked while her husband sleeps, captioned I BUY WHAT MY  
HUSBAND CAN'T GIVE.

SAD WOMAN'S VOICE  
...but it's a problem. A big problem.  
With so many women I know...

pinups of Camera pulls back to show the picture among other  
steam women -- rich, beautiful or naked, but all blonde --  
grins wilted on the wall over a dishwashing machine. JOE BUCK  
at the wall as he scrapes garbage.

JOE  
Just keep your pants on, ladies...

MULTIPLE SPLIT SCREEN

women... A LADY COMMENTATOR, gradually surrounded by lonely

BEAUTY PARLOR  
FASHION SHOW  
PSYCHIATRIST'S COUCH  
COCKTAIL BAR  
GYMNASIUM  
STATUE OF LIBERTY

LADY COMMENTATOR  
Before World War One -- American men  
outnumbered women by over six percent.  
Today American women not only  
outnumber men, but live five years  
longer -- leaving them in control of  
vast corporate wealth and seventy-  
five percent of America's purchasing  
power...

dishes, The Lady Commentator is replaced by Joe, stacking  
surrounded by frustrated ladies. He laughs tolerantly.

JOE  
Y'all, line up and take your turn...

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The Moderator smiles into camera.

MODERATOR  
My question is this -- will American  
know-how come up with a marketable  
male to replace all the men who are  
worrying themselves into an early  
grave over women's increasing sexual  
demands?

INT. STALL SHOWER - DAY

along  
home!"  
Joe sings as he soaps himself, "Whoopee ti yi yo, git  
little dogies, for you know New York will be your new

Sound and image freeze on Joe's open mouth.

SUPERIMPOSED MAIN TITLE AND CREDITS

after  
each credit.  
TITLES follow as indicated, sound and action continuing

INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA - DAY

up.  
Joe's song continues over a sweating WAITRESS, glancing

WAITRESS

Where's that Joe Buck?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

mirror,  
playful  
as  
Wrapped in a towel, singing in front of his dresser  
Joe sprays himself with deodorant, aiming a last  
blast at the unseen crotch -- freezing song and image  
CREDITS continue over...

frozen  
as...  
...a calendar girl on the wall blushing orange, mouth  
in a tiny O, staring wide-eyed. Joe's song continues

on  
his head, freezing song and image as CREDITS continue.  
...Joe rips the wrapping from a new Stetson and sets it

INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY - DAY

dishes.  
RALPH, an aging black man, faces a mountain of dirty

RALPH

Where's that Joe Buck?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

interrupts  
himself to answer Ralph...  
Singing as he buttons his new cowboy shirt, Joe

JOE

Yeah, where's that Joe Buck?

tight  
...continuing his song as he pulls up and zips his

CREDITS. thighed black slacks, freezing song and image for

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY PARLOR - ANOTHER TIME

SALLY BUCK, a pretty middle-aged blonde, smiles down at camera,

SALLY BUCK  
You look real nice, Joe baby...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

arranging his  
freezing  
Joe sings as he pulls on his new cowboy boots,  
cuffs to show off the yellow sunburst at the ankle,  
song and image for CREDITS.

INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA - DAY

The pink MANAGER scowls at his pocket watch.

MANAGER  
Where's that Joe Buck?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

clothes,  
black  
Joe hums as he piles a complete wardrobe of cowboy  
still in their wrappers, into a shiny new suitcase of  
and white horsehide.

JOE  
Yeah, where's that Joe Buck?

INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA - DAY

Holding his watch, the Manager wags a finger at camera.

MANAGER  
You're due here at four o'clock.  
Look at those dishes, look!

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Joe laughs as he locks his suitcase.

JOE  
Know what you can do with those  
dishes? And if you ain't man enough  
to do it yourself, I'd be happy to  
oblige...

walks  
his  
strike  
Joe picks up his suitcase, a portable transistor radio,  
away from the mirror, then pauses to run a comb through  
hair, hook a cigarette at the corner of his mouth and

admiring  
ready --

a match on his thumbnail before he turns back for one  
glance at himself in the mirror -- proud, exultant,  
freezing the image as CREDITS END.

EXT. TEXAS TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Joe leaves the hotel, carrying his suitcase.

INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY - DAY

The pink Manager points at his watch angrily.

MANAGER

Four to midnight, understand?

radio.  
Angle widens to include Joe, holding his suitcase and

Ralph stares at him curiously, stacking dishes.

JOE

Say, look, uh, I gotta have a word  
with you, if you got a second.

MANAGER

Later. Later maybe.

The Manager hurries away, carrying a basket of dishes.

RALPH

You ain't coming to work?

JOE

Don't guess. Just come for my day's  
pay owing and to tell you I'm heading  
East.

door...  
Joe tilts his Stetson as the Waitress appears at the

WAITRESS

Cups!

offers his  
...but she disappears without noticing Joe. Ralph  
hand. Joe takes it, holds it.

RALPH

What you gonna do back there, East?

JOE

Lotta rich women back there...

RALPH

Yeah?

JOE

Men, they mostly faggots.

RALPH

Must be some mess back there.

JOE

Well, ain't no use hanging around here.

RALPH

Ain't gonna collect your pay?

JOE

I got me two hundred twenty-four bucks of flat folding money...

(slaps hip)

He know what he can do with that chicken-shit day's pay. And if he ain't man enough to do it for himself, I be happy to oblige!

INT. SUNSHINE CAFETERIA - DAY

appears,  
employees  
the  
on  
soaked  
table  
suggestive  
glasses.

The door marked EMPLOYEES ONLY swings open and Joe measuring his effect on the customers and his fellow as he crosses the sterile white dining room, observing drab details of the life he has left behind - garbage greasy dishes, limp food in steam table trays, coffee-cigarette butts, caked mustard and ketchup on formica tops -- two pimply high school girls slurping noises after Joe through the straws of empty coke

valley  
and  
sunshine..."

O.S. a Tiomkin-tradition chorus sings, "From this they say you are going -- we will miss your bright eyes sweet smile for they say you are taking the

EXT. TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

The song ends as Joe comes from the cafeteria "... that brightened our pathway a while."

JOE

Tough tiddy, ladies, you had your chance.

the bus  
struggling to  
loud  
prices

From a high angle -- Joe starts his long walk toward depot along the street of a small Western town urbanize itself. The click-clack-click of his boots is but somehow lonely The radio at his ear drones grain

passes...

on the Commodity change. Joe's pace slows as he

the  
deserted.  
incomplete  
giggling  
operators,  
Sally  
Grammaw

EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY

...a gilt-lettered sign in the window, glittering in  
sun, momentarily hiding the fact that the shop is  
Joe grins as he hears remembered sounds and voices  
flashes, more significant in tone than content a girl  
sexily -- "Keep your meat hooks off my beauty  
sugar" -- tinkling noises of a busy beauty parlor -  
Buck singing "Hush, little baby, don't say a word,  
gonna buy you a mockingbird..."

driers, a  
toward

...a shift of light revealing a row of tarnished  
broken mirror, a FOR RENT sign in the window. Joe turns  
the bus depot, radio pressed to his ear.

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

Benson and Hedges One Hundreds makes  
special awards from time to time for  
anything that's longer than  
anything...

JOE

Care to get out your yardstick,  
gentlemen?

At the same moment, a recognizable variant of the "Big  
Country" theme blares loud.

INTERCUT WESTERN FILM CLIP

Gary Cooper (or John Wayne) walks a frontier street.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - DAY

bus

High angle of the departing bus, intercut "Big Country"  
fashion, alternating high shots with close-ups of the  
wheels.

EXT. FREEWAY CLOVERLEAF - DAY

traffic  
onto

Through the bus windshield -- a dizzying montage of  
lines, arrows and signs as the bus sweeps around and up  
the freeway.

INT. BUS - DAY

his gum  
promising  
the  
listens to  
head.

Joe sits at the front, opposite the driver, cracking  
as he watches the huge billboards streaking by,  
him power, happiness and beautiful women if he chooses  
right breakfast food, hair oil or automobile. Joe  
the humming tires, the roar of the engine, shaking his

JOE

This is a powerful mothah, ain't it?

empty  
he's  
in  
him --  
PALE  
weakly.

Ignored by the driver, Joe rises and walks back to his  
double seat, glancing around to see what impression  
made on his immediate fellow travelers -- an OLD LADY  
front of him -- a hostile young sailor with acne behind  
two teeny-boppers flirting with Joe hysterically -- a  
BLONDE directly across the aisle, smiling at Joe

PALE BLONDE

Do you have a stick of gum?

stick.

Joe leans across, snapping his gum as he offers her a  
He watches her nibble it daintily on her front teeth.

PALE BLONDE

Thank you.

JOE

Plenty more where that came from.

PALE BLONDE

Thank you, no, it's just till the  
Dramamine works. I get carsick.

JOE

I only get carsick on boats.

(waits, then)

But seems to me that's more the fish  
smell than the bouncing...

depressed, he  
radio,  
he  
black  
of

Joe realizes that her eyes are closed. Mildly  
stretches himself across both seats and turns on his  
finds only static and snaps it off. Further depressed,  
examines his reflection in the bus window, squeezes a  
head and runs the comb through his hair, picks a piece



the  
burnt-out  
solitary  
at  
leading  
that

tobacco off his tooth and lights a cigarette, watching  
flame die in reflection, forgetting to discard the  
match as he stares out at a vast lonely prairie, a  
cowboy in the distance, a row of sharecropper shacks  
apparently deserted, a barefoot little girl motionless  
the roadside, watching the bus pass. Through this,  
into the next scene, Sally Buck sings softly "... if  
mocking bird don't sing, Grammam gonna buy you a golden  
ring..."

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON - ANOTHER TIME

closed  
"...if  
looking

Sally Buck, relaxing in the middle of a busy day, eyes  
wearily, while little Joe massages her neck. Her song  
continues over the noises of the busy beauty parlor  
that golden ring turns brass, Grammam gonna buy you a  
glass..."

SALLY BUCK

No, a little lower, sugar, yeah,  
yeah, that's good. Grammam's beat.

SALESMAN'S VOICE

You gotta sell yourself, that's the  
whole trick...

INT. BUS - DAY

and a  
he  
in a

A seedy TRAVELING SALESMAN with badly-fitted dentures  
frayed collar has taken the aisle seat next to Joe. As  
lectures Joe on salesmanship, he figures his expenses  
worn leatherette notebook, nervous fingers and eyes  
unconsciously revealing the extent of his failure.

SALESMAN

It ain't the product and it ain't  
the price, no sir, and it ain't what  
you sell, it's personality, pure and  
simple. I ain't shined my own shoes  
or shaved my own face in forty years,  
how's that? Not bad for a kid that  
didn't pass the eighth grade, right?

JOE

Yeah, hell, yeah.

SALESMAN

And that's my golden rule. Make 'em  
love you. Put yourself over and you

can sell them anything. If they like you, they'll buy horsemeat for prime beef...

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON - ANOTHER TIME

leafing  
of a  
A gawky, adolescent Joe sits sprawled on the couch, through a magazine while Sally Buck bleaches the roots of a young woman's hair.

SALLY BUCK

You get him to the church, honey. He ain't gonna find out you ain't a real blonde till after you're married, then's too late.

Sally Buck turns, pretending to be stern as Joe laughs.

SALLY BUCK

You getting too big for your britches, sugar.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

painted on  
The headlights of the bus flash past a huge sign, the slant roof of a barn: JESUS SAVES.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

bus is  
light  
ahead  
to  
the  
Joe is alone again. The Salesman has disappeared. The dark, most-passengers trying to sleep. Only one reading light still burns, over the head of the old-Lady in the seat of Joe. Joe squirms, restless, trying to lull himself to sleep with the music of a revivalist gospel group on radio.

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE

Don't forget to say your prayers, honey...

struggling  
leans  
her  
light.  
Joe leans forward to help the old Lady, irritably with the release button on her seat. She scowls as Joe over to release her seat, then pulls her blanket around and turns away from him. Joe switches off her reading light.

OLD LADY

I want it on.

settles  
opposite  
appraising  
Joe  
way to

Joe switches it on again, fakes a good-natured grin, back with his radio, aware of an OLD COWHAND seated him, replacing the Pale Blonde. The Old Cowhand is Joe's wardrobe curiously. He looks away when he sees watching him. Joe settles back, unable to think of a open a conversation.

EVANGELIST'S VOICE

Oh, my friends, I say unto you, invest with Jesus, put your dollars to work where they'll pay off at compound interest. The Good Book says money answereth all things...

quickly  
aisle.

The Old Cowhand has rolled-himself a cigarette. Joe lights a match on his thumb and holds it across the

JOE

Light?

as  
watery

The Old Cowhand's "thanks" is lost in a fit of coughing he inhales his first drag. He settles back, wiping his eyes on a faded bandanna.

EVANGELIST'S VOICE

...everyone who sends a dollar to the Evangelical Congregation of the Air will get free gratis a genuine leatherette hymn book so you can sing along with Sister Rosella and the Evangelical Choir...

JOE

You throw in Sister Rosella and you got a deal, right, old timer?

faint,

Joe glances across the aisle. The Old Cowhand manages a humorless smile.

JOE

Going far?

OLD COWHAND

Up the line. Not far.

JOE

I'm bound for New York City.

The Old Cowhand reappraises Joe's wardrobe even more curiously.

JOE

Ever happen to come across a cowman  
name of Woodsy Niles? Friend of my  
grammaw Sally Buck...

back,  
The Old Cowhand considers, shakes his head. Joe leans  
laughing to himself.

INT. REMEMBERED BEDROOM - ANOTHER TIME

similar  
on  
black  
himself  
Little Joe's head is lost in a beat-up cowboy hat,  
to the one worn by the old Cowhand. Sally Buck smiles  
WOODSY NILES -- a long-legged cowboy with a shock of  
hair -- who stands at her dressing table, admiring  
in a new Stetson.

SALLY BUCK

Like it, honey? Does it fit?

WOODSY

You do me good, Sal, you do me real  
good. You know what I gonna give you  
for that Stetson?

carrying  
Woodsy grabs Sally Buck, lifting her off her feet,  
her to the bed. Struggling, they fall across the covers  
together, Little Joe laughing with them.

SALLY BUCK

Woodsy Niles! The boy!

WOODSY

He don't know what makes little apples  
by now, it's time he found out.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

a  
Joe shakes his head, grinning, offering the old Cowhand  
cigarette.

JOE

Smoke?

cigarette  
The old Cowhand shakes his head, showing the rolled  
Joe lit for him. Joe nods, still bemused.

INT. REMEMBERED BEDROOM - ANOTHER TIME

covers,  
except  
Little Joe is cuddled in Sally Buck's arms, under the  
watching Woodsy, sitting cross-legged on the bed, naked  
for his Stetson and guitar, singing drunkenly.

WOODSY  
...git along little dogies!

EXT. MIDWEST TOWN - MORNING

From a high angle -- the bus slows to a stop.

INT. BUS - MORNING

lifting a  
starting  
Joe awakens, stiff-necked, momentarily confused. He  
straightens in his seat as he sees the old Cowhand  
sweat-stained saddle down from the overhead rack,  
toward the front of the bus. Joe calls after him.

JOE  
Nice talking to you, old timer.

at the  
Joe stuffs a stick of gum in his mouth, turns to wave  
Old Cowhand through the window as the bus pulls away.

WOODSY'S VOICE  
She-dogs squat, boy. He-dogs stand  
up and lift their leg...

INT. REMEMBERED MEN'S ROOM - ANOTHER TIME

beat-  
lifted  
Woodsy, in his new Stetson, watches Little Joe in his  
up cowboy hat, trying to balance on one foot, one leg  
in front of the trough. Woodsy roars with laughter.

WOODSY  
...but he-men stand and shoot from  
the hip.

INT. BUS RESTROOM - DAY

Joe laughs, flushes, checks his hair in the mirror.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

NEW  
HOTEL!  
The bus streaks past a brightly-colored billboard -- IN  
YORK, A WELCOME AWAITS YOU AT THE TIMES SQUARE PALACE

INT. BUS - DAY

young  
and  
Halls  
the  
Joe is now sitting in the wide rear seat, between two  
MARINES and a group of VETERANS wearing campaign caps  
convention buttons, passing a bottle, singing "From the  
of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli..." Joe follows

participating conversation between a VETERAN and a MARINE,  
remembered only because he's sitting beside them, adopting a  
military stance.

VETERAN

Ever stationed at Kennedy? Those  
Florida chicks...

