

OUT OF TEMPER

An original screenplay by
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In the darkness, a gun fires.

FADE IN:

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

A wooden chair lies on its back. Blood drains from the body tied to it and pools on the sawdust-covered floor.

MAN (O.S.)
Find him a comfortable ditch.

INT. TAXI - MORNING

ARCHIE CLARK (late 30s) throws an overstuffed messenger bag onto the seat and sits. A beefy white guy. Rough hewn face. Weary eyes. He stabs a slip of paper at the CABBIE.

ARCHIE
This address.

His Canadian accent is distinct. He fusses with his tattered blazer and tie, then notices the cabbie watching him.

ARCHIE
You have a beef, buddy?

CABBIE
You're The Enforcer! The meanest
bruiser in the NHL!

ARCHIE
Watch the road.

CABBIE
You were my hero growing up --

ARCHIE
-- If I was The Enforcer, would you
be picking me up at Greyhound?

A MONTAGE OF SCENES juxtapose with Archie's conversation:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

ARCHIE (V.O.)
No. You'd pick him up at The Ritz.

A grungy Archie searches a dumpster.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Or the Capital Grille.

Archie sniffs a damp chunk of bread. Climbs into a dirty cardboard box and eats.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Archie holds a cardboard sign: "HARD WORKER. HUNGRY."

ARCHIE (V.O.)
If I was The Enforcer, I'd be on
Easy Street.

A MAN leans from an SUV to ask a question. Archie lifts his shirt, exposing firm abs.

LATER, IN THE SUV

ARCHIE (V.O.)
I'd never have to work again.

The man tempts Archie with a twenty.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
To scrounge for a living.

Archie checks the area, then pockets the money. The man unbuckles his pants.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Archie sleeps in a cot beside rows of other vagrants.

CABBIE (V.O.)
I suppose you'd be rich after, what,
twelve years --

ARCHIE (V.O.)
-- Sixteen.

An INDIGENT reaches for Archie's messenger bag. Archie grabs the indigent's wrist.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Sixteen hard years as an NHL fighter.

The indigent tries to pull away, but Archie attacks like a cornered bear. STAFFERS rush to separate them.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Archie steps into a cold drizzle, months of scruff on his face. Pulls up the hood of his "EXETER UNIVERSITY" sweatshirt.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
But I'm not The Enforcer.

He shoulders his messenger bag with resolve.

INT. PAWN SHOP - LATER

CABBIE (V.O.)
You think the Stanley Cup is heavy?

A PAWNBROKER studies an NHL Championship ring.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
No, it's light as tin foil. In that moment it was ... I bet it was unreal.

PAWNBROKER
Is this real? Who'd this belong to?

Archie shrugs. The broker hands Archie a wad of cash.

INT. FLOPHOUSE - LATER

Archie stares into a dingy room from the dingier hallway.

ARCHIE (V.O.)
If I was The Enforcer, my life would be very different.

He hands the SUPER his rent.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

ARCHIE (V.O.)
Very different.

Archie sits freshly shaved at a computer terminal. Ignores the disgust of the WOMAN beside him. Logs into a web site.

He studies the screen with trepidation – then exuberant joy.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - DAY

Archie sits in front of his PAROLE OFFICER.

ARCHIE

The job's in Exeter. I played college
hockey there.

PAROLE OFFICER

That's 800 kilometers from here.

She studies Archie. Then her computer. Archie waits...

CUT TO:

EXT. BUS STATION - PRESENT DAY, MORNING

CABBIE (V.O.)

People defy expectations, I guess.

Archie, in tattered blazer and tie, strides toward a cab.
Reaches for the door.

ARCHIE (V.O.)

In every possible way.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER THAT MORNING

Archie slams the door of the cab. Looks up at "COCOA POWER" –
the peeling pink facade of a shabby chocolate shop.

A WINO reclines against it.

Archie takes in the street. One sign shop with stunning
flowerpots – the other shops tired or vacant. A billboard at
the end of the street stands bare.

Sunlight catches every flaw in Archie's outfit. He opens his
wallet. Fingers one bill. Motions for the cabbie to wait as
he rummages through his messenger bag.

A pair of BVDs drops to the pavement.

CABBIE

Have a nice life, Mr. Clark.

The cab leaves. Archie and the wino both grab for the BVDs.
Archie threatens with his fist as a PATRON leaves Cocoa Power.

PATRON
HEY! LET HIM GO!

Archie puts up his hands. The wino shoves Archie into the gutter beside a UPS van. Throws his bottle at Archie. Flees.

Satisfied, the patron sashays away.

Archie climbs from the gutter. Straightens his clothes. Notices a wine stain and tries to wipe it off.

Pissed, he shoulders his messenger bag and marches toward Cocoa Power. Grabs the door handle.

Sees the rainbow flag sticker on the window.

The door flies open, banging Archie's knee. MAX (30s), a brawny UPS delivery guy, exits with an armful of boxes.

MAX
Hold the door, would ya buddy?

He does, and gets an appreciative smile from Max. Archie regards Max a moment. Then limps into:

INT. COCOA POWER - CONTINUOUS

A riot of SHOPPERS place orders at a candy counter. Others queue noisily at a marble-topped espresso bar. Red-foiled hearts and frilly boxes of pink and brown jam glass shelves.

A fanciful Cupid holding bow, arrow and a "BE MY VALENTINE, BITCH" sign hangs suspended from the ceiling.

JOHNNY (early 30s), a compact Nordic dream in work shirt and pink apron - backs into Archie, arms loaded.

JOHNNY
The shelter is up the street.

ARCHIE
I'm a new hire, not a tramp.

JOHNNY
Then you need a new tailor. Hold that door or get outta my way.

Archie steps aside. Surprised, Johnny barrels through the door, glaring at the new hire.

Archie spots a tray of samples, devours four of them, then approaches MIMI (19) – a wispy sales associate – as she deftly handles the coffee crowd.

ARCHIE

I'm looking for Vanessa?

Mimi points to VANESSA (50s) – a black force-of-nature who packs orders with grace and style.

ARCHIE

Vanessa? I'm Archie, the new marketing guy. Is there somewhere we can talk?

VANESSA

Now? Hell, no.

She shoves a pink apron into Archie's hand with trepidation.

VANESSA

Lordy, I am a fool for starting a newbie on Valentine's Day. Can you even run a damn register?

ARCHIE

Take money. Put in drawer. Repeat.

VANESSA

Save the attitude for your mother. Card reader... bar code scanner...

An overweight NERD steam rolls to the counter.

NERD

Hey, you got these Oreos in dark?

ARCHIE

Milk and dark, sir. Two-piece and nine-piece but, honestly, don't you and your Warcraft buds deserve that heart piñata on the corner shelf?

NERD

What... where? Oh, awesome!

The Nerd makes a beeline. Vanessa gapes at Archie.

ARCHIE

Your web site sucks, but the product info isn't bad.

VANESSA

Don't test me. And don't eat the samples. I saw your ass.

ARCHIE

I, uh...

(to a patron)

... Is that all, ma'am? Those truffle kisses are really shouting your name.

EXT. COCOA POWER - EVENING

Archie exits with Mimi. She locks up.

MIMI

Get a drink with me?

ARCHIE

Sorry, I don't... I gotta unpack.

Mimi accepts that and strolls up the street.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - LATER

A desperate place, perhaps a former flophouse. Archie plods to the desk. The MANAGER leers at him.

ARCHIE

You have a bed?

MANAGER

Five bucks. No food. No drugs. No sex... between residents.

Archie counts his funds. Pays the fee.

MANAGER

Oh, and the showers are broken.

INT. COCOA POWER - MORNING

Vanessa watches as Archie examines the facade outside. She checks the time as he enters.

VANESSA

Ten minutes early. You live close?

ARCHIE

Walking distance. This street has seen better days.

She judges yesterday's outfit. Gives him a sniff.

VANESSA

Did you shower?

ARCHIE

So, we switch from Valentine's to,
what, St. Paddy's?

VANESSA

Time to get real: career-ending
injury, compensation fight with the
Players Association. Assault charge...

ARCHIE

My new parole officer is up the street --

VANESSA

-- Shouldn't a person of your renown
have two damn pennies to rub together?

ARCHIE

You hired me with all my flaws and
warts. So what say we cut the banter
and get on with it?

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - MOMENTS LATER

Vanessa introduces Johnny and they shake hands gamely. Johnny
scratches his neck, flexing his bicep for Archie's benefit.

ARCHIE

Yesterday was crazy, eh?

JOHNNY

Busiest day of the year, sport. It's
all downhill from here.

THEN, THE PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

A shabby upstairs room. Shelves of ingredients, huge blocks
of chocolate, tempering units and stainless work stations.

The small PRODUCTION STAFF are unimpressed with Archie.

THEN, HIS NEW OFFICE

A cramped closet overwhelmed with samples, binders and
cookbooks. An out-of-date Apple rests on a beat-up desk.

VANESSA

Your home away from home.

Archie peers in with growing uncertainty.

FINALLY, A STOREROOM

A windowless room. Old equipment and back stock pack one end. Light filters in from an attached washroom.

VANESSA

My former flat, now storage. What did I say the salary was?

ARCHIE

You didn't.

VANESSA

\$35K a year, ninety days probation, 40% off on product. Take it, or --

ARCHIE

-- I'll take it. And my past issues?

VANESSA

Old news. There's a lavatory so wash up. Today, you make coffee.

INT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Archie, now in a pink apron, hands Vanessa an espresso. She sips it. Adds it to the rejects on the counter.

VANESSA

Better. Try a couple more.

Mimi listens as she stocks shelves. Johnny delivers chocolate shamrocks to her, then sneaks a rejected espresso.

PETER (60s), an elegant man in a couture suit, glides in.

PETER

Is it rush week? I just stepped over two PIKES and a Theta Chi... wait, a new barista? I hope you belong to my church.

ARCHIE

I'm agnostic.

PETER
Mmmmm, pity. Hello, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Peter. Newbie's pretty in pink, eh?

ARCHIE
When in Rome, shipping boy.

PETER
You never really know a person until
you know their favorite color – and
I don't imagine it's pink.

Archie affirms Peter with a smile. Serves him an espresso as
Vanessa shoos Johnny away.

ARCHIE
I'm Archie. Marketing guy and probable
jack-of-all-trades here.

PETER
(flirting)
Are you master of one?

ARCHIE
One or two.

VANESSA
Peter runs a brand communications
firm across the street.

PETER
Please. It's just a sign shop.

ARCHIE
Is that right? Tell me more.

EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - EVENING

Archie rummages through employee take-out boxes in the fridge.

VANESSA (O.S.)
Archie, you there? I'm locking up.

ARCHIE
Be down in a minute!

He devours one of the food boxes.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - LATER

Archie carefully folds his blazer and shirt and places them under his cot. A thin VAGRANT eyes them with intent.

ARCHIE

When a bone breaks, it sounds like a tree branch snapping during a snow storm – kind of a muffled crack. Then the screaming starts...

The vagrant decides to look elsewhere.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

Mimi helps Archie replace Cupid with a whimsical leprechaun.

MIMI

Are you from here, originally?

PABLO (20s), a muscular tough in a suit, enters with authority. Mimi shrinks behind the counter.

ARCHIE

How can I help?

PABLO

Pick-up for Alice.

ARCHIE

Sure thing. Hold on.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - CONTINUOUS

Johnny watches Archie as he scrutinizes the special orders.

ARCHIE

You have some pick-up for Alice?

JOHNNY

Security payment. Top shelf, far right. Name's on the box.

ARCHIE

We don't have a Web account for this?

Archie finds a cigar box with "ALICE" inked on the side. He discovers a VISA cash card inside.

THE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Archie returns to the shop empty-handed.

ARCHIE
No order for Alice.

Pablo draws himself up to his full six-foot one.

PABLO
We have a monthly order for Alice,
newbie. Order isn't filled, your
business becomes less secure.

ARCHIE
Well, let's have another look.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - CONTINUOUS

Archie leads Pablo into the office.

ARCHIE
(pointing)
Maybe it's up there somewhere.

Pablo looks. Archie bashes him face-first into the shelves. Jerks his suit coat over his head. Pounds his torso like a jackhammer. Manhandles him into the alley.

The door closes slowly. Garbage cans crash. The sounds of assault resonate. Mimi rushes in.

JOHNNY
Our boy just kicked a hornet's nest.

The door flies open and Archie stomps in. Shirt torn. Fists bloody. He juts his body into the alley.

ARCHIE
Alice is now persona-non-grata. I
will crucify anyone who shows up
asking about her. Savvy?!

He slams the door. Mimi and Johnny gape at him.

ARCHIE
I need some ice.

SALES OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Archie boots up the computer with bandaged hands. Vanessa drops an apron in his lap.

ARCHIE

Just an hour of doing my actual job?

VANESSA

You wanna sell chocolate? You gotta learn bean to bar.