MARINE

Instant V-goddam-D.

VETERAN

This Pensacola teeny-bopper -- jail  
bait -- but built? Ten bucks she  
wanted. Three of us made a deal for,  
twenty-five, see, big goddam bargain?

MARINE

Big peni-goddam-cillin bargain, right?

VETERAN

You got it.

MARINE

No. You got it.

JOE

Jesus goddam Christ, I ain't laughed  
so hard since I was out at Fort  
Benning, Georgia.

MARINE

Did you make the Viet?

JOE

What? Oh, hell no. Motor pool  
mostly...  
(shakes his head)  
Kee-rist...

INT. REMEMBERED WHOREHOUSE - ANOTHER TIME

A plump, aging PROSTITUTE laughs up into camera.

PROSTITUTE

Hey, hey, what you try to do to me?  
You gonna cost me money, soldier!

INT. BUS - DAY

along Joe laughs as he passes the bottle, trying to sing  
"Over without knowing the words as the Veterans segue into  
caissons hill, over dale, we will hit the dusty trail, as the  
go rolling along..."

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON - ANOTHER TIME

Sally Buck fondly wipes lipstick from Joe's lips.

SALLY BUCK

Keep your meat hooks off my operators,  
sugar, hear?

INT. BUS - DAY

follow

Joe slaps one of the Veterans on the back, trying to  
the song into "Off we go, into the wild blue yonder..."

INT. REMEMBERED MOVIE HOUSE - ANOTHER TIME

ANASTASIA clutches a younger Joe, eyes wild, gasping.

ANASTASIA

You're the only one, Joe, the only,  
only one ever!

INT. BUS - DAY

the  
boys,

Joe is leaning across the two Marines, staring out of  
window as the Veterans switch to "Anchors aweigh, my  
anchors aweigh..."

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAY

reflection.

A stunning view through the bus window past Joe's

JOE'S REFLECTION

Gonna swing my lasso and rope that  
whole goddam island, yeah!

EXT. BROADWAY PARADE - DAY

confetti --

Drum majorettes leading the parade -- ticker tape and  
girls at skyscraper windows.

INTERCUT NEWSREEL CLIP

crowd.

Charles Lindberg (or James Stewart) waving at the

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - DAY

ship

Girls lining the piers -- flags, banners, bunting --  
horns, whistles, bells.

INT. BUS - DAY

lifting

Joe crowded as the veterans prepare to leave the bus,  
down banners and flags.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEEL - DAY

horns

The bus suddenly surrounded by converging traffic,  
honking, segueing into the noises of Times Square.

EXT. MARQUEE - DAY

Flag draped, reading: WELCOME VETERANS.

EXT. STREET - BANNER - DAY

Flapping in the wind -- WELCOME VETERANS!

EXT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE HOTEL - DAY

singing

The marquee announces TRANSIENTS WELCOME. O.S. a  
radio station break blares "W-I-N-S NEW YORK..."

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DAY

torchy

introducing

The sign flashes WINS "...ten-ten on your dial!" A  
woman's voice sings from a lonely echo chamber --  
a love theme which will haunt Joe throughout the film.

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

bed,

his

television

Joe sets his radio on the dresser, his suitcase on the  
then turns to examine his new home -- as anonymous as  
Texas hotel room -- but boasting a coin-operated  
set. Fascinated, Joe inserts a quarter.

against

really

their

them

children

...the love song continues over a television talk Show  
featuring a POODLE WIGMAKER defending his profession  
a Joe Pyne-type PANEL HOST, "...well, I perform a real  
service, there's a need, so many people, you know,  
live in their pets, I mean, lonely, I grant you, but  
feeling is real. They want to lavish as much love, give  
as much, yes, pamper them like they were really human  
or whatever..."

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE

There's a TV dinner in the fridge,  
lover boy...

INT. REMEMBERED PARLOR - ANOTHER TIME

Sally

Little Joe stares sullenly at an antique TV box while



a  
Buck puts her hat on at the fireplace mirror. There is  
framed picture of Woodsy Niles on the mantle.

SALLY BUCK

You be okay, won't you? Maybe I bring  
you a treat if you're a good boy...

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

fella, a  
Joe watches the Panel Host, "... you're a nut case,  
real nut case..."

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON - ANOTHER TIME

the  
Little Joe massaging Sally Buck's neck -- continuing  
earlier scene.

SALLY BUCK

I'm so beat, no point you waiting  
round, toots, think I'll stop in for  
a beer or two...

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

primp.  
Joe sits on the edge of the bed, watching the poodles

INT. REMEMBERED PARLOR - ANOTHER TIME

Buck  
Little Joe stares unblinking at the TV screen as Sally  
kisses him on the forehead, dressed for the street.

SALLY BUCK

Expect me when you see me. Looks  
like I got me a new beau, lover boy,  
how's that for an old grammaw? I'll  
leave you movie money...

of  
Sally Buck tucks a dollar bill under a framed picture  
Jesus, who has replaced Woodsy Niles on the mantle.

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

spray  
the  
cut  
rises,  
voice  
Morgan  
As a fairy godmother's magic wand removes sticky hair  
from a pretty model's head, Joe's quarter runs out and  
screen goes blank. At the same moment, the love song is  
off by a singing station break "W-I-N-S NEW YORK" Joe  
flipping the dial of the radio to a cultured woman's  
reading "...the Dow Jones averages, brought you by  
Vandercook. Up your income with sound investment

counseling..."

JOE

Up yours, lady.

sound  
himself  
the  
up  
turns

...but Joe leaves the lady on, savoring the expensive of her voice reading the stock quotations. Joe seats at the desk, pleased to find a postcard photograph of hotel. He picks up a ballpoint pen, counts ten floors from the street and marks a huge X -- THIS IS ME, then the card over, pen poised over the address blank.

INT. CAFETERIA SCULLERY - DAY

Ralph stares at the card, surrounded by dirty dishes.

RALPH

Hell, he know I can't read...

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

Joe's pen wavers, starts to write and stops.

EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

window.  
in his

As we saw it last, deserted, a FOR RENT sign in the Joe's reflection appears, staring at himself, dressed dishwasher's clothes.

JOE'S VOICE

After all them dishes are washed,  
what?

JOE'S REFLECTION

Then they bring some more dishes and  
I wash them and then I, uh, sleep  
some and then wash some more dishes  
and then I...

JOE'S VOICE

Say it, lover boy!

JOE'S REFLECTION

Die.

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

Joe stares at the postcard, bemused,

JOE'S VOICE

Well, you better just shake your  
tail, lover boy, and root, hog or  
die.

out  
Joe rises abruptly, rips up the postcard and tosses it  
the window.

JOE  
Goddam if I came to this town to  
write postcards.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

glancing  
The torn fragments flutter down on the crowd -- a woman  
brushing irritably at her hair -- a man grimacing,  
up -- a cop removing his hat to examine it.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE HOTEL - DAY

photograph --  
zooms  
From a low angle -- identical with the postcard  
an unseen hand scrawls a huge X--- THIS IS ME. Camera  
up to a close-up of Joe at the window.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

the  
shoppers...  
From on high -- as though Joe were watching himself --  
Stetson moves through a crowd of Fifth Avenue

EXT. GLASS BUILDING - DAY

...passing a glass bank, lady tellers counting money...

EXT. CAR SHOWROOM - DAY

...passing a display of imported luxury cars...

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

pausing  
sports car  
at  
then  
...passing a window which features a single gem --  
as horns blast O.S. and a mod blonde in a stalled  
motions to Joe -- she needs a push. Joe grins, glances  
himself in the window, runs a comb through his hair,  
turns back to see a cop helping the mod blonde.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

Joe's  
siren, a  
he  
heavy  
Joe's heels drag as he walks a deserted block of luxury  
apartment houses. O.S. The torchy woman's voice sings  
love theme in counterpoint to the blasting horns, a  
fire bell, a screech of brakes. Joe's spirits rise as  
hears the tic-tac-tic of high heels overtaking the

arrive  
Joe's  
click-clack-click of his boots. He adjusts his pace to  
at the corner at the same time as a smart and -- in  
eyes -- very RICH LADY. Joe grins boyishly, holding his  
Stetson over his heart.

JOE  
Beg pardon, ma'am, I'm new here in  
town, just in from Houston, Texas,  
and looking for the Statue of Liberty.

follows  
she  
The delicate profile gives no signs of hearing. Joe  
her to the parkway in the middle of the avenue. There  
stops and turns, neither friendly nor hostile.

RICH LADY  
Were you looking? About the Statue  
of Liberty?

JOE  
Joking? No, ma'am. Oh no! I mean  
business!

RICH LADY  
I'm sorry. I thought you were --  
never mind -- I've never actually  
been there, but let me see, you take  
the Seventh Avenue subway, I think,  
to the end of the line...

JOE  
You sure are a pretty lady.

The Rich Lady tries to frown, taken aback, blushing.

RICH LADY  
You're not looking for the Statue of  
Liberty at all.

JOE  
No, ma'am, I'm not.

RICH LADY  
Why, that's perfectly dreadful. Aren't  
you ashamed of yourself?

lines at  
just  
by  
A twinkle of amusement and sympathy reveals the age  
the corner of her eyes. Then she continues on quickly,  
as the light turns. Joe's view is blocked for a moment  
traffic, then he sees...

climbs  
Still  
...the Rich Lady, newly aware of her flanks as she  
the steps of a brownstone and searches for her key.

and  
swells  
closes

from Joe's viewpoint, he sees himself move into frame  
follow the Rich Lady up the steps. The love theme  
O.S. as the Rich Lady leads him into the house and  
the door...

...leaving Joe standing alone on the parkway island,  
surrounded by towering wealth. The love theme continues  
over...

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - DAY

miniature  
boots

...a pair of high-heeled pink slippers, walking a  
poodle -- slowing slightly, reacting to Joe's cowboy  
as they pass, pause and turn back.

CASS'S VOICE

Hurry up, Baby. Do um goody-goods  
for Mama.

approaches  
with the

Joe grins, holding his hat over his heart as he  
CASS TREHUNE, a blonde lady in a tight black dress,  
look of a movie star who wrecked her career with food.

JOE

Beg pardon, ma'am. I'm brand spanking  
new to this town, come from Houston,  
Texas, and hoping to get a look at  
the Statue of Liberty...

CASS

You're hoping to get a look at what?

JOE

The Statue of Liberty.

CASS

It's up in Central Park, taking a  
leak. If you hurry, you'll make the  
supper show. Now get lost.

her

But as she turns, Cass winks, dimpling the corners of  
mouth, signaling Joe to follow her.

INT. APARTMENT HOUSE ELEVATOR - DAY

elevator,  
kllooosh

Cass holds the DOOR OPEN button till Joe enters the  
then the doors close with a soft expensive little  
and Cass turns with the smile of a very tiny girl...

CASS

Hi.

at  
dollar  
pinball

...her lips closing on Joe's as the poodle yaps shrilly  
their feet. Superimposed, almost subliminally, a golden  
sign appears, halating like a star, and the bell of a  
machine rings O.S.

INT. CASS'S APARTMENT - DAY

desk.

A princess telephone is ringing on a gold and white  
Cass runs to grab it...

CASS

Hello?

onto  
finger  
while

...as Joe steps from the elevator, which opens directly  
Cass's penthouse. Cass beckons him toward her, hooks a  
into his neckerchief and pulls his mouth toward hers  
she talks on the phone.

CASS

Morey? Hi-ee, honey...

garrison

Cass gurgles happily as her free hand unbuckles Joe's  
belt.

CASS

I'm just out of breath, honey, running  
to catch the phone.

As her fingers reach for Joe's zipper, cut to...

...Joe's hand unzipping her dress.

CASS

I was walking Baby. Him got to do  
him goody-goods, right?

steers

The poodle tugs at Joe's slacks until they fall. Cass  
her ear to Joe's mouth, shuddering deliciously.

CASS

Oh God, oh stop. I can't stand that.  
I just die...

(quickly into phone)

It's Baby, Morey. Him trying to say  
hello. Say hello to Morey, Baby.

twisting  
passing

Cass holds the phone toward the yapping poodle,  
herself against Joe as she wriggles out of her dress,  
the phone from one hand to the other.

CASS

Okay, old goosie? Now lookie, when do you want me to meet you? Whatever you say. I'll take a nap, watch TV, you know, kill time. Okay, but just one, a big wet one.

disentangling  
glances  
Cass hangs up. The poodle yaps hysterically, himself from her tumbling dress -- hops onto the couch off and flees again as an overturned lamp crashes O.S.

INT. CASS'S BEDROOM - DAY

enough to  
and  
The poodle bounces onto the bed -- remaining long establish a TV REMOTE CONTROL TUNER lying on the satin coverlet -- then leaps down in panic as he hears Joe

full  
Cass explode into the bedroom, laughing lustily...  
...the remote control tuner buried suddenly under the flesh of Cass's hip, activating...

full  
...a twenty-five-inch television screen, blasting at volume...  
...Cass's eyes widening, profoundly impressed...

CASS

Ye gods...

clicking  
...the images and sound of the television set flicking joyfully from channel to channel...  
...Joe laughing, engulfed by Cass's abundance...  
...Cass wild-eyed, overflowing the frame...  
...a gleaming slot machine -- three Sahara cowgirls into line for jackpot -- silver dollars overflowing the frame...

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAY

...the Mutual of New York tower flashes MONY!

JOE'S VOICE

Holy shee-it, this is a goddam penthouse you got here, Cass, a real goddam penthouse.

INT. CASS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Joe turns away from a small terrace, buckling his belt, glancing off toward the sound of Cass in the shower. He

ignoring  
pretty  
animated  
flicking  
perfume

flicks the TV remote control, enjoying his power,  
the silent images on the screen -- battle casualties, a  
girl recommending aspirin, a man's stomach flashing  
pain, starving war refugees, a dog eating pazz --  
it off to concentrate on the costume jewelry and  
bottles on Cass's dressing table.

CASS'S VOICE

Don't look, baby...

holding a

Joe turns to look as Cass comes from the bathroom,  
towel around her as she runs behind the closet door.

JOE

Say, Cass, I, uh, sure have enjoyed  
being here. Believe it's as fine a  
time as I've had in my life!

CASS'S VOICE

Me, too, lover.

JOE

That's good, it is, cause, well I  
guess I didn't tell you why I came  
to New York, did I?

door.

A tower of black bugle beads emerges from the closet

CASS

Zip this thing, will you, Tex?

where

Joe zips her dress, follows her to the dressing table,  
she sprays her hair with lacquer.

JOE

Truth is, Cass, I'm, well, I'm in  
business.

CASS

Oh, poor you. Morey's got terrible  
ulcers.

smears

Cass stretches her upper lip across her teeth and she  
it with, orange lipstick.

JOE

Don't know what line Morey's in, but  
myself now, fact is -- I'm a hustler.

CASS

(lips stretched)



Hers'n zodda meg a livig.

JOE  
Beg pardon, ma'am?

CASS  
Said, a person's gotta make a living.

JOE  
You sure you heard what I said?

CASS  
Scuse me, hon, fraid I'm only half  
here. Maybe you oughta run on along.  
But why don't you take this phone  
number?

and  
empty.  
Joe grins, relieved as she takes out a gold lame purse  
opens it. He frowns as she folds; it upside down,

CASS  
Darn! I didn't get to the bank --  
Tex -- could you let me have a little  
coin for the taxi-waxi?

seductively.  
Joe stands mute as she cups his chin in her hand,

CASS  
You're such a doll. I hate money,  
don't you? God, it's been fun.

JOE  
Funny thing, you mentioning money. I  
was just about to ask you for some...

speaks --  
an impassioned whisper -- still holding Joe's chin.  
Joe tries to laugh but it sticks in his throat as Cass

CASS  
You bastard! You son of a bitch! You  
think you're dealing with some old  
slut? Look at me! You think just  
cause you're a longhorn bull you can  
get away with this crap? Well, you're  
out of your mind. I am a gorgeous  
chick, thirty-one, that's right, you  
said it!

stands  
bewildered by the vastness of her grief.  
Sobbing suddenly, she throws herself on the bed. Joe

JOE  
Hey. Hey, Cass. Did you think I meant  
that? Christ, would I be asking you  
for money with a wad like that riding  
on my hip?

He  
wailing.

Joe waves his wallet at her, but she only cries louder.  
hands her a kleenex. She clutches it to her face,  
Joe leans over the bed, whispering in her ear:

JOE

Hey. You are a gorgeous-looking piece,  
Cass. Guy gets horny, just looking  
at you. It's a fact. How much you  
need for that taxi? Ten? Twenty?  
There you go.

his  
after  
are  
smile..."

Joe tucks a twenty-dollar bill into her bosom, tilts  
Stetson and starts out. Cass blows her nose, looking  
him. O.S. chorus sings, "From this valley they say you  
going -- we will miss your bright eyes and sweet

EXT. LEXINGTON AVENUE - DAY

house,

From a high angle, Joe walks away from the apartment  
chorus continuing O.S. "... they say you are taking the  
sunshine that brightened our pathway a while."

INT. EVERETT'S BAR - DAY

the  
types  
for

Joe sits at the bar, staring morosely at his image in  
mirror, already quite drunk, oblivious to the assorted  
hiding from daylight in the barn-like saloon, waiting  
night to fall.

RATSO'S VOICE

Excuse me, I'm just admiring that  
colossal shirt...

sickly,  
an  
front

RATSO studies Joe across the corner of the bar -- a  
child-size old man of twenty-one -- hopefully nursing  
empty beer glass, contemplating the money on the bar in  
of Joe.

RATSO

That is one hell of a shirt. I bet  
you paid a pretty price for it, am I  
right?

JOE

Oh, it ain't cheap. I mean, yeah,  
I'd say this was an all right shirt.  
Don't like to, uh, you know, have a

lot of cheap stuff on my back.

wearing  
Levis.

Ratso spits as JACKIE leans on the bar next to Joe -- a feminine young person, heavily made-up, hair teased, earrings and a lace-trimmed blouse over shocking pink

JACKIE  
Got a cigarette, cowboy?

RATSO  
(a stage whisper)  
More goddam faggots in this town.

startled as

Reaching for a cigarette, Joe glances at Jackie,  
Jackie twitches his pink levis angrily and turns away.

JOE  
Shee-it...  
(shakes his head)  
Kee-rist, you really know the ropes.  
Wish to hell I bumped into you before.  
I'm Joe Buck from Texas and I'm gonna  
buy you a drink, what do you say to  
that?

RATSO  
Enrico Rizzo from the Bronx. Don't  
mind if I do.

JOE  
(slaps bar)  
Same all around! For my friend, too!

program as  
plucked  
visible  
GIRL in

The TV screen over the bar features a mating game  
Jackie cruises down to join a tall farm boy with  
eyebrows. The TV HOST points to three young men,  
only from the shoulders up, from whom a pretty DATE  
blindfold must choose an escort.

TV HOST  
...and for the losers, who don't get  
the girl, we'll give as consolation  
prices -- a six month supply of  
underarm deodorant...

continuing  
speaks,

In a booth now -- the TV screen in the background,  
the game -- Joe is refilling Ratso's beer glass as he  
loud over the laughter of the TV audience.

JOE  
...you see what I'm getting at here?  
She got a penthouse up there with

color TV and more goddam diamonds  
than an archbishop and she busts out  
bawling when I ask for money!

RATSO

For what?

JOE

For money.

RATSO

For money for what?

JOE

I'm a hustler, hell, didn't you know  
that?

RATSO

How would I know? You gotta tell a  
person these things

(shakes his head)

A hustler? Picking up trade on the  
street like that -- baby, believe me --  
you need management.

JOE

I think you just put your finger on  
it, I do.

RATSO

My friend O'Daniel. That's who you  
need. Operates the biggest stable in  
town. In the whole goddam metropolitan  
area. A stud like you - paying! --  
not that I blame you -- a dame starts  
crying, I cut my heart for her...

JACKIE'S VOICE

I'd call that a very minor  
operation...

booth. Ratso grabs the neck of a bottle, sliding back in the

Joe scowls as Jackie appears with the tall farm boy.

JACKIE

...in fact, you just sit comfy and  
I'll cut it out with my fingernail  
file. You won't even need Blue Cross,  
Ratso.

RATSO

The name is Rizzo.

JACKIE

That's what I said, Ratso.

JOE

(suddenly)

Hey now, you heard him.

On the TV screen -- the Date Girl announces:

TV DATE GIRL  
I pick Number Two! He's cool!

RATSO  
That's okay, Joe. I'm used to these types that like to pick on cripples. Sewers're full of 'em.

JACKIE  
May I ask one thing, cowboy? If you sit there and he sits way over there, how's he gonna get his hand into your pocket? But I'm sure he has that all figured out...  
(to Ratso)  
Good night, sweets.

TV HOST  
May present your chosen mate!

The TV host pulls aside the screen which has concealed the lower half of the three young men. Number Two, her chosen mate, is a dwarf sitting on a high stool. The girl's hysterical, spontaneous dismay starts everyone laughing, including the dwarf.

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

Joe has difficulty keeping up with Ratso, who swings himself along with surprising agility, his half skipping little gate favoring one game leg.

RATSO  
Look, with these chicks that want to buy it, most of 'em are older, dignified, right? Social register types. They can't be trotting down to Times Square to pick out the merchandise. They need a middleman, right? That's O'Daniel.

Joe hesitates as Ratso darts into traffic against a red light, yelling unheard obscenities at a cab driver who blasts his horn. Joe runs recklessly forward as Ratso slams the taxi fender with his fist, pretending to be hit, falling into Joe's arms. The taxi stops, halting traffic. Ratso, recovers, strolls casually in front of the cab, biting his thumb at the river.

RATSO

It is a crime, a stud like you passing out double sawbucks to a chick like that. With proper management you should be taking home fifty, a hundred bucks a day. More if you want a moonlight...

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - COCKTAIL HOUR

toward a  
haired  
at  
circle,  
At the corner of Central Park South, Ratso points young man with diamond cuff-links, sitting with a blue-matron who puffs on a small cigar. Ratso waves jauntily the young man, raising his thumb and forefinger in a leaving the young man baffled as Ratso hurries Joe on.

RATSO

Him I placed with O'Daniel just two weeks ago. And look. Not much of a stud either, what I hear...

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SOUTH - COCKTAIL HOUR

phone  
looking  
luxury  
Ratso automatically checks the coin return boxes of the booths they pass. Walking the park side of the street, across at the limousines and taxis waiting outside hotels and apartment buildings.

JOE

Hey, listen, how about you take me to mee this Mister O'Diddle bird right now?

RATSO

Well, Joe, you're a nice guy, and I'd be doing you both a favor, but why? What'm I dragging my bum leg all over town for? It's no picnic and what for, for me myself, what?

at an  
Ratso stops opposite the Plaza hotel, pointing across aristocratic blonde stepping out of a Rolls Royce.

RATSO

Tomorrow when some piece like that's scratching your back in a Fifth Avenue townhouse, where'll your pal Rizzo be? Nedicks.

JOE

Hold it, just hold it. You think I'm that kinda sombitch? Just name your

cut, whatever you want, you got it  
right now. Five? Ten, how's that?

Joe peels a ten from his wallet and offers it to Ratso.

RATSO

Joe, please. You know what I'd ask  
anyone else? Oh hell, tell you what  
I'll do, I'll take the ten...

(he does)

...but when I hand you over to Mr.  
O'Daniel, I'll have to have another  
ten, Joe; just to like cover  
expenses...

INT. PUBLIC PHONE BOOTH - DUSK

Ratso is on the phone. Joe holds the door open,  
listening.

RATSO

This boy is just your meat, Mr.  
O'Daniel, believe it, I'm telling  
you -- what? -- Enrico Rizzo from  
the Bronx. The point is he needs  
you. Right now. Tonight...

(aside to Joe)

I got his tongue hanging out...

EXT. WEST SIDE HOTEL - DUSK

Camera moves slowly up the anonymous wall of a drab  
hotel,  
following the line of dim red lights marking the fire  
exits.

RATSO'S VOICE

Name's Joe Buck. Cowboy. Just in  
from Texas, don't know the ropes,  
new to the city, but very promising  
material, sir, and ready, if you get  
what I mean. Fabulous. Right away.  
What's that room number there again?

INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL ELEVATOR - DUSK

As ancient open cage lift rises at the same pace as  
camera  
in preceding shot. Joe grins excitedly at Ratso, who  
nods  
but glances significantly at the elevator operator.  
Ratso  
follows Joe to door as the operator grinds to a stop.

INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL CORRIDOR - DUSK

Ratso steps out with Joe, gesturing to the corridor...

RATSO

Hold it a second...

Ratso ...but the operator slams the door and starts on up.  
leans heavily on the down button, glancing at Joe.

RATSO  
Nine-oh-one, got it?

again Ratso glances up the elevator shaft nervously, rings  
and turns back to Joe.

RATSO  
Let's see how you look. Fine. You  
look fine. Now I'm gonna have to  
have that other ten...

JOE  
(digs in wallet)  
Ten, ten -- I got a twenty -- take  
that...

RATSO  
Oh hell, forget it.

JOE  
Now take it. Go on.  
(gives it to him)  
Listen, where can I reach you? Cause  
I'm gonna make this right with you  
soon's I get me set up...

RATSO  
Forget it.

JOE  
I mean, dammit, where you live?

into Ratso leans on the DOWN as the cage grinds slowly down  
view and stops.

RATSO  
Sherry-Netherlands Hotel. Now get  
your ass in there. He's waiting!

closes,  
starts Ratso steps into the elevator as the door opens then  
leaving Joe alone, repeating "Cherry Neverlin" as he  
along the corridor looking for 901.

EXT. WEST SIDE HOTEL - DUSK

disappears. Ratso bursts from the hotel, almost running as he

INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL CORRIDOR - DUSK

stuffs Joe finds 901 at a dark end of the corridor, knocks  
confidently, hearing a few bars of his love theme as he



thrown  
diamond-  
after  
earlier

a fresh stick of gum in his mouth. Then the door is open by O'DANIEL -- for an instant appearing to wear a studded skull-cap, the naked overhead light bulb bright the dark corridor, halating in Joe's eyes like the dollar sign.

O'DANIEL

You must be Joe Buck. Come in.

a  
anonymous

O'Daniel, fat in a worn-out bathrobe, examines Joe like a prodigal son as he leads him into the room -- as as Joe's own room.

O'DANIEL

Am I tickled to find you, boy! Come on in and let's get a look at you. Turn around. Good strong back. You'll need it. So you want help -- take a seat, relax, tell me about yourself. Cowboy, huh?

JOE

No sir, I'm no cowboy really, but I'm a first class stud.

O'DANIEL

Take it, easy, boy...  
(laughs)  
Seems to me you're different than a lotta boys that come to me. Most of 'em seem troubled, confused, but I'd say you knew exactly what you want.

JOE

You bet I do, sir.

O'DANIEL

But I'll bet you got one thing in common with them other boys. I'll bet you're lonesome.

JOE

Well, not too, I mean, a little.

O'Daniel rises suddenly in a fury of self-righteousness, pacing, his voice simpering, whining sarcastically.

O'DANIEL

I'm lonesome. I'm lonesome so I'm a drunk. I'm lonesome so I'm a dope fiend. I'm lonesome so I'm a thief, a fornicator, a whore-monger. Poop, I say, poop! I've heard it all and I'm sick of it, sick to death.

JOE

Yessir, I can see that.

O'DANIEL

Lonesomeness is something you take.  
You bear? Dammit, you take it and go  
about your business, that's all.

JOE

Well, uh, I'm raring to go.

O'DANIEL

Yes, I believe you are. Cowboy, huh?

JOE

Uh, yessir.

O'DANIEL

Ready for hard work, son?

JOE

Ready for anything.

O'DANIEL

I got a hunch, Joe Buck, it's gonna  
be easier for you than most.

JOE

Gonna be like money from home.

O'DANIEL

Money from home, see, there's your  
strength, you put things in earthy  
terms any man can understand, son. I  
warn you I'm gonna use you, I'm gonna  
run you ragged!

Joe laughs, driving an obscene uppercut into the air.

O'Daniel

laughs with him.

O'DANIEL

You're a wonderful boy. You'n me  
gonna have fun, dammit, it don't  
have to be joyless. Say, why don't  
we get right down on our knees now?

JOE

Get down -- where?

O'DANIEL

Right here, why not? I prayed in  
saloons, I prayed in the street, I  
prayed an the toilet. He don't care  
where, what He wants is that prayer.

O'Daniel drops on all fours, crawling to find the plug

of an

electric cord. He shoves it into a wall socket,

switches off

plastic  
congregation  
horns

the overhead light and suddenly a hollow, tinted  
Jesus glows on the dresser. O.S. a revivalist  
sings. And now we notice, with Joe, placards and flags,  
and tracts, all the paraphernalia of a street corner  
evangelist.

JOE  
Shee-it...

O'DANIEL  
That's the ticket, just open your  
heart and let it flow. It ain't the  
words, it's the love beyond 'em!

EXT. REMEMBERED BAPTISM - ANOTHER TIME

little

Sally Buck sings with the congregation while a rawboned  
preacher stands in the river, preparing to immerse  
Joe.

O'DANIEL'S VOICE  
Don't fight it, boy!

INT. WEST SIDE HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

O'Daniel tries to pull Joe down beside him.

O'DANIEL  
Pray and you shall be heard!

EXT. REMEMBERED BAPTISM - ANOTHER TIME

of  
riverbank,  
voice

Camera becomes little Joe, glimpsing the fevered faces  
Sally Buck and the congregation singing on the  
just before being plunged under the river. O'Daniel's  
reechoes, filtered through water.

O'DANIEL  
Don't be frightened, son!

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

pursued

Joe runs in aimless panic, pushing through the crowd,  
by O'Daniel's voice and the singing congregation.

O'DANIEL  
Don't run from Jesus!

on a  
two

Joe stops short as he sees the front page of a tabloid  
newsstand. There is a picture of Joe being led away by

ELEVEN. deputies, under a headline ALABAMA MURDERER SHOTGUNS

EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET - NIGHT

suddenly  
in a  
but  
on  
Joe searches the faces of the crowd, running forward  
as he sees Jackie and the farmboy picked up by two men  
large convertible. Joe chases the car to Eighth Avenue  
stops, frightened as he sees himself in multiple image  
the front of every newspaper displayed on a newsstand.

INT. EVERETT'S BAR - NIGHT

lull. The  
The saloon is almost empty during the after dinner  
BARTENDER doesn't look up from his newspaper as Joe  
approaches.

JOE

Say, you know that runty little  
bastard I was with?

BARTENDER

I don't know nothing.

the  
an  
near the  
Joe tenses as he sees the tabloid picture of himself on  
back of the bartender's paper. Joe's hand closes around  
empty beer bottle, a terrible violence surging very  
surface. O.S. women scream.

INT. REMEMBERED BEAUTY SALON - ANOTHER TIME

smashing  
women  
which  
Reflected in the mirror, we see little Joe wildly  
bottles and glass display cabinets -- the voices of  
screaming O.S. -- little Joe hurling a perfume bottle  
shatters the mirror and his own image.

INT. EVERETT'S BAR - NIGHT

drowned  
photograph,  
Joe.  
The empty beer bottle stands where it was. Joe has  
disappeared. On the TV screen over the bar, sound  
out by the jukebox, we see a blowup of the tabloid  
revealing a young man very similar to, but clearly not

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

vertical,  
Colorful lights still flash seductive promise. The

lights on the MONY tower reach bottom and freeze momentarily.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe at his hotel window staring out blankly. Gun fire O.S....

INT. SHOOTING GALLERY - DAY

The radio at Joe's ear is drowned out by a kid in cowboy hat, shooting alone in the gallery. Two policemen idly slap their thighs with night sticks. Joe moves on, unconsciously checking the coin return box of a pay phone.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe curled up on his bed like a baby, fully dressed, his radio on the night stand. O.S. his love theme, remote, hollow...

EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET - NIGHT

Joe's radio is at his ear "...never too late to look great, Ben's Bargain Basement's open 'till five a.m., miles and miles of Western styles, worth more at any store, money talks and nobody walks." For the first time, Joe is aware of the other midnight cowboys lurking in doorways, the cruising queens, the middle-age men in sport shirts. Joe moves on self consciously as he sees a scar-faced policeman, unconsciously massaging his night stick. Camera holds on a window display of gag buttons, featuring NEW YORK WILL BREAK YOUR HEART, BABY.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe soaking in the tub, eyes closed.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE DANCE HALL - DAY

Joe's radio promises job opportunities for young men to twenty-five in the U.S. Air Force. He stands with a crowd of eighteen staring up at a girl go-go dancing in the window of SERGEANT PEPPER'S LONELY HEART CLUB.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

theme.