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Vanessa leads Archie to the chocolate tempering vats.

ARCHIE

So you temper the chocolate first.

VANESSA

Yep. We begin with couverture bars --

ARCHIE

-- You temper it to stabilize the cocoa butter. When it cools it releases from the mold and retains a shiny surface. And it doesn't bloom.

VANESSA

You're a regular encyclopedia. But how long before it sets? What are cocoa nibs? What is chocolate liquor?

Archie's interest is piqued.

ARCHIE

Enough. I surrender.

Vanessa shoves Archie into a chair. Places a tray of truffle centers and the bowl of melted chocolate in front of him.

VANESSA

We hand-dip our truffles -- but you already know that. Let's see your technique. Dip with two fingers, tap it on the side, set it on the tray. See the circle? The "O" is for orange. Dip four dozen -- and wear a glove.

LATER

Vanessa examines Archie's truffles with distaste.

VANESSA

Maybe packaging is your cup of tea...
you can tie a bow, can you not?

STILL LATER

He can not. His boxes are mangled, his ribbons frayed.

VANESSA

Archie, it might be best if you stayed
in your office.

SALES OFFICE - EVENING

Archie squints at the Apple. Piles around him begin to organize the chaos.

Johnny brings Archie a fresh ice pack.

JOHNNY

Hey, Knuckles! You busy tonight?

ARCHIE

I'm washing my hair.

JOHNNY

I'm takin' you to my gym. A little
lifting, some cardio. Burn off some
testosterone..?

ARCHIE

Okay, yeah. That would be great.

INT. GYM - LATER

A MONTAGE of gym scenes: Johnny spotting for Archie on the bench press; both sweating on ellipticals; covertly assessing each other in the locker room. They have chemistry.

INT. JAPANESE STEAKHOUSE - LATER

Archie and Johnny sit at a teppanyaki table as a Japanese CHEF prepares their food. Archie sips a tea, his eyes fixed on the food. Johnny sips a Manhattan.

The Chef tosses five shrimp in succession onto their plates. Archie devours his. Johnny takes his time.

JOHNNY

Just tea, eh? I always pictured hockey players as beer-drinkin' sex machines.

ARCHIE

Sorry to disappoint you.

JOHNNY

No, no – but satisfying people does seem part of your DNA.

ARCHIE

The thing is, hockey players live for hockey. The action, the camaraderie. There are women, sure – the pucks – but the sex is a, um, kind of a, a fringe benefit ...

Archie finds Johnny's gaze unnerving.

ARCHIE

So, you a life-long townie?

JOHNNY

Not in the rah-rah, Chamber-of-Commerce sense. You obviously have a hard-on for the place.

ARCHIE

What brought you here?

JOHNNY

Army discharge.

Johnny doesn't elaborate. The Chef serves them bowls of rice. Archie digs in.

ARCHIE

It felt good to lift, you know? You have amazing ... um, so, you have a favorite team?

JOHNNY

Back up, Tonto. Amazing...

ARCHIE

-- Nothing. It's stupid. A throwback to the hockey locker room thing.

JOHNNY

The homoerotic thing.

ARCHIE

Homosocial thing. Take a bunch of jocks who spend every minute together and you banter about everything.

JOHNNY

My amazing what. Pecs? Ass? 'Cause, frankly, your ass is fuckin' inspiring.

ARCHIE

I was going to say your abs are awesome and how do you keep definition and drink and eat carbs, but...

Archie considers Johnny.

ARCHIE

It's not a conversation most straight guys have.

JOHNNY

Outside the locker room, you mean?

Johnny nudges his rice over to Archie with his chopsticks.

JOHNNY

I prefer meat over carbs most days.

The Chef smirks. Adds two zucchini to the grill.

ARCHIE

Tell me about Alice.

JOHNNY

Why are you here? All those years in the NHL and you're in shitty Exeter? Not Aspen, or Miami.

ARCHIE

You live pretty large considering the shit economy. Shinola watch, Ducati Panigale V2... you got a side hustle we don't know about?

JOHNNY

Even has-been bench-warmers have walk-around money.

ARCHIE

I am great with investments.

JOHNNY

Let me guess: you married one puck
too many.

ARCHIE

I was gonna retire in style.

JOHNNY

Wait ... gambling. Drinking!

ARCHIE

My agent ran off with it, okay?
Emptied my accounts, bought a first-
class ticket and disappeared. Some
big-assed native is probably peeling
him guavas in Fiji.

Johnny bursts into laughter.

Archie storms out. Johnny pursues him, and catches him in the
airlock between the inner and outer doors.

JOHNNY

Hey, come on! I'm sorry!

Archie shoves Johnny against the glass.

ARCHIE

You know NOTHING about me!

JOHNNY

I know you can't afford food.

ARCHIE

Why are you such an asshole? Half
the time you're like a, a bird looking
for a chance to shit on me.

JOHNNY

That's what assholes do, sport.
(still amused)
Jesus, I can't believe that was true.

ARCHIE

I can feed myself. Jerk.

JOHNNY

So I'm an asshole only half the time?

Another PATRON enters, crowding the tight space. Johnny presses against Archie to make room. Archie doesn't push him away.

JOHNNY

I buy what I like, for whoever I like, because I can. So what's say we finish dinner and you spill the skinny on your felonious agent?

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Johnny moves to a wall. Pulls open a Murphy bed.

JOHNNY

Keep this on the DL. Vanessa would have a big, dramatic cow if she knew.

ARCHIE

Absolutely. You're great to, um...

Johnny lies back on the bed, propped on his elbows. His treasure trail peeks out.

JOHNNY

Look at you: Exeter's finest. How does pro hockey's star pugilist end up back here?

ARCHIE

I beat up a lot of people.

JOHNNY

Maybe the wrong people --

ARCHIE

-- Why is a college-educated smart-ass doing grunt work at a failing confectionary?

JOHNNY

I didn't go to college.

ARCHIE

You didn't learn words like "pugilist" in trade school.

JOHNNY

I was precocious.

Johnny stands and dons his coat. He steps close to Archie.

ARCHIE
Dinner was unexpected. Thanks.

JOHNNY
I make hella breakfast...

Archie opens the door. Johnny hands Archie a spare key.

JOHNNY
Sleep well, Knuckles.

COCOA POWER STOREROOM - THAT NIGHT

Archie lies in bed. Frustrated. He slides his hand beneath the comforter. Pulls on himself. The crash of breaking glass pulls him from his arousal.

EXT. COCOA POWER - MOMENTS LATER

Archie exits the shop. The front window lies shattered. "NIGGER DYKE" glares in spray paint across the store front.

EXT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Archie speaks with to Officer OFFICER QUINN (20s), a white-bread rookie. He glances at Archie's boxer briefs.

OFFICER QUINN
You live around here?

ARCHIE
You could probably hear that glass break for miles.

OFFICER QUINN
Yet you're the first guy to report it. You don't live here...

ARCHIE
-- It's just until I find a place.

Officer Officer Quinn glances around the deserted street.

OFFICER QUINN
The street could use some eyes and ears. You got any pants in there?

THAT MORNING

Archie and Mimi scrub the graffiti with soap and water. Max rolls his cart toward them.

MAX

Most of the shopkeepers use lacquer thinner for that.

ARCHIE

Have the gangs gotten bad here? I pounded on a friggin' extortionist a couple days ago.

Max glances around before answering.

MAX

Not gangs, Archie: Mafia. My friend Janet at the paper says every shop on this street pays protection money. Even the UPS Store. They tried to write a story...

MIMI

You're supposed to keep us safe.

ARCHIE

It's a ruffies and poppers town. Drunk frat boys. College kids.

MIMI

Vanessa hired you to protect us.

ARCHIE

Get serious. I'm not a gun for hire.

MAX

You were in the NHL.

ARCHIE

That doesn't mean...

PETER (O.S.)

-- Ooo, not a good morning?

Peter joins them.

PETER

I hear lacquer thinner works on that.

ARCHIE

Does everyone have an opinion on this? I suppose you're paying protection to some two-bit mob boss?

PETER

Not by choice.

ARCHIE

He needs to be chopped off at the knees. Don't you have cops?

MAX

The town has changed since you skated here for the university.

PETER

I heard that your agent ran off with all your money?

ARCHIE

(horrified)

What? No, that's not --

VANESSA (O.S.)

-- Well, shit on a cracker.

Vanessa gazes at the slur with immense dignity.

VANESSA

Lacquer thinner has always worked for me.

INT. COCOA POWER - CONTINUOUS

Archie pursues Vanessa into the shop.

ARCHIE

I didn't come here to be your bouncer.

VANESSA

You made a living as a fighter and as much as I'd love to crush some fucking mafia balls, this queen is too tired and ill-equipped to knock heads. I needed a man with fists and enough street cred to shove back and give me room. Your marketing degree was a bonus.

ARCHIE
I am NOT that guy!

VANESSA
Have you looked at your hands lately?

Archie balls his bandaged hands into fists.

VANESSA
I can barely pay the note on this building. The staff. The ingredients for all this. The profits all go to the God-damned man so he doesn't burn the place to the ground. So go back to wherever if you wish, but if you stay? Plant some damn flowers!

EXT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Archie wrestles flower pots into position as Mimi scrubs the graffiti and throws silent resentment at Archie. He notices.

Across the street, Peter waters his glorious flower pots. He watches Archie stuff a flower into fresh soil.

PETER
(shouting)
Gently, my good man. That flower has barely begun its life.

ARCHIE
(shouting back)
I am not built to be a gentle person.

Peter strolls over and takes a flower from Archie's hand.

ARCHIE
I hate flowers. I'm terrible in production, and packaging --

PETER
-- Allow me. I have a green thumb.

Archie glances at Peter's flowers. Hands his shovel to Mimi.

ARCHIE
Help him, Mimi. Let me at that damned paint.

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Archie plods in, exhausted. Johnny sits on the bed.

JOHNNY
Pissing off the mob will end real
shitty for everyone --

Archie hauls Johnny off the bed. They grapple.

ARCHIE
You spilled every secret I told you!

JOHNNY
Hey, whoa, cowboy! You never said
secret. I figured everyone knew --
Google certainly did.

ARCHIE
MY PERSONAL LIFE IS PERSONAL!

JOHNNY
SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO, HIT ME?

Archie shoves Johnny toward the door.

JOHNNY
Fuck. A guy tries to be decent.

ARCHIE
Just get the hell out.

JOHNNY
Apparently "asshole" is contagious.
I brought over a set of free weights
for you in case, you know -- you seem
to be workin' a lot...

Johnny shoves over the weights. Grabs a sack off the floor.

JOHNNY
And I'm takin' Santino's Italian
beef sandwiches with me.

ARCHIE
Damn it. Hold on --

JOHNNY
-- And fries. And banana cream pie.

ARCHIE

Johnny, look, I'm sorry. I'm a jerk.
You know I'm short right now.

JOHNNY

Yeah? Well, find some other fucking
gravy train! You're gonna get someone
hurt, or yourself killed.

Johnny slams the door behind him.

SALES OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Archie ransacks the shelves. Finds a box of old chocolate
samples. Rips the cellophane off one.

He sinks into his chair and turns on the computer. Navigates
to a web site called MANBAIT.

Archie enters his data with trepidation.

ARCHIE

Five foot eleven. 190. What am I
looking for?

He continues typing. On screen, we see the words: "A GENEROUS
MAN WHO CAN HOST. LOOKING FOR NOW."

Archie tugs off his shirt. Poses for his iPhone camera.

COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Archie pumps iron as *Phantom of the Opera* plays on his iPhone.
A ring tone interrupts. Archie checks the message.

INT. BUNGALOW FOYER - LATER

A doorbell rings. MR. GREEN (50s), a wiry man in a robe,
hurries to the door. Archie stands outside.

ARCHIE

Mr. Green? I'm Dirk.

BUNGALOW BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small room, dimly lit with a lamp and candles. Archie notes
the bottle of lube, condoms... wad of cash.

He studies a certificate on the wall.

ARCHIE
County health inspector, distinguished
service. Nice.

MR. GREEN
You seem old to be doing this.

Archie submits to Mr. Green as he strips Archie bare.

ARCHIE
What do you like?

MR. GREEN
I don't like it rough.

Archie reclines on the bed and Mr. Green straddles him. Shrugs
off his robe. Thrills to Archie's touch.

MR. GREEN
My God, Dirk. \$300 seems a bargain.

The comment stabs like a knife, but Archie does his job.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Archie walks, brooding. Sees a DARKLY DRESSED MAN pause at a
crossing in front of him - not crossing, just standing.

Archie stops, spooked. He never sees the man behind him, or
expects a hood to tug over his head.

INT. BARN - LATER

Someone jerks the hood off Archie's head - and Pablo punches
him in the face.

Archie sits bound to a wooden chair, fresh sawdust under his
feet. O'TOOLE (30s), a sturdy Irish tough, stands behind him.

PABLO
I see pain in your future.