Joe staring in the mirror. O.S. static over his love

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT

jack  
radio.

By work-light, the tarrier in metal helmet leans on a  
hammer, beyond the sign DIG WE MUST, drowning out Joe's

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

LIVE  
push-

Joe flexing his muscles in his jockey shorts while --  
ON TV SCREEN -- a physical culture personality finishes  
ups and starts pitching his own extra protein bread.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE PANCAKE HOUSE - DAY

a fry  
on a  
those  
It's

Joe's radio continues the super-break commercial while  
cook flips flapjacks in the window. But Joe's eyes are  
sign DISHWASHER WANTED. Joe looks up and his eyes meet  
of the young man scraping garbage behind the counter.  
Joe.

JOE

Shee-it.

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

unable  
woman's  
I  
clicking

Joe sits in the hotel lobby, staring out at the street,  
to concentrate on his comic book. On two-way radio, a  
voice giggles as she speaks, "When I can't sleep, well,  
just dial the time and listen to those old seconds  
by like, you know, counting sheep?"

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - COCKTAIL HOUR

lady,  
man.  
before  
radio

Joe watches a young man hold a taxi door for an older  
at the same corner where Ratso waved to another young  
The woman's predatory eyes linger momentarily on Joe  
she leads the young man into the Cafe. The two-way  
continues over, "...that's what I do about insomnia."

JOE

Well, now, ma'am, next time you got  
that feeling coming on, you dial Joe

Buck. I'll show you what to do...

STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Joe straddles a chair, staring at a blank TV screen.

SINGING COMMERCIAL

Need a little easy money? It's E-Z.  
Want a little easy cash? It's E-Z.

E-Z LOAN COMMERCIAL

into  
and

As the jingle continues, we follow Joe and his radio  
the loan office, the depressing reality photographed  
edited in the style of a TV commercial:

JINGLE

Easy locations to get to Easy ladies  
to greet you Easy chairs to seat you  
Easy payments to meet Let E-Z set  
you On Easy Street.

of  
forms

Joe arrives confident Harassed E-Z receptionist Lines  
uneasy customers Desperate, angry faces Reams of E-Z  
to fill Clerk's sneer, says Joe has to be kidding.

INT. TIMES SQUARE PALACE LOBBY - NIGHT

Joe's image frozen -- as if another still photograph -  
standing at the desk, waiting for his key.

JOE'S VOICE

Key to 1014...

paper

Action continues as the DESK CLERK hands Joe a folded  
instead of a key. Joe opens it, deeply perplexed.

DESK CLERK

Looks like you been locked out of  
your room, buddy. Till you pick up  
your tab.

JOE

Uh, what about my things'n all?

DESK CLERK

We keep them nice and safe till you  
get this straightened out.

INTERCUT

Room 1014 warm and inviting, Joe's suitcase on the bed.

JOE

Listen, tell you what, you can keep  
all the rest of the goddam junk if

you let me have just the suitcase.  
That suitcase means a lot to me.

INTERCUT

The postcard photograph marked X -- THIS IS ME.

DESK CLERK

We keep everything. House rules.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

bright  
in  
Joe stands outside the hotel, stunned, seeing the  
colored lights turn suddenly grey. The film continues  
black and white as Joe walks into the crowd.

EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY

The FOR RENT sign flapping in the wind.

INT. BAR - DAY

as a  
Ratso.  
Joe nurses a short beer, like the regulars. He looks up  
crippled panhandler approaches, vaguely reminiscent of

JOE

Screw off.

INT. ROOM 1014 - NIGHT

The bed turned back, clean sheets, a soft night light.

INT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

A  
Joe  
night  
Joe is stretched on a bench, his Stetson over his eyes.  
loud speaker announces a bus "departing for Texas" but  
does not move. A policeman taps Joe's boots with his  
stick. Joe rises and starts away with mixed anger and  
apprehension.

INT. PUBLIC MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Joe  
Two matching Ivy Leaguers exchange a glance as they see  
washing his feet in the basin. Joe stares back with a  
belligerent grin.

JOE

Any objection, gentlemen?

INT. ALL NIGHT CAFETERIA - NIGHT

solitary  
Joe balances a cup of coffee, walking past the other



what  
woman and  
touching  
make  
the  
bowls.

night people, avoiding each other's eyes. Joe spots  
he's looking for and seats himself next to a gaunt  
her ten year old son, both freaked out, erratically  
things, themselves, each other in a futile effort to  
contact with reality. But Joe is only concerned with  
plastic-wrapped crackers left by their empty soup

JOB

Y'ain't gonna eat them?

mouse  
face.  
one  
ketchup

The woman stares at Joe blankly. The boy runs a toy  
across the table, up his mother's arm and around her  
With a polite nod, Joe opens the crackers and squirts  
with ketchup. Joe upsets his chair as a great gob of  
spills onto his pants...

JOE

Shee-it.

only  
stick.  
water  
the  
his

...glancing around with an embarrassed laugh, but the  
one looking is a cop, scratching his calf with a night  
Joe keeps his back to the customers as he moves to the  
dispenser, wets a paper napkin and tries to wipe away  
stain. But the water has only spread the stain across  
pants and down his leg. He blushes as a blonde young  
streetwalker giggles.

SALLY BUCK'S VOICE

Wet your britches, lover boy?

INT. SUBWAY ARCADE - NIGHT

checks the  
burly  
of a  
Joe

Joe tries to hide the stain with his jacket as he  
coin boxes of vending machines, wary as he passes a  
policeman, abstractedly snapping his handcuffs in front  
bakery window display of bride-and-groom wedding cakes.  
barely glances at a confused MIDDLE-AGE LADY.

MIDDLE-AGE LADY

How do I get to Grand Central?

JOE

Shuttle. Follow the green light.

machine,  
staring  
unconsciously  
in his

Automatically, checking the trough of a gum vending  
Joe unexpectedly faces himself in the mirror, the eyes  
at him tired and hopeless. His hand reaches  
for a cigarette, the package is empty. He crumples it  
fist but holds it.

JOE

Alright, cowboy. Enough of this shee-  
it. You know what you got to do?

(nods)

Then go do it.

EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET - NIGHT

LITTERBUG  
ear.  
street  
a  
for  
promising  
  
other  
figure  
  
hide  
slows  
Joe is  
  
in  
whose

Joe hurls the crumpled package into a DON'T BE A  
basket as he emerges from the subway, his radio at his  
The torchy voice belts his love song, merging with  
noises crying danger -- an ambulance, a burglar alarm,  
policeman's whistle -- the lights flashing lurid color  
the first time since Joe was locked out, no longer  
but threatening, clashing, warning as...  
  
...from a high angle, across the street, Joe joins the  
midnight cowboys, offering himself to all comers. His  
is momentarily obliterated by traffic then...  
  
...zooming in, we see Joe self-consciously trying to  
the stain on his pants, embarrassed as a large sedan  
then moves on to stop in front of a motorcycle freak.  
briefly obliterated again by a passing police car...  
  
...the receding flash of its turret light revealing Joe  
close conversation with a frightened young FAT BOY,  
eyes plead for reassurance as Joe scowls.

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

Joe's black and white suitcase gleams on the bed.

JOE'S VOICE

Twenty-three bucks, I got to have  
twenty-three bucks...

INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE - NIGHT

fiction  
spaceman  
maiden  
calling,  
From an apparently empty balcony -- an old science  
film grinds endlessly through the night -- a lost  
trying to make contact with a tantalizing Martian  
across an invisible time barrier, there in voices  
"Earthling, where are you?"

FAT BOY'S VOICE

Okay. Sure. I got twenty-five...

face  
and  
the  
through  
many  
forcing  
At the top of the balcony, Joe leans back, turning his  
away as the Fat Boy embraces him, kissing Joe's cheek  
neck, his head moving down out of frame to show -- on  
screen -- the spaceman and Martian maiden meeting, arms  
outstretched. But the Martian maiden moves right on  
the spaceman, crying, "Earthling come back, however  
centuries it is, I'll wait!" Joe closes his eyes,  
his memory back...

INT. REMEMBERED MOVIE HOUSE - ANOTHER TIME

younger  
...repeating the remembered image of Anastasia and a  
Joe, behind the movie screen...

ANASTASIA

You're the only one, Joe, the only,  
only one ever!

intercut  
camera  
the  
...the remembered passion continuing, mounting --  
with flash impressions, like flipping pages of a nudie  
magazine -- naked, half-draped blondes gazing into  
with sultry eyes, including one comic strip sexpot and  
calendar girl in Joe's Texas hotel room...

ANASTASIA'S VOICE

You're the best, the very best, yes,  
yes, kiss me, oh God please kiss me,  
Joe, now, now, now!

houses  
adolescent  
...Joe's face in extreme close-up, sounds of both movie  
merging, confused, dominated by the voices of  
boys...

BOYS' VOICES

Hey, Joe, give someone else a chance!  
What's he doing for chrisake? He  
kissing Anastasia? You better swallow  
a whole goddam drugstore, man!

screen,  
Anastasia.

...an adolescent ratpack waiting in line behind the  
laughing in coarse whispers, watching Joe and  
O.S. theremin voices call "Earthling, where are you?"

INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE - NIGHT

spaceman,  
it is,

On screen, the Martian maiden moves through the  
crying, "Earthling, come back, however many centuries  
I'll wait!"

INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE RESTROOM - NIGHT

Joe watches the Fat Boy doubled over, retching.

JOE

I'm awful damn sorry you're sick,  
kid, but you gonna have to gimme  
that money like you said.

FAT BOY

I was lying. I don't have it. What're  
you going to do to me?

JOE

(controls fury)

What you got in your pockets?

token,  
watch.

Eagerly, the boy produces a family photograph, a subway  
a dirty handkerchief. Joe grabs his wrist, revealing a

JOE

How much's that worth?

FAT BOY

I can't go home without my watch! My  
mother'd die! She'd die! Take my  
books! Not my watch! She'd die!

voices  
you?"

But Joe has already kicked open the door. Theremin  
drown out the Fat Boy, calling "Earthling, where are

INT. ALL NIGHT MOVIE - NIGHT

rail,  
Martian

Joe sprawls, trying to sleep, his feet on the balcony  
the radio at his ear. On screen, once again, the

the  
speaks,  
with  
maiden moves through the spaceman, crying, but we hear  
voice of a desperate woman on two-way radio. As she  
a policeman moves along the aisle, slapping his palm  
his night stick.

DESPERATE VOICE

Bill, can I call you Bill, Mister  
Bonner? I feel like I know you from  
listening. What I called about, Bill,  
I'm gonna kill myself...

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

seen  
BONNER'S  
From a high angle, only Joe's Stetson and radio can be  
above a passing bus, its side panel advertising BILL  
STRAIGHT LINE, A STRAIGHT TALK SHOW.

BONNER'S VOICE

Why call me, baby? If you want to do  
it; just do it, don't talk about it.  
Are we drunk? Feeling a little sorry  
for ourselves maybe?

Joe appears in full figure as the bus passes. He stands  
looking at the suitcases in a luggage shop window.

DESPERATE VOICE

Well, Bill, what I got thinking, I  
didn't want the neighbors to have to  
find me, this young couple with the  
boy I want to have my cat, see, Bill?

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

BONNER, tough in a grey crew-cut, talks on the phone.

BONNER

Okay, baby, now listen, just hold on  
while I leave the line for a minute.  
And think about all the kids that  
are dying overseas for you, okay,  
baby? Got that? I'll be back in  
exactly sixty seconds. After this  
message from...

A taxi horn blasts, interrupting the sponsor's message.

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

injury  
toward...  
Joe's fist slams a fender violently, using Ratso's fake  
trick to stop traffic, running across the street

EXT. NEDICK'S - DAY

lighting  
outside  
conflicting  
one  
like

...Ratso staring out at Joe, paralyzed in the act of a cigarette -- intercut in flashing close-ups -- Joe the window, Ratso inside -- reflecting their emotions -- Joe's murderous rage -- Ratso's panic -- almost subliminal flash of each revealing something pleasure at finding a long-lost friend...

INT. NEDICK'S - DAY

...Ratso staring up into camera, holding his breath.

RATSO

Don't hit me, I'm a cripple.

Joe's hand falls on Ratso's shoulder.

JOE

Oh, I ain't gonna hit you, I'm gonna strangle you to death...

jerks  
with

The cigarette in Ratso's mouth burns into his lip. He spasmodically, choking on smoke as he rips skin away the butt and drops it in his coffee cup.

JOE

...only first I'm gonna turn you upside down and shake you out right here and now.

the  
sticks  
matches  
ashamed.

Coughing, eyes tearing, Ratso empties his pockets on counter, finally producing: sixty-four cents, a few of gum, an almost empty cigarette package, a book of and two pawn tickets. He raises his eyes, somehow Joe kicks the toe of Ratso's loafer.

JOE

What's in your socks?

RATSO

Not a cent, I swear to God, I swear on my mother's eyes.

the  
Disgusted,

Ratso removes his loafers and shakes them, glancing at counter man. His socks don't even conceal his toes. Joe shoves Ratso's small pile back at him.

RATSO

You keep the sixty-four cents. I

want you to have it.

JOE

It's sticky. What you do, slobber on 'em? I wouldn't touch 'em.

tangible to  
Ratso  
Joe should leave -- Ratso obviously has nothing offer -- but Joe hesitates, lighting a cigarette as pulls on his loafers.

RATSO

How do you like that O'Daniel, flipping out like that? I wanted to get in touch with you when I heard, but I been laid up with this cold...

continues  
Ratso touches his chest, forcing a cough which itself beyond his intention.

JOE

You want some free medical advice, shut your goddam mouth about that night.

RATSO

Okay, right, right, okay. Another subject. Where you living? Still at the hotel?

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

The black and white suitcase lies open on the bed.

INT. NEDICK'S - DAY

Joe turns abruptly and walks away.

JOE

Shee-it. I got better things to do than talk to you.

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

Joe strides north, pretending he doesn't hear...

RATSO'S VOICE

Hey, wait up, for crissake!

light.  
...Ratso hop-skipping to overtake Joe at the traffic

JOE

Listen, keep away from me, hear? You come near me again, I snatch you bald-headed!

RATSO

I'm inviting you. I mean if you're

not located, I got a place. I'm  
inviting you, goddamit.

JOE

You inviting shee-it.

EXT. TENEMENT STREET - DAY

AVAILABLE in  
tenements  
over  
squeak

A contractor's sign announces LUXURY APARTMENTS  
high-rise co-op, under construction beyond a row of  
with X's taped on the windows. Ratso's voice continues  
the click-clack-click of Joe's boots and the flip-flap-  
of Ratso's loafers as camera moves toward a condemned  
building.

RATSO'S VOICE

The X on the window means the landlord  
can't collect rent -- which is a  
convenience, hey? -- on account of  
it's condemned.

INT. TENEMENT STAIRS - DAY

Footsteps climb past rubbish piled outside empty flats.

RATSO'S VOICE

The electric's off. Another  
convenience. I don't mess with Con  
Edison, hey? What the hell, I got  
candles, right?

INT. X FLAT - DAY

poster  
flat,  
blankets

Light from the X window shines on a Florida tourist  
as Ratso leads Joe into an abandoned tub-in-kitchen  
barely furnished with a table and chair, a rumple of  
on a burnt-out mattress.

RATSO

I got no heat, but by that time, you  
know, cold weather, hey, I'll be in  
Florida. Stretch out. Make yourself  
comfortable. You hungry? I'll put up  
some water for coffee.

Sterno  
to  
him  
to

Ratso fills a saucepan from the tub-sink, sets it on a  
stove. Joe sits himself on the mattress-bed, pretending  
test it, weeks of exhaustion and tension overwhelming  
suddenly, his only immediate problem being the effort  
restrain a large, comfortable yawn.



JOE  
Comfortable, kee-rist, I slept on  
subways softer than this.

heavily.  
softly  
spite of

Joe stretches himself, yawning, his eyelids drooping  
The sounds of the city recede. Joe's love theme plays  
on a distant radio. Joe's eyes close momentarily in  
him self.

INT. REMEMBERED CAR - ANOTHER TIME

face.

A vintage dashboard, radio dial glowing, Anastasia's

ANASTASIA  
Love me, Joe?

EXT. DEMOLITION SITE - DAY

facade.

A huge metal ball arcs on chain, demolishing a brick

INT. X FLAT - DAY

Sterno

Ratso's face seems to radiate evil as he lights a  
can. Joe forces his eyes half-open.