Someone watches from the dark. THEIR POV shows Pablo as he
pounds Archie.

PABLO
I'm the face of this organization.
You will respect me.

ARCHIE

You wouldn't last a shift at a Pee Wee game.

O'Toole stops Pablo from striking Archie, taking his cue from the someone in the darkness. He consults a sheet of paper.

O'TOOLE

Archibald Blackwater Clark. Hockey star at Exeter University. Drafted in the second round. Former NHL bruiser: Boston Bruins, Chicago, San Jose Sharks. 4,019 all-time penalty minutes... huh, number one. That's impressive. Career-ending injury, pissed off the league, felony assault --

ARCHIE

-- I pled to a misdemeanor.

O'TOOLE

A somewhat ignoble end.

ARCHIE

Big time word for a small time hood.

O'TOOLE

You blew out your knee. Sad.

O'Toole sets a large ax on Archie's shoulder. Archie looks at it in horror.

O'TOOLE

Right knee, wasn't it?

Pablo hefts the ax a moment, then smacks Archie's right knee with its handle. Archie cries out in pain.

PABLO

Next time, I'm turning this fucker around and chopping your legs off at the knees. So be a good boy and pay us - every dime, every time.

O'Toole yanks the hood back over his head.

EXT. COCOA POWER - LATER

A van stops at the curb and Archie, still bound and hooded, tumbles onto the sidewalk.

Archie wriggles out of the hood as a drunk COLLEGE STUDENT staggers up to him.

ARCHIE
A little help here...

... And the student pees on Archie's head.

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - MORNING

Archie wakes in his bed. Feels every bruise and cut.

He hears voices on the stairs.

Archie scrambles up, his knee nearly giving out on him. Shoves the Murphy bed back into the wall. Hobbles into the washroom.

WASHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Archie presses against the wall. Familiar voices collect inventory in the storeroom.

VANESSA (O.S.)
Dark Oreos. Candied orange peel.

MIMI (O.S.)
But he's always early. It's like he lives here.

VANESSA (O.S.)
I am not that man's keeper.

They finish and leave. Archie examines his face in the mirror, then notices something behind him — a fresh dress shirt and tie hang from the shower rod.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - LATER

Archie enters, smart in his new clothes. Johnny wolf-whistles.

JOHNNY
Damn. Students jump your ass?

ARCHIE
Pablo and I had a little dance. He insisted on leading.

JOHNNY
That fuck has a long leash. Sit.

Archie winces as he sinks to a stool. Johnny gently moves a practiced hand over Archie's muscles.

ARCHIE

You know your way around a body.

JOHNNY

Field training for the Army. I got good at finding where soldier's hurt.

ARCHIE

Coffee and Tylenol will do me.

JOHNNY

That tie suits you. Good color. It even matches your eyes...

Johnny holds the tie against Archie's cheek. The moment hangs between them.

ARCHIE

I have a meeting.

JOHNNY

Negative, Knuckles. Not before I fix that handsome mug of yours.

Johnny brings his sling strap shoulder bag to the table. Removes a military-grade medical kit.

A gun pokes from a pocket.

ARCHIE

Protection from the students?

JOHNNY

Army surplus. Hold still.

INT. PETER'S SIGN SHOP - LATER

A design business, chic and sophisticated. Typography samples and corporate signage adorn the walls.

Archie limps in.

PETER

Good Lord. Is that from hockey?

ARCHIE

I need a marketing plan using social media that I know nothing about.

PETER

Piece of cake. Instagram, Tumblr, a web upgrade and blog. Sit down before you fall down.

Archie sits, takes in the space. Unfocused.

PETER

Archie?

ARCHIE

Be honest – can an angry thug like me possibly turn around the fortunes of a frilly chocolate shop?

PETER

Decent people can always turn around bad situations. I'll help you, gratis, because you are a decent person. Besides, I'm intrigued by angry men doing gentle things.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - LATER

Archie could count the reporters on one hand. He moves to the closest one, JANET (30s).

ARCHIE

I'm looking for a Janet?

JANET

You found one.

ARCHIE

A friend, Max, suggested --

JANET

-- You know Max?! I love that man. Nicest guy in the world.

ARCHIE

Absolutely. Do you accept story ideas?

JANET

Only if someone will read it.

ARCHIE

It's about the local mafia. They have a strangle-hold on Main Street.

JANET

Mafia? Best person to speak to is Rocco. That desk there.

The desk is empty.

ARCHIE

Will he be back soon?

JANET

Well, they found him in a ditch with a hole in his head, so I'm guessing someone wasn't keen on a Mafia-stranglehold-on-Main-Street story. But feel free to pitch it to another newspaper. If you can find one.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Archie exits a shop. He hands a box of chocolates to the SHOPKEEPER.

ARCHIE

Tell me something: what if you didn't have to pay protection money?

SHOPKEEPER

I ... is that possible?

INT. PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - DAY

Archie attempts to tie a satin bow on a box. Then again. And again. Vanessa checks her watch.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Archie hobbles up the street. Greets three PLAYERS with hockey sticks over their shoulders. IAN (20) - tall with a winning smile - recognizes him.

ARCHIE

You men heading to practice?

IAN

Yes sir, Mr. Clark. Every weekday afternoon and Saturday mornings.

ARCHIE

Same schedule, twenty years later.

STUDENT

Ian, quit jawing with the old man
and c'mon! We're gonna be late.

IAN

Will you skate with us sometime?

ARCHIE

You bet. Kick some butt, Ian.

Ian rejoins his teammates – but steals a look back at Archie.

Archie plods along, tired and sweaty. Sits on a bench with
his samples. Massages his knee.

A UPS van stops beside him. Max leans out.

MAX

You need a lift?

ARCHIE

You're a lifesaver, Max.

INT. PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - DAY

Vanessa watches as Archie carefully opens a mold. A dark
chocolate bunny plops onto a piece of parchment paper.

ARCHIE

My God, it worked.

Johnny ambles in with a delivery and nods to Archie. Vanessa
sees their connection.

VANESSA

You remember that movie? Something
about a box of chocolates.

ARCHIE

Yeah, *Forrest Gump*. "You never know
what you're going to get."

VANESSA

That's the thing about chocolates.
Some are sublime, some off-putting,
some downright nasty. That one? You
never know what you're gonna get.

ARCHIE

Johnny? He's harmless.

VANESSA

Mmm-hm.

SALES OFFICE - EVENING

Archie closes a spreadsheet. Thinks for a moment.

ARCHIE

Siri: search the web for Jonathan
Henrik Storgen.

SIRI

Showing results for Jonathan Storgen.

Archie studies the screen.

ARCHIE

No military info. Huh...

His stomach growls. He checks his empty wallet. Then opens
the MANBAIT site.

INT. A SPACIOUS LOFT - LATER

A knock at the door.

MAN (O.S.)

It's open.

Archie enters and takes in the stylish space. He moves to the
large windows and stares at the campus below.

He sees a reflection. Turns. Finds himself facing Peter,
resplendent in a kimono.

PETER

Well, I am hopelessly underdressed.

PETER'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Archie stares at an arrangement of tulips.

Peter sets an enormous sandwich in front of Archie, who
contemplates the ramifications of eating it.

PETER

Archie, if I wanted to fuck you, you
wouldn't be sitting there.

Archie eats with relish.

PETER

So are you just rough trade, or really
"a member of my church?"

Archie concentrates on the sandwich.

PETER

Should I check your iTunes history?

ARCHIE

Look, you were expecting something
and I'll deliver. Whatever you want.

PETER

I want one answer to one question.

Peter slides the vase of tulips across to Archie. Archie
retreats from them.

PETER

They're not radioactive.

ARCHIE

No...

Peter waits.

ARCHIE

What is it with gay men and flowers?

Peter offers Archie a glass of wine. Pours one for himself
when Archie declines.

ARCHIE

Look at these things: firm stems,
engorged buds ready to burst open.
It's a circle jerk in a vase.

Peter sips his wine.

ARCHIE

They represent, what, a gay man's
feminine side? You realize that when
you cut them, their life is over,
right? They're dying as soon as they
hit the vase. Whatever. They're
ridiculous.

Archie picks at his sandwich. Agitated.

ARCHIE

What do you want me to say?

PETER

I think they're beautiful.

ARCHIE

They represent death, okay? And funerals and weeping and two mangled drunks pieced together for open caskets. They mean abandonment. And heartbreak. And loneliness. Everything I've done has been cut off at the root. Every stinking thing. Every dollar I made. Every goal I achieved. Dead. Useless.

Archie shoves himself from the table. Escapes to the window. Finds his face damp and wipes it quickly.

ARCHIE

Fuck...

The lights of the campus twinkle. Peter joins him.

PETER

Seems to me you just need to plant yourself somewhere new.

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - MORNING

Archie snores peacefully. A CRASH downstairs jars him awake. He sits up, dazed. More commotion. Glass breaks.

Then, Mimi screams.

INT. COCOA POWER - CONTINUOUS

Four FRAT BOYS trash the shop. Take bites from the merchandise. Break chairs. One pisses in the corner.

BIG RED (20), a ginger giant, corners Mimi behind the counter. She kicks and fights.

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Let her go.

Archie stands in his underwear, imposing but out-numbered. Big Red shoves Mimi away. Joins his mates.

BIG RED

You and what army?

Archie launches himself at them. Pummels one. Uses the lad's body to block the others. Mimi throws jars at them.

But Big Red sweeps Archie's feet from under him. His cohort lay into Archie with everything they have.

Then, a CLICK. Big Red stares up at a gun.

JOHNNY

Get off of him.

BIG RED

Fuck you. Like you'll shoot us...

Johnny fires a bullet into the floor, then presses the hot muzzle into Big Red's forehead. The lad wets himself.

JOHNNY

Missed. And that never happens.

INT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Police haul the frat boys from the store. Officer Quinn interviews Archie, Johnny and Mimi.

OFFICER QUINN

They say you threw the first punch.

ARCHIE

He could have hurt her!

OFFICER QUINN

But why? Frat guys aren't usually that forward.

MIMI

It was a warning. Like the graffiti.

OFFICER QUINN

There's been more gang activity, but --

JOHNNY

(wallet in hand)
-- You wanted to see
my conceal-carry permit --

ARCHIE

-- The shopkeepers on this
street don't feel safe.
Cops, or no cops.

Johnny shoves the permit toward Officer Officer Quinn. He takes it. Studies it. Assesses the three of them.

OFFICER QUINN

I'll give my report to a detective.
And I'm sorry if my tone --

JOHNNY

-- Your superiors need to know that
Archie here means business.

Johnny escorts Officer Officer Quinn out the door. Mimi studies Archie as he sets tables onto their feet.

MIMI

You live upstairs, don't you.

Archie looks at his torn t-shirt and boxer briefs.

ARCHIE

I tried like hell to hide it.

Mimi sends him back up the stairs to change. Thankful.

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Archie enters with Johnny, both sweaty from a workout. He bangs the door against a rack of chocolates.

ARCHIE

Damn it.

Johnny massages Archie's shoulders.

JOHNNY

Sales are up because of you, Knuckles.
You're the rainmaker.

ARCHIE

You want dinner or something?

JOHNNY

Or something. I smell like ass.

Archie watches Johnny strip off his sodden shirt.

ARCHIE

What did you do in the Army?

JOHNNY

(sarcastic)
Defended the honor of this great
land. You got a towel?

ARCHIE

We'll need to share one. I meant...

Johnny shuts the washroom door behind him.

WASHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Archie enters in his boxer briefs. Glimpses Johnny through the partially open shower curtain.

ARCHIE

I meant, what did you do in the Army?
Medic? Communications? Artillery?

JOHNNY

You think any of the shopkeepers
will pit themselves against the Mob?

ARCHIE

You're evading me.

JOHNNY

You wanna bone me.

Archie stands at the toilet.

ARCHIE

You kill anyone, wherever you were?

JOHNNY

(ogling Archie)
Afghanistan. And yes. And you'll
never piss outta that beast until,
you know...

ARCHIE

You're such an asshole.

JOHNNY

Come wash the asshole.

Johnny holds out the soap. Archie hesitates, then strips off his boxer briefs and steps in behind Johnny.

He lathers Johnny's back. Johnny lies back against him.

ARCHIE

If we organize the shopkeepers...

Johnny guides Archie's soap over his chest and stomach. Urges Archie's hand lower.

ARCHIE
We can stop --

JOHNNY
-- Don't stop.

Shopkeepers are suddenly the last thing on Archie's mind.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

Mimi chats with Peter across the espresso counter.

PETER
And he shot the floor with it?

MIMI
YES! Guns scare me, Peter. Working
here scares me.

Archie enters, whistling.

ARCHIE
What scares you?

PETER
Mimi has reservations about working
in this questionable environment.

ARCHIE
Huh. Maybe I can help.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - MOMENTS LATER

Archie leads Mimi and Peter past a large pile of outgoing
boxes. Johnny feeds paper through a shredder.