JOE  
Smart thing for me to do is haul ass  
outta here.

RATSO  
Whatsa matter now?

sleep,  
Joe

Joe shivers, pulls a blanket around him, resisting  
but the noises of demolition fade, the love theme lures  
back.

JOE  
You don't seem like no fag...

RATSO  
What's that supposed to mean?

sleep.

Joe's eyes close, his voice continuing out of half-

JOE  
Want me to stay here, y'after  
something. What y'after?

INT. REMEMBERED CAR - NIGHT

the  
butterfly-

Joe's thumbnail flares a match, exposing Anastasia on  
car seat with Joe, both nearly naked. Anastasia  
kisses Joe's chest as he lights a cigarette.

ANASTASIA

Say you love me. Just say it.

JOE

Okay. I love you.

to  
window.

Anastasia purrs as her lips find Joe's breast, trying  
nurse. A flashlight flares suddenly through the car

NIGHTMARE - MULTIPLE SPLIT SCREEN

...Sally

Low angle Ratso bending over Joe, into camera...

Buck shocked, hand still on switch...

screaming  
window...

...Joe blinded by halation... ... Anastasia's mouth  
soundlessly... ...flashlights multiplying on car

bang

Full frame -- Anastasia catatonic in hospital gown -- a  
woman's voice "What'd he do to you, Annie?"... ...gang-

closing on  
foot...

ratpack surrounding car with flashlights... ...Jackie  
shrieking "He loves her he loves her"... ...hands

Joe's

Joe's buttocks... ...hand closing on Joe's naked left

...hand on naked right foot... ...dentist leaning over

mouth... ...hands pulling Joe's legs apart...

Buck

Zoom close-up -- Anastasia screaming soundlessly...  
...thermometer under Little Joe's tongue... ...Sally

licks

shoves chocolate in her mouth... ...bewigged poodle

bedpost...

her fingers... ...Sally Buck hangs enema can on

...corona

...Ratso leads ratpack chasing naked Anastasia...

of flashlights...

into

Anastasia screaming soundlessly -- flashlight shoved

go-go

her mouth -- electronic rock blasting... ...blank-eyed

ratpack...

girl in dance hall window... ...Joe held naked by

...dwarf

...Ratso breaking beer bottle on Everett's bar...

at

laughing on television... ...Ratso aims broken bottle

Joe's crotch... ...shooting gallery cowboys riddle  
Joe's  
pelvis...  
  
ANASTASIA CATATONIC IN COURTROOM -- BETWEEN GAUNT  
PARENTS -  
  
whining singsong "Raped her raped her Joe Buck raped  
her"...  
...Fat Boy's mouth finds Joe's breast, tries to  
nurse...  
...Sally Buck kisses him open-mouthed... ...slug crawls  
up  
Joe's stomach, trailing mucus... ...Cass's poodle laps  
at  
his toes... ...butterflies settle on his eyes...  
  
Anastasia catatonic in courtroom between parents -- who  
are  
now O'Daniel and Sally Buck... ...drawling voice  
"evidence  
of repeated violations"... ...Bill Bonner in flag-cloth  
judge's robe... ...police advancing, swinging night  
sticks...  
...Joe running into Times Square, suddenly naked...  
...Anastasia sitting in all-night cafeteria...  
...freaky  
child running toy mouse over her naked body...  
  
Siren screaming -- Anastasia staring catatonic from  
rear  
window of ambulance... ...ambulance racing away...  
...Joe  
chasing naked after ambulance... ...running into the  
arms of  
the police... ...Ratso laughing as police beat Joe...  
  
INT. X FLAT - NIGHT  
  
Joe awakens in a cold sweat, fighting the blankets,  
wild-  
eyed as he sees Ratso at the table, examining Joe's  
radio by  
candle-light. Joe lunges across the room to snatch the  
radio  
from Ratso's hands.  
  
RATSO  
For crissake!  
  
Still wild-eyed, Joe suddenly points at his stocking  
feet.  
  
JOE  
Where's my boots -- ?  
  
EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY  
  
Joe facing the crowd, naked except for his boots.  
  
INT. X FLAT - NIGHT

Ratso points to the boots on the floor by the mattress.

JOB

How'd they get off me?

RATSO

I took 'em off.

JOE

What for?

RATSO

So you could sleep! I mean Christ!

Army cot -  
by  
Joe inspects the boots, seats himself on a battered  
which has been added while he slept -- swinging a boot  
its strap, considering whether to stay or go.

RATSO

I drug in a cot, if you want to stay.

JOE

Well now, Ratso, I'm gonna tell you  
something for your own good, only  
first gimme a cigarette.

strikes  
Ratso.  
Ratso offers a cigarette from his crushed package, Joe  
a match on his thumbnail and lights up, staring at

JOE

You want me to stay here tonight, is  
that the idea?

RATSO

I ain't forcing you, like, I mean,  
who's forcing you?

JOE

Oh. Guess I got the wrong impression.

Joe makes a slow move to pull on one boot.

RATSO

I want you to stay, okay? I goddam  
invited you, didn't I?

JOE

Well, I hope you know what you're in  
for. I'm a very dangerous person.  
Someone does me bad like you. If I  
caught up with you that night, there'd  
be one dead Ratso long about now.  
Hear?

RATSO

I'm impressed. You're a killer.

JOE

So if you want me to hang around for a few days, I thought you should know.

the Joe yawns, picks up a few blankets and spreads them on cot. He puzzles out the faded printing on one blanket.

JOE

Property of the YMCA. You make me wanna puke sometimes, Ratso.

blankets. Ratso blows out the candle and wraps himself in

RATSO

Joe -- do me one favor -- this is my place, am I wrong? You know, in my own place my name ain't Ratso. I mean it so happens my name is Enrico Salvatore Rizzo.

JOE

Shee-it, man, I can't say all that.

RATSO

Rico then, at least call me Rico in my own goddam place.

JOE

Rico! Rico! Rico! Is that enough?  
(then)  
And keep your meat hooks off my radio.

EXT. VEGETABLE MARKET - DAY

several Ratso wears a threadbare raincoat of faded black,  
sidewalk sizes too large, as he shops with housewives at a  
back -- vegetable stand -- elbowing his way through the ladies,  
testing fruit, picking up vegetables and putting them  
till the GREENGROCER spots him.

GREENGROCER

You! Out! Out! I told you, I calla cops!

avoiding The other shoppers deliberately turn their backs,  
into involvement. As the Greengrocer grabs Ratso, Joe ambles  
the scene, wearing his dangerous little smile.

JOE

Hey, looka here, that ain't nice, picking on a cripple...

then  
Camera  
Joe intervenes just long enough for Ratso to escape,  
ambles on, leaving the Greengrocer in frustrated fury.  
holds on a tray of coconuts.

INT. X FLAT - DAY

penetrate  
variety  
Joe lies on his cot, watching Ratso struggle to  
the fibrous husk of a coconut, experimenting with a  
of rusty tools in an old cigar box.

RATSO

The two basic items necessary to  
sustain life are sunshine and coconut  
milk. That's a known fact. If I can  
find the goddam hole the milk squirts  
out.

JOE

This is an okay setup you got here,  
but I'd say you ain't just exactly,  
uh, flush, is that right or not?

RATSO

I been sick. Hold this, will ya?

Ratso  
Joe takes his time rising to hold the coconut while  
tries to poke a hole with a bent ice-pick.

RATSO

In Florida, they come smooth, ready  
to eat. Down there, your only problem  
is, diet-wise, you gotta lift an arm  
to wipe warm milk off your chin.  
Tough, hey?

JOE

I think finding you's the smartest  
thing I ever did, for both of us.  
You just the crooked kinda sneaky  
little sidewinder I need to get me  
hustling in this town. Hey!

pick.  
holds  
a  
Joe jerks his hand away just in time to avoid the ice-  
The coconut bounces on the floor. Ratso picks it up,  
it, while Joe tries to crack it, swinging his boot like  
hammer.

RATSO

Miami Beach is the only place for a  
real hustler. Florida has more rich  
chicks per square yard than any resort  
spot in the world. They lie out in  
their pagodas and pergolas waiting

to grab the first jockstrap that passes.

JOE

What's all this sweet talk about Florida? Your friend O'Daniel got a stable down there now?

good

Joe swings violently. Ratso yelps, hopping on his one leg, sucking his thumb.

RATSO

Cowboy killers! Break my finger, Christ! I got news for you, baby, no chick with any class buys that big dumb cowboy crap...

Ratso holds his thumb under the tub-sink faucet.

RATSO

...the cowboy bit's out, except among fags of a certain type, which take a certain, type hustler to exploit. Like I could handle it -- being a stealing operation basically -- but take your average fag, very few of them want a cripple.

hard.

Joe holds the coconut like Yorick's skull, thinking

JOE

Well, I am dumb, that's for sure. I don't talk right. I can't think too good. Just only one thing I ever been good for's loving. Women go crazy for me. Fact. Crazy Annie. Had to send her away. So I don't cash in on that, what am I? I'm shee-it. May's well flush me down that hole with the dishwasher.

hands

Joe sets the coconut on the floor, holding it with both hands while he tries to smash it with the heel of his boot.

JOE

That's why you gonna stop crapping about Florida and get your skinny butt moving to earn twenty bucks worth of management you owe me...

INT. ROOM 1014 - DAY

The suitcase lies open, displaying Joe's wardrobe.

JOE'S VOICE

Make that twenty-three bucks.

INT. X FLAT - DAY

under Joe slams his heel down. The coconut shoots out from him and he lands on his ass.

RATSO  
Look at yourself, Joe, no offense, but frankly, you're beginning to smell. For a stud in this town that's a handicap.

JOE  
You talk like a man with a tin twat.

as Ratso sets the coconut on the window sill, balancing it he raises the X window.

RATSO  
You ain't got a chance in hell. You need threads and glitter, baby. A front, hey?

JOE  
Well, uh, my manager's gonna manage all that crap, or else he gonna get a coconut up his flue.

crash Joe slams, the window down. The coconut flies down to O.S. on the sidewalk below.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

An alley cat laps up the milk of the broken coconut.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - FANTASY

shrills. Joe stands naked in the middle of traffic. A siren Anastasia, catatonic in a hospital smock, moves toward Joe like a sleepwalker, passing through him.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

wrapped in a blanket -- angle widening to show Ratso, spotting Joe's jacket, slacks and shirt with cleaning fluid -- his eyes on a very pregnant Italian lady. As she starts to load a coin cleaning machine, Ratso intervenes solicitously, speaking in Italian...

RATSO  
A woman in your condition shouldn't do that. Let me help...



she ...adroitly slipping Joe's cleaning in with her load as  
turns to seat herself beside Joe.

JOE'S VOICE  
It ain't right, stealing from a  
pregnant lady.

INT. HAT CLEANERS - DAY

Joe and Ratso stand waiting at the counter.

RATSO  
What did it cost her? The laundromat  
syndicate lost a couple coins. I'm  
crying.

the The owner brings Joe's clean and blocked Stetson from  
himself rear of the shop. Joe sets it on his head and examines  
in a mirror as the owner hands Ratso, the bill.

RATSO  
Where's mine? The black homburg? I  
brought it in the same time.

rear The owner glances at the slip, puzzled, returns to the  
Ratso of the shop to search for the nonexistent homburg.  
shop. quickly drags Joe away from the mirror and out of the

INT. SUBWAY ARCADE - NIGHT

Ratso - The rhythmic duet of boots and loafers follows Joe and  
reach checking coin boxes and telephone booths -- till they  
till a a shoeshine stand, locked for the night. They loiter  
chairs young couple has disappeared, then Joe kicks loose 'the  
expertise, padlock on the equipment drawer, mounts one of the  
jazz and Ratso goes to work on his boots with furious  
flourishing double brushes, snapping the rag like a  
drummer.

JOE  
Hey, you're good! I bet you could  
pick up a living at this if you tried.

RATSO  
And end up a hunchback like my old  
man? You think I'm crippled? You  
shoulda caught him the end of a day.

turns  
Ratso  
swinging  
with his  
on

Ratso demonstrates a chimpanzee walk. Joe laughs. Ratso  
back in panic as another man takes a chair next to Joe.  
is about to refuse when a cop takes the third chair,  
his handcuffs around to the front, tapping his shoe  
night stick. Ratso quickly drops a rag over the broken  
padlock, cursing under his breath as he starts working  
all three customers at the same time.

RATSO'S VOICE

You think it's funny?

INT. X FLAT - DAY

window, a  
almost

Joe is seated in a straight-back chair near the X  
towel tucked around his neck as Ratso trims his hair,  
as expert a barber as shoeshine boy.

RATSO

Stupid bastard coughed his lungs out  
breathing that resin all day. They  
buried him with gloves on. Even the  
fag undertaker couldn't get his nails  
clean.

cigarette  
opens  
back

As if by conditioned reflex, Ratso chokes on the  
in his mouth, coughing painfully. He crushes it out,  
the window to spit, shivering, then slam it and turns  
to remove the towel from Joe's neck.

JOE

Kee-rist, you pretty damn clever for  
a skimpy little gimp.

RATSO

You like it? Take a look.

JOE

Don't rush me. How I do it, see, I  
get myself primed, like I was turning  
on the charm for some pretty little  
blonde lady, then kinda mosey away  
slow and easy and - swing around! --  
and there you are, you handsome devil.

has  
legless  
table

Joe performs his ritual as he speaks, but more relaxed,  
faintly laughing at himself with Ratso. The wall mirror  
been added since we last saw the flat, along with a  
overstuffed chair with burnt-out cushions, a tasselled

tourist  
neckerchief,  
cover, pinups, calendar girls and several new Florida  
posters, Ratso moves to Joe's side, arranging the  
nodding.

RATSO

Not bad -- for a cowboy -- you're  
okay, you're okay.

JOE

What I'm gonna do, I'm gonna make a  
cowboy outta you, kid. How about  
that? Build you up a little, teach  
you couple little tricks'n turn y'out  
to stud, Rat-stuff.

Ratso's  
corner  
one  
removes the  
Joe slaps his hat on Ratso's head, tilts it, hooks  
thumbs in his jeans and shoves a cigarette into the  
of Ratso's mouth. Ratso laughs till he chokes -- for  
instant, self-consciously, mimicking Joe -- then  
hat and reaches for his threadbare black raincoat.

JOE

Okay, you got yourself one handsome,  
sweet-smelling cowboy, strut your  
stuff...

EXT. CONVERTED TOWN HOUSE - DAY

into  
endorsed  
discreet  
language. A  
memo and  
memo  
hails  
holding  
Escort's  
Ratso  
unfolding  
Joe and Ratso peer down through a basement bay window,  
the office of THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN ESCORT SERVICE --  
by leading travel agencies and credit clubs offering  
companionship and personal guided tours in any  
large-busted matron, on a French phone, fills out a  
hands it to an immaculate young ESCORT, who slips the  
into his topcoat pocket as he comes from the office and  
a cab. Ratso darts forward, limping exaggeratedly,  
the door, lifting the memo as he brushes off the  
topcoat. The young man waves him away with out a tip.  
slams the door and bites his thumb after the cab,  
the memo as he joins Joe on the sidewalk.

RATSO

How do you like that? Cheap bastard...  
(reads, then)

I think we struck gold. This is one high-class chick. The Barbizon for Women!

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DUSK

The Mutual of New York tower flashes MONY.

INT. CORNER PHONE BOOTH - DUSK

Ratso consults the memo as he speaks into the phone.

RATSO

Mr. McNeill, I'm calling for Miss Beecham at the Barbizon Hotel for Women. She won't need you tonight...

EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

A doorman helps a young lady into a limousine.

RATSO'S VOICE

Would you believe a whole goddam hotel with nothing but lonely chicks?

Joe and Ratso watch from across the street.

RATSO

Score once in that setup, the way chicks talk, Christ...

Joe cracks his gum, tilts his hat, starts across the street.

RATSO

Get the money! Remember Cass Trehune? Cash! These rich bitches write a check at night, call the bank and stop payment in the morning. Get the cash!

In Ratso's eyes -- as Joe enters the hotel -- its facade suddenly wipes away to reveal rich ladies in negligee waiting in every room.

INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

Joe starts up the stairs, two at a time. A BELLHOP grabs him.

BELLHOP

Hey! No men upstairs!

EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

Ratso warms his hands at a chestnut vendor's cart, seeing...

...zoom close-up, a lady in a window grabbing Joe.

INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

Joe picks up a house phone, watched by the Bellhop.

EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

Ratso sees Joe zip from room to room in wild animation.

INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

The lobby watches Joe blow a gum bubble at the  
elevator.

EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP - NIGHT

Staring at a window display of Florida sportswear,  
Ratso's imagination soars, seeing...

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH FRONT - FANTASY

...Ratso, like a model in a travel poster, in gaudy  
sport shirt, talking on the phone against a background of  
hotels...

...Ratso like James Bond, surrounded by bikinis,  
dictating while girls serve coconut milk and massage his game  
leg...

...Ratso like George Raft, in evening clothes, running  
a posh casino, flicking a coin...

...Ratso simply himself, dressed as he is, sitting on  
the beach, at peace in the sun...

...the same identical picture with Joe sitting beside  
Ratso.

INT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

Joe faces MISS BEECHAM, a reserved and rather plain  
young lady in evening dress, She tries to speak softly.

MISS BEECHAM

I'm afraid there's been a terrible  
mistake...

EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP - NIGHT

Ratso leans against the window, flipping a coin.

EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

lobby  
Miss Beecham is flushed with humiliation, the entire  
watching Joe in the hands of two bellboys.

JOE

I want my money, goddamit, you owe  
me my money whether you get laid or  
not, lady, shee-it!

EXT. EXCLUSIVE DRESS SHOP - NIGHT

out  
The lights in the window suddenly switch off, blacking  
Florida. Ratso glances toward the growl of a siren O.S.

EXT. BARBIZON FOR WOMEN - NIGHT

swings  
he's  
and  
A police prowler car slows in front of the hotel. Ratso  
across the street with incredible speed to meet Joe as  
tossed onto the sidewalk. Ratso picks up the Stetson  
brushes it off, then helps Joe to his feet.

EXT. SIXTH AVENUE - NIGHT

the  
more  
and a  
store,  
FLORIDA  
From a high angle -- the two figures move slowly along  
deserted avenue, their rhythmic musical duet growing  
and more faint in the distance, a broken grasshopper  
six foot tarnished cowboy -- passing a tuxedo rental  
next to a lighted sign -- TEMPERATURE IN MIAMI BEACH,  
89 DEGREES -- their pace slowing to a dead stop...

INT. X FLAT - NIGHT

freezing  
it is  
...Joe and Ratso frozen -- rain on the X windowpane  
into sheet ice. O.S. a radio commercial plays warm,  
sentimental music while a cozy voice explains how easy  
to heat with Humble oil.

EXT. CONDEMNED TENEMENTS - DAY

watching  
O.S. a  
Joe and Ratso frozen in a narrow shaft of sunlight,  
the huge metal ball demolish the building next door.  
radio announcer sells FROZEN SUNSHINE ORANGE JUICE.

INT. X FLAT - NIGHT

radio.  
Joe and Ratso frozen, staring significantly at Joe's

winter O.S. a singing commercial, "Don't wheeze and sneeze the  
away! Drink Frozen sunshine every day!"

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

pawnbroker Through the window -- Joe and Ratso watch the  
be examine Joe's radio, "Be healthier, wealthier, life can  
by fine, when you drink Frozen" -- Sunshine is clicked off  
the pawnbroker.

INT. X FLAT - NIGHT

Joe and Ratso frozen, wrapped in blankets as...

...the canned heat dies with a faint puff...

icicle... ...water dripping in the tub-sink freezes into an

dark. ...the candle burns down and out, leaving the screen

EXT. CONDEMNED TENEMENTS - DAY

rising Joe and Ratso warm themselves on the smoke and steam  
building. from a subway grating -- watching two officials in fur  
disappearing Reading their doom, Joe and Ratso, continue on,  
into the subway.

EXT. FORTY-SECOND STREET - NIGHT

their Joe stands alone, watching the midnight cowboys ply  
store trade. Camera pulls back as Joe turns away and enters a  
front blood bank, offering ten dollars to blood donors.

INSERT

O.S. A huge hypodermic fills the frame, sucking Joe's blood.  
Ratso coughs uncontrollably.

INT. X FLAT - NIGHT

coughs, Ratso leans over the tub-sink, dry-heaving while he  
controls wearing a sheepskin coat much too large for him. He  
close the cough with effort -- hearing the door open and  
O.S. -- wipes his mouth and turns to grin at...

deliberately ...Joe, trying to light the empty Sterno can,  
faucet, ignoring Ratso. Ratso shrugs, washes his mouth at the  
finds a cigarette butt and lights it, careful to avoid  
inhaling the first puff.

JOE

Shee-it. Cough yourself inside out,  
then light a fag, a goddam fag. You  
make me puke. Where'd you steal it?  
In the movies?

RATSO

The coat? A guy I did a favor once  
gave it to me. Christ.

JOE

Who'd you ever do a favor for? You  
just let some poor bastard freeze to  
death, wouldn't you?

Joe slams ten dollars on the table. Ratso glances at  
Joe with curious concern.

RATSO

Where'd that come from?

JOE

Forty-second Street. Where'n hell  
you think it come from?

RATSO

You wanna know the truth? You dumb  
bastard, I got it for you. Look at  
it. Goddam thing's ten sizes too big  
for me.

Ratso pulls off the coat and throws it at Joe.

JOE

Wear it yourself. I wouldn't put it  
on my back.

Joe throws it back at Ratso.

RATSO

Goddamned if I'll wear it!

Ratso hurls it in a corner. Joe shoves the ten at  
Ratso.

JOE

Go get your medicine. Before you die  
on my goddam, hands...

EXT. EAST RIVER BRIDGE - DAY

High angle -- Joe and Ratso cross an foot, chilled by  
wind,



riverfront  
Sunday.

neither wearing the sheepskin coat. The Queens  
and factories appear cold and bleak, deserted on

rent  
segregated

EXT. LONG ISLAND CEMETERIES - DAY

Camera moves into acres of tombstones, piled like low-  
housing projects for the dead, the various faiths  
by crumbling boundaries.

JOE'S VOICE

Shee-it. I hate boneyards.

RATSO'S VOICE

So split. He ain't your goddam,  
father.

EXT. PROTESTANT CEMETERY - DAY

glances  
headstone  
toward a

Ratso leads Joe past a Negro family at a grave --  
around -- snatches an elaborate floral piece from a  
and hides it under his black raincoat as he darts  
low dividing wall and swings himself over into...

EXT. CATHOLIC CEMETERY - DAY

touches  
Ratso at  
graves  
floral  
laughs.

...an endless section of plain stone markers. Joe  
his hat to two nuns, guiltily hurrying to overtake  
his father's grave, indistinguishable from the other  
except for the name on the headstone. Ratso places the  
piece on the grave with almost absurd solemnity. Joe

JOE

Kee-rist, you sure are one twisty  
little bastard, Ratso.

RATSO

The name's Rico, at my own father's  
grave, a man deserves some respect.

JOE

Respect shee-it! You even steal  
flowers for his grave.

RATSO

Can he smell the difference, eh?

Joe reads from the ribbon on the floral display.

JOE

Well, uh, he dam well know he ain't  
'be-loved Aunt Winifred'.

RATSO

He can't read. Even dumber than you.  
Couldn't write his own name. X --  
that's what it ought to say there on  
that goddam headstone. One big lousy  
X like our flat. Condemned. By order  
of City Hall.

Joe is frowning, standing at the headstone, momentarily  
depressed with an undefined sorrow.

JOE

My Grammaw Sally Buck, she died  
without letting me know.

EXT. SALLY BUCK'S BEAUTY SALON - DAY

tarnishing  
Through the window, past the FOR RENT sign, the  
driers are lined up like tombstones.

EXT. JEWISH CEMETERY - DAY

skullcap,  
Joe frowns, puzzled, as Ratso pulls out a black  
leading Joe toward a group of professional mourners,  
whispering:

RATSO

Just keep your hat on and cry a  
little. They tip you when it's over.

the  
Joe and Ratso join the mourners as the funeral moves to  
grave, Ratso mouthing an authentic double-talk...

glances  
remove  
ribs...  
...Joe standing self-consciously, aware of the covert  
of the other mourners, automatically reaching up to  
his hat, remembering when Ratso elbows him in the

that  
...Joe scowling, tight-lipped, embarrassed by the tip  
is thrust in his hand.

INT. LUNCH COUNTER - EVENING

costume,  
and  
A weary Santa Claus, in a rented beard and over-large  
warms his hands over the steam of his coffee cup. Joe  
Ratso are arguing farther down the counter.

JOE

Just ain't right, cheating someone  
dead and can't cheat back.

customers  
dressed

In the background, as Ratso speaks, HANSEL and GRETEL  
MACALBERTSON enter the lunch counter, inspecting the  
one by one. Both wear black turtlenecks and jeans,  
as twins, both blond and pretty.

RATSO

You and my old man. Same kinda mind.  
Putting me down till the day he  
died...

(mimics)

...why can't you be like your  
brothers? Sons a father could be  
proud of. Yeah, sure. My brothers.  
Too goddam busy making something of  
themselves to show up when the old  
man's dying!

studying  
smiling

Conditioned reflex, Ratso starts to cough. Joe sees the  
MacAlbertsons in the mirror, standing behind him,  
him. Gretel nods, Hansel hands Joe a large black card,  
vaguely, then moves on.

RATSO

What was that all about?

but  
card

Joe studies the black card, frowning at first, suddenly  
smiling, turning as if to call after the MacAlbertsons,  
they are disappearing around the corner. Joe hands the  
to Ratso.

JOE

You wanna read something, read this.  
I been invited somewhere.

INVITED  
LANE -

Shocking pink letters on the black card read YOU ARE  
TO HELP US BURY LOVE -- TONIGHT AT BROADWAY AND HARMONY  
LANE -  
HANSEL AND GRETEL MACALBERTSON.

JOE

They picked me. The only one in the  
whole goddam place. You see how they  
looked me over, up and down before  
they give me that?

RATSO

So?

Joe  
in

Joe sees a young man washing cups behind the counter.  
shakes his head, wonderingly, turning to study himself  
in  
the mirror.

JOE

Well, this thought just struck me.  
It wasn't too long ago I was washing  
dishes way the hell somewhere in  
Texas.

RATSO

Yeah, well, so?

JOE

Now I'm here. I'm in New York City.  
Getting picked for things. Don't you  
see what I'm driving at?

RATSO

What you're driving at, you want me  
to get lost so you can go to your  
fancy-ass party.

JOE

Did I say that? Did I?  
(studies card)  
It don't say nothing about you...

RATSO

Don't say nothing about you either.

JOE

But they picked me, right? So what  
I'll do, I'll just say, now look,  
you want me? Well, I don't go nowhere  
without my buddy here.

RATSO

(shrugs)

Well, what the hell, I got nothing  
better to do.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ratso  
Snow swirls in the aureole of a street light as Joe and  
run, heads lowered, turning into...

INT. LOFT BUILDING - NIGHT

reading  
he  
the  
hair  
Ratso's  
...a drab entrance hall, dimly lit -- signs identifying  
various commercial tenants -- a pink-on-black placard  
MACALBERTSON, TWO FLIGHTS UP. Joe has started up before  
notices Ratso, leaning on the bannister at the foot of  
stairs, struggling to catch his breath. His face and  
are wet with perspiration, his lips lavender-blue.  
In swift flashes -- intercut -- Joe reads the panic in

offer eyes, so intense that Joe shares it, unable to speak or  
reassurance.

JOE

Better dry your hair some. You  
sweating all over the goddam place.

and Joe pulls out his shirttail, grabs Ratso by the neck  
rubs his head dry.

JOE

You got a comb?

RATSO

Don't need a comb.

JOE

Few dozen cooties won't kill me,  
don't guess.

tangled Joe hands Ratso his own comb. Ratso swipes at his  
hands the hair angrily until two teeth break in the comb. He  
in comb back, tugs at his hair with his fingers, pats it  
place, then looks back into Joe's eyes.

RATSO

Okay? I look okay?

a In a moment of silence, distant sounds can be heard --  
of siren, the grinding teeth of a garbage truck, the twang  
makes an electric guitar upstairs at the party -- then Ratso  
a quick gesture of impatience and starts up the stairs,  
pulling himself on the bannister.

INT. MACALBERTSONS' LOFT - NIGHT

cameraman on A bank of lights blinds Joe and Ratso as they enter --  
- electronic rock blasts their ears -- a bearded  
showing a step-ladder photographs them as they stand confused -  
the murder of a hippie known as Groovy -- in-huge black  
over letters, LOVE WAS GROOVY -- GROOVY IS DEAD. Joe shouts  
the amplified music.

JOE

Better get a hold of someone and  
tell them I'm here.

Joe Ratso points to his ear -- he can't hear -- following  
underground across the room. The huge loft is crowded with a random  
supply selection, gathered to serve as dress extras in an  
camera film. The party is the scene. The MacAlbertsons merely  
in a the ingredients and allow it to happen, with cameras  
Joe strategically placed to record the happening...  
...Hansel with tape recorder, Gretel with hand-held  
camera rifting through the crowd -- catching words and images  
in a detached, whimsical fashion. Gretel turns her camera on  
Joe and Ratso as they approach.

JOE  
Well, I made it. This here is Ratso  
Rizzo and I...

RATSO  
Rico. Rico Rizzo.

Gretel smiles without recognition. Hansel gestures  
vaguely.

HANSEL  
Do you need anything? I mean there's  
beer and so forth. Whatever your  
thing is...

the The twins move away together, pausing to confer with  
flower operator of a tripod camera -- focused on an emaciated  
glazed. girl with long hair and dirty feet, stretched in a  
sarcophagus, clutching a dead daffodil, her eyes  
LOVE! Scrawled in huge letters on the wall over her head --

RATSO  
If you want the word on that brother  
and sister act, I'll give you the  
word. That Hansel's a fag and Gretel's  
got the hots for herself. So who  
cares, right? Load up on the salami...

him Ratso heads for the refreshment table. Joe starts after  
where a but pauses, intrigued by an alcove under the balcony  
bodies light show is in progress -- surreal images of naked  
projected against abstract currents of color and strobe  
light...

Buddha at ...a bored fat lady in a muu-muu, squatted like a

a  
the  
is...  
a low table, rolling joints for the guests. She lights  
joint and offers it to Joe as he wanders in to watch  
show. Joe laughs delightedly when he realizes what it

JOE

Shee-it, this is one helluva party!

techniques  
-  
...glancing around at the others, imitating their  
the quick inhaler, who follows with sharp gulps of air

stylist  
nostrils --  
at the  
around  
of  
her  
head,  
spontaneously  
at...  
the deep inhalers who draw air as they inhale -- the  
who lets the smoke drift out and inhales through the  
Joe puffing himself slightly dizzy, starting to laugh  
silent flick effect of the strobe light -- the action  
him slowing almost imperceptibly, overcranked -- a veil  
smoke hanging over the fat woman's face, transforming  
into a laughing witch -- a similar veil around Joe's  
relaxing the self-conscious tension of his face,  
curious about the play of light on his hand, grinning

flesh...  
...a serious young technician handling the light show,  
scattering psychedelic stars across a sky of magenta

back  
...Joe reaching for the stars as he rises and wanders  
to the crowded loft, fascinated to see...

one end  
...a crew with cameras and lights, on the balcony at  
of the loft, photographing the scene below...

the  
bottle,  
...a dark-haired lady by the name of SHIRLEY -- chic in  
style of a gangster's moll -- drinking beer from the  
predatory eyes searching the crowd...

buffet  
Gretel  
steals,  
...Ratso surreptitiously stuffing his pockets from the  
table, glancing nervously over his shoulder, unaware of  
and her hand-held camera, photographing Ratso as he  
turning away casually, disinterested...

black ...Joe laughing as he dances for a moment with a tall  
swimming... girl -- the lights swinging around them -- faces

...Shirley in fleeting close-up, gone in an instant,  
reappearing...

INT. MACALBERTSON BATHROOM - NIGHT

provocative way -- ...her face in the mirror smiling in a dark,  
boldly Joe standing at the bathroom door, forgetting to be  
embarrassed as Shirley turns away from the mirror,  
unhurriedly, running her fingers through her hair,  
meeting Joe's eyes.

SHIRLEY  
I can tell, can't you?

JOE  
Yeah, oh yeah.

SHIRLEY  
What'll we do? Leave now or what?  
Your place or mine? Oh God, the second  
I looked at you I knew. Did you?

her Joe grins, watching Shirley's lips move, unable to keep  
in sync, startled to hear Ratso's voice.