ARCHIE
Good morning, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Morning...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Archie leads them into a wide space between the buildings.
Stops beside a chain link fence.

ARCHIE
There are simple things you can do
to protect yourself.

PETER

I prefer words over violence.

ARCHIE

I've got an idea to throw a party
for our corporate customers. To
organize them.

MIMI

You're leading us down a rabbit hole,
Archie. Are we even safe?

Her concern weighs on Archie.

ARCHIE

No. But I want you to be.

MIMI

Okay, then. Teach me.

INT. SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - LATER

They return back through shipping. Johnny studies a pile of
manifests at the shipping desk.

PETER

... Come over and we'll develop some
ideas for your party. I have a mailing
list. Hello, Johnny Boy.

Johnny acknowledges Peter. Continues reading.

EXT. COCOA POWER - MOMENTS LATER

Archie joins Max at his van. Checks Cocoa Power boxes.

ARCHIE

Nevada. Idaho. Florida.

MAX

Cocoa Power ships all over the States.

ARCHIE

Overseas?

MAX

Just one: the Cayman Islands. Say,
you a beach guy? Surf and sand and
tiki drinks?

ARCHIE

Two outta three. Excuse me.

Archie returns to:

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING

Johnny is still at his desk.

ARCHIE

Do we have a client in the Caymans?

JOHNNY

So, I wanna know if last night was a worked-up-from-the-gym thing or a friends-with-bennies thing or a just-trying-a-guy-on-for-size thing or what 'cuz if you're just checking out the man-on-man groove then maybe you'd like to go out with me tonight?

ARCHIE

Um...

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - NIGHT

A former tool-and die shop, one-story, brick, with glass block windows and a taller former warehouse attached to the back. Gravel lots surround it.

The bar's name glows from a lurid neon sign, as does a rear-facing cartoon of a muscular man and the letters "AYOR".

INSIDE PUCKER'S BAR

A grungy beer bar. Dim lights. Dark recessed booths. Denim and leather crowd. A red doorway invites patrons into The Catacombs, the bar's salacious back room.

The door squeaks as Archie and Johnny enter. The BOUNCER nods to Johnny.

A beefy WAITER delivers a bourbon to Johnny, who shoves a big tip into the waiter's front pocket.

ARCHIE

You must come here a lot.

JOHNNY

It's a good place to get lost. Dark.
Anonymous. We attract professors,
students, rough trade – even cops.

ARCHIE

Cops?

JOHNNY

They chill out. Drink and... whatever.
Keeps Pucker's off the radar.

Johnny steers Archie to an intimate corner booth. Archie takes
in the crowded room.

ARCHIE

What's behind that red doorway?

JOHNNY

Banquet space. And... other things.

PATRONS dance to trance music on a small dance floor. Bearded
BARTON (30s and handsome as hell) dances alone, eyeing Johnny
and Archie. Johnny encourages him over to the booth.

JOHNNY

What name are you using?

ARCHIE

Name?

JOHNNY

(to Barton)
Hey, I'm Johnny.

ARCHIE

Dirk.

Barton slides in beside Archie. Bottles of bourbon and water
plus two glasses appear at their table.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Archie relates a story, eliciting laughter.

JOHNNY

I'm doing a lap. Save me some fun.

Barton urges Archie to the dance floor. He moves easily to
the music and Archie soon finds his groove, reveling in the
freedom of it.

Barton's lips brush against Archie's. He pursues a deep kiss with little objection. They strip off their shirts. Sweat glistens on them as they dance.

Barton whispers in Archie's ear. Nods to the red-lit doorway.

THE CATACOMBS

Eight-foot walls divide the warehouse into The Catacombs. Revolving lights spotlight random corners of the murky rooms and corridors. Sliding doors and hinged walls create a fluid, ever-changing space and reveal sexual acts of every kind.

Barton leads Archie to an out-of-the-way corner. Their hands grope and mouths explore. Clothes fall away.

Johnny watches from the dark. Checks his watch, then looks in the rafters as if for a clock.

He shucks his shirt, dons a leather mask and joins Archie and Barton in a tangled threesome.

INT. PETER'S SIGN SHOP - DAY

Peter studies a mailing list. Archie works on Peter's laptop.

PETER
You're sure about this?

ARCHIE
The mob can't hold if the shopkeepers
all join together.

PETER
This won't just rock the boat, it
will be...

Archie's iPhone buzzes. He checks it.

PETER
... Will be the iceberg it runs into.
Lord, he better be cute.

ARCHIE
Who?

Peter peers over Archie's shoulder at the sculpted torso on his iPhone.

PETER

"Hugh Jock"? Great alias for a great slab of beef. Glad to see you no longer need to sell yourself.

ARCHIE

I might be involved. I don't know.

PETER

With a nice man?

Archie nods. Peter hugs Archie like a proud mother.

ARCHIE

This Scruff app. It's weird that I just chat, right?

PETER

It's baby steps in some direction. I'm glad for you.

INT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Mimi cleans the espresso machine. Archie folds a ladder. Above him, a lewd Easter Bunny winks.

MIMI

... And my brother tends these Toggenburg goats. The cheese is amazing.

ARCHIE

Chocolate and cheese. There's an idea there.

Pablo enters. He stops short when he sees Archie. Mimi stands her ground.

PABLO

Order for Alice.

ARCHIE

Join me?

Pablo is unamused.

SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - CONTINUOUS

Johnny marks Archie's actions as Archie grabs the cigar box. Checks for the VISA cash card. Leaves the room.

Johnny eavesdrops at the door.

THE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Pablo removes the card from the cigar box.

ARCHIE

We're having a party for corporate clients. Invite your boss.

PABLO

Who says I'm not the boss?

Pablo jabs the cigar box into Archie's chest and struts out.

ARCHIE

You okay to watch the store?

MIMI

I am now.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Archie grabs the local gay tabloid from a news box. Shadows Pablo as he extorts the other shopkeepers.

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - LATER

The bar looks innocuous in the sunshine. The door squeaks as Pablo enters.

Archie crouches inside a bus stop kiosk. Studies his options. A police cruiser rolls in. Parks beside a red Mercedes.

Barton climbs out in a police uniform.

He checks the surroundings. Notes a man reading in the bus kiosk. Saunters into the bar through the squeaky door.

Archie closes the tabloid. Bolts across the lot. Crouches in front of the Mercedes.

He assesses his position. Looks up at a light pole - directly into a security camera. Ducks down. Finds a large rock amid the gravel. Judges his distance.

Archie throws the rock. It hits the camera squarely, knocking it off its mount. It hangs by a wire.

The door squeaks.

Archie ducks. Pablo clicks a key fob as he and Barton exit. The Mercedes' lights flash beside Archie's head.

PABLO

... But I'm the one on the street.
I'm the target.

BARTON

Get your shit together or you'll be
a bigger target.

Barton drives off in the police cruiser. Pablo smokes beside the Mercedes. There is nowhere for Archie to go.

Pablo studies the dangling camera for a moment. He chucks the cigarette - it lands by Archie's head.

Pablo climbs in the Mercedes.

Archie stuffs the tabloid in his shirt and curls up on the ground as the Mercedes backs up. Pablo sees him.

PABLO

QUIT LOITERING, YA BUM!

Archie sticks up his hand, middle finger extended. Pablo moves to confront him, but changes his mind and drives off.

INT. COCOA POWER - EVENING

Lights twinkle in a shop dimmed for revelry. Chocolate-packed shelves entice. Business owners mingle.

Vanessa greets clients at the door as Archie works the room in a suit and tie. Shakes hands. Hands out samples.

Police CHIEF BRADY (50s), a big man in full uniform, enters with another officer. He shakes Vanessa's hand warmly.

CHIEF BRADY

Well now! This is a right homey affair
you've put together.

VANESSA

I have chocolate bunnies for the
precinct. A gift for their service.

Johnny, in tuxedo shirt, carries a tray of wine and glasses. He fills the glass of a BROKER in a navy dress.

BROKER

I love an angel with a full bottle.

JOHNNY

I only look like a choir boy, ma'am.

Johnny moves to Chief Brady.

CHIEF BRADY

The shipping business good?

JOHNNY

Booming, sir. Try the Cabernet.

He joins Archie at the espresso counter. Archie fills a tray with samples.

JOHNNY

You gotta stick to selling chocolate, dude. Accept the inevitable.

ARCHIE

Nothing is inevitable.

JOHNNY

You like cock. That ain't changin'.

ARCHIE

These shopkeepers need hope. Vanessa, Mimi, you. Banding together against the mob will give us that.

JOHNNY

The mob won't roll over. Keeping the status quo is safer.

Peter joins them. Shakes hands warmly.

PETER

Hell of a party! Every business owner in town is here and then some.

ARCHIE

Your mailing list worked wonders.

PETER

Reputation is everything.

(to Johnny)

Cabernet, chardonnay, are you a lay?

JOHNNY

Any day for you, Peter.

PETER
Promises, promises. Come, Archie.
I'll make introductions.

Peter leads Archie to a cluster of BUSINESS OWNERS.

PETER
Folks, your host: Archie Clark. He
needs the skinny on your businesses.

At the espresso bar, Johnny lures the Broker with the navy dress. He empties the bottle into her glass.

JOHNNY
You look thirsty.

BROKER
I bet you could sing a toe-curling
aria in my cathedral, choir boy.

JOHNNY
Mr. Clark wants to rock our protective
boats. I think he's off-base and I
need your influence.

BROKER
I need quid pro quo...

A VISA gift card buys her interest.

JOHNNY
Work the room. And that lawyer there,
dressing left? He's on the rebound.

Nearby, Archie lobbies Peter and other shopkeepers.

SHOPKEEPER #1
... But they could hurt us. Put us
out of business.

ARCHIE
You have no business. You give up
all your profits.

SHOPKEEPER #2
I agree with Archie. Peter?

PETER
I'm most certainly in. Don't we have
a duty to fight such tyranny?

ARCHIE
Okay, who else --

SHOPKEEPER #3
-- I'm out of wine.

COCOA POWER - LATER

The party winds down. Johnny dries glasses. Archie plops onto a stool and sorts business cards.

The inebriated Broker stumbles over, pulling the now drunk lawyer with her. She hugs Archie.

BROKER
Thank you. It was a fine, FINE party!

ARCHIE
Think about what I said. If we stand together --

BROKER
-- We ain't doin' it, none of us.
Sticking to the status quo, baby.

She staggers away.

ARCHIE
Status quo, my ass. The mob is going down. You mark my words.

Johnny registers his concern. Peter joins them.

PETER
Well, I'm off.

JOHNNY
An admirer left something for you.

He hands Peter a gift bag. Peter pulls out a bottle of vodka.

PETER
No card, eh? Well, I may never know.

JOHNNY
I'll walk you. Got an errand to run.
(to Archie)
You got a favorite color, Knuckles?

ARCHIE
Green. Why?

Johnny shrugs. Drapes the drying cloth gently over Archie's shoulder. Exits for his coat.

Peter doesn't miss Archie's red cheeks.

PETER
Successful night, my friend?

ARCHIE
I think it's a mixed bag.

COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Archie enters the room. Exhausted. Kicks off his shoes. Notices that the bed is down.

A note card rests on the pillow.

Archie picks it up. Smiles at the kitschy woman and bon mot on the front. Opens it.

CLOSE ON a written message: "GREAT NIGHT, KNUCKLES. PROUD OF YOU. J"

INT. PETER'S SIGN SHOP - LATER

A streetlight illuminates the counter. The production area is dark and quiet.

Peter kneels on the floor. Bound. He looks up at someone.

PETER
Are you my secret admirer?

Silence.

PETER
Always the enigma. Even when I had you drunk and naked, you were inscrutable. Archie deserves better.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Does he?

PETER
And to think I survived the AIDS epidemic for this. Well, make it quick, young man, and hope for a better end...

A gun fires, knocking Peter backward.

Johnny empties his gun into Peter. He studies his body with practiced indifference then uncorks Peter's gifted vodka.

He takes a long drink, then stuffs a rag into it.

He lights the rag and throws the Molotov cocktail at the wall. Gasoline accelerates the fire as Johnny saunters out.

INT. COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Johnny strips himself bare and joins Archie in bed. The shriek of emergency sirens grows outside.

ARCHIE

You smell like a gas station.

JOHNNY

My Ducati was bone dry. Damn spigot made a mess.

ARCHIE

Those sirens seem close.

Johnny cuddles against Archie, kissing his neck.

ARCHIE

What's wrong?

JOHNNY

Nothing.

Archie rolls over to look at Johnny. He sniffs the air.

JOHNNY

Those sirens are very close.

OUTSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Archie steps into a hellish glow. Horror sweeps over him.

Johnny watches the fire — and Archie — from the front window.

EXT. COCOA POWER - MORNING

Firemen soak the debris of Peter's shop. Storefront blackened. Roof collapsed. His beautiful flower pots, ruined.

Mimi stands with Archie in the middle of the street. He makes a call on his iPhone. Waits.

MIMI
Still no answer?

Two paramedics exit the shop with a stretcher covered with a silver sheet. A coroner's van backs toward them.

Archie stares, numb. Mimi weeps. Vanessa pulls a flower from one of her pots and crushes it in her hand.

INT. SALES OFFICE - LATER

Archie sits at his desk, examining the card that Johnny put on his bed. Johnny watches Archie from the doorway.

JOHNNY
I'm sorry, Arch.

ARCHIE
You walked him home, right?

JOHNNY
Hey, I knew Peter a helluva lot longer than you. Even messed around with him a time or two. But I left him at home. Got my bike. Got gas. Got in bed with you. End of story.

ARCHIE
Yeah. End of story.

Johnny takes this in. He drops a bag from Santino's Italian Beef on Archie's desk.

JOHNNY
I gotta be somewhere.

Johnny stomps out. Archie lays his hand against the bag – still warm. Grief overcomes him.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LATER

A Ducati Panigale V2 motorcycle races along the deserted road. It slows at a farm and rolls up a two track to a barn.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Pablo sweats in a wooden chair beneath the single bulb. Fresh sawdust beneath him. Barton paces. O'Toole smokes calmly.

They hear a door open. Pablo and Barton both glance in that direction. O'Toole snuffs his cigarette on his shoe.

Johnny removes his helmet. Tosses it to O'Toole.

PABLO

You know what this is about, Johnny?

Johnny yanks his gun from his sling strap bag.

BARTON

You burned that queen real good --

JOHNNY

-- Your gun government issue?

Johnny motions for Barton to hold his bag. He does.

JOHNNY

To answer your question, Pablo: there was an issue at Pucker's.

Johnny jerks Barton's gun from its holster. Examines it. Checks the ammunition.

JOHNNY

Someone watched you make the drop.

PABLO

Impossible. That camera was broken.

O'Toole walks a photo to Pablo. HIS POV: an undeniable shot of Archie, looking into the camera.

Johnny tosses his gun to Pablo, surprising him. Motions for Pablo to stand. He does. Wavering.

PABLO

Please, I beg you.

Johnny waits, Barton's gun at his side like Doc Holiday.

In an instant, Pablo raises his gun and fires at Johnny. Johnny unloads his gun into Pablo, who flops back into the sawdust.

Johnny touches his left shoulder. A flesh wound. He strides to the horrified Barton. Holsters his weapon.

JOHNNY

Pablo was the lead suspect in the arson and murder of Peter Boyd. You cornered him. He had a gun. You shot in self-defense. That sound right?

BARTON

Yes... yes, sir.

JOHNNY

The boys at the precinct will do the rest. And for the record?

Johnny opens a switchblade in nanoseconds. Positions it beneath Barton's chin.

JOHNNY

Killing Pablo and Taliban soldiers and their wives and their children -- even ending Peter's glorious life -- those were easy. The difference was Peter never whimpered. Never pleaded --

MAN (O.S.)

-- Enough. What about Mr. Hockey?

Johnny releases Barton. Looks at someone in the dark.

JOHNNY

He's mine, boss. All mine.

INT. COCOA POWER - LATER

Archie paces. Waiting. He sees the UPS van pull up outside. Meets a saddened Max at the door.

MAX

Hey.

ARCHIE

I need you a minute.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Archie leads Max into the alley. Mimi and Vanessa wait there.

ARCHIE

My plan to get the locals together
didn't work. They're scared.

MIMI

Can you blame them?

ARCHIE

You can't live your life in fear.

VANESSA

I lived in the projects, hon. Fear
was everywhere. Would I make it to
school? Would I live until morning?
God, look at you. You're bruised and
limping, and live in a storeroom and
eat my samples --

ARCHIE

-- I don't eat the samples anymore.

VANESSA

Your life is shit and yet you fight.

She allows her gaze to fix on Mimi and Max.

VANESSA

I lived in the projects, and this is
not the fucking projects. We deserve
better. So for this man, I will fight.

MAX

So will I. Whatever you need.

MIMI

Me too.

ARCHIE

I fear for all of you.

VANESSA

A good healthy fear keeps you alive.
I assume you have a plan?

ARCHIE

Yeah. Max: you're our eyes and ears
on the street. Watch the crooks, the
cops, everyone. Got it?

MAX

Got it. I'd better go.

ARCHIE

One last thing... be careful what
you say around Johnny.

Max leaves them with a wave. Archie huddles with the others.

ARCHIE

You've heard of cyberbullying?

INT. PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - LATER

Archie dons a pink apron and hair net. He opens a plastic storage container of molds. Pulls out a phallic penis and several boob molds.

Sets them aside. Opens another storage box.

A distinctive alert sounds on his iPhone. He accesses a Scruff photo: the familiar torso of Hugh Jock.

HUGH JOCK (V.O.)

We should meet up for coffee.

Archie types a quick response:

ARCHIE (V.O.)

I'm not the kind of guy you have
coffee with.

HUGH JOCK (V.O.)

What kinda guy are you, Archie?

Archie stares at the screen, spooked to see his name. Considers a response. Then:

ARCHIE (V.O.)

Damaged. Who is this?

HUGH JOCK (V.O.)

The kinda guy who wants to help you.

SALES OFFICE - LATER

Vanessa sits at the computer. She accesses Instagram.

VANESSA

Fake name, fake profile. Just like
me buying muscatel at Kyrone's Corner
Castle in high school.

She enters a name for the new profile: OUR NEFARIOUS NEIGHBORHOOD.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

O'Toole browses the displays. Mimi enters from shipping.

MIMI

Oh, hi! Can I help? The Taleggio cheese truffles are to die --

O'TOOLE

-- I have a pick up for Alice.

Mimi's blood runs cold.

MIMI

Doesn't Pablo usually --

O'TOOLE

-- Pablo has left the company. Is that a problem?

MIMI

Let me check. Would you like a coffee while you wait?

SALES OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Archie hunt-and-pecks the keyboard. Mimi rushes in.

MIMI

A new guy here... a big, Irish goon. Picking up for Alice.

ARCHIE

Follow the plan. He'll get what's coming to him.

BACK IN THE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Archie enters with the cigar box as Mimi dons her coat. He opens the box. O'Toole takes the cash card.

O'TOOLE

You'll be glad to know your issue with Pablo resolved itself.

ARCHIE

Pablo and I had an understanding.

O'TOOLE

Then understand this: you pay on
time and your staff can keep their
fingers. Savvy?

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - LATER

O'Toole strides into the bar through the squeaky door.

Mimi watches the lot from her nondescript SUV. Barton arrives
in his police cruiser. Enters. Mimi waits.

A tap on her window startles her – it's Officer Quinn. Mimi
rolls down the window.

OFFICER QUINN

Car trouble, miss... oh, it's you.

MIMI

No, no trouble. Waiting for a friend.

OFFICER QUINN

Are you?

Officer Quinn glances at Pucker's.

OFFICER QUINN

Well, lock your doors. It's a sketchy
neighborhood.

Officer Quinn saunters up the street. Mimi barely hears the
squeak as Barton leaves the bar, package in hand. He climbs
into his cruiser.

Mimi starts her SUV.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Mimi pulls into a parking spot. Watches Barton stride around
a chain link fence and into the alley with the package.

MIMI

What the..?

He passes under a sign with an arrow pointed toward COCOA
POWER SHIPPING & RECEIVING.

Mimi waits. Soon Barton returns – empty-handed.

INT. SALES OFFICE - EVENING

Johnny sits in Archie's chair. Cruises the Scruff app. Pockets his iPhone when Archie enters.

ARCHIE
You need something?

JOHNNY
I wanted to check e-mail on something larger than my phone. Sorry.

Johnny gives up the office chair. But lingers.

JOHNNY
The six-pack contest at the gym is shit without you, Knuckles.

ARCHIE
I have a special package for delivery tomorrow. Would you drop it?

JOHNNY
Yeah, of course. Where to?

ARCHIE
The newspaper. Remember that reporter they found in that ditch?

JOHNNY
What about him?

ARCHIE
Just a tip I had. It's nothing.

Archie sits. Moves some papers around.

ARCHIE
You gonna hit the gym tonight?

EXT. GYM - LATER

Archie and Johnny exit the gym. Plod past darkened shops.

JOHNNY
Great workout.

They walk in silence. Then:

JOHNNY
You ever hear from that agent?

ARCHIE
Jesus, seriously..?

JOHNNY
-- I'm kidding --

ARCHIE
-- I almost believed the asshole had
taken the night off.

Johnny stops walking. Archie realizes it after several strides.
Turns back to him.

JOHNNY
Was there anything about me you ever
really liked?

Yes, there was. Johnny sees that before Archie shuffles on.
Johnny follows him to:

EXT. COCOA POWER - MOMENTS LATER

Archie pauses to examine the storefront.

JOHNNY
Arch...

Archie pulls out his key.

JOHNNY
I'm a prick. I am. But I felt those
moments too. In the shower, in bed.
At work. It was something I have
never felt. Ever.

Archie waits.

JOHNNY
Protective. I wanted you safe.

Archie holds the door open. Johnny approaches, tentative.

INSIDE

Johnny enters the shop, anxious. Archie takes Johnny's hands
and kisses them gently. Johnny touches Archie's face. Caresses
still-healing bruises.

Archie pulls him close.

JOHNNY

I ... I'm so sorry...

They kiss, tenderly, then with an all-consuming ardor.

COCOA POWER STOREROOM - LATER

Archie spoons Johnny beneath the comforter, caressing a furrow in Johnny's left shoulder. Their eyes closed, content.

JOHNNY

I love you.

Archie's eyes open.

ARCHIE

Deliver that package in the morning.

And then - Johnny's eyes open as well.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR - DAY

Johnny strolls into the empty bar in his motorcycle leathers. A Cocoa Power package nestles under his arm. The Bouncer restocks booze behind the bar.

BOUNCER

Hey, boss.

PUCKER'S BAR, OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A stylish space with desk, chair and sofa. An erotic Tom of Finland poster highlights one wall.

Johnny sets the package - clearly addressed to the *Exeter Enquirer* - on the desk. Opens his switchblade. Carefully slices open the packing tape.

He pulls out a bubble-wrapped confection. Gingerly extracts a luscious-looking box molded from chocolate.

Johnny studies it. Its top is solidly attached. He tries to pry it open - and it suddenly crumbles into pieces.

JOHNNY

Ah, fuck!

Johnny picks up the small note inside. CLOSE ON THE NOTE which reads: "If this note reaches the *Exeter Enquirer*, then I was wrong about Johnny Storgen."

Johnny crushes the note into a ball.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

Vanessa sits with a cappuccino. Archie saunters in...

ARCHIE

Oh, hey. I have those web traffic reports you wanted --

VANESSA

-- Come. Sit.

Archie does. Expectant. Vanessa pulls out her iPhone and accesses a video. Shows it to Archie. Music plays.

Johnny plods in. Recognizes the music. Feigns interest in something beneath the counter.

Archie studies the video, more concerned by the second. Finally, he grabs the iPhone and shuts it down.

VANESSA

That was you with those two men, wasn't it?

ARCHIE

Where did you get this?

VANESSA

It was sent from your e-mail account to my entire client list.

This stuns Archie. He grasps for a reason, a person...

VANESSA

Pack up your belongings and get out. Every shred, including the things in your love pad upstairs.

ARCHIE

Vanessa, I didn't do any of this --

VANESSA

-- I trusted you --

ARCHIE

-- Why would I do any of this?!

VANESSA

Because you're a thug and always
will be. I WANT YOU OUT. NOW!

Archie abandons his seat. Johnny ignores Archie's venomous gaze as he stomps out – but watches his back with keen regret.

COCOA POWER STOREROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Archie hastily packs his messenger bag. Stuffs what he can into a shopping bag. Mimi appears at the door.

MIMI

Archie, what happened?

ARCHIE

Someone filmed me at Pucker's with...
God, I've destroyed her business.
How could I trust that, that animal?

MIMI

Wait! Where will you be?

Archie shoves past her and down the stairs.

MIMI

You've gotta trust somebody!

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER – MOMENTS LATER

Archie plods in. The manager recognizes him and perks up.

MANAGER

Still five bucks a day. A week for
you with special consideration.

Archie pulls three extra bills from his wallet.

ARCHIE

No one knows I'm here, if you value
your teeth.

HOMELESS SHELTER – LATER

Archie counts his meager funds. The other men eye him hungrily. He climbs under the blanket in his clothes, clutching his bag tightly. Ears and eyes open.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Archie lingers between two buildings in a hoodie. Watches a drug dealer meet a desperate customer. Clicks a photo.

Archie records life on the streets:

- Officer Barton harasses a homeless man;
- a gang of students heckle a gay couple;
- a hood slashes the tires of a BMW;
- a hustler leans into an SUV...