RATSO'S VOICE  
She's hooked...

INT. MACALBERTSONS' LOFT - NIGHT

Joe realizes he is back at the party, Ratso whispering  
hoarsely.

RATSO  
...I'd say she was good for ten bucks,  
but I'll ask for twenty...

and But Joe is watching with terrible fascination as Hansel  
Gretel lift the flower girl from her sarcophagus.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE  
Did you know? We were going to make  
it?

Shirley. Joe glances down to see himself flanked by Ratso and

RATSO  
You really want to do business?

SHIRLEY  
Who's he? Oh God! Don't tell me you



two are a couple -- ?

dipped  
laughs.  
The flower girl, hypnotically dazed, accepts a broom  
in black paint and smears a huge X across LOVE. Joe

HANSEL'S VOICE  
Why are you laughing, Joe?

grinning  
body.  
Hansel holds a microphone toward Joe, who shrugs,  
at Ratso and Shirley. Gretel's camera moves down Joe's

HANSEL  
Are you for real, Joe?

JOE  
Well, I ain't a f'real cowboy, but  
I'm one hell of a stud!

ear.  
Shirley glances at Ratso, who nods, whispering in her

RATSO  
A very expensive stud. And I happen  
to be his manager.

increasingly  
and  
keeping  
body,  
The scene -- from Joe's viewpoint -- becomes  
confusing and fragmented, dialogue and image moving in  
out of focus, cameras and lights surrounding him,  
the center of attention in his own blown mind...  
...Shirley's eyes unnaturally bright, inspecting his  
lingering on his thighs, moistening her lips...

SHIRLEY  
It's too much -- to come face to  
face with a walking talking sex  
fantasy -- to buy a man's -- God!

starting to  
camera...  
...the tall black girl dancing in strobe light,  
remove her clothes -- Gretel following her with a

SHIRLEY'S VOICE  
I can't wait to tell my man Monday.  
I should be taking notes. Look at my  
arm!

gooseflesh  
on her tanned arm...  
...Shirley's talon-like fingernails caressing the

RATSO'S VOICE

I gotta sit down. I feel crummy.

flower  
placing  
reaction...  
Ratso stretched out on a Victorian love seat -- the  
girl walking unsteadily, passing out dead daffodils,  
one in Ratso's hand Gretel photographing his

SHIRLEY'S VOICE

Eat it -- a man in your line of work  
has to keep his strength up...

plate,  
...Shirley bringing Joe a massive sandwich on a paper  
watching him bite into it...

SHIRLEY

It's fantastic, now I know, everything  
you do has sexual implications. If I  
you know, bought it -- could I take  
pictures of you naked? That's part  
of it, isn't it, kinky kinda things?

promote  
working  
girls  
...the tall black girl and a few others are trying to  
an orgy. A scrofulous old wino dances spastically,  
his toothless gums, preparing to expose himself to two  
dancing together...

HANSEL'S VOICE

We want you, Joe. You've been chosen.

sailors,  
turned  
girl out  
Strobe  
...five youths stand beside the sarcophagus -- two  
two cycle freaks, a weight-lifter -- waiting to be  
pallbearers. Joe joins them. All lights and cameras are  
on the slow funeral procession, carrying the flower  
of the loft to the tune of "Moonlight and Roses".  
light adds to the unreality of the scene...

SHIRLEY'S VOICE

I had a thing for him. Before I knew.  
Why should knowing make it more of a  
thing?

funeral.  
...Shirley talks to Gretel as she photographs the

SHIRLEY

Naturally I'll have to ask myself  
why a cowboy? And why a cowboy whore?  
But not tonight.

INT. MACALBERTSON LANDING - NIGHT

bannister. Shirley is pulling her coat out of the pile on the

SHIRLEY  
Incidentally, how much is this going  
to cost me anyway?

coats. Joe turns to Ratso, whose attention is fixed on the

JOE  
Tell her, Ratso.

RATSO  
Twenty bucks...

SHIRLEY  
Sold. Let's go.

RATSO  
...and taxi fare for me.

SHIRLEY  
Get lost.

RATSO  
I agree. And for that service I charge  
one dollar taxi fare.

Ratso,  
lingers,  
loose She takes a dollar from her purse and hands it to  
takes Joe's arm and starts down the stairs. Ratso  
starting quickly through the coats, frisking them for  
change.

INT. LOFT BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

violently. At the foot of the stairs, Shirley kisses Joe

SHIRLEY  
Your name's Joe. Which is fabulous.  
Joe could be anyone. Kiss me, Joe,  
move over, Joe, go away, Joe. It's  
just perfect.

rapidly They glance up as Ratso appears, swinging down too  
clown's on the bannister. He misses a step and falls -- a  
himself. fall, unable to stop but apparently not hurting  
Shirley and Joe are laughing when Ratso lands at the  
foot of the stairs.

SHIRLEY  
He fell. Hey, fella, you fell. Is he

all right?

RATSO  
(rises, mimics)  
Is he all right!

JOE  
Well, if you're awright, why you  
hanging on the bannister. Can you  
walk or not?

RATSO  
Walk? Naturally I can walk.

SHIRLEY  
He's got taxi fare.

JOE  
Sure you're all right?

RATSO  
(shouts)  
I said yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah!

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT

flushed,  
Joe and Shirley are kissing. Shirley rolls away,  
fanning herself. Joe rolls down the window.

EXT. VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

Joe leans out of the taxi window, waving his Stetson,  
bellowing at the snow.

JOE  
Whoopee ti yi yo...!

EXT. LOFT BUILDING - NIGHT

curb,  
cab  
into  
cab,  
painfully  
Ratso makes his way slowly from the building to the  
whistling between his teeth sharply, hailing a cab. The  
slows to a stop. Then the driver sees Ratso, shifts  
gear and drives on. Ratso bites his thumb after the  
rests for a moment on the lamp post, then starts  
inching his way along the deserted street.

INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

mobile  
Joe lies on his back, staring fixedly at a fragile  
hanging from the ceiling, stirring listlessly.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE  
That happens. Don't worry about it...

Shirley leans on one elbow, looking at Joe  
sympathetically,  
fighting an almost irrepressible desire to laugh. Still  
avoiding Shirley's eyes, Joe finds a cigarette on the  
side  
table, searches for matches.

JOE  
Well, that's something never happened  
to me before, you can bet your bottom  
dollar. Uh, where's the matches,  
ma'am?

SHIRLEY  
Top drawer. Maybe if you didn't call  
me ma'am, things would work out  
better.

Joe finds the matches, lights up and lies back, staring  
at  
the mobile as he smokes, still not looking at Shirley.

JOE  
First goddam, time it ever quit on  
me. Fact.

The repressed laugh finally breaks through. Shirley  
stifles  
it quickly as Joe sits up, looking at her.

JOE  
You think I'm lying!

SHIRLEY  
(controls herself)  
No. Of course not. Just something  
struck me funny...

Close on Joe -- watching Shirley closely, reacting.

SHIRLEY'S VOICE  
I just put myself in your shoes. I  
had this image of a bugler without a  
horn, a policeman without a stick,  
etcetera, etcetera and I...  
(giggles)  
I think I'd better shut up, I'm making  
it worse.

Shirley composes her face, reaching out to touch Joe.  
But  
that doesn't help either. He reacts sharply.

SHIRLEY  
Maybe we should take a little nap,  
see what happens?

JOE  
I ain't sleepy.

SHIRLEY

I know. Scribbage!

Extreme close-up of Joe -- frowning, puzzled...

JOE

Shee-it...

game,  
lettered on  
the  
so far

...camera pulling back to show Joe concentrating on a spread out on the sheet, consisting of nine dice all sides, the object being to build as many words as possible, Scrabble fashion, while a sand timer counts seconds. Shirley watches Joe's efforts to think with sympathetic amusement. The only word Joe has composed is MAN.

SHIRLEY

That's pretty Freudian, Joe.

JOE

What? It's a perfectly good word, ain't it. How much time I got?  
(glances up)  
Goddam sand thing drive you crazy. Kee-rist. Spelling never was a very strong point with me. Even in school.

SHIRLEY

If you didn't talk so much, maybe you could think more.

JOE

Talking helps. Don't talk, you get muddled in your head. Hey! Now you just look at this here!

Joe spells out MONY, down from the M in MAN.

SHIRLEY

There's an E in MONEY. If that's your word.

JOE

M-O-N-Y -- I'm right! That's just exactly how they spell it up there on that big building, bet you could see it from here. M-O-N-Y.

SHIRLEY

(stifles giggle)  
Okay. Never argue with a man.

JOE

Y -- what in hell starts with Y?

Shirley slyly trails the tips of her fingernails across  
Joe's

softly chest as she leans over to study the game, breathing  
into his ear as she speaks.

SHIRLEY

It can end in Y day, pay, lay --  
hey, pay lay!

accident - One predatory hand rests on his knee -- as if by  
his Disarranging the sheet, talon nails lightly brushing  
thigh.

JOE

Cut it out. That's cheating, teasing  
me so I can't think. Just one bitsy  
Y word and I gonna beat you!

SHIRLEY

You gonna beat me, Joe?

JOE

Beat your butt, you don't lemme think!

SHIRLEY

Gay ends in Y. Fey. You like that --  
gay fey -- is that your problem?

JOE

I show you what problem --

taking But the end of his sentence is swallowed by Shirley,  
animal his kiss in her open mouth, crushed by its impact, an  
cat noise snarling deep in her throat -- the agonized alley  
theme wail of pleasure -- Joe's problem is solved. Joe's love  
rises, swells triumphant. At the same time, Shirley half-  
issue trying to force Joe's head down, her own on top. The  
to is joined. Shirley has named the game. Her objective is  
his force Joe onto his back. Joe's objective is to retain  
central initiative. Camera ignores the classic action on the  
front, concentrating exclusively on peripheral tactical  
maneuvers...

...Joe's elbows pinning her shoulders...

...her eyes bright, accepting the challenge...

...his tight smile revealing clenched teeth...

underarm...  
...her fingers searching out then tickling his

...Joe laughing as he falls lopsidedly...  
...Shirley laughing triumphantly...  
...his hand closing on her wrist...  
...her talon-nails clawing the air...  
...her toes walking up his calf...  
...her legs suddenly locking around his knees...  
...her free hand grabbing his hair...  
...her shoulder rising as she forces his head back...  
...her lips pressing down on his...  
...his hand swatting an unidentified mass of flesh...  
...her eyes popping, teeth clamping his ear lobe...  
...his hand catching her ankle...  
...her teeth losing the ear lobe as she screams...  
...her foot appearing upside down beside her face...  
...her talon-nails furrowing flesh, drawing blood...  
...his head rearing back, roaring...  
...both rolling to the floor, out of view...  
...her feet suddenly flying up into view...  
...her hand tugging rhythmically at the blanket...  
...her other hand wildly exploring Joe's back...  
...her ankles locking spasmodically...  
...her eyes and mouth wide, gaping...  
...the blanket suddenly ripping free, flying into the  
air as  
her arm flings itself around Joe...  
...the bedclothes spilling down around them, muffling  
her  
ascending shrieks.

JOE'S VOICE

Whoopee ti yi yo...

INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Shirley has difficulty reverting to her nine-to-five

role as



she is a Madison Avenue career girl. Half-dressed for work,  
the talking on the telephone, her eyes on the open door to  
bathroom, through which Joe's voice continues singing.

SHIRLEY

Well, I really can't talk now, if  
you know what I mean, but believe me  
when I say, Myra, it's an experience  
every emancipated woman owes herself.  
I'm not. I'm not exaggerating. Well,  
what's Phil's poker night?

(yells off)

Joe -- are you available next  
Thursday, eight-thirty?

INT. SHIRLEY'S BATHROOM - MORNING

sprinkling an Thoroughly shaved, bathed and groomed, Joe is  
expensive cologne into his boots. He yells back  
enthusiastically.

JOE

Well, lemme think now, Thursday,  
eight-thirty, yeah, I guess I could  
be available. Hell, yeah.

INT. SHIRLEY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Shirley turns back to the phone. Joe appears, grinning.

SHIRLEY

Why don't you just come here? I'll  
be working every night this week.  
I'll leave a key with the super...

JOE'S VOICE

Well, ma'am -- Shirley -- I sure  
hate to trouble you, but...

places Shirley opens her purse, savoring the moment. As she  
the money in Joe's hand...

INT. MEN'S STORE - DAY

cowboy ...Joe slaps a bill on the counter, admiring a fine new  
boots. shirt in the mirror, wriggling new white socks into his  
two Suddenly remembering, he goes to the sock rack and buys  
Joe's pairs, one large and one small. Gradually dominating,  
love theme recurs, continuing over...

INT. CHAIN DRUG STORE - DAY

medicine. ...Joe slaps down money to pay for an assortment of

INT. CONDEMNED TENEMENT - DAY

Joe takes the stairs two at a time to burst in on...

INT. X FLAT - DAY

the ...Ratso huddled in the overstuffed chair -- wearing  
stolen sheepskin coat -- wrapped in blankets, his teeth  
chattering, in spite of the sweat on his forehead. Joe  
stops abruptly, his mood shattered by Ratso's alarming  
condition. They simply stare at each other for a moment, then Joe  
turns away to see soup heating on the Sterno stove. Joe  
tosses one of his paper bags onto Ratso's lap...

JOE

See what you think of that crap.  
I'll pour your soup. Got some of  
that junk you like to swill, too.  
Mentholatum. Aspirin. All that shee-  
it...

shivering, Ratso opens the paper bag, trying to control his  
pulling out the socks and a suit of long underwear. He  
sees Joe watching him for a reaction. The best Ratso can do  
is a slight shake of his head.

JOE

They wrong?

RATSO

No. But while you was buying the  
underwear, I could have lifted the  
socks.

JOE

You couldn't lift fly specks from a  
sugar bowl. Can you hold this?

warmth Joe hands Ratso the soup. Ratso seems steadied by the  
in his hands. He nods, sipping the soup.

RATSO

But thanks.  
(hesitates, then)  
Hey, Joe, don't get sore about this  
or anything. You promise?

JOE

Yeah.

RATSO

Well, I don't think I can walk.

(embarrassed)

I mean, I been falling down a lot  
and, uh...

JOE

And what?

RATSO

I'm scared.

JOE

What of?

RATSO

What'll happen. I mean what they do  
to, you know, do with you -- if you  
can't -- ah, Christ!

JOE

Who?

RATSO

I don't know. Cops. Or the -- how  
should I know?

to  
Ratso is trembling so violently that the soup, starts  
slop over. Joe takes it and sets it on the table.

JOE

Okay. Here it is. You gonna go see  
the doctor. I got nine bucks and  
twenty more Thursday and I gonna be  
riding high before you know it. So  
you gonna get you the best goddam  
doctor in this town and get yourself  
straightened out, that's what.

RATSO

No doctors. No, sir. Not me. Doctors  
are like goddam auto mechanics. Fix  
one-thing, unplug another. Operate  
for piles and while they're there,  
they unscrew your liver. My old man,  
for God's sake, wasn't any sicker'n  
I am when he went to the doctor.

JOE

Well, just exactly what the hell you  
think you're gonna do? Die on me?

RATSO

I'm going to Florida, that's my only  
chance.

JOE

You know what's wrong with you? You  
got fevers. You kinky as a bedbug.

How you gonna get to Florida?

RATSO

I'll find the money. If you just get me on the bus, that's all I ask.

JOE

Just when everything's going my way, you gotta pull a stunt like this.

RATSO

I don't even want you to go. Whaddya think of that? I got other plans for my life than dragging around some dumb cowboy that thinks he's God's gift to women. One twenty-buck trick and he's already the biggest stud in New York City. It's laughable.

Joe sets his Stetson on his head.

JOE

When I put you on that bus down to Florida tonight, that'll be the happiest day of my life!

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

curl  
phone is

Joe strikes a match with his thumbnail and watches it away while he waits, hearing a phone ring. Then the answered by a woman's voice.

JOE

Hey, Shirley... Miss who? Oh, yeah, well, when will Missus Gardner be home?... I'm a friend of hers, a goddam good friend... Shee-it, I can't wait till then...

still

Joe hangs up while the answering service's voice is talking. The match has burned out. Joe flips it away.

INSERT

Headline -- WALTER P. BOX TAKES NEW YORK BY SURPRISE.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DUSK

Joe loiters outside a gag headline print shop, his eyes following a man in homburg and chesterfield.