Archie pauses to watch the hustler. Then moves on.

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - LATER

Archie waits in the vandalized bus kiosk. Photographs Johnny as he arrives on his Ducati. Then O'Toole and Barton. A police cruiser as it comes and goes...

EXT. COCOA POWER - AFTERNOON

Archie watches from an alley. Max scans his cart full of boxes. Loads them. Returns to the store.

Archie bolts across the street. Enters the van. Finds the Cocoa Power boxes.

MAX (O.S.)

See ya tomorrow, Johnny!

Archie crouches in the back. Max jumps on. Mounts the cart to the wall. Scans the area outside with practiced eyes.

INT. VAN - LATER

Max grabs a package. Steps from the van.

Archie quickly searches the boxes. Finds the one he wants. Hears Max outside and hides.

Max enters the cargo area. Selects another package, then notices his shoe is untied. Stoops to tie it - right beside Archie, his foot on the strap of Archie's messenger bag.

Archie holds his breath. Max scans the package and exits.

Archie stuffs his box into his messenger bag. Pauses at the door. Quickly jogs up the street.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - EVENING

Archie opens the Cocoa Power box. Discovers corporate-branded chocolates – and twenty decks of playing cards.

He rips one open. A dozen VISA cash cards fall into his lap. He quickly hides them in his messenger bag.

And then realizes he has a surplus of chocolates. He glances at the empty cots.

HOMELESS SHELTER - LATER

An ELDERLY MAN sits on his cot, dejected. And then picks a chocolate off his pillow.

INT. SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - DAY

Mimi shoves plastic containers into a Cocoa Power bag. Vanessa hurries in with a bag of oranges.

VANESSA

Where is he?

MIMI

Making a delivery uptown, I think.

She shoves the back door open. Vanessa follows her into:

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They both halt in their tracks. The chain link fence is lined with perfectly tied satin bows.

Archie ties another one at the far end. He looks grungy.

ARCHIE

Just practicing.

Vanessa sits Mimi on the stoop with her back to the door.

MIMI

Where are you living?

Archie hands Mimi a bag of VISA cash cards.

ARCHIE

Johnny launders money through Cocoa Power with these and ships them to the Cayman Islands. And he uses Pucker's bar as a front.

MIMI

So, blackmail, extortion. A damn fine way to get cops on your payroll.

Vanessa stands back from Archie. Contrite.

VANESSA

I was real shitty to you. I know now that you were set up... I didn't realize he was such a snake --

ARCHIE

-- Now we do. And hey... you hired me. Allowed me to learn. I wouldn't be here without you.

Archie hugs Vanessa. Hands her a ZIP drive.

ARCHIE

Photos for Instagram. Mimi: use those cash cards to market our site.

There's a noise inside.

ARCHIE

He's still here?

Archie ducks behind a dumpster just as Johnny bangs the door against Mimi.

MIMI

Hey! A little tenderness, asshole!

JOHNNY

As if that's in my play book. Your break about done?

VANESSA

It's done when I say it's done.

JOHNNY

Whatever. We got a rush order, so whenever your gossip session is over.

He slams the door behind him.

VANESSA

We're gonna slip up eventually.

ARCHIE

I have an idea to shut him down.

MIMI

Take some cash cards. Please?

ARCHIE

No. But thanks for the grub.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR, OFFICE - NIGHT

Johnny counts money with a machine. House music thumps through the wall. A gun sits within reach.

He adds some figures, then dances to the music a bit – until he kicks a stack of free weights on the floor.

JOHNNY

God damn it!

Johnny massages his foot. Stares at the weights. Pensive. His desk phone rings and he limps over to answer it.

JOHNNY

Yeah. Who? Patch her through.

Johnny pours bourbon into a glass, concerned. Sips it as the call connects.

JOHNNY

Such an unexpected pleasure... wait, slow the fuck down. What? That's impossible. It's UPS... did you track it? Scanned at the source but never delivered. How much? A quarter mil... seriously? That money should be there -- hey, lay off the threats, lady, we'll make good. Yeah. Fine...

Johnny slams down the phone. Dials another number.

JOHNNY

I need you in here. Now.

Johnny paces. O'Toole enters, unsure what to expect.

JOHNNY

Where the fuck is Archie Clark?

O'TOOLE
I thought he skipped town.

JOHNNY
One of our shipments went AWOL from
UPS. You need to rattle the supply
chain. Hard.

O'TOOLE
Roger that. You need, um...
(suggestively)
...Anything else?

JOHNNY
Archie Clark. Find him.

O'TOOLE
What should I do when I find him?

Johnny wrestles with his question for just a moment.

JOHNNY
What you do best, Toolie.

He exits as Johnny downs his bourbon.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Archie talks into a flip phone. Leaves voice-to-text messages.

ARCHIE
Johnny: So you're now doing laundry.
Is cash cheap in the Caymans?
(SEND)
Barton: Better watch your back, bitch.
Trouble's coming.
(SEND)
Chief Brady: an FYI from a concerned
citizen: there is nefarious shit
happening at your precinct.
(SEND)

Archie switches to his own iPhone. A message pops up.

ARCHIE
Helloooo, Mr Green.

Archie sniffs himself, disgusted. He snaps the flip phone in
half and throws it into a trash can.

EXT. ARENA - EVENING

Three collegiate athletes exit. Archie slips in before the doors close.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Archie exits the shower in a towel.

A college kid enters in workout clothes: built, athletic - familiar. He joins Archie at the vanity. Shucks his shirt.

ARCHIE
Ian, right?

IAN
Yes, sir. Good memory.

ARCHIE
Everyone else gone?

IAN
Yeah, just the two of us. I wanted to, you know, lift some more.

Archie pulls a fresh package of BVDs from his messenger bag, aware of Ian's eyes on him.

Ian strips off his clothes. Shows himself off.

ARCHIE
I used to stay late. Shower last.

IAN
Yeah? Getting that extra workout?

ARCHIE
Avoiding my teammates. And you can wrap a towel around ... around all that. Nothing is gonna happen here.

Ian blushes. Retreats to the towel stack. Grabs one.

ARCHIE
It's okay... you're okay...

Ian hurries toward the showers.

ARCHIE
HEY! Get your ass over here!

Archie's authority stops Ian. He plods back. Archie puts his hands on the boy's shoulders.

ARCHIE

Look, I wish I could tell you that it was easy and that it always works out the way you want it to. It doesn't. It's hard. And painful. And a lot worse if you keep it bottled up inside you. Believe me, I know...

Ian nods, biting his lip. Archie gently wraps him in a bear-hug. Ian begins to sob.

ARCHIE

You're powerful. Courageous. And your team will do anything for you if you let them. So let them. Promise me you'll let them.

Archie comforts the lad and lets him weep.

INT. BUNGALOW FOYER - LATER

A doorbell rings. Mr. Green scampers to the door in his robe. Throws the door open. Archie stands outside.

ARCHIE

Hello, Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN

Hello, Dirk.

BUNGALOW BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Archie saunters into Mr. Green's bedroom. Sees the lube and the condoms. Picks up the money.

MR. GREEN

\$300, same as last time.

Archie stuffs the cash into the pocket of Mr. Green's robe. Then shucks off the man's robe with intention. Intimate.

ARCHIE

You have a first name?

MR. GREEN

I... I, ah... George.

ARCHIE

Here's the thing, George. I need a
big, big favor from you.

Archie whispers into George's ear. George is surprised.

MR. GREEN

Um, I would do that if I could...

He whispers something into Archie's ear.

ARCHIE

I'm all yours, George.

INT. SHIPPING AND RECEIVING - DAY

Vanessa barges into Johnny's space as he plays Solitaire.

VANESSA

Have you seen this "Nefarious
Neighborhood" thing?

JOHNNY

Never heard of it.

VANESSA

Then why is your face all over it?

Johnny glances at her phone. Swipes through several screens.

JOHNNY

Handsome guy. Nice guns.

VANESSA

On your bike? That is your bike,
right? You need to fix this.

JOHNNY

Maybe. Will it save your business,
or put it under --

Mimi bursts in.

MIMI

-- Vanessa! There's some inspector
here to see you.

COCOA POWER - CONTINUOUS

Mimi and Johnny follow Vanessa into the shop. Mr. Green waits with other INSPECTORS. He produces his card.

MR. GREEN
Surprise health inspection, ma'am.

VANESSA
Seriously? No warning?!

MR. GREEN
That's what surprise means, ma'am.

EXT. COCOA POWER - MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Green gives Vanessa a list of violations as the others linger on the sidewalk.

MR. GREEN
Fix these and give me a call.

JOHNNY
You can't just shut us down! Your boss is gonna hear from us --

MR. GREEN
-- Threatening a federal employee is a felony, sir. You'd prefer prison?

INT. JAPANESE STEAKHOUSE - LATER

Johnny bypasses the hostess stand. Beelines to a teppanyaki table. Only one other man sits there: Chief Brady.

JOHNNY
You mind? I hate eating alone.

Chief Brady motions to a chair. The chef remembers Johnny. Bows. Sets water and condiments at his place.

Johnny hands the chef a fifty.

JOHNNY
Scallops. And a Lagavulin, neat.
Take your time.

The chef takes the money with a bow and leaves.

CHIEF BRADY

As I understand, the chocolate shop is shuttered with an indefinite future. Puts a damper on business.

JOHNNY

I can't lean on that inspector.

CHIEF BRADY

Then fix the violations and reopen the store. Clean up your mess.

JOHNNY

Sir. Yes sir.

CHIEF BRADY

Mr. Hockey is carpet bombing the precinct with more innuendo than a church lady at a potluck. I want him in a ditch.

Johnny understands.

CHIEF BRADY

Your work is usually flawless. Who got into your head?

JOHNNY

No one. Consider the problems solved.

CHIEF BRADY

Good boy.

He pulls himself to his feet.

CHIEF BRADY

Our Army roots go only so deep, son. It's not that hard to find a soldier who enjoys the kill.

The chef returns with Johnny's scotch. Chief Brady stands.

CHIEF BRADY

Thanks for pickin' up my lunch. Mighty white of you.

Johnny watches Chief Brady leave. Contemplates his scotch.

CHEF

Bad news, sir?

JOHNNY

Apparently Army roots only go so deep. News to me.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR - EVENING

The Bouncer ignores frat boy Big Red's ID.

BOUNCER

Through the red doorway. Left, right, right, straight on, then left and right. Can't miss 'em.

THE CATACOMBS

Big Red follows the directions, wide-eyed, until he finds a room with a sling hanging from the ceiling. O'Toole re-configures some walls.

O'TOOLE

Setting up for the Bear Beer Bust. You'd be very popular.

BIG RED

Look, I... I came in person outta respect, but we can't --

O'TOOLE

-- \$100 per guy. Pallet of vodka for the house. \$1,000 in your pocket now plus ten grand on completion.

BIG RED

Please, I... I can't do this.

O'Toole shows Big Red the \$1,000, then shoves it down Big Red's pants. His hand squeezes the frat boy's junk.

O'TOOLE

You can. Do it quick, then get this fat cock and your sweet ass back to the frat house -- unless you want to party with the bears...

BIG RED

-- NO! No sir, I... we... will go right back to the house.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - THAT EVENING

Archie confronts the manager at the front desk.

MANAGER

Five bucks a night, no exceptions.

ARCHIE

If I get the money tonight, can I
keep the bed?

MANAGER

If I have a bed.

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - LATER

The blue light district comprises Pucker's back lot and the
knot of seedy shops and alleys behind it.

A billboard across the street screams "OUR NEFARIOUS
NEIGHBORHOOD" with photos and a web URL.

Archie leans against a light pole. Unzips his jacket, revealing
his bare chest. Scans the sordid offerings.

A UPS van pulls to the curb nearby. Max hops out with a
package. Scans the area. Hurries into a business.

Several cars slow in the parking lot. Archie moves toward
them but younger hustlers beat him to it.

Max exits the business. Scans the area again...

MAX

Archie?

Archie hears his name. His cheeks flush. Then he sees Max's
black eye and bruised face.

ARCHIE

Geez, what happened?!

MAX

A box went missing from my truck.
The client wasn't happy.

ARCHIE

A box from Cocoa Power?

MAX

Yeah...

Max figures it out quickly.

ARCHIE

You've got deliveries to make.

MAX

I would have given you that box.

ARCHIE

Go back to your truck...

MAX

-- Arch, you don't have to do this.
You have people who love you --

ARCHIE

-- Those people you talk about? They
need to love someone else... and I
gotta work, so fuck off.

Hurt, Max retreats to his van. Archie gets to work.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Grunts behind a dumpster, then a loud groan of climax. An obese MAN (60s) fastens his pants around his pendulous belly. Throws money on the ground. Waddles away.

Archie retrieves his money. Forces himself to vomit.

BIG RED (O.S.)

Hey, cock sucker.