EXT./INT. METROPOLE - DUSK

in a

Joe lingers momentarily, identifying with the violence jazz drummer, his eyes searching for a pickup.

INT. ARCADE - DUSK

cowboy  
the  
applause...

Joe tests his skills in a shoot-down with a large metal and kills him, a recorded voice sneaks, "Got me!" as cowboy slumps. Joe glances off as he hears polite

TOWNY'S VOICE

Bravo...

hand

...TOWNY -- a stout, round-faced man -- clasps Joe's between both of his own, like an old friend.

TOWNY

How are you?

(more quietly)

Townsend P. Locke, from Chicago.  
Call me Towny. I'm here to attend a paper manufacturers' convention and, frankly, to have a little fun, dammit...

away.

Towny grips Joe's elbow, almost forcibly leading him

EXT. SIDE STREET WEST OF BROADWAY - DUSK

Towny's face appears huge at Joe's shoulder.

TOWNY

This is my first night in town and I'll consider it a ghastly omen clouding my entire ten days, if you don't consent to have dinner with me. Anywhere you like...

but  
a  
with  
they've

Towny's mouth continues speaking at an incredible rate, his words are drowned out momentarily by the grinder of a sanitation truck, chewing up a discarded Christmas tree tinsel clinging to it. Towny is still talking when passed the truck.

TOWNY

...never mind how you're dressed. They know me. I'll say you're with the rodeo. There's always a rodeo in New York, dammit. Besides, you look very elegant...

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

whining  
said,

Joe hardly notices O'Daniel on a far corner, his scarcely audible. "Ye are the salt of the earth, Jesus

be  
but if the salt hath lost its savor, wherewith shall it  
salted?"

TOWNY

But, dammit all, I just remembered,  
we'll have to eat in my room because  
I have this phone call coming at  
nine-thirty...

INT. TOWNY'S HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

An ancient open cage lift.

TOWNY

What I like about you, you're such a  
wonderful conversationalist. So won't  
that be nice to have dinner sent up?

INT. TOWNY'S HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A threadbare, carpeted but spacious hallway.

TOWNY

Fifty years ago this was the only  
hotel in Manhattan. My mother always  
calls me at her bedtime, so I've got  
to be there.

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

large  
Mutual  
quickly  
coffee  
The room has little to recommend it except its size and  
French window, through which -- ignored by Joe -- the  
tower flashes MONY. Towny waves Joe toward the couch,  
slipping several physical culture magazines from the  
table onto a shelf beneath.

TOWNY

A drink? I've got some nice gin. If  
you'd prefer something else, they'll  
send it up...

JOE

Gin's okay.

TOWNY

It's so exciting. New York. The mad  
forward thrust of everything. My  
sense of time here is completely  
altered.

INT. TENEMENT STAIRS - DAY

blanket.  
Joe carries Ratso down the stairs, wrapped in a

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Chinese  
last

The coffee table is littered with empty cartons of food, soaked through with brown sauce. Joe finds the egg roll and eats it as Towny's voice drones on.

TOWNY

Sometimes it seems to me time stopped twenty years ago. There was this war, there was this handsome young man with quite black hair and he was supposed to die. But he didn't. Isn't that amusing?

JOE

What?

to  
slightly  
purpose.

Towny's dialogue moves out of sync. Towny's eyes seem to look into camera -- from Joe's viewpoint -- but past it. The quality of the scene grows increasingly disjointed as Joe glances around the room, looking for something to steal, losing personal contact with Towny, viewing him as an object to be used for a specific

TOWNY

Enough about me. I'm through talking for the evening. Now I want to hear about conditions in the West. The romance of the West holds a tremendous power over me. Mother was actually a pioneer woman, can you believe it? When she calls, I'll introduce you and she'll be so thrilled.

EXT. TENEMENT NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Ratso sits on a stoop while Joe hails a cab.

INT. TOWNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

value.  
probably  
recalls

Towny's voice is only a shrill monotone from here, Joe searches with increasing desperation for something of value. An old electric razor is too bulky for Joe's pocket, worthless anyhow. Towny's array of medicines merely recalls Joe's purpose.

TOWNY'S VOICE

Mama, a coincidence. Guess who was being discussed. Discussed. Not disgusted. Discussed! Do you have that thing turned up? Why aren't you wearing it! This is impossible!

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Joe lifts Ratso from the taxi and carries him inside.

JOE'S VOICE

Listen, Towny, did I mention I got a sick kid?

INT. TOWNY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joe is rehearsing the speech in the bathroom mirror.

JOE

Well, he is, he's sicker'n shee-it.  
And I've gotta get him South quick  
as I can...

INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

clock  
Joe stands in a long line, glancing impatiently at the  
while Ratso waits on a bench, wrapped in his blanket.

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Towny is stretched out on the couch, staring morosely.

TOWNY

I was so childish with her.

him,  
Joe moves into frame past camera, standing in front of  
so that we can see the scene from behind Joe's waist.

JOE

What d'you want?

TOWNY

What?

JOE

What you got me up here for?

TOWNY

Oh, difficult, it's so difficult.  
You're a nice person, Joe -- I should  
never have asked you up -- a lovely  
person. Oh, how I loathe life. I  
loathe it. Please go. Please.

JOE

You want me to leave?

TOWNY

No, yes. No, I mean yes please go.  
Help me to be good. Come back  
tomorrow. Promise.

JOE

I'm going to Florida.

TOWNY



This is terrible. I meet someone who --  
then -- wait, I want to give you a  
present. For your trip. You'll let  
me please...

INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Joe's face is expectant, next in line at the ticket  
window.

He nods reassuringly toward Ratso.

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe's face is puzzled then angry as Towny takes a Saint  
Christopher medal from his sack and hands it to Joe.

His

eyes are looking past Joe, his speech out of sync.

TOWNY

Please take it. You don't have to be  
Catholic. Saint Christopher is the  
patron saint of all travelers. I  
want you to have it. For helping me  
be good.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

It's Joe's turn. The clerk looks at him expectantly.

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Joe's voice is angry.

JOE

Listen, I gotta have money.

TOWNY

Oh. Yes. Of course. I should have  
thought. You shouldn't have to ask.  
That was thoughtless of me. Yes.  
Wait here...

Beside  
woman  
movements  
and  
close  
his  
calling

Towny hurries across the room to the bedside table.  
the telephone is a picture of a prosperous pioneer  
wearing a hearing-aid. Towny tries to conceal his  
as he takes a wallet from the drawer, lifts out a bill  
tucks the wallet back and turns -- terrified to see Joe  
behind him -- almost knocking the lamp off the table in  
fright. Pressed against the table, protecting but  
attention to his wallet, Towny holds out the bill.

TOWNY

Here. Don't even thank me.

JOE  
(takes the bill)  
I gotta have more'n ten. I gotta  
have fifty-seven dollars.

TOWNY  
I simply don't have it, Joe.

JOE  
Get outta my way.

TOWNY  
You're wasting your time. There's  
nothing in there.

head  
Trying to  
but  
corner  
his

Towny clutches the table, staring at Joe, shaking his  
like a bad little boy. Joe backhands him angrily.  
duck the blow, Towny stumbles and slips to the floor,  
grabs the table in his arms, watching Joe out of the  
of his eyes, whimpering. Joe grabs his hair, turning  
face up.

JOE  
Let go. Let go of the table.

table  
fist.

Joe slaps him, but Towny clings more fiercely to the  
as Joe tries to jerk it free. Joe strikes him with his

TOWNY  
I deserved that, I know I did.

falls  
fulfill

But he clutches the table wildly. His mother's picture  
unnoticed. Joe stands in panic, sickened, unable to  
the role Towny has assigned him.

TOWNY  
I brought this on myself. I'm  
bleeding, my nose is bleeding, isn't  
it?

blood  
free of

Towny's eyes shine, teeth clenched in a crazy smile,  
trickling from his nose. Suddenly Joe jerks the lamp  
its socket.

JOE  
You wanna gimme fifty-seven dollars  
or you wanna busted skull?

Towny simply stares at the lamp.

JOE

Please let go of that table.

falls  
bed,  
him  
money --  
the

Joe threatens, swings the lamp down, but stops short of hitting Towny. Towny shrieks -- eyes rolling back as he limps -- losing his grip on the table, leaning on the laughing and crying hysterically. Joe has to step over to reach the wallet in the drawer. He takes all the probably twice what he needs -- desperate to get out of room.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Joe carries Ratso up the steps onto the bus.

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

Towny's shrill little whisper says...

TOWNY

Thank you, Joe.

the  
holding his  
hand,  
as  
dentures on  
useless

...provoking Joe to glance back. Towny is reaching for telephone, his eyes on Joe with wild brightness, hand on the receiver. Joe knocks the phone from his hits Towny in the mouth, jerks the cord from the wall Towny falls -- gagging -- finally dislodging his the carpet. Joe stands sick and confused, holding the phone in two hands...

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL - DAY

gears.

The bus driver revs the powerful engine, shifting

INT. TOWNY'S BEDROOM-SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

when  
receiver

...Joe is about to hang the dead receiver on its hook on sudden impulse -- he shoves the small end of the into the toothless mouth of the man on the floor.

EXT. LINCOLN TUNNEL - DAY

The bus roars into the tunnel.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

teeth

Joe and Ratso sit near the rear of the bus. Ratso's  
chatter, wrapped in the blanket.

RATSO  
Thirty-one hours.

They ride a few moments in silence.

RATSO  
The trip is. Nine-thirty in the  
morning we get there. Not this morning  
but the next one at nine thirty.

Both nod for a moment in silence.

JOE  
These guys're good drivers.

RATSO  
They gotta be.

JOE  
Yeah.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The bus tires sing as it speeds South.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

the  
new

Joe and Ratso have reversed places, putting Ratso by  
window. Joe watches a middle-aged couple try on their  
straw hats, unaware that Joe is watching them.

RATSO  
You get your first palm tree in South  
Carolina.

JOE  
How'n hell a dumb Bronx kid like you  
know that?

RATSO  
I read it.

JOE  
Shee-it. You believe all you read?

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

The metal grating rings as the bus soars onto it.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - NIGHT

casually  
Joe

Two aging young ladies in brand-new resort wear are  
examining Joe, along with the other men on the bus, but

is frowning at Ratso, who shivers despite the bright sun.

JOE

If you have to shiver, why don't you pull the blanket up more?

RATSO

I been thinking. I hope we're not gonna have a lotta trouble about my name down there. Because like what's the whole point of this trip anyway?

JOE

Keep the goddam blanket on.

RATSO

I mean New York's one thing, but can you see this guy, imagine it, running around the goddam beach all suntan and he's going in swimming, like, and then somebody yells 'Hey, Ratso' -- how does that sound to you?

JOE

Sounds like they knew you.

RATSO

Sounds like crap, admit it. And I'm not gonna have it. I'm Rico all the time, okay, do you blame me? That's agreed, okay? We're gonna tell all these new people my name's Rico?

Joe nods. Ratso closes his eyes, momentarily at peace.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

The bus passes a Florida hotel sign too swiftly to read it.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAWN

Joe frowns in his sleep, awakens, lifts his Stetson to see Ratso wide awake, in misery, wiping tears from his eyes.

JOE

Hey -- whatsa matter?

RATSO

(barely audible)

I'm wet.

JOE

You're what?

RATSO

I wet my pants! My seat's all wet.

JOE  
Hell, don't cry about it!

RATSO  
Here I am going to Florida and my  
leg hurts, my butt hurts, my chest  
hurts, my face hurts, and like that  
ain't enough, I gotta pee all over  
myself.

Joe laughs suddenly, uncontrollably.

RATSO  
I'm falling apart, that's funny?

JOE  
(nods, laughing)  
You just -- just -- what happened,  
you just had a little rest stop wasn't  
on the schedule.

funniest  
starts  
Ratso begins to laugh with Joe as if it were the  
thing they'd ever heard. Then Ratso's face pales as he  
to choke and cough. Joe pats him on the back.

JOE  
Hey, what size pants you wear?

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET - DAY

clothing  
shirt. He  
a  
the  
WAITRESS.  
The bus is parked in the distance. Joe comes from a  
store, bare-headed, wearing plain slacks and sport-  
carries the boots, Stetson and cowboy suit in one hand,  
bundle under his arm. He dumps his cowboy regalia in  
trash bin of a sandwich stand and calls to the

JOE  
Couple crullers'n coffee to go.

The Waitress draws coffee, wraps crullers.

WAITRESS  
Where you from?

JOE  
New York.

starts  
accomplished  
happening.  
Joe pays. She smiles, gives him change. Joe smiles,  
on toward the bus, hardly aware that he has  
something rare and remarkable for Joe -- a simple human  
contact without fear or threat, a pleasant everyday

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

wider  
passengers  
a  
dozes  
continues,  
waist.

Joe and Ratso have moved to the seat farthest back, than the others. Joe blocks the view of the other as he helps Ratso into a new pair of corduroy pants and Florida shirt. In the middle of the operation, Ratso dozes off. Joe shakes his head, scowling, annoyed, but lifting Ratso enough to slide the pants around his waist. Ratso awakens as Joe zips the fly.

RATSO

Hey, what the hell you doing?

JOE

I'm zipping your fly, what the hell you think I'm doing?

cigarettes,

They both smile. It isn't funny enough to laugh at. Joe arranges the blanket, takes out a package of cigarettes, glances at Ratso and puts it away.

EXT. TRAVELING SHOT WITH BUS - DAY

glaring  
to the

Palm trees are streaking past the window. The sun is hot. A group of kids in bare feet and straw hats wave bus as it passes.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

across  
watching...

Ratso's eyes squint in a dazed half-sleep. Joe leans to pull down the shade. He hesitates a moment, ...past his reflection, a group of young men on their way to work, carrying lunch pails, dressed exactly as Joe is now dressed...

nod

...then Joe lowers the blind and seats himself. Ratso slightly, his voice practically inaudible.

RATSO

Thanks, Joe.

JOE

Shee-it, you know, I got this thing all figured out, Ratso. I mean Rico. When we get to Miami, what I'll do,

I'll go to work. I gotta do that,  
'cause see, I ain't no kind of a  
hustler. I ain't even any goddam  
good as a bum. I'm a nothing, that's  
what I am. So reckon I'd better go  
to work and get me a goddam job.  
Okay?

face  
hand  
Joe glances at Ratso, but there is no response.  
Surreptitiously, Joe takes out a cigarette, turns his  
away from Ratso and lights it, hiding it cupped in his  
as he smokes.

JOE  
Yeah, guess that's what I'm gonna  
do.

looking  
shades  
noticing  
position.  
view  
thoughtful. We  
starting  
with  
the  
loudly.  
They ride for a moment in semi-darkness, Joe smoking,  
at the other people on the bus, brighter without the  
own. Joe turns, checking the blanket around Ratso,  
that Ratso is sitting in a peculiarly stiff, awkward  
Joe leans over to straighten Ratso's head, blocking our  
for a moment. Then Joe leans back, frowning,  
still do not see Ratso's face. Joe rises slowly,  
forward in the bus...  
...passing an older couple, a schoolgirl, two ladies  
straw hats, a young man trying to read, pausing when he  
reaches...  
...the DRIVER, staring out at the Sunshine Parkway with  
Driver, leaning over so he won't have to speak too

DRIVER  
Yes, sir?

JOE  
My friend's dead in the back seat.

DRIVER  
Your friend's what in the back seat?

JOE  
Dead. Dead as a doornail.

DRIVER  
Is this some kind of...



up. He glances at Joe, then pulls off the road and stands

DRIVER

Okay, folks, everything's fine.  
Nothing to worry about.

Driver The passengers crane their necks as Joe follows the  
staring to the rear of the bus. The passengers at the rear are  
touches ahead, trying not to see what is going on. The Driver  
it. Ratso, straightens, touches his hat, but doesn't remove

DRIVER

Is he kin to you?

Joe nods no.

DRIVER

Don't you want to close his eyes?

JOE

Close them?

DRIVER

Just reach over and close them. That's  
all.

Joe closes Ratso's eyes.

DRIVER

I guess we'll just drive on, right?  
Nothing else to do.

JOE

No, sir. Not till Miami. I'll see to  
burying then.

passengers. The Driver moves to the front and turns to the

DRIVER

Just a little sickness, folks, nothing  
serious. We'll be in Miami...  
(looks at watch)  
...in forty minutes.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

on. Joe sits stiffly, very frightened, as the bus starts  
and Then he glances at Ratso, frowning, reaches out an arm  
ahead. puts it around Ratso, settling back, staring straight

THE END