Big Red and three frat boys appear at the end of the alley. Three others block his escape.

BIG RED

We got unfinished business.

Archie tries to defend himself, but is quickly overwhelmed. They beat Archie to the ground.

Big Red snaps open a knife...

Suddenly, a shotgun blast hits the wall above them. The frat boys scatter like cockroaches.

Max cradles the shotgun as he stoops to check Archie. He finds a pulse, relieved.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Johnny strides down the driveway in his motorcycle leathers.

He pauses at the "TAU KAPPA EPSILON" sign by the road. Takes a swig from a bottle of vodka.

An explosion detonates behind Johnny and a livid red glow brightens the trees around him. Shouts, then screams, echo from men trapped in an inferno.

Johnny mounts his motorcycle. Rides off into the night.

INT. BUNGALOW BEDROOM - MORNING

Archie opens his eyes in a familiar bedroom. He sits up with difficulty, feeling every cut and bruise.

After a moment, Mr. Green enters.

MR. GREEN

You're awake! I'm so glad.

ARCHIE

How the hell did I get here?

MR. GREEN

UPS delivered you. He said he found this address in your wallet.

He urges Archie to lie back down.

ARCHIE

George, I --

MR. GREEN

-- Relax. Rest.

ARCHIE

It's too dangerous.

MR. GREEN

Let me help you. Let others help you. It makes this world much less dangerous and much more worth it.

Archie squeezes George's hand.

ARCHIE

Does anyone else know I'm here?

MR. GREEN

Just me and your knight in shining armor. He had to visit a friend.

EXT. MAIN STREET - THAT MORNING

Mimi strolls with a coffee. Grabs an *Exeter Examiner* from a box. A garish headline screams above the fold: "TEN DEAD IN TAU KAPPA FIRE."

Mimi notes a photo of Big Red. Then:

MIMI

Oh, no! No, no, no...

CLOSE ON the paper: "FORMER EXETER HOCKEY STAR BEATEN TO DEATH IN ALLEY." Archie's photo grins below it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - THAT MORNING

Ian reads in horror about Archie's death. He glances at his teammates as they prepare for practice.

IAN

Hey guys? You got a sec?

INT. PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - DAY

Vanessa watches as Mr. Green and his men complete their inspection. Mr. Green approaches her with a smile.

MR. GREEN

Sorry about this. A little bird told me you fixed everything.

VANESSA

Don't you be tellin' me I was in compliance all along?

MR. GREEN

Oh God, no. You're a restaurateur, not a saint.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mimi stops at a telephone pole and staples a flyer to it.
CLOSE ON the flyer: the word "WANTED" and photos of O'Toole,
Barton and Johnny.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

O'Toole enters the shop. Grabs a fancy box of chocolates.
Walks to the counter where Vanessa waits.

O'TOOLE
I'll take Alice's monthly plus these.

VANESSA
That will be \$39.86.

O'TOOLE
I said, the monthly plus this box.

VANESSA
I have two words about the monthly.

Mimi and the production team step in with various blunt
objects. Vanessa pulls out a baseball bat.

VANESSA
Get. Out.

Mimi bashes him in the side. The others attack with gusto.

OUTSIDE THE STORE

They beat O'Toole onto the sidewalk. Mimi calls a halt.

MIMI
Tell your boss that we're done paying
his blood money.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

A quick montage as the scene replays at every store O'Toole
enters. Physical abuse. Blaring air horns. Water — or worse —
thrown in his face.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR, OFFICE - LATER

Johnny stares at a stained and battered O'Toole.

O'TOOLE
The shopkeepers are in open revolt.

JOHNNY
Is Archie dead or alive..?

O'TOOLE
-- It's my fault. I left it to idiots,
let me fix it...

There is a knock at the door.

JOHNNY
FUCK, WHAT IS IT!?

BOUNCER (O.S.)
Package, sir.

JOHNNY
LEAVE IT!
(to O'Toole)
Fetch.

O'Toole retrieve a Cocoa Power box. Sets it on the desk.

Johnny slits the box open with his switchblade. Pulls out a chocolate box – the match of the one for the newspaper. Opens it. Discovers a note inside.

He reads it aloud.

JOHNNY
Happy Pride, asshole.

Johnny sets the knife on the desk. O'Toole wants to vanish into the floor.

JOHNNY
Sit.

O'Toole sits. He cringes as Johnny massages his shoulders.

JOHNNY
That knife saw a lot of action in
Afghanistan. Remember? The ears it
cut off? The eyes it gouged out? You
were my guy, Toolie, my majordomo
with benefits. Rounding up targets.
Cleaning up kills. The sergeant.
That CIA fuck. The general's mistress.
You didn't think... you followed me,
even above Army command.

He picks the knife from the desk. And closes it.

JOHNNY
Can you do it again?

O'TOOLE
To the end, sir.

Johnny scratches the top of O'Toole's head.

JOHNNY
Good boy. It's time to cut our losses.

PUCKER'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

O'Toole finds Barton in the crowded bar. Furtive.

O'TOOLE
Johnny's planning a reaping at Pride.

INT. PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Vanessa snaps on the lights and turns on the chocolate tempering machines. Mimi ties an apron around her waist.

VANESSA
Something rainbow?

MIMI
Archie signed us on as lead sponsor for Pride. We need to make a splash.

VANESSA
Mimi, that's this Saturday.

MIMI
Individual portions. Something we can hand out. Some things to sell.

VANESSA
We don't have enough hands --

ARCHIE (O.S.)
-- Here's two more.

Archie leans against a door frame.

ARCHIE
I just need a chair.

Mimi squeals. Runs over to hug him. It hurts, but he accepts it warmly. Vanessa kisses his cheek.

VANESSA

Bark.

ARCHIE

Excuse me?

VANESSA

Chocolate bark. Big sheets of it.

ARCHIE

Break it into pieces. Yeah, yeah ... we need some colorful ingredients, and the strawberry chocolate.

MIMI

We can put luster dust on truffles. And hand-dip bananas.

VANESSA

And those X-rated chocolate molds!

ARCHIE

One step ahead of you.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Vanessa locks up. Waves to Mimi. Pauses to look at Peter's burned-out shop.

A gun presses against her back.

JOHNNY

We need to chat.

B-ROLL FOOTAGE - SMALL TOWN PRIDE PARADE - DAY

Rainbow flags and colorful floats brighten Main Street. Drag queens wave. Leather daddies strut.

CUT TO:

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

A cartoon of a saucy 1950s housewife holding a "HAPPY PRIDE" sign hangs above rainbow-colored displays. Mimi and the production team manage the exuberant patrons.

Mimi's cell phone buzzes. She answers.

MIMI
This seems like a wild gamble.

EXT. COCOA POWER, ROOF - CONTINUOUS

ARCHIE
Flush out the big boss. Find their
lair. Alert the FBI. Have you heard
from Vanessa?

MIMI (O.S.)
She has some flu. Great timing.

ARCHIE
That's... inconvenient. Deliver those
chocolate-covered bananas to Pucker's.
I'll hold the fort.

Archie hangs up and scans the scene with binoculars.

A reflection glares at him. He lowers the binoculars to get a
better look... and Johnny waves back.

INT. WASHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Archie scrambles through the washroom window. Drops to the
floor. Hears a shotgun cock.

O'Toole stands in the shower.

O'TOOLE
The boss has presents for you.

ARCHIE
Big boss or little boss?

O'TOOLE
He said bring you. He didn't specify
big or little pieces.

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - LATER

Mimi watches the post-parade activity from her SUV. She sees
Chief Brady arrive in a vintage Cadillac convertible.

Barton approaches Brady and they exchange words. Chief Brady
joins Barton in his police cruiser and they drive off.

Mimi makes a call as she follows them.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

A post-parade dance party rages.

The reporter Janet pushes through the crowd. She spots the Exeter University hockey PLAYERS in their rainbow sweaters and makes a beeline for them.

JANET

Excuse me. I'm looking for Ian?

PLAYER

He was here a minute ago. HEY, YOU GUYS SEEN IAN?

No one has seen him.

PLAYER

You check that back room? He's probably getting his gay on.

INT. BARN - LATER

Someone yanks a hood off of Archie's head.

The bare bulb glares at him as his eyes adjust. He feels thick sawdust beneath his feet.

Three chairs sit across from him, all occupied by bound and hooded captives: two men and one woman.

O'Toole moves to Archie's left with the hood.

ARCHIE

This is between you and me, Johnny.
SHOW YOURSELF!

Johnny kisses Archie's ear. Archie recoils.

JOHNNY

And I thought you liked me.

Johnny enters the light. Checks the chambers of his revolver.

ARCHIE

Johnny, let me help you.

JOHNNY
You've helped me plenty.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Chief Brady stands in a field facing the barn with a dozen officers and a SWAT Team.

CHIEF BRADY
We have hostages tied to chairs. If they're standing, they're hostile and should be subdued. I want them alive if possible. Let's move out.

The officers scatter. Barton remains.

CHIEF BRADY
Alive won't be possible, will it?

Barton hefts a sniper rifle. Indicates a definitive "no".

CHIEF BRADY
I want him dead. No mistakes.

On the main road beside the barn property, an SUV parks. Mimi climbs out quietly and assesses the farm and the police.

She climbs through a fence and sneaks across a field toward a corn crib.

INSIDE THE BARN

Johnny plays master of ceremonies.

JOHNNY
Let's meet our contestants.

He pulls the hood off the woman. Vanessa squints at the bright light, but does not flinch.

JOHNNY
Miss Vanessa outlined your plan: sponsor the Pride Parade, flush out the whale. It almost worked - made collecting everyone way easier.

ARCHIE
Johnny, I see you. You're not... you couldn't.

JOHNNY

I am. I could. I have. The blood on
my hands could float the Titanic.

Johnny bypasses the middle hostage – the only one shaking in
fear – and moves to the third one. Pulls off the hood:

ARCHIE

Ian?? Johnny, he's just a kid.

JOHNNY

Sports fixing may be my next big
gig. Finding a student-athlete dead
in a ditch would be great leverage.

Ian struggles in his chair. Johnny aims the gun at him.

ARCHIE

NO, JOHNNY --

JOHNNY

-- Of course, no. Still one to reveal.
The best one.

(to O'Toole)

Untie him.

O'Toole does so. Johnny encourages Archie to his side, but
keeps the gun pointed at him.

JOHNNY

You're gonna shit. This failure of
the human species... you'll want to
punch the life out of him.

ARCHIE

I'm done with punching.

JOHNNY

Great. Then use this.

Johnny opens Archie's hand and sets his gun into it. Archie
points it at Johnny.

JOHNNY

As if you could kill me.

Johnny steps up to Archie until the gun jabs into his chest.

JOHNNY

(quietly)

Or vice versa.

OUTSIDE THE BARN

The police move toward positions around the barn. They don't see the bottles that litter the tall grass.

INSIDE THE BARN

JOHNNY

This man forced you to eat from dumpsters and sell yourself on the street.

In the loft, Barton settles in with a clear shot of everyone. He focuses the red laser sight of his gun on Archie.

JOHNNY

You were worthless to him. Oddly enough – he was real easy to find. Just not in Fiji.

ARCHIE

It... it can't be...

Archie yanks the hood from the man's head.

ARCHIE

YOU!

Archie's tanned and bludgeoned AGENT (50s) cowers.

JOHNNY

Good-looking agent. He put your money to very good, very personal use.

Archie points the gun at the man.

JOHNNY

A yacht. A sea-front villa.

Archie presses the gun against the man's forehead.

JOHNNY

And yet – you can't pull the trigger. Because you have a soul.

Archie falters, shaken.

ARCHIE

You have a soul. I felt it.

OUTSIDE THE BARN

A police officer kicks a jar and it clatters into others, cutting through the silence outside.

INSIDE THE BARN

Johnny hears it plain as day.

JOHNNY

Let's test that theory.

Johnny disarms Archie. Pulls Archie and O'Toole in front of him. Lays a hand on each man's shoulder as Barton's red laser sight tries to acquire its target.

JOHNNY

I love you both. Toolie: cover
Vanessa. Archie: protect the kid.

ARCHIE

What? I don't --

JOHNNY

-- And I left you something in my
safe...

Police burst into the barn. They yell for everyone to freeze.

Archie launches himself at Ian as Johnny shoots out the light bulb. The barn goes black.

More shots. Officers shout. Hostages scream.

CHIEF BRADY (O.S.)

HOLD YOUR FIRE! HOLD YOUR FIRE! GET
SOME LIGHT IN HERE!

Flashlights slice through the darkness. Archie covers Ian. Vanessa screams from beneath O'Toole's bloody corpse.

Chief Brady stands over a trap door. Shines a light down: below, Archie's agent groans in a pile of straw.

Johnny is gone.

EXT. CORN CRIB - MOMENTS LATER

Mimi kneels nearby. Takes a wine bottle in hand as a weapon. Hears a noise inside the crib.

A door swings open from the crib and Johnny hobbles out. He just ducks Mimi's assault with the bottle.

JOHNNY

Easy! I'm on your side.

MIMI

When Vanessa said to help you, I thought she'd finally gone crazy.

JOHNNY

Just crazy-adjacent, that one --

MIMI

-- If Archie dies, I will hunt you like an animal and skin you alive.

Johnny touches his side. Shows her a bloody hand.

JOHNNY

I'll be easy to track.

EXT. BARN - LATER

The lights of ambulances and police cars bathe the barn. Archie stands with Vanessa and Ian, both shaken but unhurt.

VANESSA

Johnny used me and the kid as bait to attract the mob boss. He never intended to kill us.

ARCHIE

Did it work? Where is he?

VANESSA

I don't know. I don't even know if we're safe.

Archie feels Ian's eyes on him.

IAN

All that stuff he said -- eating out of a dumpster and selling yourself and all -- is that true?

ARCHIE

It's the path I had to take, kid.

IAN

You survived and made a difference.
That's pretty awesome in my book.

Vanessa squeezes Archie's hand.

OFFICER (O.S.)

MR. CLARK? ARCHIE CLARK?

Archie waves to the officer. The officer jogs over.

OFFICER

We need to get a statement. Can you
follow me?

INT. UNMARKED CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Archie climbs in. Sees a silenced gun.

CHIEF BRADY

You're a real pain in the ass - just
like you were on the ice.

Barton takes the driver's seat.

CHIEF BRADY

Drive.

INT. MIMI'S SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny eases himself into the passenger seat. Mimi slips behind
the wheel and starts the car.

MIMI

You need a doctor --

JOHNNY

-- Get down!

He shoves Mimi's head into his lap and hunches down. Chief
Brady's unmarked car passes them.

JOHNNY

I know where they're going. Just
tail them, unobtrusive-like.

(quietly)

I'm comin' for ya, Arch.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR - NIGHT

The bar throbs with people.

The Bouncer gets a text. He calmly leaves his post, pulls a fire alarm and exits through a hidden side door – careful to wedge it open.

EXT. PUCKER'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

A distracted crowd gathers outside the bar. They miss the unmarked police car that parks beside the building.

Archie gets out with the other two men.

CHIEF BRADY

One sound and many people die.

They make their way to the bouncer's wedged door and enter as Mimi's car pulls up nearby.

JOHNNY

Can't go that way. C'mon.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

Music continues its dance beat as Barton cuffs Archie's hands behind his back.

CHIEF BRADY

Where's the safe?

BARTON

No clue. Office, maybe?

CHIEF BRADY

Take him back there. And leave something for me.

Barton shoves Archie toward The Catacombs.

OUTSIDE

Johnny leads Mimi behind a set of dumpsters to a tall chain-link fence covered in privacy hedge slats.

Johnny unlocks it. A staircase leads to the basement.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR, OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chief Brady ransacks the office. He hears a door open in the basement beneath him and leaves quickly.

INT. PUCKER'S BAR, BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The bunker-like basement beneath the former tool-and-die shop stores catering supplies, seasonal decorations and a number of slings and BDSM tools.

Johnny unlocks a door and leads Mimi into a storeroom filled with booze. A metal ladder leads to a trap door in the ceiling.

Johnny grabs Mimi's arm — he wants her undivided attention.

JOHNNY

Remember 35 74 12 69 26. Repeat it.

MIMI

35 74 12 69 26.

JOHNNY

Say it again.

THE CATACOMBS

Barton pulls Archie through a maze of rooms and corridors, not entirely certain where he's going.

ARCHIE

Just you and me, stud.

BARTON

Back where it all started for us.

He kicks Archie's bad knee and Archie goes down.

PUCKER'S BAR, OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny exits the trap door behind his desk, his breathing labored. Mimi notices.

JOHNNY

Brady was looking for the safe.

Johnny logs into his computer.

JOHNNY

It's behind the... the good hooch.
Downstairs.

He brings up the CCTV cameras as Mimi pulls up his shirt and checks this wound.

JOHNNY

Bullet's under a rib, probably in
the lung. Likely terminal... look.

Johnny points at the screen.

THE CATACOMBS

Barton kicks Archie in the stomach. Archie grins up at him.

ARCHIE

You've had better foreplay.

BARTON

No fight left in you, Enforcer?

ARCHIE

You coulda killed me in the barn --

BARTON

-- Johnny and O'Toole were the targets
in the barn. Couldn't have a bunch
of civilian casualties, could we..?

Archie drops Barton to the floor with a kick to Barton's knee and scampers away. Barton gives chase.

Archie limps around a corner. Swings a wall closed with his foot. Barton runs past.

UPSTAIRS, IN PUCKER'S BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny shuts off the music. Mimi grabs a pool cue from the pool table.

MIMI

Where's your gun?

JOHNNY

Promise me that you'll bug outta
here when we find Archie.

MIMI
You'll need help --

JOHNNY
-- Both of you. Promise me.

They listen at the entrance to The Catacombs. Silence.

Johnny leads the way. Pauses at an intersection. Seals off the corridor behind them with a sliding wall.

Just sees Mimi disappear around a corner.

JOHNNY
Fuck.

Johnny opens a panel, revealing a ladder to a catwalk in the rafters. Snaps open his switchblade. Bites it in his teeth like a pirate. And begins to climb.

A MONTAGE OF SCENES as Archie, Mimi and Barton seek each other in a cat-and-mouse hunt from room to corridor to room.

IN A CORRIDOR

MIMI
Archie?

IN A ROOM

Archie hears her. Tries to find a way toward her.

IN A CORRIDOR

Barton waits. Mimi tiptoes forward, pool cue ready.

Barton grabs her from behind. She smashes the pool cue into his forehead. Jabs the end into his stomach.

Barton staggers backward. Mimi drops him to the floor with a whack between his legs and a smack against his temple.

She removes her belt and trusses Barton like a pig on a spit.

IN A ROOM

Archie discovers drips of blood on the floor.

ARCHIE
Mimi? Where are you?

MIMI (O.S.)
ARCHIE! HERE...!

Bullets rip through the wall and Archie dives for the floor. Discovers a wound on his thigh. Rips off a piece of his shirt.

IN A CORRIDOR

Mimi hears the rip. Hurries toward the sound – until a door slams, blocking her way.

Chief Brady yanks the pool cue from her hands and throws it down. Brandishes his gun.

CHIEF BRADY
Not a word, missy.

She pretends to trip and crashes against a wall.

IN ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Archie hears her, but has too many paths to choose. He studies the space.

ARCHIE
He said banquet hall...

Archie finds the edge of a wall. With hands still handcuffed behind his back, he grits his teeth and pushes. The entire wall telescopes into one thick pillar.

Archie shoves another wall open. Then another – and discovers Chief Brady holding Mimi, a gun to her head.

CHIEF BRADY
So the Enforcer's still standing.

He handcuffs Mimi and shoves her beside Archie.

ARCHIE
All these bodies. You'll never keep your captain's badge.

CHIEF BRADY
We responded to a fire alarm. And discovered one. It will require some... theater. On your knees.

They comply. Chief Brady uncorks two bottles of high-proof rum. Pours one over each of them.

CHIEF BRADY

Assassination by fire was Johnny's favorite method, did you know that? Frat houses. Sign shops --

ARCHIE

-- Shut up --

CHIEF BRADY

-- Johnny killed that faggot Peter. And Pablo and, what, ten Tekes?

ARCHIE

Shut your stinking mouth!

Mimi sees blood on her blouse. More drips from above.

CHIEF BRADY

Five of my rivals in command, 32 Taliban civilians, countless others at my request. And then, he became a tin man.

ARCHIE

I'LL TAKE THE TIN MAN.

Chief Brady pulls a lighter from his pocket.

CHIEF BRADY

Great, 'cause he's useless to me.

He ignites the lighter...

Johnny drops from the rafters, slashing the air as he drops to the floor.

Chief Brady gurgles as blood sprays from a fatal neck wound. He grabs his throat. Slumps to his knees.

Johnny kneels in front of Brady. Looks into his eyes.

JOHNNY

You made an asshole of me, sir. Forever a killer --

ARCHIE

-- No...

Johnny shoves the switchblade up through Brady's jaw, tongue, sinuses, then shoves him over. He searches Brady's pockets as Brady quivers and dies.

Johnny throws a set of handcuff keys at Archie.

ARCHIE

Johnny, you're hurt...

Blood soaks Johnny's shirt. All the love Johnny has for Archie shines on his face.

JOHNNY

Thanks to you, sport, I'm only an asshole half the time.

He smiles bitterly, then stumbles out.

PUCKER'S BAR, BASEMENT - LATER

Archie sits on a box and immobilizes his leg with some lumber and duct tape.

MIMI

How could you love a man like that?
Really love him?

Archie lets her question hang there.

MIMI

He said something about something
behind the good hooch.

Archie points at a case of Johnny Walker Blue.

ARCHIE

Blue was his favorite color.

Mimi rearranges some boxes. Discovers a safe and opens it with the numbers Johnny gave to her. Cash and documents stuff it to the top.

ARCHIE

Pile all that over here.

Mimi creates a stack. Archie maneuvers himself closer. They go through it all.

ARCHIE

It's roughly four hundred grand.

MIMI

This envelope has your name on it.

She hands a green envelope to Archie. His name shines in hand-written silver ink.

He opens it warily. Finds a certificate and a letter:

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Archie: If you're reading this, then I'm on my way to Hell to fry for my sins. Enclosed is a bearer bond to a nameless account in the Cayman Islands. Blood money, yes, plus money I stole back from your agent. Contact F. Abagnale at this address. Do some good with it, Knuckles.

MIMI

What is it? Is it important?

ARCHIE

No, it's just... it's not what I expected.

INT. COCOA POWER - DAY

A comical matron with a huge bouquet hangs from the ceiling. A sign above her head shouts, "WHO'S YOUR MAMA?!"

Vanessa crunches numbers at a cafe table.

Archie enters and limps to the espresso machine. He expertly draws two perfect espressos. Carries them to Vanessa's table.

ARCHIE

You in the black?

VANESSA

Not even remotely.

ARCHIE

Maybe you need a partner...

VANESSA

Sweetness, get real. Where on this planet am I going to find a partner?

ARCHIE

Karma?

Vanessa doesn't follow him.

ARCHIE

I'll put a half million dollars
against your twenty years of sweat
equity. We'll own Cocoa Power as
equal partners.

Archie holds out his hand. Vanessa shakes it in wonder as
Mimi rushes in.

MIMI

Archie! One of my production staff
called in sick. I need someone to
roll centers, output labels for
chocolate almond bars...

Archie stops listening. He just grabs a pink apron and limps
after Mimi.

SUPER: FOUR MONTHS LATER

EXT. MAIN STREET - EVENING

Archie waters the flowers in front of the store, looking fit
in a white shirt, pink vest and florid tie.

He greets a gay couple strolling hand-in-hand. Appreciates
the bustling Main Street. The billboard at the end advertises
"Cocoa Power: Chocolate For Your Soul."

A distinctive alert sounds on his iPhone. He accesses a Scruff
photo: the familiar torso of Hugh Jock.

HUGH JOCK (V.O.)

Long time. About that coffee...

Archie shoves the iPhone into his pocket.

INT. COCOA POWER - CONTINUOUS

Archie plods in. Mimi watches the street as she unpacks a box
at the espresso counter. Vanessa puts on her coat.

Officer Quinn sits at the espresso bar with a latte.

MIMI

Archie! Did you see these truffle
pucks Vanessa created?

She holds up a regulation-size hockey puck in dark chocolate, wrapped in cellophane.

VANESSA

A nod to your history. And I have a hot date... would you lock up, hon?

Archie gives a thumbs-up. Vanessa sashays out as Ian enters from the shipping office. He removes his apron.

IAN

The coach was wondering if you'd talk to the new recruits.

ARCHIE

Anything you need, Ian.

Mimi sees what she was watching for.

MIMI

I'm off. Walk me to my car, officer?

OFFICER QUINN

That new cheese shop just opened...

MIMI

Then, lead on. Good night, Arch!

Ian follows them out and Archie finds himself alone. He makes an espresso.

Max peeks his head in. He's dressed in street clothes and carries a bouquet of flowers.

ARCHIE

Max? Hey, you just missed Mimi.

MAX

I ran into Mimi and she caught me up and, um ... Hugh Jock wants to ask you to dinner.

He hands the flowers to Archie.

MAX

When you made me your eyes and ears on the street, did you think I was just watching the crooks?

Archie breaks then, and tears come. Max hurries around the counter. Hugs Archie tightly.

ARCHIE

Yes. Dinner. A movie. A walk in the park. Surf and sand and tiki drinks... anything... everything.

Archie realizes he made two espressos.

ARCHIE

How about that coffee, "Hugh"?

He and Max sit together at the espresso bar.

FADE OUT: